

POLIS 2005 PLENARY CONFERENCE

EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Paris, Sciences Po, 17-18 June 2005

WORKSHOP 9: DO EU INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES "PRODUCE" EUROPEAN IDENTITY?

Chair: Dieter Fuchs (OK), Stuttgart

"Producing identity in an expanding composite polity:

Can the EU take lessons from empires?"

Paper proposal submitted by

Magali Gravier

(magali@gravier.org)

Universität Salzburg

23 February 2005

The question whether EU institutions and policies do "produce" European identity seems very simple at first glance. The brackets used for the verb "produce" might, though, indicate that this verb may have several meanings. A closer look to this question opens up three other questions: what is identity? Which institutions and policies are meant or can produce identity? Whom does this "produced identity" address? I will take a little time to answer briefly these questions before going further on with the subject of this paper: "Producing identity in an expanding composite polity: can the EU take lessons from empires?"

First, the verb "produce", in this very question, covers two aspects of process of identification: On the one side, the "offer" of an identity, and on the other side, the development of an identity by social actors. Both are linked since the first meaning focuses on the elaboration of a content of identity, and the second on the internalisation of this identity by actors. So, in the second definition and as far as we are concerned here, "production" refers to the capacity of EU institutions to trigger the development of an identity of some given actor.

Let's leave this first question open and skip to the second, I will come back to the question of the "production" after having dealt with the second question.

Second question, what is identity? This concept is very difficult to define in a few lines. In the following paper, I will follow a major philosopher who has worked on the question of identity, P. Ricœur¹. Ricœur was a philosopher of the subject, and consequently only considered the identity of individuals. I think that his concept may be extended to collective identity without betraying its rationale; this is why I will be using his theoretical framework here. Since I cannot, for lack of space, expose his concept of identity, I would like to focus on three main dimensions of the philosopher's concept. One of the first remarks that he makes when analysing what identity is, is that identity is always an "identity-with" ("*identité-à*"). This means that identities do not float, they are anchored in a reality, and more exactly, they are intrinsically a relation to an object. Second, identity is defined by the self and by the others at the same time ("Who am I?" or "This is who I am" and "Who is this?" or "That's him/her", in other words: "Which characteristics of mine/his/her do others/I use to identify me/him/her?"). Last but not least, the use of the word recognition – the process of identification is a process of recognition – implies time. Identity can only exist over time, says Ricœur. You must have known at least once in order to be able to identify. Because to identify is to recognize, and to *re-cognize* – Ricœur stresses the etymology of the word – means precisely to "know again". Among these three dimensions the notion of object is very important, especially when trying to analyse concrete processes of identity construction and production. If one tries to understand real processes of identification, one not only must know who is the subject of identity, but also which objects these subjects are supposed to identify with. This brings us back to the first sense of "production" that I had mentioned: offering objects of identity. In this paper, I will focus on this first dimension of the production of identity: the attempt of EU institutions and policies to offer objects of identification. Thus, I will not be speaking of concrete identities but of potential identities. Talking about concrete identities would require another type of study in order to see whether these objects offered to the identification of actors are indeed accepted by them or not. This is not the purpose of my paper. Also, the study of the concrete identification of actors cannot be seriously dealt with without having first been through the first step: it is not possible to say that actors identify

¹ Ricœur Paul, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Éd. du Seuil, Coll. Points, 1990, 424 p.

well enough or to little with... with what, if you haven't first shown what actors are supposed to react to.

Third question, which institutions and policies produce identity? For this paper, I have chose the three main policies that produce directly identity. The first one is not called a policy, but it is nonetheless the active attempt of the EU institutions to foster the functional equivalent of a "national identity". Since the adjective "national" cannot apply to the EU, I will use the expression "civic identity" for lack of a better alternative expression. The second is the language policy and the third is the very recent European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The answer to this third question gives at the same time an answer to the last question: who is expected to develop an identity? In the first case, it is clearly the European citizens, in the second case, citizens as well as states are the targets, and in the third one, states and the EU itself are the main targets, but citizens may be affected too.

I have showed in another paper² that the concept of empire is heuristic when analysing the integration process and the functioning of the EU. First, this concept enables to embed the integration process in the longterm history of the European continent. Indeed, Europe (as a geographical space) has known many empires since the Roman Empire, many of which contended they were the heirs of the Roman empire. What's more, the same states or parts of their territories were very often involved in the same empires, which means that European states have a very long common history, during which they have of course quarrelled, but also learned to know each other, developed common values and experiences of supranational institutionalisation of power. Second, choosing to use the concept of empire instead of using (or even inventing) a new concept in order to analyse the EU has important methodological consequences. It enables comparisons between the EU and former empires, in other words between the present European composite polity and former composite polities. Studies that try and use new concepts to study the EU because they claim that the EU is an unknown type of polity forbid *eo ipso* any comparative approach and thus take the risk of what G. Sartori once

² "From good governance to good empire: the emergence of the federal European state", paper presented at the conference Political Concepts beyond the Nation State : Cosmopolitanism, Territoriality, democracy, University Of Copenhagen, 28-30 October 2004 (unpublished).

called “pariochalism”³. Third, like any concept, the concept of empire is a guide for the analysis of the EU, in the sense that it tells us what I will focus my attention on.

This paper will first show how the question of identity is dealt with in the case of empires. It will then analyse successively the three policies that foster directly identity in the EU: the policy fostering civic identity, the linguistic policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

1. EMPIRES AND THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Even if there is no consensus on the definition of empires, many authors⁴ agree on three main characteristics of empires. I call them *primary* criteria: Empires are states or at least polities⁵, they are a composite kind of state, and they have a core dominating a periphery. Four other criteria are often mentioned though it is more uncertain, whether those are necessary criteria or not. For this reason, I call them secondary criteria: Authoritarianism, stability, territory, and culture and/or identity. Of all these seven primary and secondary criteria, two obviously do not apply to the EU: it is neither a state nor an authoritative polity. This paper is not the place to discuss thoroughly these two points. In short, and despite the momentarily negative

³ Sartori, Giovanni, « Comparing and miscomparing », *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1991, 3:3, 243-257.

⁴ Motyl, Alexander J., “From Imperial Decay to Imperial Collapse: The fall of the Soviet Empire in Comparative Perspective”, in R. Richard L. & Good D., (eds.), *Nationalism and Empire. The Habsburg Monarchy and the Soviet Union*, New York, St Martin Press, 1992, p. 15-43; Motyl, A. J., “Thinking about Empire”, in K. Barkey & M. von Hagen (eds.), *After Empire. Multiethnic societies and nation-building*, Westview Press. Boulder / Oxford. 1997, p. 19-29; Hintze Otto, „Imperialismus und Weltpolitik, [1907], in *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte*, Herausgegeben von G. Oestreich, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2d ed., 1962, p. 457-469; Cooper Frederick, “Modernizing Colonialism and the Limits of Empire”, *Items & Issues*, 2003, 4(4), Fall/Winter, p.1-9; Deàk, István, “Comparing Apples and Pears: Centralization, Decentralization, and Ethnic Policy in the Habsburg and Soviet Armies”, in R., Richard L. & D. F. Good, 1992, p.225-241; Tilly, Charles, “How empires end”, in Barkey K. & M. v. Hagen (eds.), 1997, p. 1-11. This leaves out among others Negri and Hardt whose use of „empire“, though very fashionable since their book entitled „empire“, is not compatible with the rest of the literature on empires and more metaphorical than rigorously theoretical. Hardt, Michael & Negri Antonio, *Empire*, Cambridge, H.U.P., 2000, 478 p. For a critical reading of Negri and Hardt’s books *Empire* and *Multitude*: Alexander J. Motyl, “Is Everything empire? Is Empire Everything?”, *Comparative Politics*, (forthcoming, 2005).

⁵ In the sense of Y. H. Ferguson and R. W. Mansbach, *Polities. Authority, Identities and Change*, 1996. Considering empires as states or polities excludes the use of the word “empire” to designate supranational economical networks – even if these have a hegemonic dimension. Empire thus requires a political organisation.

outcomes in some ratification procedures of the constitution, the EU is closer to being a state than an international organisation, which legitimises the use of the concept of empire. The question of authoritarianism can be dealt with by saying that it is indeed a common feature of many empires (though not all of them were at all moments or in all respects authoritative), but it is by no means a necessary criterion. Rather, it appears to be a historical contingency, one could even risk the word “political fashion”, that tends to disappear when the social context is not favourable to the use of authoritarianism by decision-makers and reappears when the context changes. In other words, one can hypothesize that in the context of the rule of law and of liberal democracy, if empires were created, they would be democratic composite polities.

The question of identity, all too often forgotten by scholars of empires, is however mentioned here and there by some scholars. Identity is important for states because this what holds their population under their roof. It enables the citizens to think of themselves as being something that citizens of another state are not, and consequently as being part of a group that differs from others. Identity is usually embedded in a history that is more or less regularly rewritten so as to enable a collective identity that is constantly adapted to its current situation. This history is made of events, people, territories and values, and sometimes missions (especially in the case of empires). In the case of nation-state the collective identity is to a certain extent easy, as it takes the form of a homogenous “we” (the “nation”) against a more or less homogenous “you” or “them”. Empires face a much more complicated situation. The composite nature of empires implies a particular rationale of construction of the collective identity that constitutes at the same time a weakness often linked with the collapse of empires. The composite nature of empire implies that a greater unit is composed of several sub-units, and these sub-units have different identities, cultures, traditions, modes of local government, and, to a certain extent, histories. They may even be nations.

The task of identity “making” in composite polities must therefore deal with this difficulty. Trying to reconstruct some kind of a common history is one possibility. For instance, the “post-Roman” empires claiming to be the heirs of the Roman Empire grounded part of their identity on a common older history in order to legitimize themselves. This strategy is often combined with a second strategy consisting in invoking a mission. Empires often presented themselves as the only possibility to preserve peace and/or to ensure a better life. One could take the examples of the British and French colonial empires, which thought of themselves as having civilizing mission. O. Hintze, who wrote great pages on empires in 1907, explained that colonial empires were about the “domination of the outer European world in the form of

peaceful commerce and colonial education [*Erziehung und Kultivierung*] of exotic peoples“ even if he conceded that the background of this mission was also the development of an invincible sea army...⁶

The fact that European empires were almost always composed of a core that dominated peripheries and that most empires have experienced at least an authoritative phase often led to the fact that the identities of the peripheral groups were endangered either because the core tried to impose its identity (such as language, religion, values, economy, etc.) to the peripheries or because they barred the way to central positions in the central institutions to members of the peripheral zones. This was for example the case of the Soviet empire in which the Russians (“Slavic nationalism”, so István Deák⁷) clearly dominated. The Austro-Hungarian empire offers a counter-example, where minorities were rather well tolerated and integrated. This probably has to do with the fact that, as the name of this empire tells us, it was from the start beginning made of two major groups and not just one. István Deák contends that the way the Habsburg and the Russian Empire dealt with the nationalisms partly explained the collapse of the Soviet empire, on the one side, and, on the other, the longevity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

If nationalisms were probably never strong enough to cause the collapse of these empires, they were nevertheless always invoked during the phase of collapse. In fact, the rhetoric of nationalism was very often used in order to mobilise the populations of the peripheries against the core. So the question of identity seems to be a very important factor of duration of the empires. The comparative approach implied by the use of the concept of empire to the case of the EU leads me to ask the question how does the EU deal with this question and which rationales sustain these identity policies.

2. FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY IN A COMPOSITE POLITY.

The website EUROPA is a major source when analysing the attempts of the EU to offer objects of identity, because it is conceived of as a place where citizens can be informed on

⁶ Hintze Otto, „Imperialismus und Weltpolitik,, [1907], in *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte*, Herausgegeben von Gerhahrd Oestreich, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed., 1962, p. 468.

⁷ Deák, István, “Comparing Apples and Pears: Centralization, Decentralization, and Ethnic Policy in the Habsburg and Soviet Empires”, in Rudolph, Richard L. & David F. Good, [eds.], *Nationalism and empire: the Habsburg Empire and the Soviet Union*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992, p.225-241.

what the EU is and why it exists. In other words, EUROPA is not only a virtual documentation centre on the EU it is also a tool of political communication from the EU institutions to its citizens⁸ and of production of identity. The two strategies of identity construction I had described above are present in the discourse to be found on EUROPA: The construction of a common history and the invention of a historical mission. Let's first see the content the discourses that try and foster civic identity.

Several pages of this website explain the history of the EU. It is unanimously presented at least as the direct aftermath of WWII. If the first Community was created by the Treaty of Paris in 1951, many pages admit that a history of the EU, even quick, starts shortly before.

“The historical roots of the European Union lie in the Second World War. The idea of European integration was conceived to prevent such killing and destruction from ever happening again. It was first proposed by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in a speech on 9 May 1950. This date, the "birthday" of what is now the EU, is celebrated annually as Europe Day.,⁹

Pushing further in the same site, one finds a chronological presentation of the European history. It starts in 1946 with two key events; on 19 September 1946 “Winston Churchill calls for a ‘kind of United States of Europe’ in a speech he gives at the Zurich University.” And on 17 December 1946 “The European Federalists Union is set into place in Paris, France.”¹⁰

Further again in this site, one can read a slightly different version, rooting the European construction in an older time. The introductory page of the chapter “Key events of each year” indeed states:

“Beginnings: war and peace.

For centuries, Europe was the scene of frequent and bloody wars. In the period 1870 to 1945, France and Germany fought each other three times, with terrible loss of life. A number of European leaders became convinced that the only way to

⁸ And the other way around since individuals have the possibility to ask questions to the European Institutions, to contact the ombudsman, but also to take part to forums. See for example: Roman Winkler and Ulrike Kozeluh, *Europeans have a say: online debates and consultations in the EU*, Final Report supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Educations, Science and Culture, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005, 110 p.

⁹ <http://europa.eu.int/abc/index_en.htm>

¹⁰ <http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/1946/index_en.htm>

secure a lasting peace between their countries was to unite them economically and politically.

So, in 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed integrating the coal and steel industries of Western Europe. As a result, in 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was set up, with six members: Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands. The power to take decisions about the coal and steel industry in these countries was placed in the hands of an independent, supranational body called the "High Authority". Jean Monnet was its first President.”¹¹

In the brochure *Key facts and figures about the European Union*, which can be downloaded from EUROPA, it is written that “the EU began in the 50’s as the ‘European Communities’”¹² Pascal Fontaine, former assistant to Jean Monnet and Professor at the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris wrote *Europe in 12 lessons*, a booklet of 62 pages, published by the EU for the public and also available on EUROPA. He explains the birth of the European polity in a version quite similar to the ones previously mentioned. He too suggests that the European polity might have old roots:

*“The idea of a united Europe was once just a dream in the minds of philosophers and visionaries. **Victor Hugo**, for example, imagined a peaceful ‘United States of Europe’ inspired by humanistic ideals. The dream was shattered by two terrible wars that ravaged the continent during the first half of the 20th century.*

*But from the rubble of World War II emerged a new kind of hope. People who had resisted totalitarianism during the war were determined to put an end to international hatred and rivalry in Europe and to build a lasting peace between former enemies. Between 1945 and 1950, a handful of courageous statesmen including **Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Alcide de Gasperi and Robert Schuman** set about persuading their peoples to enter a new era. There would be a new order in Western Europe, based on the interests its peoples and nations*

¹¹ <http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/index_en.htm>

¹² e-reference: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/publications/booklets/eu_glance/44/index_en.htm>. Paper reference: European Commission / European Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2003, p. 7.

*shared together, and it would be founded upon treaties guaranteeing the rule of law and equality between all countries.”*¹³ In the next paragraph, P. Fontaine adds that R. Schuman took the idea of creation the ECSC from Jean Monnet, the uncontested mythic father of the European polity.

All together, the various pages and documents of the site are consistent in contending that the history of the EU starts somewhere between 1946 and the 50's. There are two exceptions. Firstly, P. Fontaine's booklet in which the author explains that the roots date back to 19th century, Victor Hugo – the famous French author, and apparently the only thinker worth citing... – and the first half of the 20th century (the two world wars). These roots provide dreams (V.Hugo, as a philosopher and visionary) and reasons (WWI and WWII) to create the European polity. The second source going back to the 19th century is the introductory page of the chapter “Key vents of each year” of EUROPA, which contends that the three wars between France and Germany between the years 1870 and 1945 offer also an explanatory factor to the European integration process. In all these discourses, lie the main features of the Europe we know today:

- French men were the visionaries (Hugo and Monnet);
- The French-German node, which started as an extremely bellicose one but ended as the “engine of Europe”;
- War having provoked a thirst for peace, the EU is a polity that was created in order to change the course of history from war to peace and wealth (the very first line of the page of EUROPA entitled “The European Union at a glance”, poses that “the European Union (EU) is a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity. The idea of European integration was conceived to prevent such killing and destruction from ever happening again.”¹⁴);
- Finally, still following P. Fontaine, if among others V. Hugo, then J. Monnet, provided the dream, the heroes (the authors writes: “courageous statesmen”) belong to the four

¹³ e-reference: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/publications/booklets/eu_glance/22/en.pdf>. Paper reference: European Commission / European Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2004, p 5.

¹⁴ <http://www.europa.eu.int/abc/index_en.htm>

big member states of the EU-15: The French minister Robert Schuman, the first Chancellor of the newly born FRG, Konrad Adenauer, Great-Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Italian statesman Alcide de Gasperi. An interesting strategy giving the honour of the European vision to the French, but counterbalancing it immediately with the concrete construction that was due to the common action and will of the big four states. How can this be explained? My hypothesis is that it must constantly be stressed that the European polity is not a polity dominated by one state not even two, but that it is the product of the will of all, for the good of all. So in this discourse and opposite to a classical feature of empires, the EU should by no means appear as a composite polity made of one core dominating a periphery, rather it is the "empire of all on all", in other words an egalitarian composite polity¹⁵. Let's also notice that among the big four is the United Kingdom, though it only became a member of the European communities in 1973 (together with Ireland and Denmark who are not mentioned in the list) and that the Americans, who played an important role by encouraging and relaunching the integration process in the very early stages of the Communities, are not mentioned at all... This is where the process of mythification and "invention of a tradition" appears with the greatest evidence.

The temporal limits, the catalytic role of WWII and the founding fathers selected by the European institutions themselves are obviously not so much meant to tell an "objective" and "exhaustive" history as to stimulate an identification process with the EU through its founding fathers.¹⁶ The effect of this myth is twofold. Firstly, it writes a history that is common to all.

¹⁵ This discursive strategy does not really reflect the reality. Some examples can be given that do show a difference between a "composite core" and lesser, more recently integrated, peripheral group of states. For instance, the economical discrepancy between original member states, newly integrated member states (the "internal periphery") and the neighbours (the "external periphery") or the mechanism of enhanced cooperation. The results of the French and Dutch referendum on the European Constitutional treaty show that a "no" answer from a "founding state" weighs much more than any answer of other states (who noticed the "yes" answer of Lettland after the refusal of the Dutch and the French?).

¹⁶ In fact, EUROPA also proposes its own list of founding fathers. But this list is quite puzzling since it also mentions personalities such as Jacques Delors or Lorenzo Natali. If Delors is undoubtedly a very important man in the history of the EU, Lorenzo Natali is as undoubtedly totally unknown to the greater public... and probably to an "initiated" public as well. Both however cannot really be called "founding fathers" except if we consider that we are still in a founding phase of the Union. I believe that this extended definition of the founding phase is

Indeed though it was experienced from distinct standpoints since the “participants” were enemies, these “participants” experienced the same wars. They shared sufferance and losses, and this now unites them in a sort of community of past and destiny. The chosen founding fathers, coming from the four big states of the EU-15 are meant to enable the identification of several populations to one same “object” – the EU – via the mediation of selected points of reference that have a meaning for each major sub-group – major politicians in their national contexts. This history, if we sum it up, is thus made of events (the catalytic experience of WWII, but also WWI, and the French German relations), persons (the founding fathers and the visionaries), values (essentially those of liberal democracies).

Secondly, it gives birth to the mission of the EU. The EU is indeed committed to peacekeeping and to the well being its population. In fact, the EU is presented as the only practical way to achieve these two goals. The “TINA” discourse (“there is no alternative”) ever present at each step of the integration process of the European project reminds that of other composite polities, which presented themselves as the best and often only way to achieve a particular vision of the future ideal society. This mission also explains in many cases the tendency to expand without end (the mission is universally good and thus potentially applies to every body). I will come back to this question that is very crucial in the case of the EU when dealing with the ENP but for now, I would like to present the second important policy of identity production: the linguistic policy.

2. THE LINGUISTIC POLICY

Languages have been considered since the early stages of the EU as an essential part of the European construction. The European project was not just about creating a supranational level of coordination of selected policies, it was about doing so while respecting the specificities of the states involved in this supranational level of coordination – specificities meant among others the national identities and thus the languages in which these identities existed. The very first resolution of the Council of the EEC, dated 6 October 1958, posed the principle of multilingualism:

not very useful for social scientists.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/mediatheque/photo/select/foundingfathers_en.htm>.

“Article 1: The official languages and the working languages of the institutions of the Community shall be Dutch, French, German and Italian.”¹⁷

The basic principle of this regulation was that the language of each member state was an official language. This meant that the European citizens could communicate with the European institutions in the language of their choice and receive an answer in this same language (Art. 2). The Official Journal (art. 5), as well as general regulations or documents of general application (art. 4), were to be published in all official languages. However, when communicating with a specific state or with a person of this state, the Community was supposed to use the language of the addressee (art. 3). The case of states with several languages was also dealt with: the EEC accepted whichever official languages were recognized by this state. There were two restrictions to this principle: first, the European Court of Justice determined its language policy in its rules of procedure and second (art. 7) the institutions could in some cases restrict the use of languages (art. 6). Often questioned after the successive enlargements, the Communities and now the Union have always kept to this principle. Thus, in April 2002, Neil Kinnock, who was leading the DG Admin at that time, presented to the members of the Commission the “strategy for the joint interpreting and conference service in the lead-up to 2004”. His memorandum starts by explaining that “the forthcoming enlargement of the European union presents a major challenge (...) for the language services of the European institutions” but adds immediately that “multilingualism will remain a founding project of the European project”.¹⁸

The multiplication of languages has led to the creation of two separate directorates dedicated to languages (instead of one), the DG Translation (DGT) and the DG Interpretation (SCIC¹⁹). Before the last enlargement the language services counted around 2500 permanent persons (translators, interpreters and administrative staff), to which must be added external staff (more than 20% of the translations are made by external translators and there are more than 2000 accredited freelance interpreters). After the enlargement, the DG Interpretation announced the recruitment of 15 to 40 interpreters per language. In 2003, the DG Translation translated

¹⁷ EEC Council, *Regulation n°1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community*, Official Journal B 017, 6/10/1958, p. 0385-0386. Downloaded from <http://europa.eu.int/comm/scic/thescic/cr1958_en.htm>, date of consultation 6/4/05.

¹⁸ “Conference Interpreting and Enlargement. A strategy for the joint Interpreting and Conference Service in the lead-up to 2004”, Memorandum from M. Kinnock, SEC(2002)349/2, p. 2.

¹⁹ The acronym comes from the French version: Service Commun d’Interprétation et de Conférence.

1416817 pages, while the DG Interpretation counted in 2001 50 meetings per day requiring its services and 145.000 interpreter days/year. This huge activity of translation and interpretation is not very expensive: the total cost of translation and interpretation of the whole EU institutions (not just the Commission) was of 2,55€ yearly per inhabitant in 2003 – this low cost might be explained by constant struggles to keep costs as low as possible. The DG Interpretation was expecting the cost of its services (0,28€ yearly per inhabitant) to rise by 20 to 50% after the enlargement. Not very surprisingly, the EU is the biggest agency of translation/interpretation of the world...

The creation of Directorate-Generals for translation and interpretation is not the only application of the European policy of multilingualism inside the European institutions. The European bureaucracy is multilingual itself. Being able to work in two languages of the EU is indeed a requirement in order to be recruited as a civil servant of the European Institutions.²⁰ Many officials, though, speak actively three and more languages, either because they do so before their recruitment or because they learn additional languages once recruited.

Outside the institutions, four major programs have been developed in order to promote multilingualism among the European citizens. These programmes, LINGUA, LEONARDO DA VINCI, COMENIUS and SOCRATES/ERASMUS promote measures contributing to learning languages either for persons who work, or for pupils or students. The aim is really multilingualism, in other words, to avoid the development of one language or even one lingua franca inside the EU because this would de facto mean that one language would dominate in the EU – and this language would be English. The idea is to promote the use of other languages, the six major languages (spoken as a mother tongue or as a second language) being English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Polish.²¹

Why bother with these costly measures? Here again, EUROPA is an interesting source, since it expresses explicitly the political goal of these measures. For the DG Translation:

“The EU is a democratic organisation so it has to communicate with its citizens in their languages, not to mention the Member States’ governments and civil

²⁰ More exactly, the article 28 of the staff regulation poses that each candidate should speak thoroughly one language of the Union and be sufficiently fluent in another so as to be able to fulfil his professional tasks.

²¹ A good synthesis of the language policy of the EU can be found in Rudolf de Cillia “Grundlagen und Tendenzen der europäischen Sprachenpolitik”, in Monika Mokre, Gilbert Weiss and Rainre Bauböck (eds.), *Europas Identität. Mythen Konflikte, Konstruktionen*, Frankfurt/New York, Campus Verlag, 2003, p. 231-257.

services, businesses and other organisations all over the EU. The public have a right to know what is being done in their name and must also be able to play an active part without having to learn other people's languages. And the European Union passes laws which are directly binding on everyone in the EU, so everybody in the EU must be able to understand them, which means they must be available in all the official languages."²²

For the DG Interpretation:

*"Giving everyone at the table a voice in their own language is a fundamental requirement of the democratic legitimacy of the European Union. In many cases, the legal acts resulting from discussions will have an immediate and direct effect on people's lives. There should be no obstacle to understanding and putting views in meetings. The citizens of Europe should not have to be represented in Brussels by their best linguists: they can send their best experts. The SCIC will make sure they understand each other."*²³

These two quotations are very interesting and complementary. They both have in common to reflect a conception according to which languages are not just means of communication, but also political tools. Reading more closely these two explanations reveals however a subtle difference. For the DGT, multilingualism is a tool that enables democracy in general and participatory democracy in particular ("the public (...) must be able to play an active role without having to learn (...) languages"). The stress on this aspect can be explained by the fact that this DG is the major interface between the EU and the European citizens since it is the service that provides a version of the site EUROPA in all languages of the Union. The DG Interpretation, on the other side, does not provide services to the citizens but essentially to states and members of Parliaments. Hence the stress on representative democracy: EU citizens can send to the European Parliament "their best experts" and not "their best linguists", says the SCIC. This is a powerful formulation and reveals a major difference between European

²² <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/translation/navigation/faq/faq_language_en.htm>, consulted on 30 May 2005.

²³ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/scic/thescic/mission_en.htm#2>, consulted on 30 May 2005.

officials who are recruited on the basis of technical and linguistic skills and MEPs who are not elected on the basis of their linguistic skills but on their capacity to win an election.²⁴

In all, this part of the language policy is not just an instrument of efficiency (making exchanges and thus governance possible despite the fact that actors may not speak the same languages) it *shows* the tolerance of the EU. Making sure that all communications with the outside of the Institutions is systematically proposed in all languages enables anybody to see that indeed, at least one aspect of their cultural identity is not endangered by the EU. Multilingualism is thus explicitly conceived of as both a form and an instrument of democratic accountability to the citizens, their representatives, and the member states. In the “Strategy for the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service of the Lead-up to 2004”, Neil Kinnock echoes the two DGs by contending that “it is widely agreed at institutional level nowadays that the use of the national languages is essential for the legitimacy of the Union”.²⁵

The comparison with other empires reveals the originality of this policy. No empire ever developed such a linguistic policy, especially the part meant to encourage multilingualism of the population. While most empires have tried to reduce the cost of the empire, the EU invests much money in this policy. At another level, it reveals a original pattern of governance. While most empires are characterised by vertical relations, in other words relations from the core or the hub to the peripheries, EU multilingualism implies also horizontal relations between the peripheries. The complexity of the system combining vertical and horizontal relations sets the EU apart from the other empires and reveals here too the constant efforts in order to avoid the emergence of a strong dominating core. Ascribing to the language policy a capacity to foster

²⁴ In a case study on the concrete work of MEPs and their advisers when drafting texts, Eugène Loos contends that MEPs are not really multilingual. However their advisers are multilingual so that they do work in several languages. These use different languages for written and oral communication, as well as according to the persons that are present, which usually means that when MEPs come to their meetings, they adapt to the languages that the later speak. If English tends to dominate since the Scandinavian enlargement and might continue to do so even more after the enlargement to the East, for the moment, work in the Parliament is still done in various languages – mainly English, French and to a lesser extend German. Texts are not only drafted in several languages, one same sentence can even contain bits and parts drafted in several languages! Only the final version will be translated properly in each official language. E. Loos, “Composing ‘panacea texts’ at the European Parliament. An intertextual perspective on text production in a multilingual community”, *Journal of Language and Politics*, 2004, 3:1, 3-25.

²⁵ “Conference Interpreting and Enlargement. A strategy for the joint Interpreting and Conference Service in the lead-up to 2004”, Memorandum from M. Kinnock, SEC(2002)349/2, p. 8.

political legitimacy reveals the cautiousness of decision makers who believe that dealing with the identity conveyed by languages in a proper manner contributes actively to hold the EU together.

Together, the policy fostering civic identity and the linguistic policy are complementary because they foster unity (through the civic identity) and diversity (through the linguistic policy). They also partly address the same public. Both indeed address the EU citizens. However, the linguistic policy is much broader since it also addresses the member states. The third policy is quite different and adds another aspect not dealt with by the two others: the territory.

3. THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY.

In a joint letter dated August 2002 responding to the Council of General Affairs that had met a few months earlier and expressed the wish that the EU think about the new external borders that would be created by the enlargement to the East, Javier Solana and Chris Patten wrote:

“The imminent enlargement presents an opportunity to develop a more coherent and durable basis for relations with our immediate neighbours (...) looking to the medium and longer term, we could foresee a gradually evolving framework for economic and political space surrounding the Union, which would nevertheless stop short of full membership or creating shared institutions. Building on existing instruments and relations, this approach could immediately bring neighbouring countries fully into the internal market and other relevant EU policies.”²⁶

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was born. It was not sure how it would be called. The letter contains the title “Wider Europe”. This was initially translated in most languages “La grande Europe”²⁷ (Bigger Europe), which inevitably evoked the policy of expansion of empires – but only in certain languages, not in English. It is now translated “L’Europe élargie”²⁸ (“wider” in the sense of “enlarged” Europe – interestingly the English version “Wider Europe” has remained unchanged) a euphemism, which sounds more acceptable. Sometimes, it is even referred to as the attempt to build a “ring of friends”, an even more acceptable euphemism:

²⁶ Letter from Christopher Patten and Javier Solana to the Council, *Wider Europe*, 07.08.2002.

²⁷ „La Grande Europa“, „Das große Europa“, „Het grote Europa“ in Italian, German and Dutch.

²⁸ „Europa ampliata“, „Größeres Europa“, „Het uitgebreide Europa“ in Italian, German and Dutch.

“The European Neighbourhood Policy is a new policy that invites our neighbours to the East and to the South to share in the peace, stability and prosperity that we enjoy in the European Union and which aims to create a ring of friends around the borders of the new enlarged EU.”²⁹

This official goal is, as explained on the home page of the site EUROPA dedicated to the ENP, to share peace and stability and prosperity with the neighbours of the EU. Peace, stability and prosperity, those are the key words defining the mission of the EU, and they are to be proposed to the “ring of friends” that are outside the EU. There is a certain ambiguity in this formulation since it defines a border but immediately goes past it. The friends are indeed in and out of the zone of influence of the EU. More exactly, though they are outside of the EU, they are still in its zone of influence.³⁰

Who are these friendly neighbours? Roughly, one can say all the countries that have a common border with the EU be it in the East or in the South: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, The Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Lybia, Lebanon, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Russia. Candidate countries i.e.: Romania and Bulgaria, Turkey with which accession negotiations have been opened, and the “potential candidate” countries of the Balkan region are not part of the ENP, which deals with relations states that should not be offered the possibility to integration the Union. Russia and the EU have actually initiated a special type of partnership. Accepting to be part of the ENP as any other state of the Enp would had *de facto* meant a form of dependence, hence quasi submission of Russia to the EU, which was unacceptable for the former superpower. The special partnership enables to put both entities at the same level: “Russia and the enlarged EU form part of each other’s neighbourhood”³¹, reminds the very diplomatic European Commission.

What does the ENP really do? Officially, the EU proposes to share “the benefits of EU enlargement in terms of stability, security and well-being”³². It proposes privileged relationship and cooperation with the friends but no integration – I will come back to a

²⁹ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index_en.htm>, page consulted on 19.05.2005.

³⁰ Del Sarto Raffaella A. & Tobias Schumacher, « From EMP to ENP : What’s at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean ? », *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2005, 10: 17-38.

³¹ *ENP. Strategy paper*, Communication from the Commission, COM(2004) 373 final, dated 12 May 2004, p.6.

³² *ENP. Strategy paper*, Communication from the Commission, COM(2004) 373 final, dated 12 May 2004, p.6.

secondary effect of this point. It provides help in order to perform political transition as well as economic development and modernisation, to fight crime, corruption, trafficking, money laundering, to regulate migration provided common values are adopted: mainly democracy, human rights, etc. Concretely, its “benchmarking approach” turns it into a rather “explicit” instrument of diffusion of the European political, philosophical and economical identity outside of the borders of the EU, because “only those states that share the EU’s political and economic values and/or commit themselves to engage in reforms will have anything to gain from the EU’s neighbourhood Policy”³³. Therefore, it is an instrument of diffusion of identity outside of the borders and might mean at some points a remodelling of the relations with the USA (cf.: Israel, Egypt, Syria)³⁴.

Interesting in this policy is that it is one of the first attempts to give an answer to the question of the territory of the EU. If we compare its situation with that of other composite polities such as empires, the question of the territory has always been a two-edged one. On the one side the empires had a tendency to expand always more (with the exception of China, which at some point stopped to expand) in order to increase their power and richness, on the other hand, this tendency to over expand has often caused their end. Large empires were indeed to expensive and to difficult to control. Because the EU is a democratic composite polity, it must also deal with popular accountability, ie the acceptance of the territorial policy by the people. Territory is not just a piece of land; it is inevitable linked to the population that lives on it, its model of society, its history, its culture, etc. It is an important element of any collective identity. The question of the Turkish integration shows where the limits might be for most of the citizens of the EU. It might have been one of the reasons for the negative outcome of the French referendum on the European constitution.

Though the ENP is initially a policy that aims at defining a concept of foreign affairs, it necessarily deals with the question of territory by creating a “buffer”³⁵ zone between the EU and the “outerworld”. Identifying the countries to which this policy will be proposed and defining them as neighbours means also defining the borders of the EU. This is a subtle way of doing so. Avoiding to ask the polemic question “where does the EU stop?”, i.e.: defining

³³ Del Sarto Raffaella A. & Tobias Schumacher, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 23.

³⁴ Aliboni Roberto, “The Geopolitical Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2005, 10: 1-16.

³⁵ Del Sarto Raffaella A. & Tobias Schumacher, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 19.

the borders of the EU from within, it nonetheless gives the answer to this question, by answering the question “who are our neighbours?”, i.e.: by defining the borders from outside. However, it doesn't deal with the differential territorial identity (Schengen, Eurozone, Opting-out, etc.), it merely defines the maximal possible borders. This is already a lot since it will enable to say in the future what a “European” is, which is still not possible at the moment. Indeed, at least one next round of enlargement is pendant, and probably two others will follow (Turkey and the Balkans). As Ricœur has taught us, as long as the frontiers keep moving, constructing an identity is not possible, because the re-cognition process cannot really take place. The EU that exists today, all EU citizens already know it, will not remain the same. Thus no deep feeling of identity is possible.

Compared to the two other policies, the ENP brings about a complementary aspect that was not yet dealt with. Though it essentially addresses states, it proposes a major element missing in the stateness of the EU, a finished territory. The ENP is truly a policy that contributes to the construction of identity because it proposes an “identity package” that combines a territory and a model of society (through the values that the ENP conveys).

The study of the policy fostering civic identity, the linguistic policy and the ENP offers evidence of broad attempts made by the EU decision-makers to foster identity. The strength of this attempt lies in their complementarity. Altogether, they define the internal and the external identity of the EU. They address the European citizens as well as the member states, and they combine common as well as diversified identity. The use of the concept of empire, which enables selected comparisons, sheds light both on the similarity of the problems faced by the EU and other empires and on the originality of the solutions proposed by the EU. But this study cannot say to which extent the contents of identity that are offered will indeed be internalised by the EU citizens... and neighbours. The process of identity elaboration is a negotiated one where several actors propose, select, accept and refuse identities. Individuals cannot be forced to accept the identities that are proposed. The negative outcome of the referendum in France and the Netherlands show that a great exposure to information, the possibility to ask for as much information as wanted does not mean at all that these offers will be used. Cognitive approaches have long identified the mechanisms that interfere here: selective attention. This is the reason why this study must be completed by a analysis of the reaction of the citizens to these offers of identity.