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**WORKSHOP 4A
DO EU INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES “PRODUCE” EUROPEAN IDENTITY?**

Producing European Identity in a ‘European School’

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Abstract

Encouraging pupils to develop a sense of European identity is one of the aims of the ‘European Schools’. This paper reports on a small case-study that was carried out in 2004 that investigated how the secondary section of the European School at Culham attempts to develop in its pupils a sense of European identity. In particular, the study looked at the school’s organisational features, its curriculum, extra-curricular activities and teachers’ conceptions of European identity. The research findings reveal that above all else, pupils’ sense of European identity is encouraged indirectly through the many opportunities the school provides for these children from diverse backgrounds to integrate and interact with one another. Teachers at the school believe that it is through such interactions, which take place both in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities that pupils learn about each others’ cultures and languages and develop a feeling of being European.

Introduction

At the heart of education for a united Europe lie the European Schools [Desmond Swan, 1996]

The European Schools are part of a rather distinct education system. Their main purpose is to meet the educational needs of children of officials of the European institutions. During the 1950s a group of officials of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), having moved country to take up their posts, felt that it was inappropriate to move their children into a totally different education system, with a different cultural tradition and language. They wanted their children to be educated in their mother tongue and to receive a similar education to that of the country they were from. This was considered important not only for the preservation of their children’s national culture and heritage, but also to ease their children’s integration back into their native education system once they returned home.

Besides the aim to preserve pupils’ national heritage, the schools are also seen as the ideal place in which to foster ‘young Europeans’ by developing in them a sense of ‘European identity’, or as Schuman put it ‘to Europeanise without de-nationalising’ (cited

in Shore and Finaldi, 2000:10). This objective is encapsulated in the words of Monnet and sealed into a foundation stone of each of the schools. These words declare that while all pupils will learn their own language and about their own literature and history, they will also learn to speak other languages and learn about other European cultures. Furthermore, by mixing with children of all different nationalities, they will learn to respect each other, live together in harmony and understand that they belong together. Particularly interesting about this statement is the part that maintains that pupils 'will become in mind Europeans' and will 'bring into being a united a thriving Europe' (CEC, 1977). It is clear from this set of aims that developing a European identity in its pupils is an important objective of the European Schools.

In light of this background, this research project looked at *how* the European School at Culham (the only European School in the UK) *attempts* to develop in its pupils a sense of European identity. The project focused on the school's secondary section and used interview data from teachers in the English, French and German language sections. The inquiry was approached through a combination of a literature review (in order to provide some context and theoretical background to the research project) and empirical research. A series of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and senior. The data gathered were checked against curriculum documents where possible and supplemented to a small degree with fieldnotes from classroom and general observation.

The value of this study lies in the fact that it provides examples and stimulates ideas regarding how a sense of European identity might be formed through education. Creating a common European identity has become an increasingly important issue to the European Union. Facing numerous contemporary challenges, including the recent enlargement and the 'no' votes to the referenda on the European Constitution, the EU is concerned that a lack of a common European bond amongst its citizens might result in the stagnation of the integration process and prevent it from becoming truly democratic. The argument goes that in order for the EU to function, survive and progress, it needs to increase its legitimacy and do away with the so-called 'democratic deficit'. In other words, Europe needs to be brought closer to its people through the building of a common European identity. The nature of the European Schools, with all their diversity, places them in the unique position of being able to possibly serve as a model for using education as a means of fostering a sense of European identity. This study is therefore important in that it actually examines a European School's attempt to create a European identity.

In order to provide some theoretical and contextual background to the research project, part one of this paper considers the problems and perspectives associated with defining the term 'European identity'. Following this brief section is a historical overview of the ways in which the European Union has tried to build a common European identity through its policy on the 'European dimension in education'. Part one also briefly describes the development of the European School system. Part two focuses on describing and analysing the research findings.

Part One: Contextual Background

Defining European Identity: Problems and Perspectives

Defining the concept of 'European identity' is very challenging and both academics and politicians seldom agree on its meaning. Howorth (2000: 85) describes it as a 'major headache' and Brewin (2000: 55) points out that it is 'more problematical than national identity'. It is such a loose concept that not even the European Union has been able to provide a formal definition. In attempting to disentangle the notion, academics encounter a host of further questions, equally difficult to determine. The starting question is often: 'What is Europe?' – geographically?/politically?/culturally?/institutionally? etc.

While it is not within the scope of this paper to answer this question, in considering this from a geographical perspective, Europe does not have fixed, determined boundaries (and neither does the EU). The issue as to whether or not Turkey¹ is European is an example in this geographical debate.² This raises the question: 'How can one establish the concept of European identity if the borders of Europe are so fluid that they are constantly being redefined?' A possible answer may be that just as Europe is an ever-changing concept as per the newly redefined borders of the EU, so too is the concept of European identity subject to change. European identity cannot therefore be based on the nation-state model of identity formation in relation to physical geography, for the nation-state does have finality.

The next question that surfaces is: 'What is identity?' Social psychologists describe identity as a 'feeling of belonging' to a group which shares similarities such as common values (cultural/moral etc.), a common history and a common religion. Keesing & Strathern (1998: 48-49) state that the factors that shape identity include biological predisposition, personal experience and the social and cultural environment. Identity is therefore linked with the idea of the self (of 'who you are') sharing a common set of meanings with a particular group. However, identity is equally about the *distinction* of the self from others. Anthropologists often argue that 'identity formation is a dualistic process of exclusion as well as inclusion. In short, people define themselves not so much in terms of who they *are*, but against that which they are *not*. (Cohen 1982; MacDonald 1993).³ These ideas appear in the historian Robert Frank's definition of European identity:-

L'identité d'un groupe est faite de traits communs qui font que les membres de ce groupe se sentent "memes". [...] Bien que distincts, ils se sentent semblables dans la mesure où ils s'opposent aux "autres". L'identité européenne est donc une conscience d'être Européen, par opposition à ceux qui ne le sont pas, une conscience de similitude, un sentiment d'appartenance.⁴

Although 'being European' is about feeling you have commonalities with other 'Europeans', it is also about realising what distinguishes Europeans from 'others'. Shore, (2001: 11) comments that '[t]o create 'Europeans', the category of 'non-European' [...] must become sharper and more salient.' But by which criteria can one determine whether a country or person is or is not European and on whose authority should this depend? The debate surrounding what European identity is involves a series of

¹ Turkey is hoping to join the EU within the next ten years.

² For a most interesting paper expressing the viewpoint that Turkey is European see: Nicolaidis (2004a).

³ Quoted in Shore (2001: 11).

⁴ Quoted in Obaton (1997: 12). Approximate translation: The identity of a group is formed by common traits, which make the members of that group 'feel the same'. Despite their differences, they feel similar insofar as they can distinguish themselves from 'others'. European identity is therefore an awareness that you are European as opposed to those who are not, an awareness of similarity, a feeling of belonging.

conflicting ideas and opinions by politicians, academics, the media and European and non-European citizens. No definition has achieved consensus. It is not within the scope of this paper to enter the messy debate, but for the purpose of the empirical research of this project, it is important to have an understanding of the main ideas surrounding what European identity is. Having analysed a select number of key texts on European identity, I have composed a list of characteristics that might be exhibited by a person who has a European identity. The person would:

- be a citizen of a state that is stipulated as being within a geographical entity called Europe;⁵
- speak a language which is officially accepted as one of the official languages of Europe;
- share a common history with other Europeans;⁶
- share a cultural pattern and tradition with other Europeans such as common customs, festivals, arts, myths, stories, music etc;
- share a common Christian heritage;⁷
- share common European principles and values such as human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms, tolerance, pluralism, environmental protection etc;⁸
- share a common future with shared ideals, objectives and projects such as the Single Market;⁹
- have a European consciousness;¹⁰
- experience a psychological, mental and spiritual feeling of belonging to Europe;
- share common institutions and practices, such as the institutions of the European Union.

Many of these characteristics have been contested as inexistent, over-simplified or 'made-up' by the European Union, undermining the very nature and existence of a genuine European identity. In particular, it has often been pointed out that Europeans are more characterised by diversity than by commonalities (in terms of language, cuisine, attitude, humour etc.). Walkenhorst, (2004: 9) for example, raises the issue that '[i]t is particularly the European continents richness in different cultures and historical developments which make it difficult to find a common denominator that might provide the basis for a 'European identity'.'

This issue makes the European Union's aim of creating a common European identity particularly challenging. At present, a key question amongst EU politicians is how to create a sense of European identity in order to solve the EU's legitimacy crisis and increase democracy. Garcia and Wallace (1993: 172) comment that '[i]f a European identity could be established and its elements clearly identified, the institutions of the European community would have a much stronger point of reference from which to gather loyalty from its citizens and build up a much needed legitimacy'.

⁵ See Bryder (1999: 37-50).

⁶ Soysal (2002: 267) explains that '[t]he Greek and Roman legacy, Renaissance humanism and enlightenment, parliamentary democracy [...]' are considered examples of Europe's common patrimony.

⁷ This contentious issue has been especially debated. Even in drafting the European Constitution, certain politicians wanted this to be written into the preamble, but it is not included (Nicolaidis, 2004c).

⁸ Soysal's (2002: 274) view is that these goals are universal rather than unique to Europe or to the Member States and therefore 'everyone can be European, as long as they adhere to the principles'.

⁹ Nicolaidis (2004a: 26) states that the draft Constitution for Europe 'bases its political community [...] on shared projects and objectives' and concludes that '[t]he sense of belonging and commitment to the European Union ought to be based on *doing* more [than] *being*'.

¹⁰ This concept is also difficult to define. It might be described as a concern for and commitment to the construction of Europe.

Along these same lines, Shaw (1997) once commented that '[i]n order to make 'Europe' work, you need 'Europeans'' (cited in Kostakopoulou, 2001:14). The difficulty facing the EU is that despite success in integrating Europe economically and politically, it has been less successful in creating a 'European demos' with enough interest in supporting decisions taken in Brussels. Increasingly poor turnouts in the European elections are one example of the waning interest of European citizens to the EU.¹¹ Shore (2001:3) is of the opinion that 'subjective identification with the European Union (and a sense of 'We, Europeans') is extremely weak – except perhaps among certain political, administrative and business elites.' Shore (2001: 3) further comments that 'European integration to date has been an elite-led, technocratic affair, conducted over the heads of European citizens, who remain largely indifferent or hostile to the project' and therefore '[t]he challenge for the Commission is how to transform this 'technocrats' Europe' into a 'people's Europe'?

Cognisant of its challenge, the European Commission has continued to seek ways to either 'create awareness among people about their European identity or to construct one', mostly through the fields of education and culture (Soysal, 2002: 267). The 'European dimension in education' is one policy through which the EU is attempting to encourage its younger citizens to develop a sense of European identity. The following section explores the development of this policy.

The Development of the European Dimension in Education

Europe suffered terrible economic and political devastation after the First and Second World Wars. As a result, support grew for initiatives that would aid economic recovery and prevent further war. The initial impetus towards European integration was therefore concerned with economics and politics, not with education. As such, the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, contained no official provision for education.

Nevertheless, ideas concerning the role that education could play in the social and cultural integration of Europe were discussed by politicians even before the creation of the EEC.¹² Education was seen as the ideal means of creating the new 'European Citizens of the future' by fostering in them a 'European spirit' or 'consciousness' and developing their sense of European identity (Field, 1998: 28).

The notion of giving a European dimension to education first appeared in EEC documentation in the Janne Report of 1973. This provided guidelines for the development of a Community policy in education, stating that education should have a 'European dimension' wherever possible, particularly through the promotion of foreign language learning and exchanges as well as through the exclusion of biased references in curriculum subjects. Despite no official definition of the concept, it was understood that the aim of the European dimension in education was to help European citizens acquire a better understanding about life and people in other Member States (Savvides, 2002).

¹¹ Last year's European elections saw the lowest turnout ever in the UK (Nicolaidis, 2004b).

¹² Between 1957 and 1986, the European Union (EU) was known as the European Economic Community (EEC). Between 1986 and 1992 it was referred to as both the EEC and the European Community (EC). It changed its name to the EU in 1992 (Economou, 2001: 8).

In the same year, the concept of a shared Community identity was first given prominence by the Heads of State at the Copenhagen Summit (Lewicka-Grisdale & McLaughlin, 2002: 54). The 'Declaration on the European Identity' presented at this summit described the 'fundamental elements of the European identity', which included common European ideals and objectives such as 'defending the principles of representative democracy', 'the rule of law', 'social justice' and 'respect for human rights' (CEC 1973: 119). This document affirmed the EU's determination to introduce the promotion of European identity onto its agenda, though its details were rather vague.

This concept of European identity, together with the notion of the European dimension, gained increasing attention during the 1980s. The Fontainebleau Declaration of June 1984, for example, emphasised the importance of promoting the Community identity both for its citizens and in the wider world. A further report submitted by the Adonnino Committee (1985) defined the concept of the *European citizen*, and suggested ways of involving young people in the construction of the new Europe (COM (93) 457:17). In light of these aims, Community programmes such as LINGUA and ERASMUS¹³ were established, enabling participants to learn European languages and partake in cultural exchange.

During this period, a significant step towards a European dimension in education was the Council of Ministers' Resolution of 1988. This stipulated a definition of the European dimension for the first time and set out a framework of how it could be achieved. First and foremost, the purpose of the European dimension in education was to:

strengthen in young people a sense of European identity and make clear to them the value of European civilization and of the foundations on which the European peoples intend to base their development today, that is in particular the safe-guarding of the principles of democracy, social justice and human rights.

Furthermore, it should improve young people's knowledge of the Community and prepare them to participate effectively in its economic and social development (OJEC No 177, 5-7 1988).

The Council's 1988 Resolution suggested that measures should be taken at both the Member State and Community levels in order to incorporate a European dimension into national educational systems, school programmes and teaching, teaching materials and teacher training (Savvides, 2002). What was not effectively explained was how the resolution's objectives and suggested measures would be individually achieved. Moreover, much of the terminology used in the resolution, including 'European identity', was not explicitly defined.

The Resolution was an important step towards the inclusion of a European dimension in education and subsequently towards the promotion of a European identity, but it was not legally binding. However, in 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht included for the first time in the legislative history of the European Community a provision on general education that would deal with school-level education, as well as higher education. Furthermore, it specifically stipulated that Community action would be 'aimed at developing the European dimension in education'.

¹³ The European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus) was established in 1987 and is now part of the SOCRATES programme established in 1995.

Since Maastricht, the European Commission has set up various education programmes to be implemented by the Member States. The SOCRATES programme set up in 1995, seeks to develop the European dimension in primary, secondary and higher education in order to 'strengthen the spirit of European citizenship' and to increase the level of 'understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the European Union' (Decision 819/95/CE, OJ L 87/10).

Under the umbrella of SOCRATES, the COMENIUS programme specifically focuses on fostering the European dimension at the school level. Shore (2001: 11) raises the point that EU officials, when asked about the development of a European consciousness, state that 'true Europeans will only emerge among future generations of children who have been educated to see the world through a non-nationalistic lens' – hence, the EU's emphasis on school children as a priority group for EU information campaigns (Glendening 2001).' In fact, in a recent communication from the Commission declaring the necessity of each Member State to commit to the value and promotion of a shared European identity, it is stated that that '[i]t is above all through the involvement of young people that...Europe will assure its future.'¹⁴

More recently, in January 2005, the European Commission launched a new initiative called eTwinning. This will enable schools across Europe to form partnerships through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in order to carry out a wide range of pedagogical activities in collaboration. The intention is to give a European dimension to education by promoting 'awareness of the multilingual and multicultural European model of society'¹⁵.

During the eTwinning launch conference, Ján Figel, the Commissioner responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, stated that eTwinning 'will provide every child in Europe with the opportunity – at some point in their schooling – to engage, exchange and learn with other children from across the continent'. Claudie Haigneré, the French Minister for Europe, commented that the purpose of eTwinning is to encourage pupils in the EU to feel like European citizens from an early age. She stated that '[s]chool is a place where you can learn, but also a place where you can learn to build your own identity...you have to become aware of your European citizen status at a very early age' (Cassidy, 2005).

This short survey of the development of the European dimension in education has revealed that whilst the EU has an interest in promoting a sense of European identity through education, it is constrained in its abilities to do so. The success of the EU's education programmes depends first on the level of commitment of the Member States in encouraging schools to promote the European dimension in education. Second, it depends on the efforts of teachers who are responsible for taking the initiative to implement the European dimension in their schools and classrooms. To date, very little action has been taken by the Member States to introduce a European element to their education systems. This could be attributed to a lack of understanding over the precise meaning of the European dimension and how it should be implemented.

¹⁴ See: Commission of the European Communities (2004: 21-22).

¹⁵ www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/8&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

The major difficulty is the fact that the concepts of the European dimension in education and European identity are so loose and 'fuzzy' that they are difficult to define (Soysal, 2002: 278). What constitutes these concepts, whether or not they are truly desirable and how they can be achieved remain ambiguous. What is clear is that the EU's task to guide and direct the development of a European identity through education will prove much more difficult than its task to unify Europe in the economic and political spheres.

The Development of the European School System

The most innovative attempt to create a European identity amongst the young was through the creation of the European Schools, seen by its founders as 'laboratories for cultivating the European idea' (Shore, 2000: 9). Since their inception, the European Schools have had a double aim: to foster a *European* identity whilst preserving the *national* identities of its pupils. This dual ambition is also reflected in EU policy statements which specify that the development of a *European* identity is not intended to replace or be considered superior to Europe's *national* identities.

The European Schools are legally recognised by all Member States of the European Union as official intergovernmental educational establishments.¹⁶ They are controlled jointly by the national Ministers for Education and the European Commission, with oversight by the European Parliament (Swan, 1996). The first European School was established in 1953 by a group of parents who had moved to Luxembourg with their families to take up posts as officials of the ECSC. These parents were concerned by the fact that the education system in Luxembourg, though willing to welcome their children, could not offer them an education in their mother tongues, nor teach them enough about their own national cultures (Heumann, 1993: 20-21). The parents did not want their children's *national* identities to be threatened by being cut off from their cultural and linguistic roots and replanted in an education system with a different language, culture and curriculum (Swan, 1996: 8; Shore & Finaldi, 2000: 5).

A decision was made to set up a new type of education system that would enable these children to be educated together under one roof. Teachers would be brought in from their respective countries so that the children could continue their education in their native languages (Decombis, 1993: 27). It was agreed that a single school would be created that would have four 'language sections'¹⁷ all of which would follow an identical timetable and curriculum. This school would not only ensure the preservation of *national* educational traditions and languages, but also introduce a *European* element, since all the children would be educated alongside each other, enabling them to learn about each others' different cultures and languages (Decombis, 2003: 17). In 1959 the Luxembourg school held the first European Baccalaureate examination, which has since been recognised by all Member States as a qualification for university entrance. The Baccalaureate is also recognised in several other European and overseas countries including the USA (European Commission, undated: 5).

Since the creation of the first European School, a further twelve European Schools have been set up in seven EU Member States and a second school in Luxembourg is scheduled to open in the near future. The basic ethos and principles behind the establishment of the first European School have not changed and have been applied to the European School system as a whole.

¹⁶ http://www.eursec.org/SE/htmlEn/IndexEn_home.html

¹⁷ Each pupil would belong to the language section corresponding to their mother tongue.

Whilst the original purpose of the European Schools was to educate the children of EU officials in order to preserve their *national* languages and cultures, the schools have also had a more encompassing *European* orientation. Swan (1996: 7) states that the founders and supporters of the schools have shared from the beginning a common politico-social mandate 'to cultivate and work for the ideal of European unity, based on the equal dignity of each of the cultures within it.' Swan (1996: 26) later adds that the schools have 'embraced the ideal of cultivating a European identity as part of their *raison d'être*.'

The notion of the European Schools as vehicles for 'cultivating the European idea' is encapsulated in the words sealed in parchment in a foundation stone of each of the schools. Monnet's oft-quoted paragraph, which covers the main ideal, reads as follows:

Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.

It is clear that from the start, the European Schools have had a double aim. The original purpose for the establishment of the schools was to maintain pupils' *national* cultures. Alongside this and of equal importance to the founders of the schools was the aim of creating or developing in pupils a sense of *European identity*, considered essential for the creation of a secure and united Europe. Today, this ideology remains central to the organisation and operation of the schools, affecting the daily life of the pupils and teachers.

Part Two: Research Findings

All of us who are interested in the European ideal have a double identity. We are both nationals and Europeans [...] and that's the aim of the European Schools too, you should develop a European spirit without forgetting your own origins.

[Senior Member of Staff, European School, Culham]

The aim to educate for European identity has been documented in various school brochures and many of the schools' pedagogical objectives have a European dimension. My research findings suggest that the Culham school recognises the importance of this aim and generally *tries* to achieve it, albeit perhaps moreso indirectly rather than directly.¹⁸ According to one teacher, the school tries 'to convey this European spirit as best they can [...] we try as best we can.' This comment is echoed by a teacher of a different subject and language section: '[The school] does try, it doesn't always succeed, but it tries to ensure that the students can [...] have a feeling of being [...] European.'

These statements lead one to ask: '*How* does the European School at Culham *attempt* to develop in its pupils a sense of European identity?' - the central question behind this

¹⁸ See the next section for a fuller explanation of this point.

research project. This following sections of this paper approach this question by relating the findings of the investigation to the research questions. First, I consider the general nature of the European School and its organisational features that contribute to developing pupils' sense of European identity. I then comment on the European dimension of the curriculum and the school's extra-curricular activities. Teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards European identity are also presented.

The School's General Characteristics

The very nature and organisational structure of the European School was identified by the majority of interviewees as being an important factor in encouraging pupils to think of themselves as Europeans. Many mentioned that rather than the school consciously striving to instil a sense of European identity in pupils, it is achieved indirectly because it is inherent in the system.

According to a senior member of staff, the European school has the 'right conditions' to foster pupils' European spirit. One such condition is the selection procedure of the European Schools. The fact that teachers are nationals from the EU Member States was mentioned by one teacher as an important factor, since pupils communicate with them in their national language. Furthermore, several teachers mentioned that the schools cater for children from multilingual, multicultural, *European* backgrounds, suggesting that pupils already have some sense of European identity. The aforementioned senior member of staff points out that the European Schools are 'created for a specific purpose educating the children of [EU] officials [...] and other children that could take the benefit from this education, so [...] in their own way, [the European Schools] try to [help] those children, who already come from family backgrounds that are pro-European [...] keep that spirit.' Another teacher highlights this same point by stating that 'you are trying to encourage what is already there.'

These statements suggest that the school's aim of developing pupils' European identities is facilitated by its selection procedure. Rather than having to *create* this identity (as might be the case if this was an aim in a non-European school)¹⁹, the school is trying to *maintain and develop* pupils' existing sense of European identity. Moreover, the fact that teachers and pupils are from diverse European backgrounds means that through mixing together they can learn about each others' cultures and develop an awareness of or sensitivity to different European languages. In fact, one teacher said that 'the European spirit is there simply thanks to the fact that there are so many different Europeans here at work...after a while they start [...] communicating in different languages [and] try and understand other peoples' behaviour and habits and customs.'

Pupils 'mixing together' both in and out of the classroom, was identified as one of the most significant factors that contribute to developing their sense of European identity. Although pupils belong to a 'language section'²⁰, there are many instances when they can interact with one another. One teacher specified that '[i]n the common rooms, outside in the playing fields, they are mingling all the time' and this is one of the most important aspects of school life that contributes to developing pupils sense of European identity. The teacher also mentioned that the 'unconscious day to day communication

¹⁹ This means any school other than a European School.

²⁰ The language section a pupil enters depends on their mother tongue. For example, a French-speaking pupil who has come to the Culham school from France would be put in the French language section, and receive most of their education in that language.

really gives them [a] feeling [of European identity]' and they learn to accept and respect each others' differences.

'Classroom interactions' were considered especially important by several teachers. For example, one teacher told me that 'by learning together, and spending a lot of time, from morning until afternoon...with their classmates or with students from other sections...this alone makes them more European.' Another teacher said that in the classroom, 'what we are doing is actually living in European dimension' because the topics discussed in class are discussed on a 'cross-European basis' where students compare and contrast their views or mention how certain things are done in their particular countries.

Subjects that are taught across the language sections²¹, such as music, art and sports were identified as fostering European identity 'by default rather than actively' simply because 'students are being educated with people from different nationalities' (teacher interview). Furthermore, mixed nationality classes (such as History, Geography and other optional social science classes including Economics) where pupils from different language sections come together to study a subject in their 'working language'²² enable pupils to 'get a more European feeling' as another teacher put it. The same teacher states that 'just the very fact that they are working alongside the students from the other sections [...] that's probably the most important thing because they are sharing experiences with people from other countries, I think that's stronger than us trying to make them feel European by imposing the syllabus upon them.'

The common syllabus or curriculum, with its 'main thrust towards a European perspective'²³ is also considered an important aspect of the school's attempt to develop pupils' sense of European identity. The curriculum of the European Schools is harmonised and so the same syllabus and timetable exists in all the language sections, with the exception of the mother tongue. The same standards of attainment are expected and all pupils sit the same examination (the European Baccalaureate) in year 7. It could be that since students in all the language sections follow the same syllabi and are studying towards a common goal, a community spirit is fostered.

The European Dimension in the Curriculum

Teachers at the school generally felt that incorporating a European dimension in the curriculum was important in working towards the aim of developing pupils' sense of European identity. One teacher stressed that '[if] we don't use education to do so, it's unlikely just to happen [...] I do believe to some extent that it does happen just because of integration, because they are working with people from different countries and different backgrounds, inevitably they do pick up ideas from one another, but it does have to be supported I think, by a conscious education programme, which is done in [...] the secondary [...] through [...] the Economics syllabus and [...] in [the] geography and history syllabus for instance.' The same teacher continued explaining that he consciously tries to incorporate a European dimension into their lessons.

²¹ These classes are composed of students of different nationalities and languages. The teacher communicates mostly in their national language, but occasionally has to use other languages spoken by the pupils in order to make themselves understood.

²² This is the pupils' first foreign language, which they start learning in primary school. So, for example, pupils from across the language sections whose first foreign language is French would be taught a social science subject in French by a native teacher.

²³ This quotation is from one of the senior members of staff.

Another teacher referred to the education programme at the school as being 'the medium through which students learn and acquire skills to be good citizens' and that it helps its pupils become 'more tolerant, more open, more understanding [about] Europe. The European Union was created to avoid future wars in Europe. A European education, a sense of identity will [...] invariably help that process.' A further teacher commenting on the importance of incorporating a European dimension into the curriculum said that 'only by [...] teaching Europe you can create a European identity [...]'.

A senior member of staff highlighted that 'the curriculum has a lot of moments when the European dimension is enhanced.' In order to determine the extent to which the curriculum has a European dimension, I used a list of criteria of what a curriculum with an effective European dimension should enable pupils to do (Savvides, 2002). Analysis of interview and curriculum data suggest that one or all of the following curriculum contribute most to developing pupils' sense of European identity: History, Geography, Languages, Economics, Arts, Physical Education/Sports. History, Geography and Languages were identified as the subjects in which the European dimension is most prominent.

However, one teacher drew my attention to the fact that 'it's important to understand that it's very difficult to talk about the European curriculum as one whole. It depends on the year group you're talking about, [...] the level you talk about, [...] the language section you talk about [...] when you speak of the curriculum you need to be specific about what part of the curriculum [...] and hence it is very hard to make a general statement about [...] the European school's curriculum.' Analysis of curriculum documents support this claim.

History and Geography

The Human Sciences curriculum²⁴ and History and Geography have quite a substantial European dimension.²⁵ In year two pupils learn about 'Europe and its diversity' and 'Europe and the world' and in year three the focus is on 'the Mediterranean region' and 'Ancient Greece and Rome'.²⁶ In History, one teacher specified that 'you do the various empires [...] the Roman empire, the Greek empire, Charlemagne, the Celts, the Vikings. You would foster an understanding within the students that Europe has changed, the concept of Europe has developed [...] it's moved on, it's evolved over time.' The syllabus in year seven has been characterised as the most 'Eurocentric' since the entire course is 'Western Europe'. The same teacher mentioned that pupils 'learn about the origins, growth, development of Europe. They develop a European awareness' and that teaching about Europe in History tends to focus on the EU because it is easy to find information on EU countries through Eurostat.

However, the syllabus varies according to each year, and not all of them focus to such an extent on Europe. There is hardly a European dimension to the year six syllabus for example, which focuses on world history. This point is echoed in another teacher's statement that 'the baccalaureate programme isn't restricted exclusively to Europe [...] Geography and History focus on Europe but they also look at world history, in Economics there is economics of the EU, development economics, third world

²⁴ This is a combination of History and Geography and is taught in years 1-3.

²⁵ This is evident in the syllabus documents and was also mentioned to me by several teachers.

²⁶ This information has been drawn from the recently revised Human Sciences curriculum, which came into effect in September 2004.

issues...international trade [...] and I'm sure it's the same for other subjects too [...]'. This shows that while a European dimension is present in many of the syllabi, it is not incorporated to such an extent as to make it overly Eurocentric.

Teaching Pupils in a Foreign Language

The fact that social sciences are taught in a foreign language is also an important aspect of the European dimension of the curriculum. Pupils of different nationalities and languages work and communicate together and are often asked to present their differing views or give presentations on certain topics relating to their home countries.²⁷ As such, this is the ideal environment in which to learn about people and society in the various EU Member States. A senior member of staff told me that learning History in a foreign language enables pupils to 'learn [...] to look at history itself from a different angle.' This is also because the teacher is also of a different nationality to the pupils' and so their views are also often different to that of the pupils'.

Some teachers informed me that during their lessons they try to draw examples from a wide range of countries (and not just from the country they are from), in an effort to remain neutral. One particular teacher mentioned trying to incorporate the general viewpoints typically held in other European countries to the topics covered in class, since the students in these classes are from different countries. However, some teachers admit that in reality this is difficult to achieve. One reason is that it is extremely time-consuming for teachers to read about topics from the perspectives of other countries. A larger problem is the fact that teachers approach their subjects 'with a load of baggage [...] you can't just [...] forget all your training and all your philosophy and the way you've done things' as one teacher put it. It appears, therefore, that most teachers cannot totally escape from their national points of view when teaching.

Learning Languages

A distinct feature of the European Schools is the emphasis they place on learning languages. Teachers talked enthusiastically about the fact that pupils can learn up to four languages – a feature that distinguishes the schools from other education systems and international schools.²⁸ The minimum requirement is for pupils to learn their mother tongue plus two other European languages.²⁹ The fourth foreign language is optional from the third year.

Languages are considered an important aspect of the European dimension in education. They are the 'tools of communication' as one teacher put it. One senior member of staff commented that 'language...is...a door open to 'the other' [...] When you learn languages [...] you become aware of the common history, sometimes even the common linguistic background of the different nations.' This reveals the importance of learning languages to foster a common European identity.

Are Pupils *Really* Learning About Europe?

²⁷ This information was gathered from interviews and was supported by classroom observation.

²⁸ International schools typically offer bilingual education.

²⁹ It is interesting that the slogan 'mother tongue plus two' has been adopted by the European Commission for its language policy (for further information, see the Commission's recent Action Plan on languages, available on the EU website).

Although the curriculum provides some opportunities for pupils to learn about Europe, some teachers feel that pupils' knowledge about Europe is not actually that good, and possibly no better than students who attend ordinary state schools. One teacher told me that pupils probably 'learn a lot more about Europe in Germany than at the European School here.' Another teacher said: 'I would have thought that by the time they leave they would have a reasonable knowledge of European culture and history, but [...] I'm not convinced that they are more knowledgeable about Europe than had they gone through a state school.'

Although there appears to be no link between being knowledgeable about Europe and having a European identity (Convery et al, 1997) teaching about Europe is a key part of adding a European dimension to the curriculum. Furthermore, one would presume that since this is a 'European School', pupils would learn more about Europe than if they attended a regular state school. It is therefore surprising that teachers believe this is not the case. It is also interesting that teaching about Europe seems to happen in intense patches/periods rather than in a consistent manner in each subject from year to year. While this is bound to happen when teaching modules about certain topics (i.e adopting a thematic approach), the point of the European dimension in education is that the curriculum should try to bring in a European dimension whenever and wherever appropriate, not just during occasional lessons on Europe.

Extra-curricular Activities

The teachers interviewed at Culham generally feel that a lot is done in terms of extra-curricular activities at the school that contribute to developing pupils' sense of European identity. For example, a senior member of staff told me that '[t]here's music, theatre, art [...] sport and all the languages are spoken and you should listen to the pupils switch from one language to the other with great ease and that's the European dimension I suppose. And that's helping them think of themselves as Europeans.'

However, some teachers believe that the nursery and primary schools did more activities with a European dimension than the secondary school. One teacher explained that: 'We could possibly be making more activities in the secondary school, but I suppose the answer is of course that we are just about to go through the baccalaureate exams, final year exams...and there is a limit to what you can do when you've still got to deliver the syllabus, and our main aim of course is to get people through the baccalaureate, that is what we've go to do'. Some teachers offered suggestions regarding how the secondary school could do more activities to help promote European identity, such as setting up film clubs where pupils watch films in different languages.

Model European Parliament and European Youth Parliament

Nevertheless, my findings indicate that many activities that might contribute to pupils' sense of European identity are being pursued at the secondary level. Of particular interest is the 'Model European Parliament' (MEP) or 'Model European Council' (MEC) depending on the year it runs. This involves students taking on the role of an MEP where they research issues in the committee and then meet for 3-day parliamentary plenary

sessions in a European city to debate the issues they prepared. One teacher commented that 'it's a good programme [...] the students enjoy it [...] they almost live the role that they play, they get so passionate.'

There is also a programme called 'European Youth Parliament', which is very similar, but differs in that it is not exclusive to the European Schools or to schools in the UK. It is a debating competition where students discuss proposals, select a proposal to put forward and then argue against other schools.' One teacher commented that it is inevitable that the students who participate in these two programmes come out with more European knowledge and more European background. However, it is worth noting that the majority of students at the school do not participate in these programmes.³⁰ Moreover, those who do take part probably already have a particular interest in European affairs. As such, the amount of pupils who are able to increase their knowledge about Europe and the EU through these programmes is limited.

'National' and 'Cultural' Days

Teachers frequently mentioned the school's celebration of *national* days and cultural days as a way to reinforce students' *European* identities.³¹ During these celebrations, the flags are raised, pupils of all nationalities put on artistic productions, and food from different countries is sampled. One senior member of staff commented that 'there's a really nice sense of togetherness [...] it's a very bonding sort of experience.' Other important European dates are also celebrated. For example, the school celebrated the recent enlargement of the European Union. On May 20th 2004, flags of all the former and new EU countries were raised, the European anthem was sung by teachers and pupils in English, French and German and quizzes were given on the issue of enlargement.³² One senior member of staff informed me that: 'We celebrate dates, for example there was a ceremony to welcome the 10 new Member States, so every occasion we can use to celebrate the European dimension we do.'

School Trips and Exchanges

School trips and exchanges are also viewed as contributing towards the development of pupils' European identities, since the children of the different language sections spend so much time together. Typical trips include a 4-day visit to Hadrian's Wall to study Roman history (for 3rd year pupils), an exchange trip where 4th year pupils stay with a family and an 8-day cultural trip, usually in Prague or Rome, for year 6 pupils.

The Role of Parents

A senior member of staff drew my attention to the important role that families play in school initiatives that have a European dimension. A group of French parents whose children attend the Culham school have formed a club called 'déjeuner français' where they come to the school to have lunch with pupils and help them to speak French. There is also the 'deutsch mitagesen'(German lunch). The senior member of staff told me that '[t]he school is ready to use the parents' help a lot, and sometimes other schools are not

³⁰ One teacher estimated that about 15 students per year participate in these programmes.

³¹ What is interesting is that these celebrations could equally and/or additionally be viewed as reinforcing pupils' *national* identities.

³² Many teachers tried to prepare their students for this day by giving them quizzes in class.

ready for that, because we understand that a lot can come from them you see, they can help a lot in this multicultural aspect.'

Teachers' Perceptions of European Identity

My findings indicate that the teachers I interviewed have different understandings about what 'European identity' means and entails, and some teachers honestly admitted that they do not know what it is. This is a significant problem given that it is an aim of the school to promote it. However, as expressed at the beginning of this paper, there is seldom agreement over the meaning of the concept, since it is still evolving.

The main conflict in opinions lies with whether European identity is an EU-identity or a wider European identity. Half of the teachers I interviewed believe that European identity is associated only or mainly with the EU. For example, one teacher said 'I do feel that I have a European identity, but I think it is an inevitable consequence of what I've been doing and the places I've lived, and I have to say also that it is an EU identity.' The other half believe that it is more about having things in common with people in different European countries, not just the countries that are members of the EU.

The different views of the teachers I interviewed have been summarised below.³³ According to them, having a European identity means:

- Being a member of the EU and understanding the benefits of it *and/or* belonging to geographical Europe;
- Recognising that Europeans have a lot in common in terms of history, geography, culture, religion and values such as tolerance and co-operation;
- Recognising that Europeans also have a lot of differences and should therefore develop a sense of friendship and respect for 'others';
- Recognising that Europeans have an important political role to play in the future of the world;
- Recognising that 'feeling European' does not mean that you have to lose your sense of national identity;
- Working together towards common goals such as peace, mutual understanding through exchange etc.

To be or not to be European?

It is interesting that only four of the teachers I interviewed expressly stated that they feel European. One of these teachers told me that they had both a strong national and a strong European identity and made the following analogy:

[...] if you have one child you love it over everything that you have ever had and ever loved before. If you have another child, then you discover that you are not dividing up that love, it's grown, to cover those two [...] and in the same way as you can feel a strong identity with your country

³³ This list does not mean that each teacher agrees with all the points. It is simply a list of their different ideas.

and you love your own country [...] you can also feel a strong identity with a larger area.

This teacher also distinguished between her sense of national and European identities, by describing their national identity as having a deep love for things, whereas their European identity was more cerebral in that they love the idea of being part of a European entity with all its diversity. Two other teachers who told me that they had a sense of European identity specified that it had grown and developed, (implying that it was not really there before) because of such factors as travelling and living and working with other Europeans in different European countries.

Two teachers said that they felt they did not have a sense of European identity. One of these teachers explained, however, that they are in sympathy with the idea of Europe and European integration, in favour of the EU and like learning about other cultures and travelling to other EU countries. The same teacher said to me 'I find this quite hard this European identity thing, what one means by it [...] I think it's hard to know what one really means by that.' The other teacher who stated that they did not have a European identity, was similarly unsure about what the concept means: '[h]onestly, I do not feel that I'm really European because I don't know what it means [...] so far for me the EU is not linked to people. It's a financial world, a political world [...] an economic world, it's not a people world.' Although these teachers do not have a European identity, their responses during the interviews suggest that they are pro-European. For example, they believe in learning and teaching about different cultures, attitudes and perspectives within Europe.

Conclusion

Producing European identity is especially challenging given that there is no agreed definition of the concept - a difficulty that teachers at the European School at Culham are also faced with daily, affecting to some extent both their personal and professional lives. It must certainly be difficult for them to attempt to develop in their pupils a sense of European identity when they are unclear of what it actually is. Nevertheless, the research findings indicate that the teachers are pro-European and are keen to draw on examples from different countries in their teaching in order to reveal a range of European perspectives to their pupils.

Interestingly, the research findings indicate that pupils' sense of European identity is enhanced more through the general nature of the school than through teachers striving to actively incorporate a European dimension in their teaching. Teachers feel that above all else, the opportunities that the children have to mix and integrate with pupils of all different European cultures and nationalities, contribute most to fostering in them a common European identity.

Although pupils belong to a language section and spend most of their time in that section learning in their mother tongues, there is ample opportunity for them to interact with pupils from the other language sections. Pupils meet in the playgrounds, the common rooms and through the extra-curricular activities in which they participate. In fact, a range of extra-curricular activities are thought by teachers to enhance their pupils' feeling of being European, such as the 'Model European Parliament', national and cultural days celebrated at the school and school trips and exchanges.

Furthermore, a particularly unique characteristic of the European Schools in general is the 'mixed classes', where students from all the language sections come together in one class either to study a social science subject in their first foreign language, or to follow courses in art, music and sports with pupils speaking a range of languages. Hart (1992) arrived at the conclusion that 'the European dimension...lies in the daily fact of working, playing and living together, as much as in a deliberately European curriculum' (cited in Swan, 1996: 65). Through subjects such as History, Geography and Foreign Languages, pupils can learn about their common European history and culture, understand the geography of Europe and the EU, learn about the evolution of the EU's institutions and communicate with each other in several European languages.

The fact that pupils at the school follow a common curriculum is also considered a contributory factor in developing in them a sense of European identity. It appears that following the same courses and striving for the same goals helps to create a feeling of togetherness, thereby fostering a community spirit amongst these pupils from mostly European backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study suggests that European identity is created in pupils at the European School at Culham in the following ways:

- 1) Interactions of pupils from diverse European backgrounds both in and out of class
- 2) Learning of several European languages
- 3) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in social science subjects
- 4) Participation in Europe related extra-curricular activities including school trips and exchanges
- 5) Pro-European attitudes of the teachers and of pupils' parents who get involved at the school

The study also suggests that European identity creation starts with pupils' willingness to share and learn about different European cultures and values rather than with politics and policy-making at the school, governmental or supranational level. If pupils were intolerant and uncompromising with one another, efforts to 'make them European' would probably fail. The European School at Culham is not Eurocentric and does not intend to use propaganda as a way of enforcing its pupils to develop a European identity. Rather, it takes a 'thin' approach to promoting European identity in that it is the very nature of its educational system that encourages pupils to develop a sense of European identity.

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