Editorial

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> *'From morning to night, narrations constantly haunt streets and buildings. They articulate our existences by teaching us what they must be.' (Michel de Certau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 1984, 186)*

There are two concerns that lie at the heart of this issue: 'What is Europe?' and 'What is Europeaness?' These are also the questions the bourgeoning literature on Europe and Europeanization has been trying to tackle with an enthusiasm that has increased particularly in the past decade. When addressing these not-so-novel questions, one more time as the editors of this issue, we were well aware of the futility of seeking any absolute answers that can be applied to all contexts -even though, without doubt, it would have been a wonderful relief to have them. Instead, our call for different narrations sought to explore how the meaning of Europe is, and has always been, shaped by different contextual concerns. Rather than searching for a definition of Europeanness, we wanted to pursue how its different definitions were being mobilised by different narrators, according to their varying needs, and what power relationships these different narrations could reveal to us.

This multiplicity of definitions is partly due to the different, but often crosscutting dimensions of Europe, namely territorial, political and cultural. As Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeiner have argued, 'Europe has increasingly come to be defined in terms of the EU; the Europeanization or the 'Europeanness' of individual countries has come to be measured by the intensity of institutional relations with the Community and by the adaptation of its organisational norms and rules.' (2002, 501) Undoubtedly, the eastward enlargement process of the EU, which resulted in the inclusion of ten more countries to the Community by mid- 2004, had a major role in triggering the

academic interest in analysing the underpinnings of the European integration and the enlargement both at the Community and national level. Given the importance of the ongoing debates on enlargement, as well as the Constitution of Europe, the territorial dimension of Europe, which overlaps with the political dimension of the EU, forms one of the most recurring understandings of Europe in the literature. However, the territorial meaning of Europe is constantly being challenged and redefined given the very dynamic character of the institutionalisation process, the most evident case being the enlargement agenda. In fact, the tension that conceptualising Europe as a territory holds is one of the main concerns highlighted in the articles presented in this issue of the WPCC.

At the same time, this issue also attempts to explore the cultural meaning of Europe alongside its territorial and political dimensions. In this regard, what intrigued us most were the different narrations that formed, justified, strengthened and also contested the cultural criteria for Europeanness. At a first glance, the cacophony of voices seriously seems to question the existence of Europe on cultural grounds, and opens the floor to the widely contested debate: can we talk about a European culture and identity? On this, Krishan Kumar argues, 'Whether or not there is, strictly speaking, a European identity, there is no doubt there is something called European culture' (2003, 36), but quickly adds that this is 'more porous and permeable than often thought. It is fissured through and through' (Ibid, 43). Etienne Balibar also points out the diverse multicultural heritage of Europe by emphasising that: 'it has always been home to tensions between numerous religious, cultural, linguistic, and political affiliations, various readings of history, numerous modes of relations with the rest of the world, whether it is Americanism or Orientalism, the possessive individualism of "Nordic" legal systems or the "tribalism" of Mediterranean familial traditions' (2004, 5). For Balibar, since the problem of difference is not exterior to but has always been a part of Europeanness, Europe has to confront its own contradictions before it can even start talking about a possible European identity. For sceptics like Zygmunt Bauman (2004, 6), no matter how much we negotiate the meeting ground for an inclusive European identity, any line circumscribing Europe will remain a challenge for the rest of the planet and a standing invitation to transgression. Whether authors believe in the possibility of a European project or not, critical academic scholarship today acknowledges the multicultural heritage of Europe, and tries to see how this might open up ground for negotiating a more democratic definition of Europeanness. The reflection of this concern is also evident in the articles that you will find in this issue.

As the editors, we are hoping that this issue will be an exciting contribution to the existing literature on Europe on a number of grounds, and not the least because the articles question the ways in which the territorial, political and cultural understandings of Europe intersect and even overlap in specific national contexts

and historical moments. At the same time, this questioning comes from a rich variety of disciplines in social research, which we find to be one of the strengths of the issue. Each article pushes new sets of concerns forward, and applies these to a range of data, from history to conversation analysis, or urban spaces to media pages, be it the Internet or newspapers. Despite the differences in analysis, all of our contributors agree on the persistence of the nation-state and the salience of the nationalist discourses in their articles, particularly in problematising the increasing number of immigrants scattered across the EU member states. It is also striking that all of our contributors, in their analysis, converge around a common platform, in that they all tackle the question of Europe from right *within* the boundaries of the EU. Therefore throughout the articles, we can witness the formation of the fault-lines, decisions about what remains at the peripheries and what should stay inside, as they are being decided. While this has not been our intention when we were opening up the issue to contributors, we found this convergence particularly helpful in exposing not only the diversity of narrations among the Europeans themselves, but also the various strategies for dealing with differences that exist both within and outside the political boundaries of Europe.

In this regard, our opening article, by Andrew Hammond, discusses the discourse of 'Balkanism' as one of the main mechanisms for othering in definitions of Europe. Locating his discussion within the historical context, Hammond convincingly explains how the Balkans were continuously narrated in the nineteenth century, particularly in Britain but also in France, Germany and Austria, as a borderland where Western intervention and control is necessary. Hammond's focus is on the 'structures of power' that were secured through this discourse, legitimising Western superiority against the region. In the aftermath of the Cold War, he finds the discourse re-emerging, this time to inform the accession policies of the EU against the post communist states of Central and East Europe.

The second article, written by a team of seven contributors, offers an interesting twist on the framework set by Hammond's article by examining Greek national identity with respect to Albanian immigrants and Europe through a detailed discourse analysis of interviews conducted in Greece. The research reveals a strong discourse of nationalism that heavily uses stereotyping as a mechanism of exclusion, legitimising the superiority of Greek national identity. The analysis highlights how assimilation is proposed to overcome the perceived disruption to cultural homogeneity by the influx of Albanian workers, who are also seen as a monolithic entity. The analysed data also successfully reveals the ambivalent location of national identity in Greece, located neither in, nor outside Europe. As with the case of the Albanians, this emerges as a result of the reading and stereotyping of Europe as having a clear-cut, homogenous identity.

In the following article, with her analysis of European ghettos, Maria Stehle again deals with the politics of othering and exclusion against the immigrants. Focusing her analysis on the German media, Stehle finds the ongoing discourse of European ghettos as an important part of the narrations of Europe today, a discourse that attempts to contain and exclude the cultural others by collapsing the cultural and territorial boundaries of Europeanness in the European metropolis. This, she finds a major contradiction – we prefer to call it a sharp irony – on the one hand, European project calls for integration, on the other hand it replicates discourses of exclusion. In a similar vein, Sana Inthorn's article also focuses on cultural boundaries of Europe, but her concern is on how these cultural boundaries consistently inform the political ones. Through an analysis of British and German newspapers, the presented data explains why different criteria apply to different candidate states in the accession process, examining particularly the case of Turkey which she finds forming a contrast to that of the Central and East European states.

Our last article, by Ruxandra Trandafoiu differs from the rest in its attempt to answer the critical and sceptic challenges to European identity and culture. She indeed argues that both exist and rest on a strong cultural heritage. While Trandafoiu's approach might convey, for some, a controversial reification of the cultural meaning of Europe, she attempts to locate that very meaning within Europe's multicultural heritage. For the writer, European culture is inherently multicultural and home to already accepted diversities within, which makes Europe quite an open, fluid concept. This openness, she argues, is one of the main reasons why it cannot be easily coined, which in return allows the opportunity for Eurosceptics to continuously challenge the prospect of ever realising European integration. Furthermore, she also argues for the strength of the Europeanization process, taking place through more subtle means at grassroots level, and mainly through the diasporas identifying with a transnational Europeanness alongside their national identities. Even though Trandafoiu certainly offers a more optimistic, if at times problematic, vision of Europe than many others, we find her analysis refreshing in diverting the focus from the tension between the nation-state and transnationality of the European project. She instead points to the compatibility of identification at transnational and national levels for the increasing number of diasporas across Europe.

Clearly, 'Where to go from here?' is maybe the most important question waiting to be explored at the end of this issue. We strongly believe that questions on Europe can no longer be addressed within the singularity of 'this' or 'that' academic discipline. Yet the problem on how to engage different disciplines of social sciences in a critical debate, and develop a common research agenda on Europe remains a challenge. Our aim was to initiate this conversation in our own terms within this limited space. We hope to see similar debates surfacing in many other venues.

References

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