IMAGES AND IMAGERIES OF EUROPE

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Living cultural diversity, making it ours, is not an easy task. It requires rethinking the subtle and complex relationship between identity and difference. The new mobilities and global movements have brought with them new types of diversity and complexity, including new kinds of juxtaposition, encounter, exchange and cultural mixing. These transcultural developments present important new challenges to national and also supranational mechanisms. Europe needs to rethink the meaning and value of identity and diversity in order to deal with the increase in interdependence with real and imaginary borders which are constantly erased and intermingled, between inside and outside, us and them. How can we break the logic of inclusion/exclusion in the light of the ideals and principles that Europe represents?

At the first "Soul for Europe" meeting in Berlin (2004), where several politicians, academics and artists together thought up a soul for this somewhat abstract idea of Europe, the journalist and political analyst Timothy Garton Ash said: "Instead of a soul, the EU needs a heart and a voice; a heart to feel that we are together and a voice with which to tell it to the outside world". Five years later, on the eve of the European Parliamentary elections (2009), Garton Ash wrote: "The true symbol of Europe 2009 is not represented by yellow stars on a blue background, but a grey ostrich sticking its head in the sand" (2009). In November 2014, in an article in the *Social Europe* journal, Garton Ash (2014) commented on the failure of efforts to reintegrate the enthusiasm of citizens for Europe and to create a truly European public sphere. Seeking a common language of shared feelings, he was asked if "rather than fostering a European identity, the EU should focus simply on narrow practical goals – doing less, doing it better". For Garton Ash, a degree of European identity exists through shared history, shared memory and shared values, but we don't perceive it like that. At the moment "the real key for enthusing people about the UE again is what it does. If you could say "well Europe made the difference, for instance because it did something for the refugees of Syria and Iraq, or in relation to climate change", issues that people care passionately about could fire the people up once again.

To think of Europe as something to belong to we need a more global framework of reference which should take into account change, mobility and innovation.

When organising this monograph I had in mind some comments made by Michael Wintle in his book, *The Image of Europe. Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography throughout the Ages,* which attempted to locate the lack of a shared European feeling throughout history (Wintle, 2009). Contemporary European iconography often fails to reflect the many ways and levels on which European societies, cultures and citizens have been and are continually changing.

Here are four ideas to describe this absence, step-by-step, taking into account the previous comments made by communication students from all over Europe: identity or identification; national belonging or supranational belonging; Europe's 'other'; change and evolution.

Identity or identification?

"Europe is a cultural construct… in flux, and there never has been full agreement about what precisely it consists of" (Wintle, 2009).

Maybe it is just as well that Europe has not succeeded in instituting a fixed, immobile identity like classical national identities, as it means we can aspire to something else that allows us to incorporate multiple identities and new identifications without competing with our coexisting local, regional and national identities. "Perhaps what we need is not a single identity that connects all the identities, but an account of Europeanisation that makes the connecting of initiatives and failures understandable. (…) Perhaps Europe's crisis lies precisely in this deficiency; that is, in the inability to understand contradictory events as being part of the Europeans' common enterprise" (Beck, 2006). How can we work in order to understand Europe as something to belong to and not as some bureaucratic fog in Brussels? And how do we make it publicly known? Does a European identity exist? Do we need a European identity? Or would it be better to speak of identification as a process with multiple effects that goes beyond the description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference as a dynamic of several forces interacting where we situate and elaborate 'our' identity as well as 'their' difference? It is in this process that strategies rise, solidarities die, mentalities change. Why? Because the people and not the cultures are the ones who interact; people with their memories, their fears and their hopes. "They are always too many", says Zygmunt Bauman. "They are the kinds that there should be less of, or better yet, absolutely none of. And we will never be enough. We are the people that there should be an abundance of" (Bauman, 2005). A debate in the political sphere and at societal level exists that is limited to thinking about or justifying what is included and what is excluded in order to strengthen this 'us', which, according to some, has become vulnerable in the face of an invading 'other'. Can the idea of a European sense of belonging overcome this essentialist thinking? How can Europe signify something else, beyond dual limitations?

Many new situations escape from the rigid and less flexible nature of the existing structures. To think of Europe as something to belong to we need a more global framework of reference which should take into account change, mobility and innovation. For some, the concept of culture "is a concept that is out-dated for analysis and should be replaced by notions of transience and mobility" (Bauman, 2005). Some sociologists talk

about how "transformations and especially the different mobilities are reconstructing the 'social as society' into the 'social as mobility'" (Urry, 2000). Other proposals are looking for new landscapes for identity and memory or ask for increased sensibility towards the effects of interdependency. We need to re-think the processes and effects of our cultural diversity and imagine a future that is able to organise desires so that everyone, in a creative way, can be capable of negotiating her place in this world.

Despite the attempts at integration and social cohesion through the management of cultural diversity, in practice, the result is often more segregation, differentiation and essentialisation. As we said at the beginning of this article, it is not easy to live cultural diversity, and despite the fact that our society is plural and our experience is diverse, we always seek 'outsiders' to be the culprits of what is going wrong 'inside'. In order to survive, our culture, like any culture, needs to question and interpret its own elements, as well as those that are foreign, in a common and continuous project. Identifying ourselves against something or someone else reinforces our identity but it is time that we stopped thinking about diversity only as a worrying 'other' or an intruder destabilising our security. In the face of globalisation, we see tense nationalisms reborn and in the face of cultural crossings, "the old demons of the tribe arise, the halting identities increasingly fold over themselves" (Shayegan, 2008). We lack the words to describe what is happening, to give the cultural the chance to go beyond the descriptive, entering that dimension where questions are asked and where problems demand solutions. The basic functions of culture in this process of identification are as a reference point of meaning for cohesion. Without this ability to construct the collective imaginary, the social community can neither exist, nor ensure legitimacy for a political project. Where is this European cultural project that might be capable of thinking of society in its diversity, of involving everyone and in which everyone might feel involved? We are referring to cultural action in its double dimension: in terms of cultural policy, appealing to the responsibility of public administrations, and the cultural practices of individual or collective spontaneous initiatives that contribute to social and public space. We also invoke culture in its capacity to build a common sense, in its capacity to set the grounds for a form of social cohesion and coexistence that would produce sense, meaning and relationships. Cultural politics is still the locus for a common language to be elaborated. Cultural discourses produce legitimation and recognition for the forging and reinforcement of interpersonal relationships. "The question of the capacity of culture to respond to the purposes and functions that are attributed to it and that justify its administration also require an interrogation into the nature of the society in which it takes place" (Caune, 2006). Culture, in this dimension of creation, makes it possible to share emotions and experiences.

The space of shared emotions, expressions and experiences is the public space, a space inhabited by socialised individuals and shaped by cultural practices. Transformations in cultural practices have contributed to increasingly diversifying and fragmenting our society. How can we speak in Europe of a shared culture that would provide a feeling of belonging, within a reality that is becoming increasingly plural and fragmented? In the case of Europe, the great cultural work of constructing a sense of belonging has not been taken into account. Nevertheless, such cultural work was, in other times, the basis for the construction of a national identity. And here we move on to the second idea.

National belonging or supranational belonging?

With a flag and an anthem, the construction of a European identity followed in the footsteps of national identity. In the past, in order to build national feelings of shared belonging, thinkers, writers and artists were mobilised to construct a history, a story and a common culture out of a reality that did not exist. The strength required did not emerge by itself: it had to be created; it needed culture. And culture was giving form to a collective identity and thereby achieving the will to live together. It was a way of unifying diversity, blind to the profound cultural differences that exist within national societies. But national identity isn't a natural outgrowth: it has been naturalised through the rhetoric of war and sacrifice, winners and losers, perpetrators and victims and through dichotomous categories to produce 'nationals' and 'foreigners'.

Furthermore, this process of identity construction has been (and is still) a reactive-defensive process with the logic of an external aggressor. Most national anthems call the people together against an enemy (imagined or real). It is easier to identify ourselves against something or somebody than in affinity with them. At the same time, identifying ourselves against something or someone reinforces our own identity. For instance, I remember that at the first "Soul for Europe" meeting, one of the conclusions was that the only shared feeling between different Europeans was the feeling of anti-Americanism.

As an example of this identification of a foreign threat, I propose the French FN party's advertisement for the European electoral campaign in 2009. The message is direct: "Europe hurts". *Marianne*, the symbol of 'free' France (nostalgia for the past) being hit in the eye by a 'European' enemy as if it were a case of domestic violence (insecure present). All symbols are cultural, they connect with our feelings and describe the present using an imaginary that refers back to a time when this unknown factor did not exist, which, because it is unknown, threatens us. Easily-interpretable situations, based on a certain familiarity, make communication possible and generate trust (or distrust) as a commitment to the future. This year we saw a change of imagery: if *Marianne* was suffering passively, Joan of Arc represents the soldier fighting for France, blowing away the yellow stars. Is there any discourse in favour of the European construction that possesses a similar communicative power by connecting directly with our feelings?

We need to rethink the cultural and its links with experiences and practices. Does the practice reflect the culture? Or rather, is culture the result of practical actions? And these practices: do they sustain a particular way of being in the world which might in turn necessitate the creation of new borders, precisely to maintain and strengthen the old ones? To speak of identification as a process with multiple effects goes beyond any description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference.

> "Hybrids, that's us. Our vehicle is the notion of translation or network. More flexible than the notion of system, more historical than that of structure, more empirical than that of complexity, the network is the Ariadne's thread of combined histories" (Latour, 2007).

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Néstor García Canclini understands hybridisation as a possibility for departing from the essentialist discourse of cultural authenticity or purity. It allows us to speak of a process of relationship or interaction, where strategies of reconversion can be articulated. "If we speak of hybridisation as a process that one can accede to, abandon or be excluded from, it is possible to understand the different positions of subjects in regard to intercultural relations" (García Canclini, 1989). For Nikos Papastergiadis, hybridness means: "Challenging national myths of place and belonging, a rejection of the binary opposition between pure and mixed and the incorporation of the political right to mobility and the maintaining of cultural ties" (Papastergiadis, 2000).

There is no doubt that the reappearance of the term 'transcultural' has taken place as a result of the new transnational connections, the juxtapositions beyond national structures and the complex connectivity between different local realities. Interconnection is the key word, and it needs to include new spaces. Can we speak of a new social imaginary that questions who participates in what, where, how and why?

In 1996, Appadurai observed how "territories surrounded by customs offices and borders could give way to circuits and networks. What future prospects can we expect from the concept of transnation? As populations become more de-territorialised and incompletely nationalised, as nations are shattered, fractured and recombined, and as states encounter increasingly inescapable and insurmountable difficulties in constructing their people, transnations have to be the main social spaces where the different crises of feelings of belonging are expressed" (Appadurai, 1996).

The approach to interaction based on complexity and transculturality, apart from avoiding essentialist binary oppositions, has also displaced the simplistic minority/majority opposition and has even forced the issue of minorities out of its national framework. It also broadens the mental and imaginary horizon of ethnic categorisations by including differences of other kinds such as gender, age and sexual orientation. We could say that it has served to "de-ethnicise difference" (Robins, 2006), and to see difference not solely as a problematic phenomenon, but as a positive option for any cultural category. The multiplication and acceleration of transnational migrations, people, goods, information, images, ideas and discourses make it vitally important that cultural policies should not only be included in a supranational frame of reference but also treated as transcultural currents with multiple effects and a marked transnational dimension.

We can see that transnational institutions' responsibility for intervention is increasing as cultural diversity issues overwhelm and exceed the capacity of governments and national institutions. For Giddens, the present is a time of opportunity for Europe, and he considers the European Union to be "a pioneering system of transnational government" which could, in principle, serve as inspiration for other areas of the world (Giddens, 2007). The future of Europe will depend to a great extent on its ability to build pluralist societies in which diversity is not the problem, but the solution.

Europe's other

"European identity: another ideological device designed as much for exclusion of Europe's 'other'…Otherness, led often to the notions of European superiority and Eurocentrism" (Wintle, 2009).

We create new borders, imaginary ones, not as an accumulation or a synthesis of different components, but as a space of tension between agreements and disagreements over what is included and what is excluded.

We have filled a cultural emptiness or even a cultural perversion with significance, based on simple theories, accomplices when it comes to naming people, groups and identities: us and them ('we are not what they are'). And the device is: identity illusions shared with those inside, conflictive categories of differentiation for those outside. We categorise that which is different in order to place it where it suits us best, producing agreement and disagreement over what is included and what is excluded. We talk a lot 'about' them, but not very often 'with' them. We keep speaking on in the name of the 'others', inventing terms such as cultural diversity, the European year of intercultural dialogue, programmes of supposed proximity, tolerance and multiculturalism. "All words that make us feel good, but in today's world, many of these words have lost their innocence due to their use when proposing policies. They have become slogans, labels with no meaning, without any particular context: flirtations with a recycled otherness to maintain the status quo" (Onghena, 2014). The 'others' are no longer these silent beings on the outer peripheries, as they now form part of our society. Sometimes Europe sends them back home as soon as they arrive as they may become our enemies if they cannot become citizens. And rather than come to terms with the difference we emphasise it, measure it out and use it, given that we need to categorise the unknown in order to be sure that what is strange and foreign does not worry or threaten us.

That is where we create new borders, imaginary ones, not as an accumulation or a synthesis of different components, but as a space of tension between agreements and disagreements over what is included and what is excluded. To situate this border we categorise with the complicity of stereotypes and prejudices. We all use stereotypes and we are all the objects of them. They play an important role in our lives, and perhaps we could not live without them because we are not "gifted with enough discerning ability to judge everything that is new, everything that he or she would be asked to pass judgement on throughout his or her existence" (Arendt, 2014). Prejudices and stereotypes form part of the large family of social representations. They feed each other in a continuous dynamic, like essential pieces for elaborating our common sense. Both present themselves as group productions that reflect, at a given moment, the (pre-elaborated) point of view of one group in relation to another. They produce a kind of image that is valid in all cases and we end up thinking that this is something natural, but they are one group's representations of another, imposed with an attributive or predicative value. They help us to interpret the world, situate new elements and understand complexities, but they are reductionist thoughts: it takes less effort to think, reason and (what is more) make value judgements based on them. The lack of critical thought and the lack of knowledge favours an unconscious acceptance of the 'truths' employed in stereotypes. It is when we do not know or when we have scant information about another group that we accept a stereotype as a real image. Its meaning is obvious, because there is something of truth in it, something

that we know, and we apply this partial truth (of an isolated case) to the whole group. In sum, they are so powerful because they are simple, easily recognisable and enjoy the acceptance of the community in general and help us to categorise, to include and exclude.

And we can see how in reality cultural differences substitute social differences. Codes and cultural baggage change. This baggage, which allows us to make sense of a chaotic world has problems being accommodated within a framework that doesn't foresee its accommodation. Inherent in identification is confrontation, which has to do with the dimension of antagonism ever present in social relations, a twin complicity in one human destiny with the ever-present possibility that the 'us/them' relationship is constructed in terms of friend/enemy. This dimension cannot be made to disappear by simply denying it.

> "Such a negation only leads to impotence, impotence which characterizes liberal thought when confronted with the emergence of antagonisms which, according to its theory, should belong to a bygone age when reason had not yet managed to control the supposedly archaic passions" (Mouffe, 2010).

But it worries us, it frightens us and this fear can be calmed by blaming culprits who are close by. A new temporal initiative: "We make the event not a final point that needs to be explained but the point of departure that explains everything" (Augé, 2008). Furthermore, in actuality, in a digital world, where here and there, past and present are all interrelated, to identify yourself ethnicity, culture and origin do not need to be denied or forgotten. "Living cultures do not, in any case, evolve from purity and contamination. Change is more a gradual transformation from one mixture to a new mixture, a process that usually takes place at some distance from rules and rulers, in the conversations on the boundaries" (Appiah, 2006).

Where is the boundary between citizen and foreigner? No one is born a 'foreigner', but you become it. That is to say that society, all of us, makes sure of that. Many foreigners are continually circulating throughout Europe: businessmen, tourists, academics and students, many kinds of professionals – they all count. But there is one foreigner who counts in a special way – the immigrant. Because we can make him responsible for what, without her, would be our responsibility. We don't have to question our responsibility, we don't have to get involved or take a position. Our passivity is the accomplice of a fiction of neutrality – our indifference is an alibi for keeping it up. We are no longer responsible to someone or for someone, but only to and for ourselves. In the face of this massive logic of individual responsibility, the feeling of victimisation is one of the ways to resist. The confusion and lack of responsibility is included, in a populist way, in a new discourse against mobility, migration and European enlargement: against the foreigner. Does Europe possess an inclusive answer for what it calls the new Europeans? Is Europe the space in which they can creatively organise their place in this world?

> "The issue of integration is the great challenge of our times, and the place where the battle will be won or lost. Either the West succeeds in integrating them by drawing them closer to the values that it upholds and thus turns them into decisive intermediaries with the rest of the world, or they will make its problem worse" (Maalouf, 2009).

Change and evolution: for a future that includes all Europeans

We have to work in a public sphere that brings together many conversations and connects the speakers, to provide the conditions for plural identities to converse, construct and try out views of the future of Europe.

The processes and effects of cultural diversity need a new framework that is sensitive to the effects of interdependence so that they can organise the desire. This new grammar must combine the theoretical with the practical in any commitment to a political project. We need a knowledge that is concerned with action, that can formulate a response to the global challenge of multidimensional realities, and that can streamline fragmented, compartmentalised and immutable knowledge. How can we renew theoretical and conceptual discourses, bearing in mind the new mobilities and global movements that have brought with them new kinds of diversity and complexity based on multiple connections? Can we include new kinds of exchanges and cultural mixtures in the existing structures?

We also have to work in a public sphere that brings together many conversations and connects the speakers, to provide the conditions for plural identities to converse, construct and try out views of the future of Europe. A space, as Craig Calhoun says, in which, "by transcending the particular, every person has the right to express, participate, speak and converse with the community, and be taken into consideration" (Calhoun, 2004). This means a space of socialised individuals, shaped by cultural practices, in which culture – extensive, controversial and ambiguous – considers the multiple forms of communication, interaction and mediation as different forces that interact. Rather than an accumulation or synthesis of different static components, it is a space where we situate or organise the difference.

We need new narratives of re-interpretation. The idea of Europe has to be broadened with contemporary opinions, views and criticism to find a more global framework of reference that includes the divergence of interests, changes and meanings expressed not only in the moment or the event, but in the movement, which means including changes and transformations. New narratives could be meanings from outside Europe as multiple connections and crossovers between subjects: do we know their view of our history? It might be interesting to share the different approaches to Europe, not with the aim of achieving uniformity, but simply to discover other meanings in which we would doubtless find similarities, as well as some interesting differences. Not only from outside of Europe also inside Europe, those meanings of generations with a shared present but not a shared past: Europeans by birth but with a dual sense of belonging – one subjected to discrimination, while the other is never considered part of a collective choice or a collective action. The future of Europe will depend to a great extent on its ability to build pluralist societies, not in spite of differences, but through them; not juxtaposing, but sketching a common future using a language of shared feelings.

We would like to hear one voice defending 'European' values outside Europe. For instance: European countries are visiting China one by one to negotiate 'national' economic interests without questioning beliefs in those shared values which Europe has attempted to defend for several centuries? And at the same time export an idea of a Europe that is capable of building pluralist societies within a system of transnational government.

"But we in Europe, who are we? Who would dare to grant the same importance to a work of culture (of art, or philosophy) as (for example) to the disappearance of communism in Europe? Does no work of similar importance exist anymore? Or have we just lost the ability to recognise it? The Europe in which we live no longer seeks its identity in the mirror of its philosophy or its arts. And where is the mirror? Where should we go to seek our face?" (Kundera, 2005).

Why haven't we managed to create, transmit and promote a feeling of common experience that represents the 'union' between Europeans as citizens involved and trusting 'their' project: "An active trust, one that has to be earned, which involves bi-directional negotiation instead of dependence, and which must be coherent and deliberately renewed" (Giddens, 2007). A new narrative that puts aside nostalgic discourses and seeks to connect with new generations, new Europeans. The originality of the European project lies, above all, in considering a 'world-ised' Europe which could serve as a model for an interdependent world. We have to unravel, once again, the question of what the European Union is for, bearing in mind the new mobilities and global movements that have brought with them new kinds of diversity and complexity based on multiple connections.

How can we, all together, work on a new knowledge which is concerned with the experiences of everyone? Maybe a shared knowledge would be able to formulate a response to the global challenge of multidimensional realities by listening to new voices which are sensitive to the effects of interdependence.

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