

Paul BLOKKER

## Democracy in the New Member States: Between Equality and Diversity

*Summary: The new member states are allegedly converging to some common European standards. They are, however, equally subject to differentiation, in particular in terms of political and cultural diversity. The paper first focuses on multiple forms of cultural diversity that have gained significance in the post-communist era. Subsequently, a number of normative approaches to democracy in the European setting are reviewed in order to assess to what extent these recognize and engage with diversity. In the concluding section, it is argued that such approaches are unsatisfactory and that instead a more pluralized approach seems possible.*

The 'return to Europe' of the new member states of the European Union (EU) has been many a time likened to a reunification of the 'European family'. The deep changes that these former communist societies are going through will result in their increasing convergence with other European societies. At least, that is the intention. This process of convergence is complicated by the fact that European integration equally brings to the fore all sorts of differences, in particular regarding cultural identities and diverse traditions. Cultural diversity is clearly important for the European project as such, as is acknowledged by the European motto 'Europe united in diversity', but the real implications of such an acknowledgement are much less considered. Neither the European politicians nor the ever-growing community of scholars studying European integration seem to take the complex nature of cultural diversity in Europe in general, and the new members states in particular,

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*Paul Blokker acknowledges an EU Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship. He is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Sociology/School of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton.*

seriously enough. And accommodating the mosaic of cultural diversity in Europe is rendered even more complex because of the increasing attention for a cultural identity of Europe itself. On the one hand, a European identity implies a rather homogeneous 'Fortress Europe' or a 'Europe of the Nations' that shares a common European outlook. On the other hand, however, the limits of such a conception of Europe are shown by the cultural complexity that the new member states bring with them. The post-1989 trajectories of the Central and Eastern European countries have almost without exception been greeted by a widespread consensus by –political elites on the 'return to Europe'. Even if not all elites see Europe in the same way, in general the new member states are driven by both the desire to obtain the economic and

security benefits of membership, as well as by an aspiration to strengthen their cultural and geopolitical identities (in particular against Russia). Thus, arguments of identity were as important for aspirations to membership as economic and political ones.

The scholarly and media debate on identity in Central and Eastern Europe has primarily focused on the unforeseen 'return of the repressed' or what is generally referred to as the 'new nationalisms' that became visible after 1989. This emphasis on nationalism was not in the last place reinforced by the events in former Yugoslavia. The revival of nationalism after 1989 has in academic circles often

been defined as 'civic' (read Western) versus 'ethnic' (read Eastern) forms of nationalism. This distinction is meant to imply that the Western European trajectory to modern democracy and the modern nation-state involved the gradual extension of civil, political, and social rights while national identities were only playing a role in the background. Instead, the distinctive feature of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe is its historically explicit and exclusivist role in the political strategies of local elites.

The most significant implication for the discussion of diversity here is that it is supposed that in Eastern European nationalisms the ethno-cultural component of collective identities (in the form of a common language and shared historical and cultural traditions) has historically been dominant. What is more, such ethno-cultural nationalisms are seen as a dominant model

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of nationalism in the post-1989 context as well. Such forms of nationalism explain explosive inter-ethnic conflict in the region, in particular in former Yugoslavia but also elsewhere. Moreover, these 'unresolved' national identity issues are an impediment to democratization in these societies. Indeed, as some argue, while Western European countries are steadily moving towards a 'post-national' form of society<sup>1</sup>, the former communist countries are in a way still struggling with the difficulties of creating a nation-state and the formation of national identities. This is for instance attested by a strong emphasis on national sovereignty in the establishment of democracies and national constitutions, on the one hand, and the emergence of radical nationalist and populist movements, on the other.<sup>2</sup> In the wider European context, then, the solution seems to lie in the adoption of a civic or 'thin' form of nationalism, similar to the West-European type, by the former communist countries.<sup>3</sup>

European integration should lead to the change of nationalism in the Central and Eastern European countries from an ethno-culturally defined national identity to a Europeanized national identity, and ultimately, to a 'post-national' or European form of collective identification. This evolutionary idea has, however, two important problems. First of all, even if the idea of a 'return to Europe' seems to mean that the various societies are pursuing one ideal of Europe, no such shared understanding of Europe can be presupposed.<sup>4</sup> In reality, a single, one-size-fits-all definition of Europe is problematic in the light of a wide range of identifications and visions of Europe, sometimes related to past civilizations (such as embodied in the Byzantine, Habsburg, Ottoman, or Russian Empires). Second, a variety of forms of group or collective identities have (re-)emerged in post-communist Europe<sup>5</sup>, pointing to the fact that the Europeanization of post-communist societies might not be only about giving 'normal' nationalism in the region a more civil face, but also about various

<sup>1</sup> J. Habermas *Die postnationale Konstellation. Politische Essays*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> P. Blokker, "Populist Nationalism, Anti-Europeanism, Post-Nationalism, and the East-West Distinction", P. Blokker, C. Joerges (eds) *Confronting Memories: European "Bitter Experiences" and the Constitutionalisation Process*, Special Issue *German Law Journal*, 6(2), (2005).

<sup>3</sup> J. Habermas, *Die nachholende Revolution*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990); W. Kymlicka, M. Opalski (eds) *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> B. Strath, "A European Identity. To the Historical Limits of a Concept", *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5:4, pp. 387 – 401.

<sup>5</sup> E. Harris, "Moving Politics Beyond the State? The Impact of European Integration on the Hungarian Minority in Slovakia", Working Paper EWC/2005/01, (Liverpool: Europe in the World Centre, University of Liverpool, 2005).

other groups with their own collective identities and who demand recognition and some form of political inclusion. What is more, complexity means that people can hold different or even 'multiple' identities (including references to Europe, the nation, the region) at the same time, and with differing intensity, and while sometimes these identities are in conflict with each other ('Am I European or Polish?'), they can also be seen as overlapping or related to each other (as can be found more frequently, perhaps, in border regions).

Thus, it might be argued that a single identity of Europe is untenable in the light of such existing cultural diversity in today's European Union. It was not least the drafting of a European Constitution of Europe that brought the question of a common European identity on the political agenda. And while in the debate concerning the European Constitution a single idea of Europe has been invoked quite often (based, for instance, on Roman and Judeo-

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Christian heritages, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution), it cannot be denied that the 'post-enlargement' European Union harbors a variety of cultural backgrounds and Europe has ties to more than one civilization. Gerard Delanty thus argues for an understanding of 'post-enlargement' Europe as 'post-Western' in that Western Europe has lost the prominent position that it had before 2004.<sup>6</sup> The member states

that make up the current European order represent different trajectories to modern society, have experienced different civilizational influences (Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian), all of which might be seen as European in some way. The rich European historical legacy is thus composed of diverse civilizational influences and encounters. From this perspective, it might make sense to speak of 'multiple Europes' rather than Europe in the singular.

Current-day Europe can thus neither lay claim to be the 'home of civilization'<sup>7</sup>, nor to be the inheritor of a single Western civilization, in the form of Ancient Greek, Roman, and Judeo-Christian origins. Nor can it lay claim to one set of European values (democracy, the constitutional state

<sup>6</sup> G. Delanty, "Peripheries and Borders in a Post-Eastern Europe", August 29, 2007; <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-08-29-delanty-en.html>.

<sup>7</sup> B. Strath, "Multiple Europes: Integration, Identity and Demarcation to the Other", B. Strath (ed) *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*. (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 69 – 71.

and the rule of law) on the basis of a single history. Rather, Europe needs to confront an enormous variety of cultural and religious legacies. This variety of cultural identities thus problematizes the idea of a single European identity on the basis of a *longue durée* or long-term historical approach to Europe. But also various contemporary 'identity groups' – including minority groups that invoke identities of a transnational (for instance, the Roma) or subnational nature (indigenous minorities) – might question such an identity if it is to mean a homogeneous identity and a single set of shared norms and values in the form of, let us say, a kind of 'conscience collective' (as ideated by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim). There is resistance against single and dominant identities, as shown by the questioning of national majority-identities by many minority groups after 1989, including claims for forms of co-habitation and forms of (limited) regional autonomy. This points to the fact that ethno-cultural nationalisms are always subject to contestation by other groups invoking similar identities, but, more importantly, that ways need to be found to create open, inclusive identities, in which a variety of cultural traditions and identities can be accommodated, rather than a singular, homogeneous one. In this sense, European political integration and the last round of enlargement have added to the need of constructing such an open identity on the European level.

Thus, to sum up, in 'post-enlargement' Europe, various cultural traditions and identities are promoted and defended, and relate to various historical legacies and (non-)national levels of identification, including sub- and transnational levels, thereby contradicting an 'evolutionary' reading of European integration from ethno-national to civic-national to 'post-national' identifications. To give a number of examples, on a transnational, regional level, cross-border regional identities are reconstructed, often of a multi-ethnic nature, that are sometimes in tension with national identities, and related to historical regions that were once part of empires, and are now divided between various nation-states as a result of the collapse of these empires (for instance, the Banat is divided between Hungary, Romania and Serbia, while Galicia is situated on the Polish and Ukrainian borders). On a wider geographical level one finds transnational meso-regions or what in historiography is often called 'historical regions'. These meso-regions comprise various states and are sometimes invoked to group families of societies sharing a number of similar features and historical experiences (the most prominent example is 'Central Europe'). On the subnational level, minorities invoke subnational and local identities, sometimes in combination with claims for (limited) autonomy vis-à-vis national states. As a result of late state-formation and nation-building in the Central and Eastern European region, and the emergence of many of

the precursors of the current nation-states out of the collapsed Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian empires after the First World War, we can therefore find a relatively high number of minority groups of which some do not consider themselves as belonging to their 'host' state (or, at least, according to their elites).

The European Union is then not only dealing with the political-economic cooperation of nation-states, which can politically be dealt with by means of negotiations between national governments, but more and more also with European-wide cultural integration and the creation of some form of common identity, an identity that needs, however, to reflect the various backgrounds and historical traditions I mentioned if it is really to unite

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Europe. Cultural integration in Europe goes beyond questions of rights and democratic governance, for instance, regarding the inclusion of minority as well as regional groups, in Europe's search for a common European identity that reflects the rich European history and cultural traditions in a Europe 'united in diversity' and can sustain democratic legitimacy on a European level.

The most important question that Europeans should ask themselves today is how the European integration project is to deal with democracy and social solidarity between its 494 million citizens in a 'post-national' European order based on complex cultural diversity. A common European identity can clearly not simply

replace various national and minority identities, but Europe needs to find a democratic way to take into account both national and other identities within a broad European context.<sup>8</sup> The questions that arise in such a context are that of the balance between a European identity and various other identities (national, regional), the relation between identities and democracy, and the possibility of a new, innovative form of European identity, based on, as I will argue below, the recognition of a plurality of cultural traditions and intercultural dialogue.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Brighenti, "Migrants as the Real Europeans", *Sortuz, Oñati Journal of Emergent Socio-legal Studies*, 1(1), pp. 34 – 49, (2007); <http://www.iisj.net/antCatalogo.asp?cod=3872&nombre=3872&prt=1&nodo=3879&sesion=1347>.

The idea that Europe needs such an open form of European identity is not shared by everyone, though. Even if the wide array of cultural diversity that the new member states have brought to Europe is widely acknowledged, such diversity is mostly seen as falling within the 'parameters' of already existing diversity, and not as a fundamental challenge to the direction of the European project itself. The idea that the enlargement has not changed the basis and conditions of the European project seems to me, however, essentially wrong. If Europe is to have some kind of historical 'consciousness' of the cultural traditions and diverse historical experiences of Central and Eastern Europe, rather than subjecting these to a single European idea, the implication is that the European project should rethink its *finalité* and acknowledge a more complex situation of cultural diversity and its own multiple civilizational background.

Unfortunately, cultural diversity in its various manifestations is not at the center of attention of European policy-makers (even if there is an increasing attentiveness for minority protection and regionalism). Also those that study the European project and propose solutions for the future of Europe seem to largely ignore the issue of cultural complexity. Policy-makers portray either the evolutionary optimism of federalist visions of Europe, which are to result in an 'ever closer union', or refer to forms of nationalist scepticism that is to limit the European project in favor of strictly national projects. The ever-growing scholarly community that studies Europe sees integration mostly in two ways. Many scholars take the modern state as a given and hold a kind of 'Westphalian' vision of Europe (the European order of nation-states that was created with the *Peace of Westphalia of 1648*). Their emphasis on the nation-state makes that they have difficulty in envisioning a European democratic order that goes beyond the nation-state and that might also give a prominent place to other than national cultural identities. Others promote a post-national, cosmopolitan idea of Europe. This vision goes quite some way in recognizing and accommodating cultural diversity. Nevertheless, also the 'post-national' option seems not able to fully accommodate the wide array of contemporary Europe's diversity.

### Liberal Nationalism

In most political-theoretical approaches that seek to understand the European project, the nation-state is seen as the most important unit of the European order. This 'statist' vision consists of the idea that Europe is ultimately based on a union of nation-states and the idea that the European Union cannot replace the democratic nation-state. This almost natural status given to the nation-state is in reality closely following the history of the

Western European nation-state. The main argument is that the EU would need to be able to reproduce the political and democratic achievements of the Western European nation-state in order to be able to function as a democracy. Significant examples of this are the ideas that a European order can only be legitimate when a European people or 'demos' is formed which speaks one common language and believes in the same values, or when a sufficient level of social trust between European citizens has developed. The 'statist' vision assumes that such a "thick" form of cultural commonality, thus the sharing of a language and traditions, is necessary for the creation of a feeling of belonging and solidarity between Europeans without which a working and stable democracy would not be possible. In theoretical terms, such a strong link between national identity and democracy is often expressed in the idea of 'liberal nationalism'.<sup>9</sup>

It immediately becomes clear, however, that the 'liberal nationalist' vision of Europe is problematic with regard to cultural diversity in Europe. First of all, liberal nationalism assumes that the link between culture, identity, and politics that is bundled in the classical, Westphalian nation-state is necessary for any kind of democracy. Thus, according to the liberal-national idea, participation and democratic decision-making can only really work when taking place in a homogeneous cultural sphere in which a common culture is shared. A future European democratic regime becomes then impossible because a European society that is bounded by a common 'vernacular' and shared traditions does not (yet) exist, so the argument goes. The equation of any worthwhile form of culture with national culture is problematic, however, in that such a reading of culture (assuming a strong link between culture and the nation-state) forgets that the Western European nations have been 'built' by nation-building elites. In other words, there is no *a priori* reason why a meaningful and shared European identity could not be built as well (this is not to deny that this might be a long and a complicated process). Second, 'liberal nationalism' seems blind to the relation of democracy with other (more complex, including multi-ethnic) identities and cultural manifestations than national ones, or, alternatively, with other, new forms of democratic models that do not need a nation-based definition of culture, or any 'thick' form of identity for that matter.<sup>10</sup> 'Liberal nationalism' seems based on a rather

<sup>9</sup> W. Kymlicka *Politics in the Vernacular. Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); W. Kymlicka, M. Opalski (eds) *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> G. Brock, "Cosmopolitan Democracy and Justice: Held versus Kymlicka", *Studies in East European Thought*, 54, (2002), pp. 325 – 347.

conservative and unimaginative stance rather than a careful consideration of different possibilities. These might include, for instance, a democracy on the European level as it might be emerging at this very moment – step by step – in numerous forms of social interaction and political and cultural debates between European citizens from different national backgrounds. An example of this is the educational exchange within Europe through European programs that is playing an important – even if modest – role in facilitating intra-European communication and dialogue amongst the younger generations.

### Democracy Beyond the Nation-State

If the 'liberal nationalist' vision is seeing mostly national diversity in Europe, a second idea of democracy in Europe, that of 'constitutional patriotism' or 'post-nationalism', is more sensitive to an idea of cultural diversity that is not merely based on the idea of 'national diversity'. The idea of constitutional patriotism consists of a form of patriotism that is focused on the sharing of universal, constitutional, and democratic values rather than of a particularist, national cultural identity. Very important in this is the notion of a public sphere: a public 'space' free of interference from the state or other powerful actors, where citizens can debate on questions of common significance. In particular the well-known German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has promoted the idea of democracy founded on the popular allegiance to the values of the constitution.<sup>11</sup> He has also on various occasions suggested the relevance of such a model for the emerging European political community, in particular because of the undermining effects of globalization for the modern democratic state, and has been an outspoken defender of the project for a European Constitution.

In this 'post-national' idea of a democratic Europe, the one-sided idea of 'national diversity' is rejected and a form of (European) democracy is proposed in which – in principle – all citizens are able to participate on an equal basis. The discriminatory implications of 'liberal nationalist' approaches to (European) culture and a (European) collective identity are avoided as 'post-national' democracy is not grounded in a shared ethno-cultural identity, but is rooted in the sharing of constitutional values and democratic engagement in public debate by – potentially – all participants. While Habermas acknowledges that 'national myths' – the idea that people

<sup>11</sup> J. Habermas *Die postnationale Konstellation. Politische Essays*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998); J. Habermas, "Why Europe Needs a Constitution", *New Left Review*, 11, (2001), pp. 5 – 26.

are part of a single cultural unit and united by a single national history – have led to the emancipation of people and their gradual inclusion as citizens, he equally underlines the discriminating and aggressive aspects of nations. The nation as a myth or ‘imagined community’ has resulted in the idea of ‘collective freedom’ – the freedom of distinct national groups – which can be (and has historically been) used to override individual freedoms and suppress diversity. In order to promote equality and inclusion, therefore, democracies and public debate should not be based on collective identities and ethical visions (the values of a specific group). Collective, ethno-cultural identities are perceived as belonging to the private sphere (including the individual and the family), in order to avoid their political instrumentalization and the domination of national majorities to the detriment of minority groups. This universalist, inclusive vision of democracy fits clearly very well with one of the main rationales of European integration, in which Europe is a primary means of overcoming the horrors of the nationalisms of the World Wars.

The idea of ‘constitutional patriotism’ is, however, not without problems and seems not able to deliver the goods in terms of a democracy that respects and recognizes cultural diversity. ‘Constitutional patriotism’ does not really provide instruments for dealing with enduring conflict over inclusion and recognition in democracy, and for the reconciliation between antagonist groups in deeply divided societies. This line of argument is of importance for Central and Eastern European societies and the problems with various minority groups in the region, where the reconstruction of national and group identities has been high on the political agenda since 1989. Various ethno-cultural groups ask recognition for, and want to preserve their identities, are in some cases attached to different values, making their claims in deeply divided multi-ethnic societies. One can think here of the conflicts between the Hungarian minorities and national majorities in Romania and Slovakia, or that between Russian minorities and the national majority in Estonia and Latvia.

An important problem with ‘post-national democracy’ or ‘constitutional patriotism’ is then that, while the trappings of ‘liberal nationalism’ are avoided, the historical context and multi-ethnic difficulties of the political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe are largely overlooked. While ‘constitutional patriotism’ was thought up as a response to the aggressive nationalisms that had threatened to destroy Europe altogether, and certainly has relevance for countering those manifestations of exclusivist, violent nationalisms that emerged after 1989 (such as in former Yugoslavia, but also, in a much less violent form, in many other countries, such as Slovakia and Romania), its move to a shared political, constitutional culture might provide

too little ‘hold’ for the democratic reconstruction of the former communist societies. At least some form of particularist understanding of togetherness or ‘background consensus’ is needed to embed such a form of ‘constitutional patriotism’, something that Habermas admits to himself when he sees adherence to constitutional values as in need of grounding in a particular historical context.<sup>12</sup> A minimal form of a feeling of togetherness or belonging is needed to “embed” modern democracy, so that neither the option of bypassing the question of national or collective self-definition by directly adhering to a set of constitutional principles nor the jump to a ‘post-national’, European identity seem to be feasible or realistic. The post-1989 reconstructions are not only about the rejection of Soviet domination, but also about redefining ways of self-expression and national identity. But while ‘liberal nationalism’ makes national cultures seem natural, Habermas seems to understand any form of collective identity as inherently irrational and exclusionary.<sup>13</sup> But the recently regained national sovereignty and related search for and construction of identities in the former communist societies does not only involve the manifestation of exclusivist, repressive, and closed forms of ethnic nationalism, but also milder, potentially more open, and Europeanist forms of ‘communitarian’ understandings of identity. This is the case, at least most of the times, with the nationalisms held by moderate political elites throughout the region, in which the nation is seen as strongly related to Europe, bound up with the idea of democracy and co-habitation of different cultural groups. In ‘constitutional patriotism’, however, there is no room for the expression of either open manifestations of collective identities nor for multiple identities for that matter, the latter which may include attachments to the locality, the nation as well more cosmopolitan inclinations to Europe at the same time. Thus, when considering the processes of democratization

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<sup>12</sup> J. Habermas, “Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State”, C. Taylor (edited by Amy Gutmann), *Multiculturalism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 107 – 148.

<sup>13</sup> V. Breda, “The Incoherence of the Patriotic State: A Critique of ‘Constitutional Patriotism’”, *Res Publica* 10, (2004), pp. 247 – 265.

in the East-Central European region, it seems that the issue is not so much how to get rid of forms of collective identity and nationalism, but rather how to contribute to the creation of open, tolerant, and cross-cultural forms of collective identification.

A second important problem with 'constitutional patriotism' is that it is too much the expression of a Western understanding of democracy. While it might be said that the collapse of communism eliminated the rivalry between East and West, the diversity of democratic experiences of the post-Soviet societies point to the importance of historical legacies and differences. Habermas himself has defined the transformations of the former communist countries as their 'catching-up' with the ideals of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, and his characterization of a democratic political culture is based on the profound change in political mentality that was the result of the French Revolution. While such a political culture on the European level is in many ways appealing for its emphasis on liberty and democratic participation, it can be argued that the specific Western experience with democracy is sometimes rather intolerant of those (including non-liberal but not necessarily undemocratic) visions of democracy that do not fully share such a Western European political mentality. One problematic aspect concerns, for instance, the different perceptions of the role of religion in public life and politics. One instance of this might be the relation of Orthodox Christianity to democracy in a number of South-Eastern European countries, such as Romania.<sup>14</sup> Orthodox culture has not been touched by modernizing forces in the same way as Western Christianity, and in that sense has not been object to the process of secularization in the same way. The strong separation of religion and the state in Western Europe seems not always the most appropriate solution in Orthodox societies. And while the conventional argument is that democracy and Orthodoxy are culturally incompatible, particular interpretations of Orthodox culture are in reality rather close to communitarian understandings of democracy, and it seems not unreasonable to argue for an Orthodox form of pluralism. The revival of religion in the post-communist era indicates a different relation of citizens to religion, and different understandings of state-church relations. Rather than subjecting the new members states to a secularized understanding of democracy and the public sphere, it might be better to think of European democracy and its

<sup>14</sup> D. Dungaciu, "Alternative Modernities in Europe. Modernity, Religion and Secularization in South-Eastern Europe: the Romanian Case", *Working Paper No. 68* (Halle/Saale: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, 2004).

political culture in terms of a 'post-secular' culture in which different relations between religion and politics are possible.<sup>15</sup>

### The Future of Europe?

Both the 'liberal nationalist' version of Europe and the 'post-national' idea provide important recognition for, and explicitly accept and engage with cultural group differences in Europe. However, both fall short in dealing with cultural differences in 'post-enlargement' Europe in a convincing way, in particular with regard to the experiences of the Central and Eastern European societies.

The 'liberal nationalist' or 'statist' reading of modern democracy is arguing for the continuing relevance of the national group in sustaining modern democracy. From this national point of view, European democracy is seen as an impossibility, mostly because a European 'demos' is lacking. The priority given to the nation as a significant cultural identity and basis of social solidarity excludes other forms of identity as significant for modern democracy (including, for instance, the complex identities of immigrants, or multiple identities that include local, regional, or supranational attachments, or religion). By giving priority to the nation as the primary form of identity, national identity is characterized as natural and, at the same time, seen as a coherent, commonly shared identity. But, in this way, the different ways people relate to the nation (in more or less intense ways, and combined with or without other identities) and other significant identities are not sufficiently taken into account. The 'naturalization' of the nation makes democracy beyond the nation-state impossible, even if the nation has itself been shown to be constructed over time.

The 'post-national' idea addresses the problem of cultural identity from a very different angle. This idea is a clear attempt at reconciling democracy with the modern fact of cultural pluralism and the impossibility of organizing

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<sup>15</sup> G. Delanty, "Dilemmas of Secularism: Europe, Religion and the Problem of Pluralism", G. Delanty, P. Jones, R. Wodak (eds) *Migrant Voices: Discourses of Belonging and Exclusion*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, forthcoming).

modern society around a single set of values that is shared by all its members. Habermas seeks to get rid of national, ethical-political forms of identification in favor of a 'post-national' form of democracy centered on universal, constitutional values realized on the European level. But, in this, he rejects any form of belonging and social identity, making his theory too formal and distant from, in particular, the reality of the new member states. And while his model of deliberative democracy is clearly much more inclusive and participatory than many other democratic models, it can be argued that it is based too much on a German/Western European experience with democracy. This makes it less sensitive to possible other 'democratization roads' and their specific exigencies, as those of the new member states.

The fifth wave of enlargement that has seen the accession of the East-Central European countries to the European Union is not only about an uncomplicated 'return to Europe', nor simply about the 'catching up with missed developments' of the new member states. 'Post-enlargement' Europe faces the challenge of finding a common denominator for deeper political integration while acknowledging Europe's political and cultural plurality. Such plurality has become more complex in the 'post-enlargement' order in that there is currently a clear need for an open confrontation with the multiple civilizational past, various routes to modern democracy, and a mosaic of complex cultural identities. A democratic Europe needs to find ways to engage with, accommodate, and transform cultural differences and identities, as might be one way of reading the notion of 'unity in diversity'. A common European identity clearly cannot be settled in terms of a single set of European norms and values and needs to go beyond the idea that democracy on the European level can only exist on such a basis. But neither the idea that a European identity can only be grounded in a political culture of abstract principles shared by all is relevant to the 'post-enlargement' situation. Instead, a European common identity should be based on inclusion and participation in open deliberation about such an identity, stimulating dialogue on distinct values and in order to further cross-group identification.

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