

The 'Difference Engine': Constructing and Representing the International Identity of the European Union

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Contents

I. Introduction: revisiting the International Identity of the EU	3
II. Misrepresenting the International Identity of the EU	6
i. Mapping	6
ii. Foreignness	6
iii. Boundaries	7
iv. Identity	8
v. Networks	8
III. Constituting the International Identity of the EU	9
i. Polity perspectives	9
ii. Role representations	12
IV. Theorising the International Identity of the EU	16
i. Conventional explanations - political theories	17
ii. Unconventional explanations - social theory	20
V. The Difference? - the International Identity of the EU	23
References	26

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to more fully develop the notion of the international identity of the EU previously suggested by Richard Whitman and myself. I will attempt to balance our previous focus on the 'active dimension' of the EU's attempts to 'assert its identity on the international scene' by looking at the 'reflexive dimension' of the EU's international identity from a more sociological perspective. This paper will argue that the distinctive polity perspectives and role representations of the EU can be thought of as a form of 'difference engine' which drives the

construction and representation of the EU's international identity. Like Babbage's original difference engine, the EU's international identity is not a multiplier of difference, exaggerating the dissimilarities between the EU and the rest of the world through the generation of a new European supranational identity, but functions solely on the basis of addition - by adding an EU element to Europeans' complex and multifaceted identities.

This paper builds on a contribution to the *Journal of European Integration* in which Richard Whitman and myself took a first step towards identifying the international identity of the European Union (EU) through an examination of its 'active identity'. We admitted that the notion of active identity was but one element of a 'complex and multifaceted international identity' rather than the totality of the EU's international role (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 238). The purpose of this paper is to build on that foundation, and the conceptualisation that it introduced, in order to more fully develop the notion of the international identity of the EU. In particular I will attempt to balance our previous focus on the 'active dimension' of the EU's attempts to 'assert its identity on the international scene' by looking at the 'reflexive dimension' of the EU's international identity from a more sociological perspective.

This paper will argue that the distinctive polity perspectives and role representations of the EU can be thought of as a form of 'difference engine' which drives the construction and representation of the EU in such a way as to introduce and

encourage differences which might be characterised as the EU's international identity. Like Babbage's original difference engine, the EU's international identity is not a multiplier of difference, exaggerating the dissimilarities between the EU and the rest of the world through the generation of a new European supranational identity. Instead I will argue that, like Babbage's calculator, the international identity functions solely on the basis of addition - by adding an EU element to Europeans' complex and multifaceted identities.

This paper will proceed in five steps to revisit, criticise, constitute, theorise, and conclude its reflections on the construction and representation of the international identity of the EU. What I hope I am able to suggest is that the conceptualisation and analysis of the EU requires a series of artificial dualities to be appreciated which break down many disciplinary barriers. The first duality is the differentiation between the more positivistic political science approaches to the EU as an instrumental actor solely motivated by material concerns (or those of its constituent parts) and the more interpretative sociological approaches to the EU as a sentient actor solely motivated by symbolic concerns (such as the reinforcement of social group identities). By focussing previously on active identity, and now on reflexive identity, I hope to bring some sort of dynamic balance to the study of the EU and the way in which its international activism and identity construction are both part of coming 'to terms with the complex processes and interactions through which the EU is 'being' or 'becoming' determined by both similarities and differences

among its multiple identities and others' (Manners, 2000: 29).

The second duality is the differentiation between the analytical perspectives of the EU as a political entity, political system, or polity and the role analyses of the EU as a civilian power, military power, or normative power. By focussing on the mutual constitution of both the polity perspectives and the role representations of the EU I hope to be able to argue that the way in which the EU is constitutionally constructed is shaped by the way in which the EU's international role is constructed which is shaped by the way in which the EU is constitutionally constructed, *ad infinitum*. The third duality is the differentiation between the so-called conventional explanations of the EU provided by political theories and the so-called unconventional explanations of the EU provided by social theory. I conclude the paper by arguing that only by using both political and social theories will be able to come to terms with the way in which the EU is a difference engine which requires that we add its international identity into our calculations of the EU in global politics. But first, I will revisit the international identity of the EU in order to reflect on its diffusion over the past five years.

I. Introduction: revisiting the International Identity of the EU

The notion of international identity has become clearer over the past decade since it was first introduced in the 1990s (Whitman, 1994, 1997; Manners, 1997), in particular the extent to which

it is 'not a synonym for 'foreign policy' or 'external relations', but ... a position from which to commence conceptualising the global role of the European Union as being greater than the sum of its parts' (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 246). Examples of this gradual diffusion of the conceptualisation include analyses of European security, political federalisation, the Middle East, competition policy, human rights, and discussions of the sociological understandings of the EU, as will briefly be considered here. The first elements of this diffusion concern the way in which the concept of international identity reflects the non-national features of the EU's identity. Thus Ole Wæver contends that 'Europe's 'Other' these years is Europe's own past. This mythic narrative of European history together with an international actor profile can produce a European international identity' (Wæver, 2000: 279). In addition Jean Raux advocates that an EU international identity is possible as long as it remains deferential to those of its member states: 'L'identité internationale de l'Union est problématique et néanmoins envisageable, parce qu'elle est elle-même respectueuse de l'identité de ses propres Etats membres' (Raux, 2000: 1).

The second elements of this diffusion focus on the distinctive features that constitute the international identity in terms of visibility, extraterritoriality, and conditionality. Ben Soetendorp suggests that the EU is building a visible international identity in the Middle East, arguing that 'the EU has nevertheless made itself clearly visible on the Middle East stage, presenting a distinguished international identity' (Soetendorp, 1999: 113). Chad Damro goes further

to argue that the EU 'has expanded its international identity specifically with regard to extraterritorial competition policy' (Damro, 2001: 218). Karen Smith contends that through the use of conditionality 'respect for human rights is already felt to form part of the EU's international identity' (Smith, 2001: 203). Finally, the theoretical elements of this diffusion contemplate the extent to which the concept of international identity is valuable, or not, in the understanding of EU identity from the more sociological approaches of roles, norms and identity. Ulrich Sedelmeier's insightful argument is that, 'from a more sociological understanding of identity, an (international) identity is something that the EU might, or might not have, but *if* it has a particular identity or role, then this is an independent, rather than the dependent variable.' (Sedelmeier, 2001: 6) Thus, he clearly differentiates the study of EU international identity from that of conventional studies of the EU's actorness which do not consider the causal impact of identity *on* foreign policy (rather than vice-versa). Sharing this concern for the sociology of identity, Marika Lerch rightly argues that our previous conceptualisation of the international identity of the EU lacked the sociological understanding of identity which she uses in her convincing theorising of the 'important role of roles' in the study of the external identity of the EU (Lerch, 2001: 2, fn. 3).

Revisiting the international identity and its diffusion allows me to reflect on both the value and the weaknesses of our original formulation. It is worth observing that Whitman and myself have previously considered, although left

underdeveloped, the construction of difference with others through 'the external definition of ... identity' and the 'expectation[s] of these external actors' or others (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 237). We have always argued that the centrality of identity to our understanding of international relations and the EU suggests 'that a significant reformulation of the discipline itself is required' and 'that the politics of identity is the central problem for the EU to solve' (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 235). However, we accepted that our original conceptualisation left the task of developing the sociological dimensions of the EU international identity's construction and representation to later:

In defining the concept of international identity there is an interrelated requirement to explore how this identity is both constructed and represented (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 246).

Thus, I now argue that the notion of international identity is an attempt to think about how the EU is constituted, constructed, and represented internationally. The relationship between the EU and the rest of the world is therefore crucially determined by the nature of this international identity. By constitution, I mean that the constitutive history and principles of the EU play a crucial role in shaping the international identity. In this sense the international identity has an essentialist element to it – a sense in which the EU is essentially constituted differently to other polities. By construction, I mean that the way in which the EU has been, and is, understood also plays a crucial role in

shaping the international identity. In this sense the international identity has a constructed element to it – a sense in which the EU is constructed as having a different identity to other polities. By representation I mean that the ways in which the EU represents itself, and is represented in the minds of those experiencing it, are important mitigating factors in shaping the essential constitution and constructed identity of the EU. All three of these elements of the EU's international identity are in flux – sometimes of an evolutionary nature, such as the neo-liberalising influences of the introduction of the single market, and sometimes of a revolutionary nature, such as the creation of the Union at the end of the Cold War. As well as being in flux, all three of these elements are continually contested, both within and without the EU, by those seeking to change the nature, direction and image of the EU. Finally, changes in any one of these elements will tend to lead to changes in the others, hence if the constitution of the EU changes then so might its identity and the way in which it is received by others.

In order to make more sense of this reformulation of the international identity of the EU it is now necessary to reflect on how conventional studies misrepresent the international identity of the EU when approaching it from within the ideational straightjacket of political science. Following this critical reflection I will then turn to exploring the constitution, construction and representation of the international identity, before going on to suggest how to escape from the straightjacket by introducing social theory.

II. Misrepresenting the International Identity of the EU

i. Mapping

The European Union's most obvious, most common, and most seen expression of itself in relation to its neighbours and the rest of the world is the map. The European Commission's map of the European Union (EU) can be found in workplaces and public places of Europeans and non-European alike. In a variety of bright colours and carefully drawn lines the map documents and symbolises what is the EU (including non-European territories) and what is not the EU (including that most European multi-lingual country at its heart, Switzerland). The map has gone through many different forms as the EU enlarges and as the potential future boundaries of Europe come into view. If there is one thing certain about the EU, it is that there will be many more maps in many more colours, with many more lines. What is interesting about the map is that it also engages in another colourful and pictorial mapping in its obligatory table comparing the area, population and gross national product per person of the EU member states with the USA and Japan. Thus the map does not just draw lines between what is the EU and what is not the EU, it also tells us that the EU is big, populous and rich, and that it should be compared to the USA and Japan on these terms. The map is both an important and misleading symbol of the EU and its foreign policy – it attempts to draw strong lines between the EU and the rest of the world, and it invites us to compare the EU with other powerful states. A fuller appreciation of the difference engine encourages us to escape the cartography of

conventional representations of the EU and its foreign policy in favour of mapping in more complex, but revealing terms which facilitate understanding rather than perpetuating misleading comparisons.

ii. Foreignness

The map leads us to believe that there is a clear-cut distinction between internal policies (inside the boundaries of the EU) and foreign policies (outside the boundaries of the EU). And that these policies are comparable with those of other political entities, such as the USA and Japan. It is this expectation which leads most academic commentators lacking a vocabulary or mental map when confronted with the alien realities of the EU's lack of boundaries between internal policies and foreign policies, and the extent to which it is not comparable with other political entities. Such commentators find themselves forced to describe the EU as being alien or foreign in our understanding of the relationships between political entities and global politics. With this map in their hands, and comparisons with the USA or Japan in their minds, these commentators find themselves describing the EU as 'strange' (Buchan, 1993), 'ambiguous' (Gasteyger, 1996), in 'paralysis' (Zielonka, 1998a), or a 'paradox' (Zielonka, 1998b). Thus it has been mainstream practice within the study of the EU to describe and label it as foreign to our understanding international relations and global politics. This act of making the EU foreign is not without costs, for it leads easily to arguments about the unique and unintelligible nature of the EU which take it from the realm of understanding and into the realm

of misunderstanding. Thus, we need to understand the extent to which the EU is different from other political entities, and the extent to which this difference shapes its foreign policy, rather than simply rendering the EU itself as foreign.

iii. Boundaries

One of the elements which seems most foreign to the study of foreign relations, and which requires the continual redrawing of the map, is the way in which the boundaries of the EU have kept moving and will keep moving. The study of what is foreign and what is not is crucially shaped by an understanding that the physical boundaries of a political entity are fairly fixed – the shape of the USA hasn't changed since the admission of the state of Hawaii in 1959 while the shape of Japan has not changed since 1946. For the EU the expectation is that the boundaries will change rather than will not change, hence the physical foundations of foreignness is constantly changing. Since the creation of the ECs in 1957 the boundaries of the EU have changed five times (1973, 1981, 1986, 1990, 1995) and will change many times again after 2004. This expectation of changing boundaries is important if we accept that one understanding of foreign policy is not as the relations between political entities, but as the creation of boundaries between a political entity and everything else (Campbell, 1998: 61). If the study of foreign policy is therefore the study of the differentiation between the inside of a political entity (where internal policies take place) and outside of a political entity (where there is little role for internal policies) then the continuing change of the physical boundaries

for delineating what is foreign is a crucial feature of the EU. A critical examination of the boundaries of the EU provides us with a means of reflecting upon what foreign policy actually is and does in the study of the EU. In particular I will argue that flexible boundaries are a conditioning feature of EU relations with its nearest neighbours.

iv. Identity

Clear-cut boundaries on a mental map and a strong sense of what is foreign are both central features in the creation of identity understood as a 'selfsameness' (Calhoun, 2001: 36). By this I mean that identity, be it personal, group, national, or European is generated through the extent to which there is sameness to oneself and that the strength of this identity is shaped by three factors – the selfsameness, the otherdifferenceness, and the interaction between the two. To simplify, if all EU citizens feel a strong sense of sameness to each other then they might share a strong mutual identity (selfsameness). Similarly, if any or all groups of non-EU citizens feel a strong sense of sameness to each other then they might also share a strong mutual identity which is different to that of EU identity – it is an other identity (otherdifferenceness). Finally, if a group of non-EU citizens interact with the EU citizens in such a way which increases the sense of different identity then this might also strengthen these identities. But as EU citizens do not share a strong sense of sameness to each other, I could argue that there is little common ground for practising strong EU foreign policy. What is clear is that the identity of the EU in global politics

is created by both the sense of selfsameness of its citizens as well as the norms and practices of its policymakers and agents. My use of the concept of international identity provides a means of suggesting that the study of the EU's role in global politics is located in an understanding of both the EU identity of its citizens and the constitutive features of the EU polity (Manners and Whitman, 1998). Approaching the EU as a difference engine allows me to describe how both the essential constitution and the constructed identity of the EU mutually define its international identity.

v. Networks

To recap, the EU cannot be characterised by clear-cut boundaries on a map and its citizens do not have a strong sense of EU identity. If we accept these arguments then what is left for us to examine in our search for an understanding of the EU in global politics? The starting point for our search is in the understanding of the constitution of the EU as a political entity which has no one clear-cut hierarchy of government, and consists of many centres of influence all linked through a variety of formal and informal channels of communication. In this sense the EU may be best understood as a form of network governance (Kohler-Koch and Eising, 1999; Jachtenfuchs, 2001). Within this network policy making takes place in a variety of different locations and modes (Wallace, 2000), and on multiplicity of levels (Webb, 1983; Peterson, 1995). The foreign policy of the EU is an extension of the form, function and aspirations of this polity. Thus, just as the EU's polity may be characterised as a

governance network so its activities may be described as a global network of relations which include a range of formal and informal channels of communication such as association agreements and interregional agreements (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 235-236). This final reflection on the misrepresentation of the EU encourages me to use all four of the previous discussions as the basis for studying the constitution of the EU's international identity.

III. Constituting the International Identity of the EU

The EU is constituted differently in global politics by the interplay of its hybrid polity and its international roles. By hybrid polity I mean that the political constitution of the EU is a hybrid of different polity perspectives which do not closely resemble those of a state (whether unitary or federal) or those of an international organisation (whether regional or global). By international roles I mean that the international role constitution of the EU is a mixture of role representations which sometimes reinforce each other and other times contradict each other. This different constitution is the result of its fifty-year old evolution during which it has acquired a complex multiperspectival polity and multi-representational role which are themselves constitutive factors in shaping its political and social consequences for EU citizens and states. As these multiplicities are crucial constitutive features of EU foreign policy it is necessary to further explore them here.

i. Polity perspectives

Since the 1960s the EU has been primarily conceived as a political system (Lindberg, 1967; Webb, 1983; Wallace, 1983) with a network rather than a hierarchy of decision-making, an expanding membership and agenda, and degrees of boundedness rather than clear-cut boundaries. Rather than attempting to decide whether the EU is a form of supranational or international governance, I suggest that the EU is a hybrid polity which can be examined from three different perspectives – network polity, meta-regionalism, and boundedness. All three perspectives are needed to get a sense of the extent to which the EU's hybrid polity shapes its international identity.

Contrary to the unitary appearance of the state model, the Network comprises a hardly soluble grid of close cooperation between units, functionally as well as territorially defined, with overlapping membership (Diez, 1997: 296).

As Diez observes, the appearance of the network is one of interactivity which provides governance and policies both within the EU and without. The close cooperation and interactivity between units has been described and theorised as representing 'policy networks' (Peterson, 1995; Börzel, 1997) in which territorial units such as member states and sub-national regions negotiate with functional units such as interest groups and companies, often coordinated by the Commission (Webb, 1977: 24). As suggested in section II.v., the massive expansion of policymaking methods and tasks in the 1990s has led to the conceptualisation of the EU as a form of 'network governance' where Diez's overlapping units engage in a variety of different governance

modes (Wallace, 2000a; Peterson, 2001). The most common mode is one in which 'the EC is a *multilevel* political system which, overall, lacks a clearly defined and universally accepted hierarchy for policy-making' (Webb, 1983: 38). Finally, the combination of policy networks in a form of network governance extends into policy making with groups, units, and states outside the EU as part of its 'network of relations' (Manners and Whitman, 1998). This network of relations between the EU and the world reflects the extent to which the network polity of the EU is an open political system in which membership is less discriminatory than in the closed governments of its member states. It also reflects the multi-unit and multi-process nature of network governance in that the EU's network of global relations is shaped by many factors such as the member states, the Commission, the Parliament, non-territorial actors, or the different processes themselves.

It is possible to use 'region' about extremely different phenomena... What applies in all cases is that we are dealing with a *territorially defined political unit which is not the nation-state*. A region is anything which has all the characteristics of a nation-state – except being one. In other terms: territoriality but not sovereignty (Wæver, 1997: 298).

As Wæver suggests, the second perspective shaping the EU polity is the extent to which it is 'a territorially defined political unit' that is not a state but is more than a large region. From this perspective the EU can be seen as going beyond territoriality towards a pooling of sovereignty, in an ongoing process of enlarging

itself, and engaging in a form of inter-regionalism with other regional entities. The European integration process of flexible territoriality combined with a pooling of sovereignty can be considered 'meta-regionalism' in that it goes beyond the macro-regionalism of creating a 'quasi-continental region' (Wæver, 1997: 298) but does not 'merely replicate on a larger scale the typical modern political form' (Ruggie, 1993: 172). Similarly, the process of massive enlargement is a second feature of the meta-regional characteristics of the EU polity and thus represents an extreme version of a polity with flexible territoriality. Clearly this flexibility is crucial for the study of EU relations with its 'near abroad' (Christiansen *et al*, 2000) as the possibility of incorporation problematises traditional distinctions between internal and foreign policies. In addition, the EU seeks to encourage meta-regionalism in other continents by engaging in inter-regional diplomacy which implicitly and explicitly promotes *mi mètisme* (regional replication) in places such as south-east Asia (ASEAN), southern Africa (SADC), and south America (Mercosur).

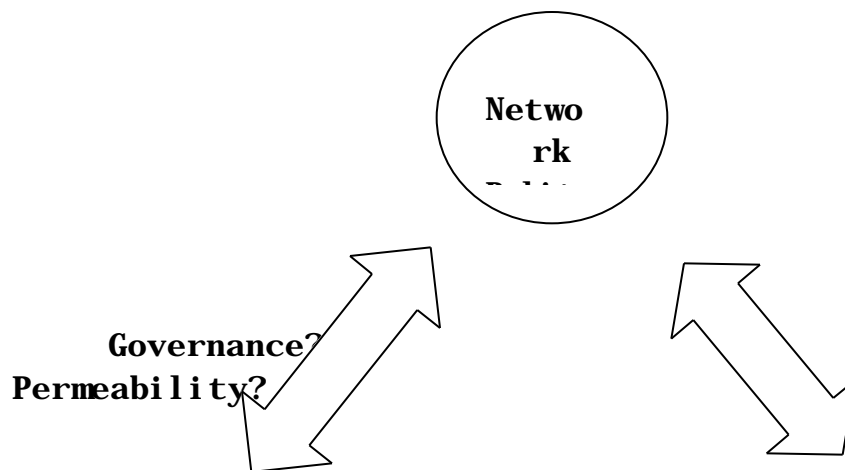
In contrast to the politics of the modern state system, recent developments in the EU fail to provide a binary division that is traditionally expected from borders. Instead, the EU has spawned novel policy-regimes that are designed for spaces that are neither properly 'inside' nor properly 'outside' the polity (Christiansen *et al*, 2000: 392).

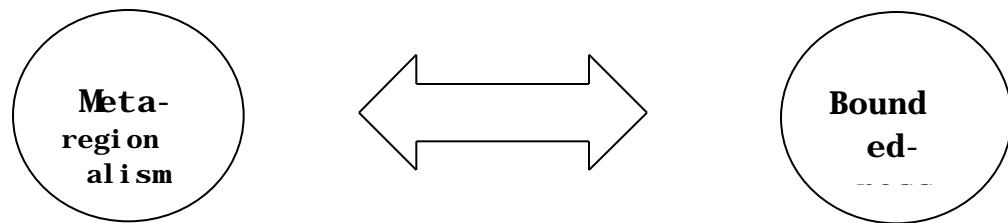
The third perspective comes from Christiansen *et al* who encourage us to look at the boundedness of the EU in terms of its untraditional borders, its novel policy-regimes, and its encouragement of trans-boundary 'regionality'. The EU borders are untraditional in that not only are they constantly moving through meta-regionalism, but they are never quite as solid as one might expect – for many they represent curtains fashioned out of 'iron and gold' (Eskelinen *et al*, 1999), 'silver' (Wæver, 1997) or 'paper' (Manners, 1999). In this respect the boundedness of the EU is not so much about in *or* out, but more about degrees of in *and* out, as manifest in a variety of different types of agreements – economic area, free trade, pre-accession, 'Europe', association, customs union, partnership and cooperation. It is this uncertainty about inside and outside, together with novel network policy regimes spanning this distinction, which lead Christiansen *et al* to describe EU borders as 'fuzzy' – 'because they produce interfaces or intermediate spaces between the inside and the outside of the polity' (Christiansen *et al*, 2000: 392). Part of this fuzziness is caused by the way in which the EU encourages trans-boundary 'regionality' (Joenniemi, 1995) through its region-building initiatives such as the INTERREG programme, as well as the cross-border components to PHARE and TACIS (Christiansen and Joenniemi, 1999). Because such regionality links 'entities across national borders ... [it] seeks to settle the tension between unity and diversity in a way of its own' (Joenniemi, 1995: 339).

The three polity perspectives of network, meta-regionalism, and boundedness give us an insight

into the questions of governance, spatiality and permeability when looking at the EU as a political system. These questions cause us to ask how governance works, what spaces that governance operates in, and how permeability these spaces of governance are. All these perspectives are deeply interdependent, as Kohler-Koch suggests – ‘network governance is widening the unitary political space [b]y bringing in social actors into European decision making and ... re-defining the boundaries of the European polity’ (Kohler-Koch, 1999). This leads me to conclude that the EU’s network polity, the meta-regionalism of its political space, and the re-definition of its boundedness makes the EU and its foreign policy very different: ‘it may constitute the first ‘multiperspectival polity’ to emerge since the advent of the modern era’ (Ruggie, 1993: 172). These three perspectives and the questions of governance, spatiality and permeability may be illustrated as follows:

figure 1 – polity perspectives of the EU





Spatiality?

ii. Role representations

Just as the EU has been conceived of a political system with multiple perspectives to its polity, so its role in world politics has become increasingly more complex. The struggle since the 1970s has been to develop conceptual categorisations which adequately capture the complexities of the EU's evolving immanence in world politics. Rather than attempting to decide whether the EU is best characterised by notions of role (Duchêne, 1972), actorness (Sjöstedt, 1977), or presence (Allen and Smith, 1990), I suggest that the EU is a hybrid international entity which can be found represented in three different roles – civilian, military, and normative. All three representations are needed to get a sense of the extent to which the hybridity of the EU as an international entity shapes its international identity.

The European Community's interest as a civilian group of countries long on economic power and relatively short on armed force is as far as possible to domesticate relations between states, including those of its own members and those with states outside its frontiers (Duchêne, 1973: 12).

Writing in the 1970s Duchêne popularised the most longstanding role representation of the EU – the notion of it having a civilian role in world politics which was primarily understood to be primarily located in economic power. Although the end of the Cold War removed the primary structural constraint on the EU in maintaining this role (Whitman, 1998: 144), the idea of ‘global civil power’ (Prodi, 2000, 3) is still at the forefront of self-reflective discussions. The primary components of this role representation are the giving of aid, trade relations, and formalised economic relations. A representational icon of this particular role is the argument that the EU as a collectivity provides 57% of the world’s development assistance, while the EC alone is the world’s fourth largest aid donor (OECD DAC, 2001). As important, though often contradictory, is the role of the EU as a trading bloc with important relations with developed and developing states, as well as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The mantra here is of the EU as the world’s biggest trading bloc, with a quarter of the world’s exports in 2000 (WTO, 2001). Finally the EU formalises these economic relations into a whole range of partnership, cooperation, and association agreements which increasingly include political components. All three of these representations are located in a civilian role conceptualisation which embraces remunitive aid and trade relationships but is ‘reluctant to use coercive foreign policy instruments’ and should ‘renounce the potential to use force’ (Smith, 2001: 186 & 193 n. 11).

Under the TEU the Union had signalled the intent of the Member States to move beyond a civilian power Europe and to develop a defence

dimension to the international identity of the Union (Whitman, 1998: 135-6).

The 1992 Treaty on European Union created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which was to lead to the 1999 Cologne European Council commitment to establish a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and a civilian Crisis Management coordinating mechanism. The EU had moved beyond civilian power as its sole role representation and had developed a circumscribed military role for itself. In reality the EC had been increasingly involved in an indirect military role through the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM) in Yugoslavia (1991), export control regime for dual-use goods (1994), anti-personnel landmines actions (1995), code of conduct on arms exports (1998), and conflict prevention policy (2001). The Petersberg tasks incorporated into the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 extended these activities by including a mixture of civilian and military roles for the EU, making it almost inevitable that defence capabilities would need to be acquired. Such an inevitability was predicable as early as 1994 when it was argued that the symbolic declarations of Maastricht and Peterberg would be part of the development of a fourth pillar of the EU as finally realised in the substantial commitments of Amsterdam, St. Malo and Cologne (Manners, 1994, 2000a). These civilian and military roles include 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making'. However the first visible sign of an EU humanitarian activity was the creation in 1992 of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) to 'provide emergency assistance and relief to the

victims of natural disasters or armed conflict outside the EU'. This was followed by the 1999 stability pact for south-east Europe to deal with the tasks of stabilisation and reconstruction in the war-torn former Yugoslavia. The events in Kosovo during 1999, following so soon after the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, provided the impetus for the Cologne declaration on strengthening the CSDP by improving decision making, developing operational capacity, and putting in place arrangements for participation by non-EU NATO members. By the end of 2001 the EU had committed itself to developing a military role (including 60,000 troops by 2003) which would not rival, but had the potential to undermine, its civilian role.

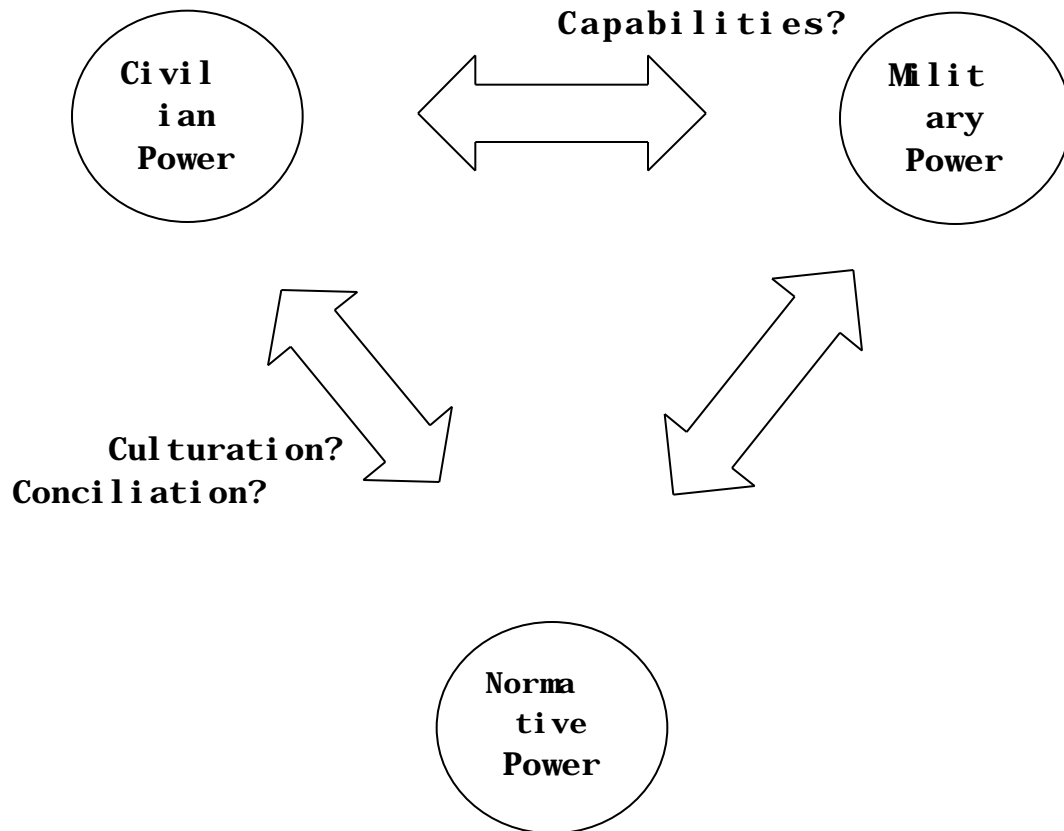
The central component of normative power Europe is that the EU exists as being different to pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference pre-disposes it to act in a normative way (Manners, 2002).

The third role representation which the EU has developed over the past fifty years is the most overlooked conceptualisation - that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is. I argue that that in addition to civilian or military role representations, the EU should also be considered a normative power. The idea of the 'pooling of sovereignty', the importance of a transnational European Parliament, the requirements of democratic conditionality, and the pursuit of human rights, are not just 'interesting' features of the EU's foreign policy - they are constitutive norms of a polity which is different to existing states and international

relations. Thus the different existence, the different norms, and the different policies that the EU pursues are really part of redefining what *can* be 'normal' in international relations. What I am suggesting here is that roles of the EU as either a civilian power or a military power, both located in discussions of capabilities, need to be augmented with a focus on normative power of an ideational nature characterised by common principles and a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions. This is not to say that the EU's civilian role, or fledgling military role, are unimportant, simply that its ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations needs to be given much greater attention.

The three representations of civilian role, military role, and normative role give us an insight into the questions of practical capabilities, Westphalian culturation, and conflict conciliation when looking at the EU as an international entity. These 'systems of representation ... consist, not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organising, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations beyond them' (Hall, 1997: 17). All these representations are involved in an ongoing process of evolution and interplay, which might ultimately weaken or undermine the strength of one particular role as the dilemmas of engagement versus sanctions have illustrated in relations with Iran, Serbia and China. These three representations and the questions of capabilities, culturation and conciliation may be illustrated as follows:

figure 2 - role representations of the EU



The combination of the essential polity perspectives and constructed role representations discussed above are both part of the definition of the international identity which I use to conceptualise the evolution of the EU as a particularly constituted polity with a 'multiplicity of identities' (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 236). The EU has three important features which have led me to completely rethink the notions of polity and role which imbue the concept of international identity, and which are summed-up nicely here: 'the absence of hierarchy, shared identity, and a single [centre of] power'

(Moravcsik, 1999: 389 fn. 40). Thus the polity perspectives found in the absence of hierarchy and single centre of power, when combined with the role representations originating in the absence of shared identity, constitute the international identity of the EU.

IV. Theorising the International Identity of the EU

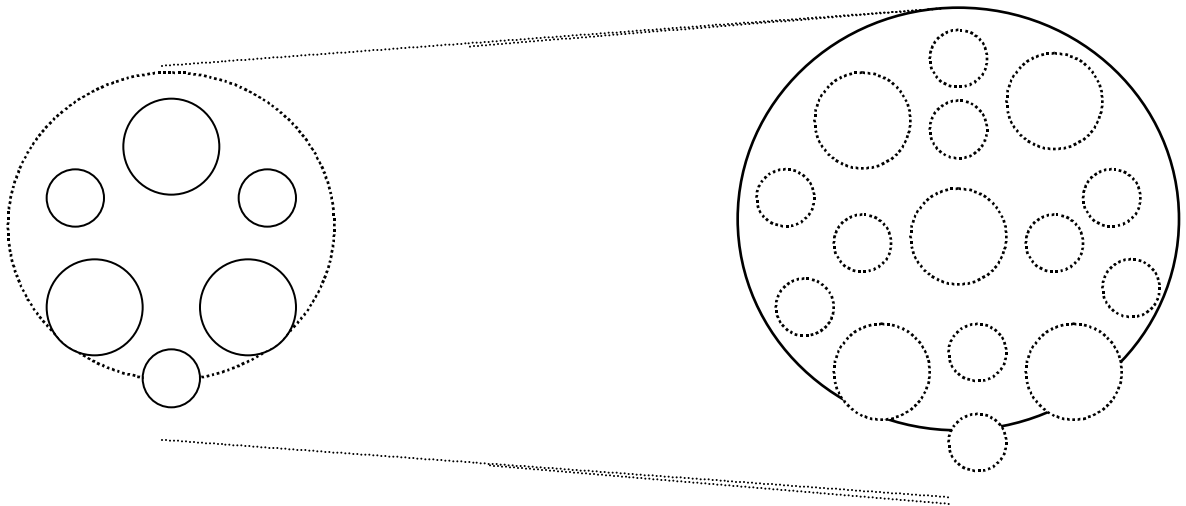
This article accepts the premise that Europe, Western Europe, the European Union and its member States represents a set of varied but interrelated identities constructed and represented through different means and mechanisms (Manners and Whitman, 1998: 236).

As our previous article acknowledged, the means and mechanisms through which national and European identities are constructed and represented present us with much difficulty when trying to understand theoretically the international identity of the EU. As considered in section II it seems simple and seductive to attempt to either compare the EU with the USA and Japan, or simply to argue that the EU is unique and above comparison. Invariably both these solutions turn out to be empty and unrevealing, particularly when executed in an unreflective way. In this penultimate section I will try to think about the international identity of the EU by combining 'conventional explanations' from political theory with 'unconventional explanations' from social theory, although the labels conventional and unconventional are only understandable from the viewpoint of traditional political and foreign policy analysis. In order to engage in such a combination of processes of

thought, it is necessary for me to explain what I mean by political and social theories.

i. Conventional explanations – political theories

figure 3 – political theories of EU



international relations
political science
theories
theories

integration
theories

Conventional explanations for the EU and the processes which shape it are both the tools and the barriers to understanding the international identity of the EU. Because the languages of political science and international relations were developed explicitly to deal with different assumptions about governance and sovereignty, the use of the term foreign policy in thinking about the EU can be problematic. As figure 3 (above) illustrates, we can broadly generalise about three different realms of political theory when thinking about the EU. International relations theory is

the realm for thinking about the EU primarily as a form of cooperation among sovereign states where intergovernmental relations remain the most important arena for understanding both the EU and its place in global politics. Political science theory is the realm for thinking about the EU primarily as a form of political system in which member states participate and where theories of comparative politics have become the most important way of understanding both the EU and its place in global politics. Integration theory is the realm for thinking about the EU as lying somewhere between these two realms of international relations and political science where the processes of deepening integration (becoming more like a form of state) and widening integration (to include more members) need to be thought about in dynamic terms.

Invariably much thinking about the EU in global politics falls somewhere in the middle of these three realms, although much controversy is created because of the desire to discuss the EU only in terms of existing concepts, terminology and realms. We get a sense of these existing, if unnecessarily dichotomous, discussions of the EU in global politics if we look at two sets of approaches from each of integration theory, political science theory, and international relations theory. Approaching the study of the EU from the realm of integration theory, we can see there has been much debate over the extent to which the *process* of integration has been driven by functional 'spillover' from one issue to another (Haas, 1958) or whether integration has been driven by state choice in intergovernmental bargains (Hoffmann, 1966). The debate between

neofunctionalist and intergovernmentalist scholars in the integration realm during the past forty years has stunted theorisation by trapping many in a 'supranational - intergovernmental dichotomy' (Branch and Øhrgaard, 1999). Thus neofunctionalists tend to focus on the role of the Commission and examine its role in the European Community's external relations, whereas intergovernmentalists tend to focus on the role of the member states and examine their role in the EU's CFSP.

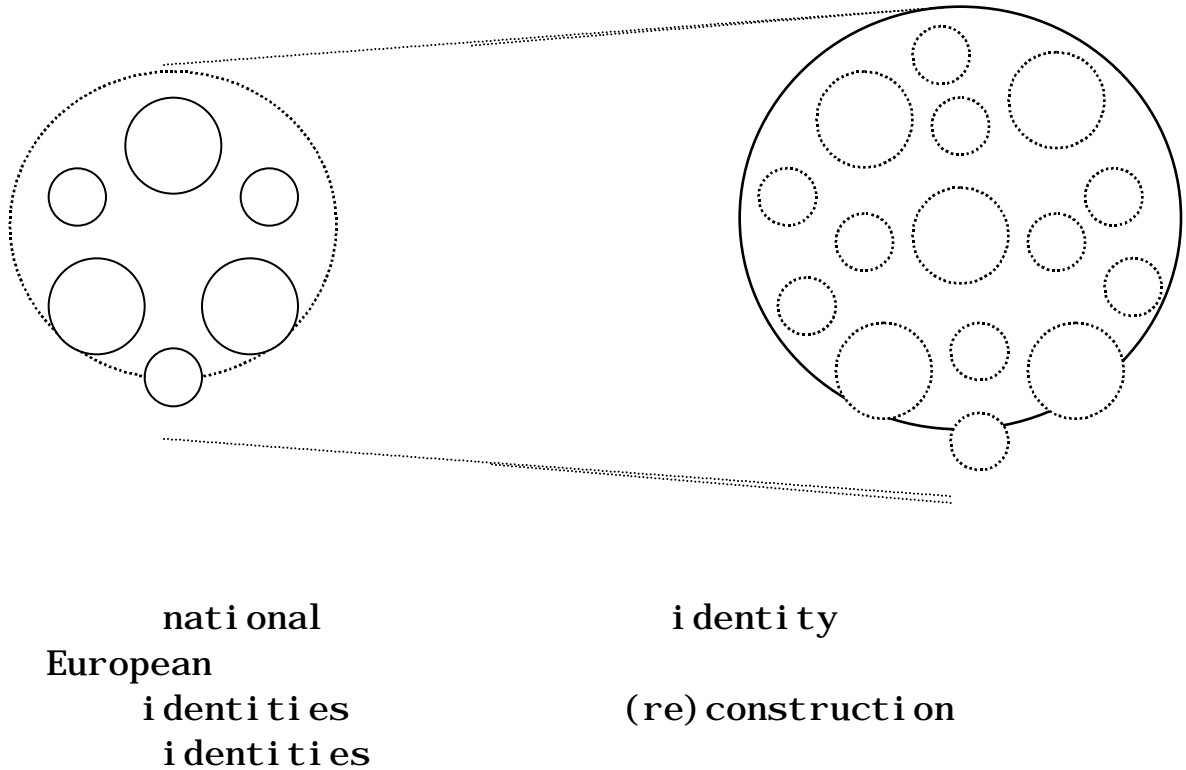
In contrast, approaching the study of the EU from the realm of political science theory, we can see the debate during the 1970s and 1980s focussed more on the extent to which the EU could best be *described* as either a form of federation or confederation with sovereignty shared between state and central authorities. This debate was characterised by the contributions of Paul Taylor and William Wallace who argued that the EU could best be *described* as a form of consociational confederation (Taylor, 1975, 1983, 1990; Wallace, 1982, 1983). Despite a number of scholars such as Simon Bulmer (1996) and Frederik Lister (1996) attempting to revive the debate over confederal governance in the EU, most scholars are agreed that the EU cannot be thought about in this way because 'many of its constituent units are themselves internally federalised' (Delanty, 1998: para. 4.4) and because of its differential constitutive elements, such as network governance, discussed previously. Both federalists and confederalists would expect EU foreign policy and diplomacy to be conducted by the central or federal government, with more economic decisions being taken by the state governments. However, the

EU often confounds these simple expectations with its complex mixture of competencies, decision-making and implementation.

Finally, approaching the study of the EU from the realm of integration theory we can see that in the 1990s the debate over the EU revolved around the question of whether it was best *characterised* as an presence or an actor in global politics. The debate was really about the extent to which is the best way of thinking about the EU and its international influence, with scholars of both presence and actorness looking to characterise the unique features of the EU. David Allen and Michael Smith developed the notion of 'presence' as means of moving the debate beyond the institutional analysis of the 1970s and 1980s and towards a focus on western Europe's tangible and intangible presence in the international arena (Allen and Smith, 1990, 1998). In contrast Charlotte Bretherton and John Volger revived Gunner Sjöstedt's notion of actor capacity to look at the EU as a global actor in terms of autonomy, ability and legitimacy (Bretherton and Volger, 1999). Those studying presence tended to focus on the loose expression of the EU's 'negotiated order', while those studying actorness tended to focus on the construction of external roles for the EU. In order to study the international identity of the EU both these approaches need to be synthesised, together with the all important missing consideration of social theory.

ii. Unconventional explanations – social theory

figure 4 – social theory of EU



Unconventional explanations of the EU, as represented by social theory, have been largely absent from thinking on the EU in global politics. Despite the observation that social theory encompasses issues that ‘concern all the social sciences’ and in particular the ‘understanding of human action and of social institutions’ (Giddens, 1984: xvi), it is rare to find it applied to the study of the EU. This failure to bring the study of human action and social institutions to research on the EU may be partially explained by the ignorance of EU scholars who believe they can isolate social theory from social science (Moravcsik, 1999). But the study of the EU and its

international identity will inevitably remain vacuous in the absence of social theories which allow us to understand the relationships between human actions, social institutions, and social identity – all of which are critical to the relationships between Europeans and non-Europeans. As figure 4 (above) suggests, we can broadly generalise about three different spheres of social theory when thinking about the EU. Similar to political theory, such a generalisation allows us to witness how artificial and unproductive such differentiation between spheres of social theory can be.

The established way of thinking about social theory is to focus explicitly on the sphere of national identity where national social systems and identity politics remain the primary frames of reference for understanding both the EU and its place in global politics. Support for remaining within this sphere of thinking comes from the European Commission's Eurobarometer (EB) public opinion surveys which consistently suggest that an average of 38% of EU citizens describe their identity as 'national only'. More recent innovations in thinking about social theory have started to focus on the sphere of European identity where national frames of reference are giving way to a European framework for understanding both the EU and its place in global politics. The main reservation in shifting the frame of reference from the national to the European level also appears to come from the EB surveys which suggest that only an average of 4% of EU citizens describe their identity as 'European only', despite 50 years of integration. The alternative way of thinking about social

theory is to disregard both national identity and European identity as primary frames of reference and to focus instead on the sphere of identity (re)construction which is taking place within the integration processes generated by the EU. Support for this more complex approach also comes from the EB surveys which suggest that an average of 51% of EU citizens describe their identity as a mixture of national and European, although most describe themselves as more 'national and European' (44%), rather than 'European and national' (7%).

Similar to political theory, the most important critical thinking on social theory is located somewhere in the middle of these three spheres – where national, European, and other identity constructions are encountered and renegotiated. It is in this space of critical social theory that the processes of deepening social integration, widening social systems, and globalising social relations that the study of the EU and its international identity needs to be located. The three crucial aspects of social theory which should inform our thinking on the EU all revolve around the question of difference in the creation of foreign policy and draw primarily on the insightful work of Craig Calhoun (1995, 2001) and Gerald Delanty (1995, 1998). The first aspect is the extent to which identity, and thus difference, is essentially a pre-given (the essentialist position) or whether it is something which is constructed through active and passive encounters in life (the constructivist position). The essentialists argue that as identity represents the 'essence' of a nation, so the likelihood of transforming it in such a short period of time without shared collective experience is very small

indeed. The constructivists argue that as identity is continually being shaped by ongoing events, so the likelihood of creating a new identity, perhaps on a European level, is entirely plausible. On first reading the EB surveys would seem to confirm the essentialist view of stereotypical readings of national identity – UK responses suggest that an average as high as 62% of those asked describe their identity as ‘nationality only’, whereas Luxembourg responses suggest that an average of only 15% describe their identity as ‘nationality only’. From this perspective the UK can be seen to be essentially un-European in its identity, whereas Luxembourg can be described as essentially European. However, on closer reading we can see that the response in the UK can vary from 62% to 67% (EB50 to EB52) in a 12 month period – a change in their essential identity for 5% of those questioned. In Luxembourg the response of those questioned can vary from 25% to 15% (EB53 to EB54) in a 6-month period – a change in their essential identity for 10% of those questioned. Hence we must conclude that the EB surveys suggest that identity is much more volatile than first thought, with 5-10% changes in identity in both un-European and European states over very short time-spans – something which only constructivist social theory is able to understand.

The second aspect concerns the extent to which it is possible to talk of a simple, single, categorical identity, or whether it is more appropriate to talk of complex, multiple, relational identities. By simple, single, categorical identities I mean that social groups may be shaped by similarities such as race, class, gender, religion, or nationality (Calhoun, 2001:

48). Thus, it is common to find writings which assume these categorical identities provide the sole basis for collective group action, and in particular on the basis of nationality. The study of national identities in the EU is similarly discussed in such categorical terms with all the implicit assumptions about national traditions, heritage, and interests, as well as the mono-dimensional nature of such identities. If we look beyond simple, single categorical identities such as nationality we can see that gender, age, class, education are all important elements in determining feelings of national or European identity. For example, positive responses to the EB survey question regarding 'European only' identity are more likely from the young, the higher educated, and males. In contrast, positive responses to the EB survey question regarding 'nationality only' identity are more likely from the old, the lower educated, and females.

In addition, categorical national identities ignore the diversity of local and regional identities which may contest any simple assumptions of nationality. For example, when the EB54 survey asked samples of EU citizens in 2000 how attached they felt to their region, their town/village, and their country, the responses were almost identical, with between 83-89% of those asked feeling attached to all three fairly equally. In a similar way, the EB44 survey asked samples of citizens in regions across the EU during 1996 whether they supported their country's membership of the EU as a being 'good thing' or a 'bad thing'. The regional variations within member states in response to this question are remarkable and illustrate the extent to which categorical

assumptions about national opinions are flawed, particularly in the more regionally diverse countries such as Finland, Belgium, the UK, Sweden and Portugal. The variety of responses to this question seem to indicate that there is a far greater diversity of opinion regarding degrees of support for the EU, and perhaps by extension, degrees of feeling positive about Europe, within rather than between member states. According to this survey, every member state except Austria and Sweden had at least one region where more than 50% of those asked thought that their country's membership of the EU was a 'good thing'. Similarly, every member state except Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg had at least one region where more than 10% of those asked thought that their country's membership of the EU was a 'bad thing'. Thus social theory suggests that it is far more appropriate to talk of complex, multiple, relational identities constructed from a diversity of differences such as gender, class, race, age, education, and locality, rather than nationality.

The final aspect is the extent to which it makes sense to think of the social model of the nation-state or supra-nation state when trying to theorise the EU and its international identity. Much of the discussion surrounding the EU, its social identity, its social institutions, and its human actions tends to be located in a discourse adopted from the nation-state. Social models of the nation-state have a tendency to be build on combinations of cultural ethnos, political demos, modern social institutions, and cosmopolitan citizenship (Delanty, 1998). However, what is clear is that the EU shares few of these social aspects, with an almost absent demos, an

incredibly diverse ethnos, limited social institutions, and a weak sense of transnational cosmopolitanism. But does it make sense to think of this as being prohibitive in understanding the social model of the EU? Most critical social theorists agree that it does not – the EU represents a transformed social model which should not, and does not, conform to our expectations regarding its constitution. From this perspective ‘the notion of a ‘knowledge society’ might be a more appropriate model for the social dimension in European integration, but a ‘social’ with a difference’ (Delanty, 1998). The difference is that the European social dimension should be conceptualised ‘as an institutional arena within which diversity and multiple connections among people and organizations can flourish partly because they never add up to a single, integrating whole’ (Calhoun, 2001: 38). If we accept this transformed conceptualisation of the European ‘pluriform social organisation’ (Calhoun, 2001: 54), then the EU’s international identity will in many respects reflect this network of diverse and multiple connections.

V. The Difference? – the International Identity of the EU

In this paper I have attempted to argue that mine and Whitman’s conceptualisation of the EU as having an international identity allows, encourages, indeed *forces* us to think thoroughly about the way in which the construction and representation of the EU ‘shape and mediate between the EU and its contact with the rest of the world’ (Manners, 2000: 25). In four steps I have suggested that our original formulation

needs a 'reflexive' dimension added to its 'active' dimension, that much conventional thinking on the EU is misrepresentative, that both polity perspectives and role representations are needed to understand the EU's constitution, and that *both* political theories and social theories are needed in order to explain its global relations. My fifth step is to conclude by arguing that the co-joining of the terms 'international' and 'identity' reflects my commitment to analysing the EU in global politics by overcoming the unnecessary divisions, barriers and dualisms that separate the discipline of political science, and in particular international relations, from the study of the EU as a social identity. The implications of this argument are such that it is worth just briefly rehearsing them here.

I have argued that conventional representations of the EU encourage the misleading practices of mapping the EU as a comparator to the USA and Japan, rendering the EU as foreign to our understanding, expecting fixed boundaries and fixed identities, and overlooking the implications of network patterns of governance. I suggested instead that need to consider the unconventional way in which the EU is constituted through its particular polity and roles.

Thus, I turned my attention to the way in which the EU is constructed and represented as a multiperspectival polity with multi-representational roles. In particular I argued that the network polity, meta-regionalism, and boundedness of the EU were crucial features or polity perspectives which distinguished it from conventional comparators such as states or

international organisations. Similarly, I argued that the historical civilian role, circumscribed military role, and constitutive normative role were crucial features or role representations which also distinguished it from conventional comparators. What is interesting here is that all six features constantly remind us of the extent to which the construction and representation of the EU's international identity is both mutually constitutive and relatively distinct from conventional comparators.

In the construction of the EU's international identity the extent to which the EU is without an invented traditional heritage, and thus even more amenable to constant reconstruction through interaction with others is important. Similarly, the absence of a clear-cut supranational European identity means that non-conventional cultural cleavages along the lines of civilian identity roles, military identity roles, and normative identity roles are given expression in interesting new ways. In the EU's member states, as in much of the world, identities are primarily constructed along the conventional cultural cleavages of territory, belief-system, socio-economy, ethnicity, and gender (Manners, 2000: 10, fn. 15). In the representation of the EU's international identity the symbolic representations through signification, discursive representations through communication, and relational representations through intersubjectivities also raise some interesting questions about its relative distinctiveness from conventional comparators.

Finally, I argued that the 'conventional explanations' of political theory, focussing on

processes, descriptions, and characterisations of EU international politics, should be combined with the 'unconventional explanations' of social theory located in the politics of identity in continual flux, contestation and change which *is* the international identity of the EU. Both approaches are needed to overcome the dualities of positivism/interpretativism, polity analysis/international analysis, and political science/social theory. I hope I have been able to convincingly argue that the difference in looking at the international identity is to be found in the addition of innovative means of conceptualising, constituting, deconstructing and reinterpreting the active and reflexive dimensions of the difference engine.

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