European Multiplicity

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Edited by

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: EUROPEAN MULTIPLICITY

CHRIS RUMFORD
AND DIDEM BUHARI-GULMEZ

The study of European integration, and the promise of a single European economic, political and cultural space, has for too long obscured the possibility of "European multiplicity," the study of which has been consigned to the margins of European Union (EU) integration studies. Agnew's (2001) still provocative question of "How many Europes?" cannot be answered satisfactorily through discussions of identity alone. "How many Europes?" remains a very pertinent question as it confronts the tendency to see Europe in terms of binaries: East/West, old/new, North/South, core/periphery, Christian/Muslim, EU members/non-members. To these more established binary divisions has recently been added "top-down"/"bottom-up," highlighting a hitherto neglected division between Europe's elites and "the people" (Taras 2009). The core task of this book is to establish the viability of an approach to studying Europe which does not rely on the binaries upon which thinking about identity is all-too-often based.

Understanding European multiplicity—Europe conceived beyond a plurality of identities—is far from a narrow academic pursuit. Institutional Europe is also addressing this issue, as can be seen from the following quote from the European Parliament.

> [R]eflection about contemporary Europe should rise above the level of issues such as identity, ethnic conflicts, the nation-state, religious tolerance and essentialist cultural values. The complexity of today's society calls for a new input in academic, political and public thought, in order to deal with the countless less or more unpredictable events and interactions which take place in today's local and global social world. The current reality asks for a focus on interactions in multiple contexts and networks.[1]

This is a particularly interesting statement, combining as it does a rejection of essentialism, a call for new thinking on society, a recognition of the need for a global context when studying Europe, and an acknowledgement of the importance of multiplicity. Contained here is the outline of an important research agenda, and a context within which to appreciate the centrality of "European multiplicity," themes very much at the heart of this volume.

A European Studies frame

The papers collected here do not conform to the expectations driven by a narrow EU integration agenda wherein the development of the EU, its enlargement, and future trajectory are conveyed in developmental and/or quasi-teleological terms and EU integration is seen as the destiny for the continent, each country (including non-members) being compelled to seek a place in the unfolding order. On such a model the European Union replaces Europe as the object of study and the investigation of European transformations is reduced to a question of EU belonging, institution building, and the process of "Europeanization." The argument here is that an EU integration studies agenda will only tell part of the story of Europe's multiplicity (or of "many Europes"). What is required in order to provide a fuller and richer account, it is argued, is a more rounded view of developments placed within a broader context of global transformations as they relate to Europe.

European Studies takes the question "How should we study Europe?" seriously, and is animated by a constant questioning of what Europe we are studying and how best we might go about it. We need a healthy and robust European Studies to sit alongside the more established integration studies (with the aim of enriching both). What, then, distinguishes this European Studies approach, apart from the name and a reluctance to be subsumed to the agenda of a larger, more entrenched, and in many ways dominant field of study? The first point to note is that European Studies offers generous portions of multidisciplinarity. Whereas EU integration studies tends to be dominated by political scientists and international relations scholars, European studies embraces a host of disciplinary perspectives. This multidisciplinarity is reflected in the papers comprising this volume, including contributions from geography, sociology and cultural studies in addition to political science and international relations. The result is a greater range of perspectives than is usually the case with volumes focussing on integration studies. It is not only the lack of breadth that is the issue. Too often, EU integration studies insists that if other

disciplines wish to make a contribution they must do so by following an agenda framed by political scientists, and in fact it is often the case that scholars in other disciplines are happy to participate on these terms (Favell & Guiraudon 2011).

European Studies poses an impressive range of questions about Europe, dealing primarily with the transformation of Europe, of which EU integration is one part. European Studies is centrally concerned with questions of cultural identities, of Europe's relation to the rest of the world, of transnational communities, of cross-border mobilities and networks, of colonial legacies, and of the heritage of a multiplicity of European peoples. European Studies aims to study Europe in the broadest and most inclusive sense possible, and it should never presume to be able to answer the question "What is Europe?" in definitive, once-and-for-all terms (Biebuyck & Rumford 2012). Understanding Europe's changing role in world politics needs to be prioritized. Caricaturing EU integration studies, we can say that it has been rather inward-looking and tends to see Europe as separate from the rest of the world. European Studies encourages approaches to studying Europe that place it within a global framework, and is concerned with exploring the transformations which have shaped and continue to shape Europe, both internally and in the wider world.

"Many Europes"

We have seen how the book embraces a European Studies approach to the exploration of contemporary Europe. To this end it seeks to develop what is arguably the newest trend in European Studies—European multiplicity or "many Europes" (Biebuyck & Rumford 2012). The theme of "European multiplicity" is certainly one which, as yet, is far less developed than other "hot" contemporary themes such as European mobilities or Europe-in-the world, and yet is related to both. Both of these themes have yielded an impressive literature in the past few years. In the field of mobility studies, Favell's (2008) *Eurostars and Eurocities,* Recchi & Favell's (2009) *Pioneers of European Integration,* and Verstrasete's (2010) *Tracking Europe* are particularly noteworthy, as is Jensen & Richardson's (2003) *Making European Space,* albeit from a more critical perspective. There is of course a large and diverse literature on migration as a specific form of mobility which poses a problem for Europe (and EU integration), e.g. Squire (2012), Geddes (2008) and Huysmans (2006). The title of Huysman's book, *The Politics of Insecurity,* is indicative of the

unsettling nature of immigration, as perceived by EU authorities, and to which "fortress Europe" is the preferred response for some.

Europe's role in emerging forms of global governance is becoming a key theme in the literature (Telo 2009; Laidi, 2007, 2010), as is the idea of Europe's changing place in the world (Böröcz 2010; Bialasiewicz 2011). In addition, in recent years the idea of a cosmopolitan Europe has become a key theme in the literature, e.g. Rumford, (2007), Calhoun (2010), Beck & Grande (2007) and Parker (2012). The EU, as a promoter of global governance and as a cosmopolitan entity, while advancing our understanding of Europe-in-the-world, arguably also represents attempts to reduce the complex relationship between Europe and globalization. The argument here is that rather than projecting Europe as being at the helm of an emerging global order, it is more important, following Outhwaite (2008, 133), to "put Europe in its place." This requires not only placing Europe in a global context but also developing global perspectives on it. What is called for is a non-Eurocentric global perspective on Europe, and this is why Böröcz's *The European Union and Global Social Change* is especially significant.

European multiplicity advances an agenda for studying contemporary Europe, which aims at avoiding answering the question of "how many Europes?" (Agnew 2001) along the familiar lines of identities, i.e. Europe is "united in diversity." The argument here is that it is more profitable to explore Europe's numerous political imaginaries, geopolitical configurations and ways of being in the world by highlighting how Europe is an active site of multiple—and often times contradictory—productions and transformations. Nevertheless, the "identity agenda" has much purchase on the study of contemporary Europe. It is worth noting that conventional divisions (and sources of diversity) such as East/West, old/new, North/South, Christian/Muslim, EU members/non-members have been supplemented of late with a new cleavage—"top-down Europe" versus "bottom-up Europe," highlighting a division between Europe's elites and "the people" (Taras 2009). Indeed, Checkel & Katzenstein (2009, 11–12) point to an elitist "cosmopolitan European identity" engendered by the constitutional treaty, versus a "national-populist European identity" fuelled by the threats represented by "Polish plumbers and Islamic headscarves." For Taras (2009, 60–61), the elite versus popular division takes the form of an elite "metacultural perspective" on a common European culture versus a "polyvocal European public," aware of (and threatened by) particularities and difference. Checkel & Katzenstein's idea of a "cosmopolitan European identity" is problematic for a number of reasons, not least because it may well prove to be oxymoronic. There is a tendency

in much contemporary IR and political science literature on the EU to label the EU as cosmopolitan without questioning what this might mean. For example, Risse (2010, 51) holds that the EU is a "modern, democratic, secular, and cosmopolitan value community" yet never interrogates whether "European cosmopolitanism" is meaningful, in the sense that it may not be embedded in the consciousness of Europeans (or even in the discourses of the European Union).

Further, Risse (2010, 38–39) holds that rather than a single European identity we have many Europes "expressed in various national colours." This is the result of the Europeanization of national identities. Risse's main contribution is the idea that the various constructions of Europe involve particular visions of Europe's others. The idea of the EU as a Europe of modernization, human rights and democracy leads to the construction of Europe's Other in terms of its own past: "militarism, nationalism and economic backwardness" (Risse 2010, 53). In other words, "Europe's own past is the out-group of the EU's modern political identity." Taras (2009, 63) makes a similar point. Upon accession, Eastern European countries had to "accept that they had not really been European until then"—this leads to a division between Old and New Europe. Risse makes the point that "modern" Europe also generates another "out group"; via racism and xenophobia, Haider, for example, was portrayed as the "enemy within." More populist constructions of Europe tend to use religion as a marker of us/them. This results in the mobilization of opposition to Turkey's candidature, on the one hand, and on the other the identification of non-European immigrants (from North Africa) as internal others. Moreover, the developing literature on the EU's "normative actorness" in promoting democratization, multilateralism and individual freedoms in Europe and beyond has discovered that the EU's normative discourse does not stem from a parochial vision of the world that belongs in the EU, but it rather shares the basic notions, concepts and methods advocated by many other international organizations that include the United Nations and a host of international governmental and non-governmental organizations (Manners 2002). In this regard, EU Studies increasingly faces the challenge of developing an approach that takes into account the degree of integration between the EU and its global environment without reducing the global context to a narrow set of values, norms, interests, institutions or trends, like economic interconnectedness.

The Design of the Volume

The book aims to demonstrate the benefits of a small agenda shift, away from an overriding concern with EU integration and Europeanization and all the assumptions that underpin these processes, towards a consideration of the possibility that Europe in the singular may not exist and that the multiplicity of Europe is all around us. As the papers in this volume demonstrate, multiplicity reveals itself across the range of EU studies as a key dimension in Europe's transformation. Multiplicity is evident both in cases where official EU policy exists (labour migration, citizenship, regional policy) and in areas which are central to European life (multiculturalism, multilingualism, the public sphere, Euroscepticism). Indeed, taken together the papers point strongly to the conclusion that Europe is best defined in terms of its inherent multiplicity.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first of these, "Fixing Europe," explores the ways in which attempts to "fix" or establish Europe based on a presumed singularity can come unstuck and allow multiplicity to emerge from within. On this basis, multiplicity is that which emerges from within Europe when cracks in the edifice of singularity become visible to all. Moreover, attempts at rendering Europe in terms of singularity generate new ways of seeing and understanding "many Europes." This section comprises four papers. The first of these, "EUrope and other Europes" (chapter two) is by Anne Bostanci and sets in motion discussion of the book's central challenge to integration studies—that the EU is but one version of contemporary Europe. Bostanci explores public relations and marketing brochures produced by the European Commission in order to understand how the EU promotes a vision of Europe created very much in its own image. In doing so it works to silence alternative imaginaries, including Eurosceptic alternatives. Bostanci argues that such attempts to "fix" Europeanness fail to engage with the experience of EUropeans and ultimately lack credibility. Moreover, "European multiplicity" is by no means the threat that the Commission assumes it to be. The second paper in Section 1 is by Valentina Kostadinova (chapter three) and concerns Commission policy on the free movement of workers. According to Kostadinova this is an example of an attempt by the EU to create singularity which has resulted in multiplicity—in other words, a very good example of the way in which multiplicity escapes from the cracks of failed singularity. In this domain, the Commission has not been able to "fix" a singular EU because regimes governing the free movement of people for work purposes are characterised by different rights for different groups. In other words, policy on free movement has been an

engine for creating multiplicity in a Europe where treating groups differently has become the norm. Chapter four is by Joanna Cagney who offers a provocative reading of multiculturalism in Germany and the UK. In some ways multiculturalism can be seen as a metaphor for the European project—promising commonality on the one hand, and openness and opportunity on the other, in reality multiculturalism is structured around national models which are very different from one another and don't go together easily to create a European version. Of late, many countries have retreated from earlier commitments to (different visions of) multiculturalism. Nevertheless, a complete rejection of multiculturalism is unlikely and the current phase of re-balancing may serve only to increase the wide range of multiculturalisms currently on offer. Finally in this section, Sebastian Büttner examines EU regions not from the perspective of their diversity *per se* but in terms of their standardization (chapter five). In doing so, he not only challenges integration scholars' ideas of regional diversity in Europe but also offers a critique of the "European multiplicity" discourse. He observes a high degree of "standardized multiplicity" among Europe's regions and sees regional diversification as a global trend. In a powerful piece, Büttner criticizes existing approaches to Europe's regions for their adherence to static notions of "the region" and naïve assumptions about the agency possessed by regions. Büttner's World Polity Theory-inspired critique reveals the multiplicity of Europe's regions to be illusory, merely the result of "standardized diversity" derived from global models of development.

Section two of the book comprises another four chapters and takes as its theme "Constituting Europes." The focus here is on European projects and developments which, on the face of it, contain within them elements of, or the potential for**,** multiplicity. Chapter six leads off the section with a piece by Akca Atac on the EU's language policy. She finds an odd relationship between multilingualism and the EU, being that it is part of European self-identity and yet is not at the forefront of EU initiatives to unite the continent. One interesting feature of this chapter, aside from its focus on an under-studied aspect of European transformation, is the advocacy of multiplicity. The case is made for the inclusion of Turkish in the EU family of languages, perhaps the most compelling reason being that multilingualism strengthens Europe's sense of self; in this sense, multiplicity is inherently positive. In chapter seven Cristian Nitoiu explores the European public sphere and its role in strengthening democratic identity. He finds that attempts to democratize Europe have unwittingly generated multiplicity. It is very difficult to ensure that legitimacy, accountability and transparency are applied consistently across

Europe. The result is a multiplicity of forms of democracy. The public sphere can be seen as a way of increasing democracy "from below." The people are placed closer to decision-making if the public sphere is allowed to mediate political debate. In this sense the European public sphere can become a driver of democracy but at the same time the absence of a coherent European space—the public sphere still being segmented into national tranches—means that multiplicity is always present. Following on from this, Nora Siklodi's chapter deals with multi-level citizenship in the context of labour migration. She makes the case that EU citizenship is characterized by multiplicity and as such does not provide the foundation for a single European identity. This is particularly true for migrants for whom multiplicity is a product of several factors: type of migrant, country of residence, and social factors such as age and gender. The second section is rounded out by an interesting contribution from Alistair Brisbourne who explores the role of the Anna Lindh Foundation in regional development and civil society promotion in the Mediterranean. In particular, his work examines the ways in which processes of "civil societalization" are associated with the spread of common global principles of normative culture, e.g. human rights, justice, development and growth. The Anna Lindh Foundation is responsible for the development of intercultural dialogue across the Mediterranean region and the use of civil society development as a way of framing political legitimacy.

Section three of the book comprises a further three chapters and focuses on "Multiple Europes beyond the EU." In doing so it reinforces one of the core European Studies themes of the volume—that Europe should not be reduced to EU membership—and opens up the horizons of the debate still further. In Chapter ten Baris Gulmez is critical of conventional approaches to Euroscepticism, seeing these as applying to EU member states only. To compensate for the omission, Gulmez advances the idea of EU-scepticism as a term which can also include the experience of non-members. There is a real need, he argues, to assess anti-EU sentiment during the process of becoming an EU member. This opens up a new window on multiplicity, to be found in multiple EU institutions, national interests and contradictory responses to common problems. The new framework developed here is applied to the case of Turkey, among other countries, where it is found that EU-scepticism is embraced by both government and opposition. Chapter eleven is by Ramneek Grewal and concerns Roma identity and the search for transnational advocacy. Grewal explores the ways in which the Roma have long been encouraged to project a unified identity, a necessity conditioned by the long shadow cast by the nationalist imagination. This same "methodological nationalism"

accords the Roma the status of "excluded minority" and "marginalized community." But beyond methodological nationalism a multiplicity of Roma can emerge and their unity is less the result of national minority status and more to do with the abilities of minorities to mobilize transnationally. In the contemporary context the issues of Roma identity and rights are being recast by transnational advocacy networks. The final chapter in the section, and also the book, is by Didem Buhari-Gulmez and addresses the vexed question of Turkey-EU relations, not from a Europeanization perspective but from a novel global perspective. Buhari-Gulmez argues that the EU is a heuristic device with which to understand the complex world order. She criticises a scholarly reliance on the idea of Europeanization for being unreflexive and for not being aware of the ritualized nature of much Europeanization, which results in EU membership on autopilot. On this platform of critique she advances an innovative understanding of Turkey-EU relations wherein the EU acts as a gateway to the fulfilment of global standards. In this sense the EU is but the bearer of global scripts.

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PART I:

"FIXING" EUROPE

CHAPTER TWO

EUROPE AND OTHER EUROPES

S. ANNE G. BOSTANCI

What is Europe? There are two main answers that are usually given in response to this question. One is: Europe is a continent stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the conventional—though tectonically hardly accurate—geographical conceptualisation. The other conventional conceptualisation is this: Europe is a union of states; a region in which one can travel without visas, border controls and—to a considerable extent—without having to exchange currency; a group of countries that are unified by a history of violent conflict and, on the basis of this memory, the project of establishing and maintaining peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

But are these two accounts the only things the term "Europe" refers to? And how is it possible that the same term refers to two such different things? The answer given here is that, in and of itself, the term "Europe" is devoid of meaning. This is not intended to say that it does not refer to anything or, indeed, many things, but that it is an "empty signifier" (Laclau & Mouffe 1985). Instead of holding a specific, intrinsic meaning, it is an umbrella term, which draws together a multitude of meanings from a variety of fields, contexts and ways of making sense of the world—history, geography, economics, politics, culture and society, to name but a few—and anchors them in a temporally and spatially context-specific, durable yet malleable morphology of combined meaning.

Moreover, this morphology of combined meaning does not refer to one single meaning-complex or narrative account of what "Europe" is about. Instead, various stories and accounts circulate, each drawing on various discourses. A variety of actors participate in the construction of this morphology: the political classes of various countries, institutions, and international organizations; scholars; media commentators; and ordinary people in a vast variety of places. Yet, it cannot be assumed that they all have the same understanding of the meaning of the term "Europe." This

means that there is not one way to make sense of or imagine Europe, but many—not one Europe, but many Europes.

The Europes spoken of or imagined in this way arise from social interaction, and it can be observed that some of them are widely held in a sufficiently unified form to be considered shared understandings or "social imaginaries" (Calhoun 2002). As mentioned above, one of the most firmly established social imaginaries of Europe is the one that portrays Europe in the image of the EU. But others exist, too. For instance, Biebuyck & Rumford (2012) instructively identify different imaginaries of Europe in social science, popular science and populist discourses, drawing attention to the extent to which they are linked with narratives about the EU. Further study could address imaginaries of Europe proposed by voices marginalized due to, for instance, lifestyle choices or nationality status (i.e. lack of member state citizenship) in societies in the EU. Beyond the European Union, too, different European imaginaries could be identified, such as those from recent member states and candidate countries that are unfettered by the exercise of EU-isation that is part of the accession process, which often involves suppression of some historical memories and their resulting contemporary identities. Yet other imaginaries of Europe may be found in countries that have rejected the idea of joining the EU or those that are uncertain whether there may be a place for them in it. In addition, the ways in which Europe is imagined in the overseas territories of long-standing EU member states might be interesting. But, because of its salience, it is the EUropean imaginary—that is, the imaginary of Europe promoted by the EU in its own image—that is brought into focus here.

The present chapter asks: what traits, what practices, what beliefs, attitudes and "repertoires of evaluation" (Delanty & Rumford 2005) does the Union construct, in its discourses, as European? Or, put differently: what are the contents of the EUropean imaginary that the EU offers Europeans for identification?

A variety of inter- and intra-institutional "coordinative" and citizen-directed "communicative" discursive forms (Schmidt 2006) may lend themselves to studying these questions. However, many of these discourses and texts contribute more implicitly than explicitly, more incidentally than intentionally, to the construction of the EUropean imaginary. Only one type is specifically intended by the Union's institutions to communicate what they see themselves as standing for and how they encourage citizens of the Union to imagine EUrope. These are the public relations brochures; the text-based political marketing materials. Hence, these brochures form the empirical basis of the present discussion.

The following structure is proposed for the present chapter. After some theoretical engagement with the function of imaginaries of this kind and their political significance, in which some important concepts and processes in the phenomenon of social construction in general and the particular role of political discourses and story-telling are addressed, both the sample and its content will be discussed. Then, based on the findings presented, the content and form of presentation will be assessed through the prism of theoretical engagement with political marketing and branding. The conclusion drawn from this discussion will be that mechanisms of fixing the meaning of the term "Europe" can be observed in the effort to promote the EUropean imaginary as *the* European imaginary, but that, at the same time, some of the identity-endowing functions aimed for in the EU's political marketing are hindered by the very content and form of the discourses conveying this imaginary of EUrope.

The EUropean Imaginary and the Construction of EUropean Identity

As the above understanding of imaginaries, including their social character, implicitly suggests, an approach is adopted here that adheres to the principle of social construction. Although by now a well-established theoretical approach in the social sciences, including the field of European studies, it is worth making explicit—as is rarely done—that the process of social construction consists of two complementary and mutually constitutive parts. Social construct*ivism* refers to the psychological conceptualisation that forms the first part. Epistemological in nature, it explains that people make sense of the world by constructing cognitive models of it. These accounts are socially constructed in the sense that they arise from social exchanges, such as political or cultural practices or discourses, and are commonly held. Social construct*ionism* is the second part of the process of social construction; it complements the cognitive focus of this conceptualisation by accounting for the level of practice more directly. Offering a sociological conceptualisation and located on the ontological plane, it explains that the world is constructed through social interaction, such as discursive exchanges and symbolic activity that spring from and contribute to a particular understanding of the world. This means that they are enabled through as well as giving rise to the afore-mentioned cognitive models.

Making the distinctness of constructivism and constructionism explicit draws attention to the fact that social construction entails two analytically separate processes. Thus, the social construction of a political entity such

as the European Union can be differentiated into two levels: that of the social and political practices that constitute it, and that of its constituent imaginaries. This enables analysis of either of these processes without losing sight of the other. The social and political practices that constitute the Union are studied extensively in the field of European studies. However, the same does not apply to the cognitive models or imaginaries of Europe and the processes of "social learning and normative diffusion" (Checkel 1999, 546) by which they are disseminated. Hence, the focus of the present discussion is on the narratives about Europe as EUrope.

It is argued that the EUropean imaginary is not limited to offering individuals a way of making sense of their socio-cultural and socio-political context. Inextricably linked to this, and by means of the aforementioned processes of social learning and normative diffusion, it also offers an account of individuals themselves as EUropeans. Thus, not only the meaning or identity assigned to political entities but also those assigned to individuals and groups can be sought to be understood through the study of imaginaries.

Content—the EUropean Imaginary and Ideology

Regarding the content of political identities in general, and the identity-endowing EUropean imaginary in particular, the concept of ideology is a useful analytical device. Ideology here is not understood in simple terms of political "-isms," and is also not understood in Marxist or similarly critically inspired terms as domination through the manipulation of ideas held by the socially disadvantaged to conform to those of the powerful. Instead, it is seen to be an omnipresent social phenomenon, which can be made sense of in a non-judgemental way and which, through its structural focus, can offer insights into political identification. Freeden (1996) describes it as shared "patterns of thought-behaviour" that offer accounts for people to make sense of the world and motivations that facilitate political action. By doing so, ideology enables collective identification. The similarity to the concept of the "imaginary" adopted here is obvious. However, the notion of the imaginary is rather unspecific as to its structure and functions. Regarding ideologies, in contrast, Freeden identifies them as clusters of core and peripheral concepts whose weight and meaning are defined in relation to each other in a morphology characteristic of each respective ideology. As they also draw on characteristic clusters of concepts and on descriptive and prescriptive patterns of thought-behaviour, it is argued here that this understanding of ideology can be applied to collective political projects and institutions

beyond classical ideologically identified ones, such as political parties, including the European Union. As mentioned above, the point when doing so is not to identify attempts at the manipulation of cognitions or condemn the perceived politics of the project, but to enable the study of the "patterns of thought-behaviour" that can be found in widely disseminated discourses that represent the EUropean imaginary.

Form—the EUropean Imaginary and Communication

The EUropean imaginary cannot be studied *per se*; it is only possible to approach it through representations in social practice, of which the discourses in EU public relations brochures form an example. An early understanding of the identity-endowing function of shared communication in political communities was offered by the transactionalist school of thought (Deutsch 1953), which identified it as a key type of transaction that establishes a "we-feeling" in the community. This is taken up by Eder (2007) in his conceptualisation of the "European communication space" (author's translation)—a socio-cultural setting in which the sharing of discourses, especially in narrative form, gives rise to collective identification. The content of such narratives can be equated with contributions to broadly shared imaginaries of Europe. Eder's concept contains two constitutive aspects: the communicative activity and the social group engaging in it. However, it understands the relationship between these constitutive parts and their function in the production and expression of identification slightly differently to the oft-mobilised public sphere (Habermas 1991). The Habermasian understanding assigns the identity-endowing function mainly to the organizational level of the *demos*, while the public sphere is understood as an arena in which to express, more than form, collective identification. The contribution of the concept of the "communication space" is that the identity-endowing function is recognised in the level of activity, namely the communication processes themselves, while the society in which they take place, i.e. the organizational level, is understood as its expression or product.

Eder identifies two types of shared identity-endowing stories in the context of the EU and the EUropean "communication space": those that refer to the perceived experience of fairness that result from the fact that rules of membership of the EU are based on a legal contract and are therefore the same for all members,[1] and those that refer to historical events of existential struggle that are perceived to be shared (even if only in the rather wide sense of the term, as commonly attributing significance to them). But, while he is right that the latter type of narrative plays a

significant role in the EUropean imaginary, the idea that a shared narrative of equality and fairness circulates within the Union is more questionable. Moreover, the exclusive commitment to these narratives seems unnecessarily limiting, for the identity-endowing narratives making up European imaginaries, including the EUropean imaginary, revolve around a much greater variety of "constant reference points" (Lenschow & Sprungk 2010).

A theoretical tool that aims to conceptualize identity-endowing political narratives in more general terms is that of "political myth" (e.g. Bottici 2007; Flood 2002). A useful conceptualisation is offered by Flood—firstly, they are narratives that carry messages that are ideological in the sense outlined above; secondly, they present themselves as, and are held to be, true and, often, sacrosanct (that is, insulated from critique); thirdly, they may appear in diachronic variations and synchronic analogies. Of further importance, as other writers suggest, is their ordinariness as an everyday phenomenon (MacIver 1947; Bottici 2007) and the fact that myths are linked to political practice through the ability to mobilise collective action by offering generally accepted descriptive and normative statements (MacNeill 1986). More importantly for the present purposes, however, myths, in their affective narrative form, cannot be challenged by rational argument. Thus, they remove the ideology they promote, or the imaginary they construct, from contestation.

Function—Decontestation, Political Capital and the Colonisation of Europe

From the public relations brochures that form the basis of the study, it can be observed that the EU draws on political myths as a strategy to remove the EUropean imaginary from contestation. This means that, in its communications, processes can be observed that serve to fix the meaning of the European imaginary by equating it with the EUropean imaginary and eliminating alternative discursive constructions. To this effect, the Union draws on an important resource and an important strategy.

The resource that the EU draws on for this purpose can be described as its social—and more specifically, its political—capital. Bourdieu (1991) defines this as the ability of a person to exercise power over others facilitated by the others' belief in that person's entitlement and ability to do so, rather than by material structures or coercive means. While the Foucauldian notion of power as constituted in a dialectical relationship that always entails the possibility of resistance is acknowledged here, Bourdieu's concept of political capital aptly illustrates how this possibility

is often passed up. With a five-decades-long process of public socialisation and employment of discursive strategies, such as the one discussed in the next section, the EU carries more such capital than other actors involved in the construction of the European imaginary.

Thus, the EU has established itself as an authoritative speaker on all matters European. Moreover, it also very often successfully claims to be speaking on behalf of Europe. And, while the blurring of the distinction between "speaking on" and "speaking for" something or someone has been considered problematic in other fields, such as anthropology (Cliffford 1983) or feminist critique (Spivak 1988), it goes largely unquestioned in European studies. Hence, the most common strategy of decontestation drawn on by the Union is a matter of simple rhetorical conflation of the terms Europe and European Union. This extends beyond the appropriation of the adjective "European" to describe the Union and its institutions (for, why is it the "European Commission" and not the "European Union Commission"?) to frequent synonymous usage reproduced in common parlance, media representation, academic study and political rhetoric. However, the European Union and Europe are distinct terms with distinct referents. Conflation of them is at best naïve. At worst, however, obscuring this distinction can be identified as a means for glossing over internal fragmentation of the EU and for the "colonisation" of the broader and more imprecise term "Europe" (Boedeltje & van Houtum 2008).

Sample and Methods

These pretentions to authorship of a EUropean imaginary, as well as the rhetorical colonisation that works to establish it as *the* European imaginary, find clear expression in the EU's public relations brochures.[2] Beyond a multitude of materials dedicated to individual policies (of which over fifty recent publications have been drawn on for the purpose of triangulation), some are identified by officials as the "basic publications." One of these, *Europe in 12 Lessons* (European Communities 2006) details the key political and policy discourses of the Union. The English language version of this publication forms the basis of this discussion.[3]

In line with the ontological and epistemological commitments presented above, the brochures in question were subjected to critical discourse analytical methods to elicit both the meaning-making processes at work and the "cultural models" (Gee 2002) and "meanings-in-use" (Weldes 1998) communicated. The aim was to do justice to the critical objective of identifying the function of power through discourse, while simultaneously avoiding both the Foucauldian tradition's sweeping claims

about the (manipulative) social function of discourse and the rather technical detail of many types of linguistic analysis, for instance a functional grammar approach *à la* Halliday (2004). For this reason, this included broad as well as detailed methods of analysis, contextualisation and juxtaposition with alternative discourses, and in-depth analysis of rhetorical devices including mode of address, nominalisation, predication, the use of metaphors, euphemisms, omissions, assumptions, framing, affective and aspirational narrativity, and semiotic analysis of images.

While it is true that this kind of deconstructive analysis is not necessarily much different from the kinds of questions any citizen of a polity might ask under ideal conditions in response to the myths he or she is presented with (Chilton & Schäffner 1997), critical discourse analysis is not simply a "replication of everyday critique" because discourse analysts "can draw upon social theories and theories of language, and methodologies for language analysis, which are not generally available, and [have] resources for systematic and in-depth investigations which go beyond ordinary experience" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, 281). Furthermore, the possibility of discourse analysis and critique (potentially) forming an ordinary practice does not detract from its effectiveness at exposing both the contingent nature of established discourses and the structures and functions of power that sustain them. Thus, the following paragraphs will look at the content of the EUropean imaginary, and are followed by a discussion that makes explicit some of the power relations between it and (potential) alternative accounts. And while it is not the objective here to be overly critical of the European Union, its professed aims or its practices, a critical evaluation of some of its communication strategies, their underlying ideologies, and their political effects cannot be avoided. This is in line with the demand—made, for instance, by Delanty (1995, 158)—that Europe must not be judged "by its lofty ideals" only. This, of course, also applies to the EU.

Findings—Content and Form of the EUropean Imaginary

Based on Biebuyck & Rumford's (2012, 4) outline of different European imaginaries, it is possible to categorise the one discussed here as belonging to the "governmental field," as it originates from the European institutions. However, it is not of the mundane and rationalistic kind that refers to a territory or population to be managed by means of policies, but an explicitly ideological and affective identity-endowing narrative construct.

As such, the EUropean imaginary aids decontestation—it naturalizes the current shape and functions of the Union and its institutions. It does so not only by stating them as simple fact rather than engaging in a discussion (even as a rhetorical device) about alternatives and reasoning in favour of the present forms and by mobilising emotions such as aspiration, pride and gratitude. It also often couches them in narratives that refer to historical origins and developments (which has the effect of suggesting inevitability) and anchors EUropean convictions and conventional EUropean practices (these are mostly presented in contemporary incarnations as timeless facts of life, and are usually represented in imagery or accounts that suggest their everyday existence in the EUropean society). This historical-narrative anchoring means that it cannot be questioned by rational argument, and such difficult questions regarding differing cultures within the Union can be avoided. It also means that room for manoeuver is included in the sense that the reader of the brochures is able to identify with those ideas and practices expressing EUropeanness that speak to him or her and disregard others.

Despite a lot of factual statements, most of the discourses presented in the EU brochures can be identified as drawing on narratives. This is possible because of the use of "story lines" (Hajer 2005)—gaps in the discourse that are filled by the recipient (in this case, the reader) by means of prior contextual knowledge, which is assumed by both recipient and sender of the communication to be the same as that intended by the sender. For this reason, many accounts of EUropeanness in the brochures discussed do not need to spell out their narrative. Nevertheless, a number of widely mobilised mythopoeic narratives can be identified in them.

One that is widely used is that of the EU as the bringer of peace and prosperity in Europe after a long history of conflict and bloodshed. While there may be some truth in this account, it can also be deconstructed in various ways. Firstly, by drawing attention to the convenient omission of the debacle of the Balkan War, and secondly with reference to other organizations—such as NATO—who could conceivably make the same claim. Also, the pairing of peace and prosperity is a peculiar one, even if it may have become engrained by the drip-feed effect of repetition over the years. For instance, the hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s would have paired the concept of peace not with prosperity but with love.

The second set of common mythopoeic narratives can be summarised as messianic tales of progressivism. These refer to both human(itarian) and technological terms—to global responsibility and EU-internal solidarity on the one hand, and the implicit belief in the power of technological advances and the ideal of human progress on the other. However, the

progressivism promoted could be critically approached on a number of counts. Firstly, it contains tenets that could be questioned or criticised as euphemisms—one may question the progressive nature of some of the neoliberal ideas promoted, for example, or the salutary potential of environmentalism. Secondly, some tenets are contradictory, such as the conservationist tendencies of environmentalism versus the emphasis on individual gratification inherent in the consumerism proposed. And thirdly, the progressivism promoted often carries an implied sense of cultural superiority that seems to be the only remnant of an otherwise omitted long-standing European discourse of assumed universalism of EUropean ideas and values and exceptionalism attached to many ostensibly EUropean practices.

Thirdly, and related to the points about cultural exceptionalism, the portrayal of outside "others" as either a threat to EUrope or EUropeanness or a victim of their "non-EUropeanness" figures largely in the EUropean imaginary. Despite simultaneous use of similar markers to emphasise diversity and inclusiveness, which are evaluated in positive terms, these negatively evaluated "others" are often presented in crude, racialized terms (and because of the familiarity of these discourses from national contexts they are prime examples of the way story lines work in the construction of narratives). The simplistic, racialized terms they draw on give the impression that the supranational aspirations of the Union are merely a matter of political organization and not one of transcending outdated conceptualisations in terms of ethno-cultural exclusivity that were originally drawn on in nationalist contexts.

Fourthly, the metaphorical European family is a common reference point of narratives contributing to the EUropean imaginary. This functions to discursively counteract the phenomena summarised under the "Postwesternisation thesis," namely the internal fragmentation and disunity of EUrope and the fact that outside influences may impact on its nature and self-understanding (Biebuyck & Rumford 2012). Although an empirical fact—which proves the Postwesternisation thesis conceptually useful—the EU claims a Europe unaffected by such processes. External influences are silenced in the official version of the EUropean imaginary and discourses that would imply fragmentation or disunity are confronted with an expectation of assimilation and conformity. As a result of this homogenisation, the rhetorical mobilisation of self-professed diversity—which is, of course, one of the narratives the EU draws on in the construction of Europe—is somewhat discredited.

A fifth, rather domineering narrative can be found in the portrayal of what might be phrased "EUropean world consumer citizenship." In it, the

cosmopolitan and inclusionary aspirations of the Union are combined with a strong focus on consumerist practices as identity-endowing (which can be found in a variety of narratives contributing to the EUropean imaginary). Taking the identification with consumption to the extreme, exotic otherness becomes a consumable quality along the lines of Hooks' (2006) concept of "eating the other." More generally, too, citizenship and EUropean identity are presented in terms uncannily similar to the vacuous, aspirational yet ultimately unsatisfactory—for perpetually deferred—identification offered by commercial advertising. This applies both to their contents and to the form in which the narratives are presented, such as the format and design strategies of the EU's public relations brochures. Thus, the brochures seem to promote an ideology pivoting on individualism and material gratification rather than solidarity and anti- or post-materialist ideals.

The ideological cluster, that can be identified as underlying the imaginary that these common narratives contain elements of, consists of: liberalism, progressivism, environmentalism, neoliberalism (which appears to be a euphemism for advanced capitalism), securitism, conservatism, democracy, the rule of law, solidarity, social welfare, educational elitism, technology fetishism, a degree of protectionism, cosmopolitanism, and a strong focus on consumerism with its associated tenet of individualism. Some of these concepts have become so engrained that they almost go without saying, for instance liberalism, and the rule of law and democracy—often referred to as the "European values"—are often assumed to be the core principles. However, considering, for instance, the questionable democratic nature of the Union or the amount of attention dedicated in the public relations discourses to other tenets in the form of representations of EUropean practices rather than the self-professed EUropean values, it could be argued in the present context that the core lies with neoliberalism and consumerism.

Discussion—Problems of the EUropean Imaginary

One of the fundamental problems with the EUropean imaginary lies in the fact that while it propagates ideals such as solidarity and civic engagement, it also exhibits a strong focus on consumption that betrays a commitment to individualism. But the contradiction inherent in this ideology is not the only problem. As mentioned above, the consumerist focus is not only expressed in the content of the EU's public relations brochures, but at least as much in their form. Assessing this form with the

help of theoretical engagement with political communication reveals other problems.

Their format and visual designs along with the self-promotional contents clearly place the EU brochures in the realm not only of political communication in general, but political marketing in particular. Political marketing as a field of study "emanat[es] from the two disciplines of marketing and political science" (Lees-Marshment 2008, 1). It aims to provide insight into a political practice inspired by academic theories and the practical business strategies of marketing (Ibid., 30). The development of this field of study is, of course, owed to the fact that "[i]n these last few decades, 'consumer culture' (Featherstone 1991) has spread from the private to the public sphere, resulting in political institutions' growing use of practices that are typical of the commercial sector" (Magistro 2010, 155). Further, it is owed to the fact that, as a result, hybrid forms of communication have emerged that combine market-oriented promotional and traditional institutional traits (Ibid.).

One of the main debates within the field, according to Henneberg et al. (2009), centres around the question of whether high-minded political institutions should or should not condescend to adopting the ostensibly trivial methods of quasi-corporate attention-seeking behaviour to cajole citizens who have lost interest in information and politics unless they are presented in the easily consumable form of infotainment, soundbites or similarly commercially inspired communication techniques. This is not the main concern here, however, even though the potentially depoliticising effect of triggering aspirational and other affective responses through the glorification of consumption practices is considered problematic. More importantly, however, the adoption of methods akin to commercial advertising seems indicative of the institutions' understanding of the political process and entities within it as trivial or meaningless beyond capitalist/consumerist ideas of competition, choice, gratification, service and individualism.

The methods adopted—similar to corporate self-promotion—often include established (Ibid.) strategies, such as the identification of a unique selling point regarding the political "product" (this may include narratives of superior ideological commitments in comparison to alternative organizations and levels) and the alignment of institutional identity with the (factual or aspirational) identity perceived to be already held by the message's intended recipients (that is, presenting institutional and individuals' interests as the same and establishing a direct relationship). Both these processes can be observed in the EU's public relations brochures and—just as in commercial contexts—they coincide with the