IWE – WORKING PAPER SERIES
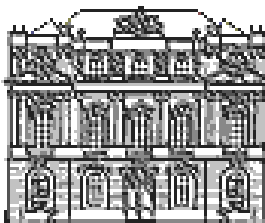
Identities and Representation

On the Development of a European Democracy

Monika Mokre

Identities and Representation*[*]

On the Development of a European Democracy

Monika Mokre, ICE, Austrian Academy of Sciences

1. Demos and Democracy

Democracy is a way of organising power, of structuring a society. More precisely, it is <u>the </u>way of organising society according to the nowadays at least in the Western world commonly shared normative assessment that, in principle, all people should take part in politics, that all power derives from the people. Democracy thus engenders two highly ambitious claims, namely for an effective political system and a normatively desirable society. Obviously, these two concepts are linked – e.g. an effective political system is expected to produce those welfare effects a good society needs – but these aims can also contradict each other, e. g. when long-winded democratic procedures reduce the output (i.e. the effective policy making) of the system. The two concepts this paper is dealing with – identity and representation – are paramount for both aspects, normative desirability and effectiveness, i. e. functionality.

The question for the collective identity of a democratic polity is the question for its people. Who is the demos? Who belongs to it and who does not? These issues can be dealt with out of an *external* and out of an *internal* perspective.

The *external* perspective looks at formal criteria for belonging to the "demos" of a polity, i.e. to enjoy formal political rights. Over large periods of democracy those defined as the "people" were actually a rather small minority of all people living within the boundaries of the respective democratic state: White men with property, men who had absolved their military service, free men … However, since slavery has been abolished, property is no longer a presupposition for the right to vote and suffrage has been granted to women we feel that we know fairly well who "the people" is – at least at the national level. But this is only partially true. To give an example: In Austria, the right to vote in elections to the national parliament and the state's parliaments is

---

[*] I would like to thank my colleagues Johannes Pollak and Peter Slominski for their valuable comments and suggestions.

granted to Austrians aged over 18. EU-citizens living in Austria may take part in EU-elections and in elections on community level. (see http://62.200.2.168/web/bmiwebp.nsf/AllPages/WA991217000019) So, the "people" of Austria is defined by a certain age group and by national restrictions. EU-citizens obviously have an ambivalent status being at some occasion part of the Austrian people and at other ones not while the 7,7% of Austrian population consisting of Non-EU-foreigners (Volkszählung 2001 see: http://www.statistik.at) have no political rights in their country of residence. – As we know some of these issues are regulated in a different way in other states: "In 1985 the Netherlands adopted a local franchise independent of nationality after five years of residence. Ireland has allowed non-citizens to vote in local elections since 1963. The Swiss Cantons Neuchâtel and Jura also grant voting rights to non-citizens." (Bauboeck 2001, 14) There seem to be many different, historically contingent answers to the vital question of democracy, "who is the people?" As Hardt and Negri (2002, 97-104) rightly observe the "people" never includes all real people but rather stands as a representative for them.

The *internal* perspective focuses on the feeling of belonging to a political entity. How is political identity created and sustained? It is part of the self-understanding of nation states that political identity derived out of cultural identity, that common roots, a shared history, the rules, norms, and values of a people made it to a nation that, consequently, strived for the erection of a nation state. However, the assumption that nation states emerged because of the existence of a culturally homogenous group, i.e. a nation, is a myth. Nations have been constructed parallely to the construction of nation states, not the nation state became necessary because of the existence of nations but nations became necessary because of the need of the nation state for a demos. „A nation of citizens must not be confused with a community of fate shaped by common descent, language and history. This confusion fails to capture the voluntaristic character of a civic nation, the collective identity of which exists neither independent of nor prior to the democratic process from which it springs." (Habermas, 2001) Many activities of newly emerging nation states, like above all the introduction of a obligatory and standardized system of education, aimed primarily at the creation of a nation by the invention of a common history, common traditions, common cultural values etc. Nations are imagined communities as Benedict Anderson (1983) has put it.

However, the fact that national identities are constructed does not mean that they are arbitrary configurations. Ernest Gellner who devoted much of his life and work to questions of nation and nationalism pointedly described two different notions of nation – an essentialist one and a constructivist one – in order to position himself between these two extremes:

"What then is this (...) idea of a nation? Discussion of two very makeshift, temporary definitions will help to pinpoint this elusive concept.

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.

2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognise each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. (…) It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non members.

Each of these provisional definitions, the cultural and the voluntaristic, has some merit. Each of them singles out an element which is of real importance in the understanding of nationalism. But neither is adequate." (Ernest Gellner 1983, pp 6-7)

While nationalism constructs a nation out of cultural bits and pieces that could be combined in quite another way bringing other results these bits and pieces are not arbitrary historical inventions. There must be an "elective affinity" as Seyla Benhabib put it between "the works of art, the music, the paintings representing a nation and the past history and anticipated future of a group of men." (Benhabib 1999, 25)

The cultural part of national collective identities makes them "thick", i.e. not easily dissolvable. Cultural identity building was part of the process of political identity building and devolved from the necessity to build up loyalty in a fragmented society.

"(…) the role of culture in human life was totally transformed by that cluster of economic and scientific changes which have transformed the world since the seventeenth century. The prime role of culture in agrarian society was to underwrite people's status and people's identity. Its role was really to embed their position in a complex, usually hierarchical and

relatively stable structure. The world as it is now is one where people have no stable position or structure. They are members of ephemeral professional bureaucracies which are not deeply internalised and which are temporary. They are members of increasingly loose family associations. What really matters is their incorporation and their mastery of high culture; I mean a literate codified culture which permits context-free communication. Their membership of such a community and their acceptability in it, that is a nation. It is the consequence of the mobility and anonymity of modern society and of the semantic non-physical nature of work that mastery of such culture and acceptability in it is the most valuable possession a man has. It is a precondition of all other privileges and participation. (…). Moreover, the maintenance of the kind of high culture, the kind of medium in which society operates, is politically precarious and expensive. It is linked to the state as a protector and usually the financier or at the very least the quality controller of the educational process which makes people members of this kind of culture." (Ernest Gellner 1995)

To sum up the first part of this paper:

Out of *normative* reasons the demos has to be defined in a way satisfying our understanding of democracy. This understanding is contingent and changes over time.

Out of *functional* reasons individuals have to feel as part of a community in order to make a community work. Only if I understand myself as belonging to a society I will be prepared to engage for it and to accept collective decisions that do not correlate with my individual interests. Within nation states the feeling of belonging of the individual citizen, the creation of a common identity has been achieved by the assumption of a common national culture. Cultural identity constructions of nation states and their political structure are inextricably intertwined. The most important link between them is political representation.

2. Representation and Democracy: An essentially contested relationship[**]

A common perspective on the relation between democracy and representation is based on a functional understanding: Democratic representation is necessary in modern mass democracies as it is obviously not possible for the "demos" to come together in order to make political decisions. Representatives have to act for the demos as a whole. As Sternberger (1971) has elaborated the concept of democratic representation is built up on several assumptions:

- the axiom of the people: There is a people represented in the representative institutions. Between the people and its representatives "identity of will exists or is constructed."
- the fiction of identification: Representative democracy is only possible if a representative system can be democratic and a democratic system can be representative, i. e. if there is an identity of will between the people and its representative bodies..
- the topic of modernity: the term "modern representative democracy" always includes a reference to the direct democracy of antiquity. Many authors understand representation as an "intentional, ingenious provision thought up or even invented to make 'democracy' in populous and vast polities possible and feasible." (Sternberger 1971, p.10) This understanding of modernity leads to
- the topic of rationality: Representative institutions are understood as rationally constructed instruments to reach the democratic goal.
- the axiom of elections: Democracy as a representative system is legitimated by elections.

Obviously, these cornerstones of representative democracy are in no way clear-cut and unequivocal. Some of the problems arising here have already be mentioned, others will appear in later parts of this text. The basic dilemma, however, lies in the fact that a purely functional understanding of representation ignores vital features of this concept that is basically a way of legitimising power. This is why considerations on representation cannot only be found in democratic polities but also in monarchies. While in a monarchy the participation of the people in policy making is not an issue the question why and through which mechanisms the power-holder

---

[**] Large parts of this chapter are based on work of my colleague Johannes Pollak whom I would like to thank for his generous support.

is legitimised is of tantamount importance as in democracy. And, as in democracy, this problem is solved by concepts of representation: The monarch is the representative of god or of the virtual unity of the people.

In democracies, legitimacy depends on the political power of the people. Democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people" according to the famous Gettysburg address of Abraham Lincoln. "The people", "the demos" is the sovereign of democracy. So, while also in democracy, the ultimate aim of representation is to legitimate government, representation now means to make the people present in political acts. But what exactly is this supposed to mean? The only way of making people present in a complete way is not to represent them but to bring them together. If this is not possible the question arises *who is represented*, or, more precisely, which qualitities of the represented are assessed important enough to be represented: their economic interest, their political aims, their gender, race, class … It would be short-sighted to assume that general elections solve these problems as the structures determining the principles of representation are a pre-condition of elections. They are part of electoral law, establishing e.g. that a certain quota for women or ethnic minorities is obligatory, they also determine if candidates for political institutions have to be nominated by a political party and according to which principles these political parties are founded etc.

The second unsolved and highly disputed question is *what a representative should do*, what should happen during representation. Hanna Pitkin (1967) discerns tow concepts of representation: representation as "*standing for*" and as "*acting for*". "*Standing for*" can be translated into "*descriptive representation*" or *"symbolic representation"*: Descriptive representation is understood as a mirror, representing in this concept does not mean *acting for* but *being like* the represented, the representative assembly should present or reflect the popular opinion. In J. Adams´ (1954, p. 86) poetic formulation: "A representative legislature should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason and act like them." In a speech before the Estates of Provence in 1789 Mirabeau (1834, I p.7) said: "A representative body is for the nation what a map drawn to scale is for the physiscal configuration of its land; in part or in whole the copy must always have the same proportions as the original."

Another way of interpreting "*standing for*" is "*symbolic representation*" While descriptive representation bears an outward resemblance with the represented a symbol is assumed to represent hidden or inner qualities of the represented. Frequently, these inner qualities are rather vague and loose. A symbol is "an exact reference to something indefinite. (…) Symbols are not proxy for their objects but are vehicles for the conception of what they symbolize." (Tindall quoted after Pitkin 1967, p. 97) Symbolic representation thus "concerns not the mere fact that the represented do accept the representative's decisions but rather the reasons they have for doing so." (Eulau quoted after Pitkin 1967, p. 111)

If we understand representing as "*acting for"* the question arises if this means that the representative should do what the represented wants her to do or that she should do what she thinks to be in the best interest of the represented. This question points to the conflict around the legal framework for representation: Should the representative act according to a mandate or independently? Or, even more fundamentally: Does the representative really act for concrete people or does she represent "unattached interests" as Edmund Burke held up (Pitkin 1967, p. 168)?

Hanna Pitkin's classic on political representation aimed at a definition of what political representation *should* be and her solution was a mixture of various of the afore mentioned elements: "Representing means acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them. Thus representation cannot be guaranteed in advance. It is achieved in a more continuous process, which depends on a level of responsiveness to the electorate." (209f)

Eulau/Karps (1978) follow this conception and differentiate four types of responsiveness:
- Policy Responsiveness
- Service Responsiveness: involves the efforts of the representative to secure particularized benefits for individuals or groups in his constituency
- Allocation Responsiveness: refers to the representative´s efforts to obtain benefits for his constituency through pork-barrel exchanges in the appropriations process or through administrative interventions.
- Symbolic Responsiveness: involves public gestures of a sort that create a sense of trust and support in the relationship between represented and representative.

I would like to argue here that a fifth, more general kind of responsiveness is called for in a democratic system, namely responsiveness with regard to the types of representation citizens or group of citizens strive for. "Institutions must not only represent men in the legal/political sense of acting effectively for them, they must embody the essentials of the image in which the men of a particular culture recognize themselves and so, in a sense closer to the aesthetic, represent the beings whose activities compose them." (Levy 1987: 136).

For many decades, different groups of people have fought for political representation out of various, often not clearly defined reasons. To respond to these political struggles by stating that some of these forms of representation do not correspond with our understanding of substantive representation seems hardly adequate. Representation is an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie 1956) that is a concept about which disagreements can be at once irresolvable yet rational in nature. According to Gallie there can be legitimate conflicts over the meaning of concepts such as representation on the basis of different, but legitimate, criteria for determining just what something is. The American political theorist, William Connolly, has advanced Gallie's by stating that essentially contested concepts, are the rational basis of politics itself. To be involved in a "what is it?" debate is to be in the midst of a political discussion. Essential contestability, then, is the defining characteristic of politics as a rational (in the sense of reasonable) activity, i.e., an activity in which for all our disagreements, reason-giving has a role (See Janik forthcoming)

Disputes about political representation are thus much more than mere discussions of a democratic instrument: Assessments on adequate concepts and procedures of representation always include concepts of man and of society. This is why Edmund Burke held up that virtual representation is possible, i.e. that a group that does not elect representatives can be represented by the representatives of another group with the same interests: He saw interests as relatively fixed, largely economic, associated with particular localities and additive. (Pitkin 1967, p. 174) Madison, on the contrary, along with Bentham saw interests in a much more pluralistic way and had a negative image of them; Madison understood representation mainly as a means to control and balance otherwise dangerous social conflicts (Pitkin 1967, pp.191-195). Marxism makes a distinction between objective interests and subjective wishes that can be against the individual's own interest (Pitkin 1967, p. 158) while in utiliarianism each person is the only reliable measure

of its own interest (Pitkin 1967, p. 159). Obviously, these fundamental differences lead to different understandings of the role of political representation.

E. Voegelin (1991) made the eminent place of the normative within representation noticeable by maintaining that existential representation is the realisation of the idea of institutions. He thereby takes up the concept of the "idée directrice" developed by M. Hauriou (1929). According to Hauriou governance is legitimated by representing the "idée directrice" of a state. This "idée directrice" makes an unorganised multitude to a politically united nation. The special function of the ruler is the creation and realisation of this idea in history. Voegelin understands this concept as follows: "For being representative it is not enough that a government is representative in a constitutional sense (descriptive type of representative institutions), it has also to be representative in an existential sense by realising the idea of the institution." (Voegelin 1991, pp.57-58)

According to Voegelin (and also to Hobbes, see above) representation has thus a constitutive function for society; it is the fact and the form of representation that is creating society out of the unordered multitude. "Modes of representation are not relations of mirroring or of references: Representation does not refer to a pre-given social subject. Modes of representation subjectify social relations and at the same time produce political subjects." (Niekant 1999, 41) Differently spoken: The act of representing creates political subjects and political interests. Therefore modes of representation are powerful processes which include domination. Democracy is an antagonistic process, in which identities and interests are constructed and bargained and not only 'represented'.

This function of representation has also been recognised by critics of political representation. "Internal differences are blurred by the representation of the whole population by a hegemonic group, race or class. This representative group is the political agent guaranteeing the effectiveness of the concept of the nation."(Hardt/Negri 117) The creative and revolutionary potential of the unstructured multitude is repressed by the representatives. Representation is thus rather an instrument of suppressing and perverting the will of people than to translate it into political decisions.

Within this broader and dialectic understanding of representation *political* representation can be seen as one of many ways of a society to represent itself. "Whose culture shall be the official one and whose shall be subordinated? What cultures shall be regarded as worthy of display and which shall be hidden? Whose history shall be remembered and whose forgotten? What images of social life shall be projected and which shall be marginalized? What voices shall be heard and which be silenced? Who is representing whom and on what basis?" (Jordan/Weedon 1995, 4) Those are the question such a broader understanding of representation has to deal with and answers cannot only be found in political representation but also in media, the arts, architecture, the contents of school education etc. Political representation is part of the symbolic framework a society defines for itself, one form of several to give form to its ruling ideas.

The ruling idea of early parliamentary representation was universalism or, more concretely, universal individualism - although this universalism was confined to a nation state and therefore the concept of universalism was broken by the concept of identity as a nation. But within a nation the representation of interests and the working out of compromises seemed possible as structural differences between groups of individuals did seemingly not exist. While each individual is different from each other individual it is at the same time similar to it in its needs and it has the same rights.

This understanding was contested by the idea of a deep class antagonism between the owners of the means of production and the proletariat. Those parts of the worker's movement who agreed to become part of the representative system were, however, easily integrated. "(…) as long as social class was regarded as the pre-eminent group inequality, arguments could divide relatively neatly between the liberal position, which sought to discount difference (we should be equal *regardless* of difference) and the socialist position which aimed at elimination (we cannot be equal until the class difference has gone)." (Philips 1995, p. 8) For this discordance compromises on single issues of social and economic policy had to be found.

This situation changed when different social and cultural groups came to the fore asserting their political discrimination due to discrimination in everyday life and claiming special political rights especially in the field of representation. While these demands were formulated parallely to

the movement for a "representation of labour" in the 19th century there is a fundamental difference in that these new movements reflect different inequalities than social class, namely usually differences for which elimination is neither a viable nor a desirable solution. (Philips 1995, p. 8) The similarity to class representation is however the fact that the claim for representation includes many different, often not sufficiently unfolded arguments, namely:

Representation of	interests
	ideas/ values
	perspectives
	collectively mediated experiences
	corporal experiences
Representativeness	effects on status of group
(symbolic arguments)	effects on aspirations
	legitimacy of institution
Equal right to represent	to participate in public decision-making
(justice arguments)	not to be discriminated against by structures of public life
utility arguments	increase pool of talent
	partisan advantage

Table: Meanings of Political Representation (Sawer 2000, 362)

Probably the first ones to fight for more adequate ways of representation were feminists holding that gendered biases of society have become operative in the political sphere, that differences between men and women in the social sphere had an impact on the political sphere. This assumption triggered debates on the question if and how social inequality and differences, for example gender difference, can be politically represented. Feminists (as well as many representatives of ethnic minorities) have understood representing difference as a mechanism to make visible and to represent marginalised social groups. Political difference also is a heuristic tool to criticise the particularism of a male (or white) universalism.(Benhabib 1996, p. 5) The question then is how social differences in experience, needs and interests can be politically represented – represented in a way that these differences do not result in political inequality.

Neither feminist standpoint theories nor republican feminists have fund satisfactory solutions for the tension between equity and difference; their answers are biased towards one or the other side of this dualism. Feminist standpoint theories aim at integrating female "otherness" (= different needs and values of women resulting from different social experiences) into the political. In this way, the political system shall be feminised and liberated from its masculine features. (see e.g. Hartsock 1983) Republican feminism, on the other hand, refers to Hanna Arendt's argument that the political is a separated sphere with its own laws and dignity that cannot be deduced from other spheres, and certainly not from the private sphere and not- public experiences. Similar controversial arguments can be found in debates on the representation of ethnic minorities.

If we try a second interim summary of what has been said up to now it becomes clear that our question for collective identity and its adequate political representation touches at core concepts and vital questions of philosophy and political theory. Even more importantly, it is closely related to individual and collective values, to people's personal and political worldviews that changed considerably at the turn from modernity to post-modernity while forms of representation did not change considerably: The institutional arrangements of representative democracies have been amazingly stable over the last 250 years despite the massive socio-economic changes our societies experienced. But maybe it is precisely this stability, this inertia of a political system that enhances the disenchantment citizens are experiencing with regard to politics. Political representation has been structured by political parties for about 150 years, and the most important and largest of these parties still represent above all class differences that have lost their impact on people's lives decades ago. Furthermore, the distance between political parties and the citizenship has constantly grown; parties are no longer mediators between civil society and political system, they have become part of the political system. (Katz/Mair 1995) While parties continue to recruit elites for public posts and to organise election campaigns, they whither in their role of important actors engaged in tasks such as the aggregation of defined interests, the formulation of achievable goals, the negotiation of political compromises, the intermediation between political elites and citizens. Thus, policy-making based on the representation of interests appeared as being more and more substituted by technocratic, output-oriented politics, while legitimacy through input was ever more neglected.

The emergence of a new polity on the European level gives us the chance to work on new possible ways of political representation within the EU. Theoretical insights as well as our experiences within the national framework should help us to identify elements for such a new structure although our considerations up to now have clearly shown that a perfect solution for the many inherent problems of political representation is neither theoretically nor practically possible.

3. Towards a European Democracy

The European Union has been founded as an economic project – or, to put it more concretely, a project to reach political aims, namely the prevention of National Socialism and war, by economic means. But economy and politics are closely linked and economic harmonisation led (intentionally or not) to the ever closer Union taking over many competences of the member states without having decision mechanisms similar to the ones on the national level. The democratic deficit of the Union thus became an often used catchword including various notions such as the supremacy of the executive, the lacking transparency of decision making-processes or the growing dissatisfaction of the citizens. While the diagnosis of the democratic deficit has been widely shared by politicians and experts of different nations and disciplines proposals to its remedy vary enormously.

First, there is the question for "the nature of the beast". What *is* the European Union? A state? A state in the making? A confederation of states? A construction sui generis? Secondly, there is the question what the Union *should* be? Those who wish for more European democracy enhance by this claim the state-like features of the Union. Others hold that the system of checks and balances of the "sui generis-structure" is a more adequate polity for the EU than a transmission of national models of representative democracy on the European level. Others again think that it is high time to stop further integration or even to devolve power back to the nation states in order to sustain democratic structures.

This paper takes the normative stance that further European integration in the sense of deepening as well as of enlarging the Union is to be wished for as a safeguard against nationalist conflicts as well as a means to improve economic performance and to enhance general welfare. A larger and

more integrated EU is, however, only viable and to be wished for if it is also a more democratic Union.

But who is the *demos* of the European Union? There are some voices, especially in the German EU-debate, claiming that a European demos cannot emerge as a demos has to be a culturally homogenous people and the EU's population is not such a group (Kirchof 1994, p. 59) However, this "no-demos"-thesis does not correspond with the understanding of identities as developed within this paper. Democracy needs the idea of commonality (not sameness) and universality, which is representable and which can be represented. But this commonality must not be built up of cultural factors as in the nation state.

The European Commission has tried to find a new way of defining a common cultural identity by understanding political values as basis of a common culture:

> (5) If citizens give their full support to, and participate fully in, European integration, greater emphasis should be placed on their common cultural values and roots as a key element of their identity and their membership of a society founded on freedom, democracy, tolerance and solidarity; a better balance should be achieved between the economic and cultural aspects of the Community, so that these aspects can complement and sustain each other. (Decision establishing Culture 2002, 1)

This seems an interesting, not essentialist and open concept of identity. It has, however, two major drawbacks.

1. By defining political values – freedom, democracy, tolerance and solidarity - as the fundamentals of a common European identity an essential concept of cultural identity as given by common ethnic roots is avoided but, at the same time, those political values are essentialised. They are not understood as dynamic concepts, continually developing and changing according to conflicting interests but as a kind of static quality a political community has or does not have. As the Croatian writer Boris Buden wrote with respect to the perception of the Balkans in Western Europe: "A society which is still involved in political fights with unforeseeable outcome is not simply a society with specific political problems but a society of the "uncivilised world". (Buden 1998, 4) In this understanding, freedom, democracy, tolerance and solidarity are not political

values of a community (or a community-to-be like the EU) that are defined and re-defined in constant political struggles (see e.g. Laclau/ Mouffe 1985) but clearly defined qualities you need to be part of this community, a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion instead of a field of discourse.

2. Secondly and paradoxically, the institutional structures of the EU itself do not really meet these values propagated by the European Commission as common European values – at least if we understand those values not only as part of political ideas, of cultural values but also as political practice. (Obviously, this problem is closely linked to the first one: When political concepts are understood as part of a common, traditional culture, implementation into practice does not seem necessary.) But democracy remains an empty catchword if it is not translated into concrete political structures. If we thus argue that the common base of the „peoples of Europe" can be considered the shared political values of the Union as enshrined in its basic constituent documents (Weiler 1995: 1685) this base has to be constituted, developed and affirmed within a European public sphere where collective problems, political concepts and solutions can be discussed. But the current modes of political decision making, especially its high degree of intransparency, hamper the development of such a European public sphere.

The public sphere in modern, large and multiply structured societies can only be understood as the sum of differentiated partial public spheres. This does not only hold true for the European Union but also for national public spheres. This is why the European diversity of languages or the impossibility of simultaneous communication are not a real impediment of a European public sphere – national public spheres do not work directly, either. (see Gerhards/Neidhardt 1991) The main question is how to interest potential participants of a European public sphere, how to make understood the enormous impact European decisions have on individual lives as well as social structures, and how to create loyalties on the European level (which do not have to compete with national loyalties but can complement them in many ways.)

The creation of a European public sphere is first and foremost not a technical problem (of e.g. creating a European TV-programme) but it is a question of contents that can be discussed, shared, and contested by the European citizens – in short: It is a question of politics and especially political representation. If we maintain that as in the case of nation states a collective identity is

not a pre-supposition of the emerging of a new polity but that those two parts of a political community develop parallely then we should focus on the creation of democratic, transparent and adequate political structures in order to create both a democratically working polity and a European public sphere.

Current developments of the EU give the impression that the European political elite has understood the need for a thorough political reformation of the Union. This is why the question of a European constitution has become a central point of European discourse and why a convention has been chosen as the adequate way to reach such a constitution. The Irish „No" to the Treaty of Nice has been another proof for the declining permissive consensus of European citizens to European integration. Not only has the bargaining of national interests in a intergovernmental conference once again shown its limited capacity of solving problems of the Union but it also has become obvious that European citizens are not longer willing to accept blindly the decisions of the European heads of government for the fate of Europe. The convention seems an adequate answer of the European governments to the combination of interest for a closer political integration of Europe with a widespread scepticism with regard to the existing institutions of the Union. The fact that the candidate states are represented in the convention seemingly acknowledges the importance of including these states into far reaching decisions about the future of the EU.

Two issues seem of paramount importance for the future of the EU:

1. Up to now the structure of the Union is much too complex and not transparent enough to create public discourse on and within it. A clear cut basic structure that can be easily mediated has therefore to be constitutionalised in order to create a European public sphere. Although the EU will always remain a complex polity and the individual citizen cannot be expected to interest herself for all procedural details the overall aim and the overall structure of the EU has to become clear to her.

2. In order to become interested in European affairs European citizens have to get some influence on these affairs. Most relevant decisions in the EU are made by the Council of the European Union and the European Council both of which are not directly elected by

the citizens. The concrete shape of many policies is decided in the European Commission that is either not elected and specified through the so-called comitology, a highly intransparent process. So, obviously, reforms have to focus on the European Parliament as the only directly elected organ of the EU. Up to now, the decision-making-powers of the EP are too limited to make it a fully developed parliament. Furthermore, elections procedures for the EP are less than satisfying: European citizens vote according to different national procedures and they do not vote for the parties their MEP represent within the EP but for the national parties the MEP belong to in the nation state. The low turnout of EP-elections and the fact that those elections are usually fought over national and not European subjects are other indications for the problems of political representation through this institution. The definition of the whole EU as an integrated constituency for EP elections where a uniform electoral law applies and a dramatic increase of co-decision power for the EP are thus without any doubt a necessary pre-requisite for an emerging European polity.

A constitution and a strengthened parliament are necessary but not sufficient pre-conditions for a European public sphere and thus for a lively European democracy. If the European Union shall succeed as a political project, i.e. if its existence is to make a difference for European politics than it has to be more than a poorer version of the nation state on a trans-national level. As Gilbert Weiss (forthcoming) put it tying up to Voegelin, an idée directrice for the EU is necessary to make it a representative political system. Up to now, the discussions of the convention do not give much hope that such an idea, such a vision will be developed within this institution. Representatives of national governments fight for their national advantages instead of developing competing concepts for the development of Europe. Sometimes, it seems as if a political determination to build up Europe while doubtlessly having been part of the political programme of the founding fathers of European Integration is lacking in the current political agents of the EU. (Barnavi 2002, 90)

But maybe there are other agents more willing or able to develop such a vision. Maybe intellectuals, academia are the right people to take this part – this conference in Krakow could be a case in point. But the enthusiasm of a very small intellectual elite for European integration will

not suffice to make it a representative polity. So, it is perhaps our task to create a European public sphere, to start disputes on European matters in which not national or regional egotisms are the driving forces but different ideas of what this Europe should be.

4. A personal vision for Europe

So, allow me at the end of this paper to change its focus from mainly theoretical considerations on political representation to some highly normative and very personal ideas on the polity this Europe could or should become.

The Europe I wish for would be one that makes a difference for those at the margins of their respective national societies, for cultural minorities – for Albanians in Italy, Africans in Austria, Roma and Sinti in Bulgaria – but as well for people discriminated because of their gender, their sexual orientation, their religious beliefs …

The Europe I wish for would be one that knows of all parts of political representation and takes them into account in its structural considerations. As mentioned before, this implies a stronger parliament with clearer links to its electorate but this will not be enough. It will be even not enough to take care of as many as possible different interests– be they nationally, regionally, by party affiliation or otherwise defined. To recognize the different aspects of political representation means to take into consideration which impact it would have on the political interest of women to see a political assembly consisting of 50% women or to consider the symbolic value a Rom in the EP would have for a minority that has been deprived of its political rights for centuries.

The Europe I wish for would, however, also in its other forms of representation pay specific attention to those to whom usually no specific attention is paid to. And it would recognize that political representation is a necessary but not sufficient condition of democracy and would complement it with dispute, with deliberation, with support for a vivid and controversial media and culture landscape creating many different public spaces. It would continue the debate on the future of Europe it launched after the intergovernmental conference at Nice and do its utmost to broaden and deepen it, to include all those who will not automatically take part in such a debate, to use all media and to tackle various issues of impact on this theme.

Finally, the Europe I wish for would be a deliberate part of globalisation. It would not replace nationalism by an even more artificial "Europeanism" but it would defend its most important

political achievement of the last 150 years, the European social state. It would not do so by stubbornly conserving existing structures but by developing new concepts to safeguard old values – and developing them in close co-operation with those actually concerned. Maybe in the form Pierre Bourdieu proposed, in co-operation with new social movements, trade unions and intellectuals. Maybe in another form and with other partners. – Democracy, as I said at the beginning of this paper, is a way of organising power, of structuring a society. If democracy is true to its own normative content, then it is a dynamic, process-oriented, open way to do so. Only in this way it can take care of the complex, constantly shifting and reorganising identities of its citizens and translate them into adequate mechanisms of political representation.

References

Adams, John 1954, The Political Writings of John Adams, ed. by G. A. Peek, New York: Bobbs-Merrill

Anderson, Benedict 1983, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism

Barnavi, Eli 2002, European identity and ways of promoting it, in: Cavanna, Henry (Ed.),Governance, Globalization and the European Union. Which Europe for Tomorrow? Dublin:

Benhabib, Seyla 1996, Introduction. The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference, in: Benhabib S.. (ed.), Democracy and Difference. Contesting the Boundaries of the Political, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3-18.

Benhabib, Seyla 1999, Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit. Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Horkheimer Vorlesungen. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer

Bodin, Jean 1576/1986, Sechs Bücher über den Staat. München: Beck.

Buden, Boris 1998, Bella gerant allii ..., in: Kulturrisse, August, 4-5

Connolly, William 1982, The Terms of Political Discourse. Princeton

Eulau H. / Karps P. D. 1978, The Puzzle of Representation: Specifying Components of Responsiveness´. In: Eulau, H./ Wahlke J. C. (eds.), The Politics of Representation. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Gallie William B.1956, Essentially Contested Concepts, in: Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol.56, 1956, pp. 167-220.

Gellner, Ernest 1983, Nations and Nationalism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Gellner, Ernest 1995, The Warwick Debates on Nationalism.
http://www.members.tripod.com/GellnerPage/Warwick2.html (last controlled on 2002-07-06)

Gerhards J. / Neidhardt F.1991, Strukturen und Funktionen moderner Öffentlichkeit: Fragestellungen und Ansätze, in: S. Müller-Dohm S./Neumann-Braun K. (Eds.), Öffentlichkeit, Kultur, Massenkommunikation. Beiträge zur Medien- und Kommunikationssoziologie, Oldenburg

Hardt M./ Negri A. 2002, Empire. Die neue Weltordnung. Frankfurt/ NewYork: Campus Hobbes, Thomas 1651/1996, Leviathan. Hamburg Meiner.

Hartsock, Nancy 1983, Money, Sex, and Power, New York: Longman

Hauriou, Maurice 1929, Précis de droit constitutionnel, Paris.

Janik, Allan (forthcoming), The Vanity of Definitions: Culture and Art as Essentially Contested Concepts.

Jordan G./ Weedon C. 1995, Cultural Politics. Class, Gender, Race and the Postmodern World. Oxford, UK & Cambridge, USA: Blackwell.

Katz R.S./Mair P. 1995, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. The Emergence of the Cartel Party", in: Party Politics, Vol.1 (1) 5-28

Kirchof, Paul 1994, Kompetenzaufteilung zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten und der EU, in: Europäisches Forum: Die künftige Verfassungsordnung der Europäischen Union (Europäische Gespräche 2/94, edited by Vertretung er Europäischen Kommission in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn.

Laclau E./ Mouffe C. 1985, Hegemony and socialist strategy : towards a radical democratic politics. London 1985 .

Levy, D. (1987), Political Order. Philosophical Anthropology, Modernity, and the Challenge of Ideology. Baton Rouge and London.

Mirabeau, Honoré G. Comte de 1834, Oeuvres, Paris

Niekant, Renate 1999, Zur Krise der Kategorien ,Frauen und Geschlecht'. Judith Butler und der Abschied von feminsitischer Identitätspolitik, in: Bauhardt Ch./ von Wahl A. (Eds.), Gender and Politics. ,Geschlecht in der feministischen Politikwissenschaft. Opladen: Leske + Budrich

Phillips, Anne 1995, The Politics of Presence, Oxford: Clarendon Press

Pitkin, Hanna F. 1967, The Concept of Representation. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

Puntscher Riekmann S./ Pollak J./ Bapuly B./ Mokre M./ Slominski P. (2002), Constitutionalism and Democratic Representation in the European Union, Interim Report. Vienna

Sawer Marian 2000, Parliamentary Representation of Women: From Discourses of Justice to Strategies of Accountability. International Political Science Review. Women, Citizenship, and Representation. Vol.21/October 2000, No. 4, 361-380.

Sternberger Dolf 1971, Nicht alle Staatsgewalt geht vom Volke aus. Studien über Repräsentation, Vorschlag und Wahl, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer

Voegelin, Eric 1991, Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik, München: Alber

Weiler J.H.H 1995, The State "über alles": Demos, Telos and the German Maastricht Decision, in: Due O. et al. (eds.), Festschrift für Ulrich Everling, Baden-Baden: 1995

Weiss, Gilbert (forthcoming), The Many Souls of Europe. An analysis of "new" speculative speeches on Europe.

Internet Sources

DECISION No 508/2000/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 February 2000, establishing the Culture 2000 programme, http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/decision_en.pdf, last controlled 2002-07-06)

http://62.200.2.168/web/bmiwebp.nsf/AllPages/WA991217000019
   (last controlled on 2002-07-06)

 http://www.statistik.at (last controlled on 2002-07-06)