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Identities in Plural Societies

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***Identities in Plural Societies* by Aune Valk, University of Tartu**

Introduction

The last few decades have seen extensive research on (collective) identity as well as complaints about the crisis, overuse, and cliché-ing of identity studies (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). A similar contradiction can be followed in everyday political and social discussion. There are numbers of people who claim the irrelevance of collective identities defining ethnic and national borders in a nowadays uniting Europe and quickly globalising world. On the other hand, we can see and read daily about the prejudice, discrimination and conflicts taking place on these borders.

Collective (or social) identity is a research question in different fields - social, political, and cultural studies - as well as a widely used term in media and politics. This means that the concept is used in very different ways. This is one of the problems in identity discussions. In a study by Ashmore and his colleagues (2004) comparing four major identity theories in social psychology - Tajfel's & Turner's (1979) social identity theory (SIT); Turner's and his colleagues' (1987) social categorization theory (SCT); Stryker's (1980) identity theory; and Cross's (1971) nigrescence model - only self-categorisation was a common element used in all current major theories.

Thus the first question is, what is the 'identity' that we are talking about? The discussion below shows that it is not a pure theoretical issue to debate between different theories, but a very practical problem as well. There is lot of misunderstanding arising such issues as:

- (1) the distinction and relationship between ethnic and national identity,
- (2) the relationship between personal and social identity, in which one forms another,
- (3) how much identity is a voluntary conscious choice that can be changed, forgotten and developed? Or is it in major part ascribed by early childhood experiences and education, and embedded in people's everyday realities?
- (4) 'Otherness' in identity. Who has a right to identify whom? Can we define ourselves without knowing who are the others?
- (5) Self-esteem and how it relates identity to inter-group differentiation?
- (6) Identity in relation to out-group derogation and
- (7) Multiplicity of identities.

These crucial questions in identity research help to explain what is happening with people as a side effect of an economically globalising world; how European identity can or cannot be created; and how it relates to national and regional identities, acculturation and developing of multiple identities.

In order better to set the scene I initially define collective identity, using the elements of the Tajfel definition of social identity, as part of an individual's self-concept that includes one's categorisation as a

member of a distinctive social group together with the value attached to the group, and symbolic and concrete importance of one's membership in the group.

National and Ethnic Groups and Identities

In his short overview of the discussions held on national identity in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, Bertriveau (2001) refers to two opposite theories on national identity. Initiated by Herder and followed up by Fichte, Maurras, and Gobineau, the first position argues that identity is initiated by a will to differentiate oneself from others, and that there are objective criteria for this differentiation e.g. language and culture. This position is followed by the primordialistic approach to nations in the 19th century, and a more modern, less radical ethnicist approach in the 20th century (Armstrong, 1982; Smith, 1991). Ernest Renan, who best represents the near opposite viewpoint, argues that in the 19th century there were universal principles valid for all human beings: 'an individual is first of all [a] rational and moral being and only after that limited by one or another language, or is a member of one or another race'. As a base of national identity he refers to the shared past: heroes, glorious battles, shared sacrifices; and to present feelings of solidarity and a desire to live together.

Although the importance of shared past and feelings of solidarity are represented in almost all definitions of nations and ethnicities, the idea of differentiation is also still alive. One of the most prominent theorists of nations and nationalism, Benedict Anderson defines nation as an

imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion... The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind...it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (Benedict Anderson, 1996: 6-7)

Thus, the feeling of belonging together for some reason, and of defining the borders of the group of people with whom this feeling is shared, seem to be the two, opposite, yet complementary principles of national identity that in modern theory "invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner, 1984).

The main difference between a nation and an ethnic group is the political dimension of the former. Nation may be defined as a politically mature ethnic group (Smith, 1991). While both ethnic group and nation can be characterised by a name and by being conscious of the nation/ethnic group, common culture, shared myths and history, feeling of solidarity and having a (memory of) homeland, nation is also characterised by having or striving towards political sovereignty and shared economic structures. When differentiating ethnic group and nation, several authors also refer to group status. A nation is comprised of a majority group in a society. It has achieved the aims of nationalism by becoming a nation. It has its own territory, economics, and political power. Ethnic group is often referred to as a minority group or as a segment of a larger society, the members of which have a common origin and culture (Yinger, 1994).

Due to the belief in common descent that is a unique feature of ethnic categorisation compared to other social categories, ethnic identity can be considered a somewhat special aspect of social identity. Although contemporary urban ethnicity cannot be equated with the deeper attachments and firmer boundaries of less mobile times and places, the ethnic factors continue to be significant elements in most societies (Yinger, 1985). Being partly ascribed and partly acquired (see discussion around this distinction below) ethnic identity is, on the one hand, stable and rooted in important social and family relations and, on the other hand, sensitive to individual differences, cultural, societal and personal life changes. As a result we can see the surprising stability of ethnic identities over time, while their expressions might differ with changes in a society due to political and economic development, globalisation and acculturation.

While there is lot of warning that growth of global communication leads to the dissolution of cultural and ethnic differences, Smith sees this process the other way around. ICT-based (mass) communication 'have enabled smaller and, weaker and less advantaged groups to come together and make their needs and claims heard and felt'. This phenomenon that might bring along ethnic fragmentation has also a potential to unite on a human-cultural identity level different 'Pan-' movements created originally with economic (e.g. European Coal and Steel Community) and/or political aims (e.g. Arab League and uniting American States). It is due to the lack of cultural unity and common identity that these organisations have often failed in achieving their practical – political and/or economic aims. 'It is only today that the material base for a genuine 'Pan' movement and regional organization exists.' (Smith, 1993, p. 132) This reality can be clearly followed in Europe where there is more discussion than ever about creating, finding and/or supporting European identity, and linguistic and cultural sharing. But this is not a 'nice cultural project' *per se*; rather it has rational aims to achieve legitimacy for planned (and maybe already once failed) political and economic actions.

Identity – personal and/ or social

The majority of social psychological theories describe identity as a social phenomenon stemming from one's group memberships and role-taking (McCall, Simmons, 1966/1978; Stryker, 1980, 1987). The personal aspect of this process is to adapt oneself to the roles and belongings, and integrating different roles and belongings with each other. A rather opposite view sees identity as an expression of one's 'true self', while roles and norms are obstacles in finding the authentic identity (Harter, 1997). The latter approach assumes the existence of such true self – real and independent experiences, attitudes, and personality traits that expression might be inhibited due to the strict rules and norms of relevant groups.

This theoretical opposition can be followed in real life in different understandings about the role of group in determining individual actions among more individualistic and collectivistic cultures. While people in more individualistic (and often also widely classified as Western) cultures might have strong group (national, regional, etc) identity and still behave as single individuals ignoring when necessary their group norms and rules (individual self), then collectivistic groups define quite strictly the behaviour of their group members. In the latter case there might be an understanding that for single individuals there does not exist separate identity that is stable across situations at all, but that each person has in every situation a unique role and identity that respects the norms and rules of a particular relationship or group (collective self) (Markus, Kitayama, 1991).

In Western (especially Protestant) Europe and English-speaking countries around the world, 'self-expression' is highly valued (Inglehart, 2006). Thus it is natural to pursue self-fulfilment, to follow one's

‘true self’, and to choose and use group memberships that support personal aims the best. In countries where ‘traditional’ and/or ‘survival values’ are overwhelming, e.g. African, South-Asian and some Eastern-European countries, group membership and respective identity have a much closer relationship with one’s personal choices and everyday activity (see also Figure 1). As expressed by Christian Welzel (2006)

in combination, weak secular-rational values and weak self-expression values pursue an ideal in which individuals are restrained by chaining them to survival communities. The commonality of this ideal is to emphasize human constraints. In combination, strong secular-rational values and strong self-expression values pursue an ideal in which individuals are free to express themselves by unchaining them from survival communities. The commonality of this ideal is to emphasize human choice.

While secular-rational value dimension is about the importance of religiosity, patriotism, respecting authority, teaching obedience and supporting (traditional) familism, the self-expression – survival value dimension is a polarisation between emphasizing civic and political freedom, supporting and using public expression, tolerating nonconformity, feeling self-direction and sensing trust. One cannot say which values are good and which are bad. Values dominating in particular society express the economic and political conditions of the society.

Inglehart and Baker (2000) found evidence that orientations have shifted from Traditional toward Secular-rational values, in almost all industrial societies. But modernization, is not linear-when a society has completed industrialization and starts becoming a knowledge society, it moves in a new direction, from Survival values toward increasing emphasis on Self-expression values. (cited from Inglehart, 2006).

Advanced Western societies have during the past 50 years become so wealthy that most of the present population has grown up taking survival for granted. ‘Cohort differences (see Figure 2) in values indicate a long-term increase of secular-rational and self-expression values in all cultural zones except Africa.’ (Welzel, 2006) If something is taken for granted – even if it is such basic things for survival as economic and physical security - it is understandable that its felt importance decreases.



Figure 1. Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World: The Two-Dimensional Value Space in Reality, Source: <http://margaux.grandvinum.se/SebTest/wvs>

It is, however, important to appreciate that although survival values seem not to be important, any threat to them is taken very sensitively. The threat can be related to economic difficulties, increasing unemployment, moving companies to countries with cheaper labour or increasing immigration. In such a situation, people who normally value highly tolerance and trust, may become intolerant towards immigrants and/or other cultures who are perceived as a threat through the local economy. When survival is taken for granted, people might be even more sensitive about any threat to one's current level of well-being. Although many people in wealthy countries could easily survive with half or even less their current income, even a slight decrease is perceived as a threat.

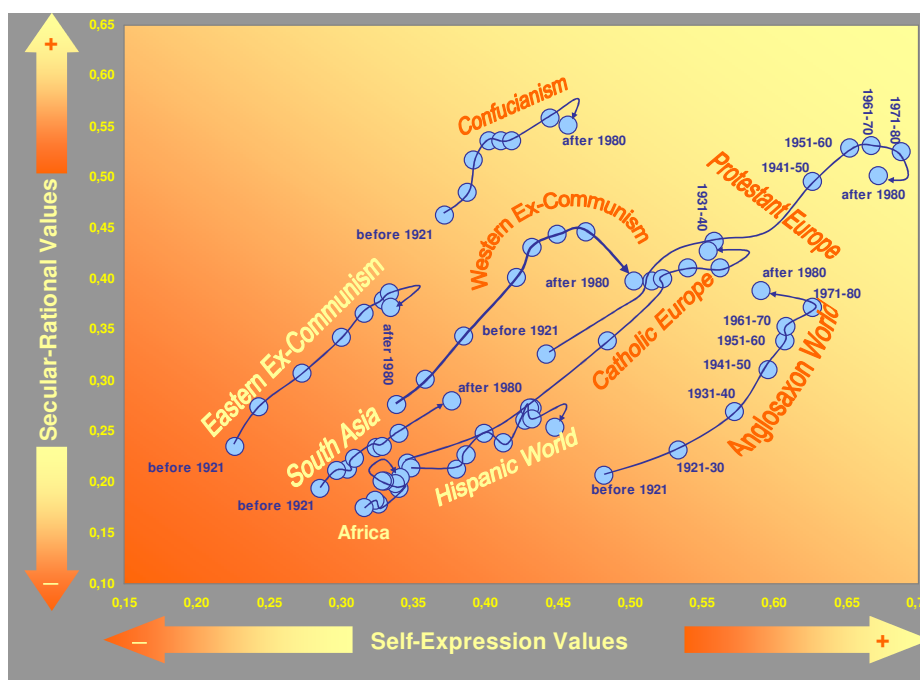


Figure2. Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World: Cohort Differences Throughout Cultural Zones, Source: <http://margaux.grandvinum.se/SebTest/wvs>

Thus the given feeling of well-being can be seen as a basis for the emergence of self-expression values. This is one of the sources for value conflicts that can be followed in many Western societies. Immigrants are expected to adopt new local values in a situation where most of them cannot (still) enjoy the wealth. Even if survival in the direct sense is not any more an issue, they cannot take it for granted. Moreover, values do not change radically in years, but rather over decades or generations. Africans, South Asians, including in Inglehart’s classification also Pakistan and Turkey, and some East Europeans who according to Inglehart and Welzel possess the strongest traditional and survival values, form the majority of current immigrants and minority groups in the European Union. It is obvious that they keep stressing the importance of religion and traditional family, and demand obedience and respect for authority from their children. These values have helped them to survive in their homeland for centuries and, as can be followed from Figure 2, were prevailing also in the majority of cultures in the mid 20th century.

The value differences across different countries or even continents reflect cultural, economic and political multiplicity. These are however becoming a problem when they meet in the same society. Whereas Western values are perceived as a threat to traditional ways of living in many Muslim societies, traditional and survival values are perceived as a threat for democracy in the West. The value conflict can be followed between majority and the bigger immigrant groups, but values are also obtained via mass media. Thus, limiting immigration in Europe and limiting Internet or TV access in Arab and some Asian countries could be perceived as two expressions of the same phenomenon.

The challenge for local, regional and national governments in these situations is at least twofold’.

First, how to offer feeling of security for the majority group? Maybe by showing that the conditions and limits of well-being, and the relative benefit of ever-increasing income, are not fixed, but flexible. As many authors have shown, the correlation between income and happiness decreases with the increase of income level: above the level of US \$10,000 per capita income, there are virtually no increases (Helliwell, 2003) or only small increases (Schyns, 2003) in well-being. 'Efforts and policies to raise income in wealthy nations are unlikely to increase well-being and might even undermine factors (such as rewarding social relationships or other cherished values) that have higher leverage for producing enhanced well-being' (Diener, Seligman, 2004, p. 10). 'Moreover, health, quality of government, and human rights all correlate with national wealth, and when these variables are statistically controlled, the effect of income on national well-being becomes nonsignificant.' (Diener, Seligman, 2004, p. 5) Well-being is highest not among 'those who live in the richest countries, but those who live where social and political institutions are effective, where mutual trust is high, and corruption is low' (Helliwell, 2003, p. 355).

Secondly, how to integrate the old values of immigrants with the opportunities and constraints of the new society? For example, if religion is of high value, then it is no solution to ignore it, but rather to support its accepted forms, if respecting authority is of value, then there could also be groups in the new society that are respected. One could also show how self-expression values could be used for mutual benefit, not just for fulfilling individual aims.

Ascribed and acquired identity

Identity is a social phenomenon developed through upbringing, education and media. It is strange therefore even to pose a question about ascription of identity. 'It is fashionable in today's social science community to insist on the flexibility of identities and the malleability of group boundaries' (Smith, 1993, p. 129). It is of course obvious that compared to more stable periods in history, people are nowadays exposed to more and different roles and identities. They are more conscious of their identities, and thus can quite easily choose between them. Individuals can even 'create their own communities and construct thus collective cultural identities of their own aspirations' says Smith and asks at the same time "Or can they? To what extent are ethnic or national identities manipulable?" (Smith, 1993, p. 129)

The mainstream social constructivist view that identities are constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed by people and groups has left aside or even denied the role of other factors in identity formation. Several voices have tried to restore the importance of 'inborn group differences' in identity research, saying that 'cultures and cultural identities are not created in test tubes, but in material historical conditions' (Davis, Nakayama & Martin, 2000, p. 532); or that 'social construction of an identity draws on a variety of authentic elements held in common within a group...' (Kelman, 2001, p.194). Eriksen (2001, p. 47) has stressed the "need for a phenomenological understanding of social identity, which sees it as emerging from experiences, not as a mere construct of ideology." This is, however, clearly a minority view in social psychology, and has been represented rather by anthropologists, and political scientists.

If we assume that identity is a voluntary conscious choice of individuals expressed in the form 'who do I want to be?' not 'who am I/are we?', then the value of identity is of course one of the most important factors in understanding identity processes. For example it is valuable to be French, thus it is obvious that all ethnic minorities in France should do their best to become French. If, however, we assume that identities can be more or less ascribed via concrete, unreflective, lived experience, then the first question with which people are faced in the development of their identity is 'who am I /are we?', probably

followed by ‘who are the others?’ (to answer more clearly the first question), and maybe “what is the best way to be who we are?”, rather than ‘what is it ‘good’ to be?’. (For more discussion of the relationship between these three aspects, see the paragraph on ‘goodness’ in identity’ below). If there is no (perceived) opportunity to change, for example, your race, gender, ethnicity, and these related identities, then the last question would not make much sense. The meaningfulness or feeling of distinctiveness in being ‘who we are’ might be a more important motivation than the question ‘what is ‘good’ to be?’ in identity and its related processes (for different identity motives see Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Thorpe, Scabini, 2004).

Thus, we can see many minority groups in Europe and around the world not searching for more positive (valued by the majority) or easy (assimilating) identity, but rather for an identity that will help them to understand themselves and their parents’ lives and experiences. As said by the 80 year old Estonian man who fled to Sweden from Soviet occupation in 1944 at the age of 30: ‘in my age it is impossible to be anybody else than Estonian’.

A parallel to the question of how identities are ‘emerging’, ‘created’ or from where they are ‘drawn’, is the question of the ‘social embeddedness’ of identity - an identity element defined by Ashmore and his colleagues (2004, p. 92) as ‘the degree to which particular collective identity is implicated in the person’s everyday ongoing social relationship’. Most of the research on identity studies the importance of an identity for a self-concept. This means, how particular group belonging, its history and traditions help one better to understand oneself, feel more proud of oneself or just live a richer and more interesting life. This is perfectly expressed in another interview by a third generation half-Estonian origin Swedish young lady: ‘My life would have been rather dull, if I would not have been an Estonian. I could not go to Estonia, I could not enter another society like I did in Estonia.’ Similarly, working in Brussels, it should not in most cases matter much whether one is German, British, French or Polish, and national differences and identities can provide for another interesting topic in a dinner conversation. The same applies for most of Christian religious and regional identities in any of the European countries.

The case is totally different, when one’s religious affiliation, ethnic background (sometimes evident only in one’s name) or citizenship determines most of the important aspects in one’s life – one’s job, the neighbourhood to live in, one’s social activities, one’s friends, one’s options to choose future spouse etc. In this case, identity is highly socially embedded, and has a different meaning and function. Also an opportunity to change it or choose another identity is possible only theoretically and happens in rare cases, since changing identity equals changing one’s life and in case of tight communities this can make one very vulnerable, and influence not just an individual but the whole group.

The role of the “other” in constructing and affirming identity

Next comes the question of the role of the “other” in forming an identity. Can we answer who we are, without having a common understanding of another? Are the others different (enough) from us - optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991)? Which are the borders between us and them, including questions posed by social identity theory about legitimacy and the permeability of borders? How do we compare ourselves to them - intergroup bias? The distinctiveness motive has been considered a ‘fundamental and universal human need, necessary for self-definition’ (Brewer, 1991; Vignoles, Chrysochoou, & Breakwell, 2000, p. 340), and one of the basic identity motives besides self-esteem. However, the sources of distinctiveness used to define identity will be inherently variable across cultures. While in individualistic cultures distinctiveness is constructed mainly in terms of difference and separateness from others, in collectivistic cultures the same is achieved by stressing the social position.

The idea that all groups and people engage to some extent in comparing themselves to others is supported by Brown and his colleagues (1992), who differentiate between autonomous and relational (originally called comparative and non-comparative, see Hinkle & Brown, 1990) social orientations, proposing that cultures, groups, and people differ in their concern about comparing one's group to others. Although the idea of objective differences between groups is nowadays denounced, the importance of constructing identity in the context of including "other" identities has therefore even been enforced. As summarised by Eriksen, the 'scholarly orthodoxy on ethnicity and the politics of identity' views, among other things, see ethnicity as 'a property of a relationship between two or several groups, not a property of a group; it exists *between* and not *within* groups. Ethnicity is the enduring and systematic communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinct. It appears whenever cultural differences are made relevant in social interaction,...' (2001 p. 46). This sees differentiation as an integral part of identity or even as a source for its emergence.

One aspect of the question of another in identity formation is the balance between self- and other-defined identities. Eriksen (2001, p. 44) has posed the question 'who has the right to identify whom', referring to the power relationships between groups and the balance between claimed and accepted, or 'self-defined' and 'other-defined' aspects of identity. In social psychological research this distinction addresses issues that range from status differences (see for a recent overview Simon, Aufderheide, Kampmeier, 2004), to perceived public evaluation of one's identity (Luhtanen, Crocker, 1992), to other-defined (Said, 1978, referred in Eriksen, 2001) and devalued identities (Crocker, Quinn, 2004). It is one of the oldest (James, 1890) and, according to some authors (Lange & Westin, 1985), also one of the most crucial distinctions in identity. It has its origin in the end of nineteenth century when William James defined man's social me as 'the recognition which he gets from his mates' (1890, 1999:70). The idea that self or identity is formed mainly on the basis of information attained from other people obtained its full power in symbolic interactionist theory (Cooley, 1902, Mead, 1934). According to Mead, self has two aspects - *I* and *Me*. The first of these is active, thinking and experiencing part of the self. The second - *Me* is an attitude towards the first one, based on imagined views of relevant others or the whole community.

This is an issue both for different minority groups all over the world and for small States. Defining somebody as a guest worker and Muslim even if one is born in Germany as a child of secular Turks and has German citizenship, or constant use of the term ex-Soviet regarding the most negative and forcefully oppressed aspect of several Eastern- and Central-European countries' identity, are examples. Those who use these names should not always do it for negative reasons. It is easier to classify the world into categories, and naming the 'other' helps often to define better one's own identity.

Thus, according to Lange and Westin (1985, referring also to Tajfel, 1981 and Turner et al., 1987) grouping people and calling them with names is a process of stereotyping that is a characteristic of our mind: 'Distinctiveness draws upon the capacity of the mind to construe representations of social reality in contrasts rather than in differences of degree. To perceive contrasts is to let the perspective of difference in one dimension overshadow the perspective similarity in many others' (p. 19). Rosenthal and Hrynevich have stressed the relevance of defining out-groups for one's own identity 'for a clear and conscious sense of ethnic identity, an awareness of boundaries between one's own ethnic group and other outgroups is essential. It is through these boundaries, and their implicit containment within the group of individuals with shared values and attributes and exclusion of those who are different, that a sense of identity is forged' (1985 p.724).

‘Goodness’ in identity

Self-esteem seems to be one of those phenomena the importance of which within identity research is not contested. Compared to any other need (e.g. need for belonging, or distinctiveness) that people might have in engaging in social group memberships or trying to make sense of their existing memberships, maintaining, enhancing, or protecting one’s (threatened) self-esteem has received the most attention. Social identity theory states that ‘people engage in positive group distinctiveness in order to protect, enhance, or achieve a *positive* social identity’ (Tajfel, 1982, p. 24), not a distinctive or meaningful identity. Self-esteem is also the major issue in the research tradition (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Phinney, 1991; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Phinney, Chavira, & Tate, 1993) that studies the threatened self-evaluation of minority youth and psychological problems in an acculturation process. According to Liebkind (1992), ‘A key-issue in writing about ethnic identity has been the impact of identification with one’s own ethnic group on positive self-concept or self-esteem’ (p.167). While there is much research about relationships between collective identities and self-esteem, these concepts have sometimes merged into each other so that no differentiation between (collective) identity and (collective) self-esteem can be made.

As shown above, self-esteem is so closely integrated into identity research that the question ‘Why should self-esteem be such a powerful motive?’ (Tice & Baumeister, 2001, p. 73) would probably seem as senseless or threatening to many because contesting a widespread understanding of human nature. Only recently have Leary and his colleagues (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; Leary & Baumeister, 2000) started the discussion about the functions of self-esteem, proposing in their Sociometer Theory that self-esteem is not an aim in itself, but rather that it monitors one’s level of *social inclusion* or *acceptance* versus *social exclusion* or *rejection*. In other words, self-esteem is not an aim of collective identification as has often been assumed, but rather, it measures how well our collective identities have fulfilled their other functions, mainly the need for belongingness (see for discussion Kirkpatrick & Ellis, 2004).

Without contesting self-esteem as a motive in itself, the question of which one - identity, self-esteem, or intergroup bias— comes first has puzzled many researchers, showing the interrelationship of the questions: Who are we? What is it ‘good’ to be? Who are the others? Most of the research in this tradition follows one or another of the two corollaries proposed by Hogg and Abrams (1990) in their critique of social identity theory. The first corollary, that successful inter-group discrimination enhances self-esteem, received support from the literature review by Rubin and Hewstone (1998). The second corollary argues that depressed self-esteem promotes in-group bias.

The literature review by Aberson and his colleagues (2000) proposes, however, that as a general rule, high self-esteem individuals show more in-group bias than do individuals with low self-esteem. Phinney (1995) analogously studied the mutual relationships between ethnic identity and personal self-esteem. She tested two hypotheses parallel to the corollaries proposed by Hogg and Abrams (1990). The first hypothesis stated that strong ethnic identity enhances self-esteem; the second hypothesis argues that positive self-esteem promotes ethnic identity. She found moderate support for both statements.

Independent of the validity of the two corollaries, both goodness (self-esteem or evaluation) and otherness (differentiation) play an important role in answering the central identity question – who am I?/who are we? (see also Figure 3). The value of the category one identifies with is derived as a rule on the bases of social comparison. Although ‘assessments of goodness and satisfaction can be made in an absolute sense against clear internal standards in case of some dimensions of evaluation or some conditions of group living, ... in most cases, however, standards of evaluation are not so clear-cut, and knowledge of the

status of out-groups becomes relevant to assessing the state of welfare of the in-group' (Brewer, 2001, p. 23-24).

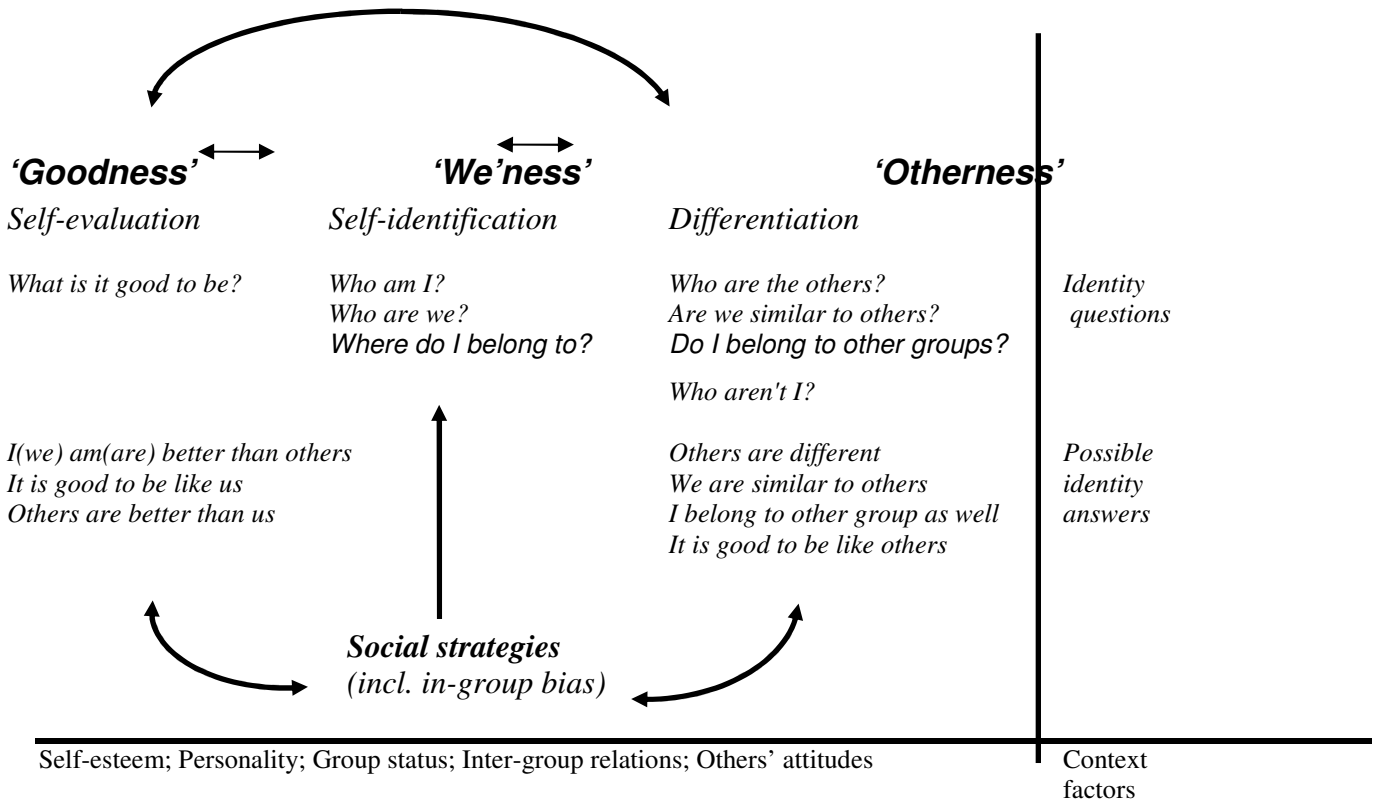


Figure 3. Three interrelated collective identity aspects in relation to social strategies used to change identity (Valk, 2001)

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In order to say 'how "good" we are', we have, in most cases, to compare ourselves to others. Thus, both the value given to a group, and differentiating and comparing one's in-group from and with others, are two steps following from self-categorisation. These steps are interrelated with each other but not sequential (as Brewer saw them). If the answers to the proposed identity questions (Figure 3) are not satisfactory, one can apply different social strategies (Tajfel, 1982) to change the existing group borders or power relations between the groups.

The choice of the strategy depends on whether the borders are perceived as legitimate and individually permeable or not. Individual strategies are used when group borders are individually permeable, for example giving up one's membership in a less valued group and striving to become a member of another. As will be shown below, there is a threat of marginalisation – loss of identity due to the non-acceptance by the new group.

When group borders are perceived as illegitimate and impermeable, one should use collective strategies. These start from changing the criteria of comparison, e.g. as done theoretically by Diener and Seligman (2004) in their paper *Beyond Money. Toward an Economy of Well-Being*. They argue that 'policy decisions at the organizational, corporate, and governmental levels should be more heavily influenced by issues related to the well-being' (p. 1) rather than economic indicators. Another example of collective strategy is re-evaluating the importance of the criteria of comparison.

A third option is finding another group for comparison; thus a minority group could compare itself to other minorities and not to the majority group. If group borders are perceived as illegitimate but permeable, the group with a lower status may start a social competition, trying to change the real hierarchy of groups.

Perceptions of group borders are thus subjective, changing the categorisation depends on how one interprets the differences, thereby answering the identity questions of goodness and otherness. The perception of legitimacy of group differences is one of the most critical factors in the emergence of ethnic conflicts. Until differences and discrimination based on the difference are seen as legitimate, the inter-group conflicts can be avoided. Objectively in a similar situation that is perceived as illegitimate, the lower valued group may use collective strategies to change the situation (Horowitz, 1985).

Identity and attitudes towards out-groups

The reported impact of national or ethnic identity on attitudes toward strangers varies, as different studies have shown. Several studies have found that in-group bias is associated with out-group hostility, especially when groups are competitive (Taylor & Moriarty, 1987) or physically distinctive (Worchel, Axsom, Ferris, Samaha, & Schweitzer, 1978). Tzeng and Jackson (1994) showed that the relationship between ethnocentrism (ingroup bias) and ethnic attitudes may depend on group status and attitude modality. Among American whites, ethnocentrism was positively correlated with out-group hostility across three attitude modalities—the affective, the cognitive, and the behavioural. Among blacks, ethnocentrism was not correlated with out-group hostility, with one exception—ethnocentrism was negatively correlated with affective hostility. Similar distinctions between majority and minority groups have appeared in studies by Levkovich and Andrushchak (1996), Verkuyten (1992, 1997), and Verkuyten and Masson (1995). In a Dutch sample, for example, prejudice was correlated positively with in-group favouritism among young people who belonged to a majority group. Among young people who belonged to a minority group, however, the two variables were either uncorrelated or negatively correlated (Verkuyten & Masson, 1995).

However, the relationship between out-group hostility and ethnic identity is generally less clear. Phinney, Chavira, and Tate (1993), for example, propose an inverse relationship between the two; they argue that individuals who have a strong sense of their ethnic identity have developed ways of handling threats to their ethnicity and, therefore, are less susceptible to negative feelings toward others. In her study of ethnic identity and other-group orientation among diverse ethnic groups, Phinney (1992) also found no connections between ethnic identity and out-group attitudes.

In addition to the strength of one's ethnic identity, a perceived threat to the security of one's identity may influence the relationship between ethnic identity and evaluations of out-groups. Branscombe, Wann, Noel, and Coleman (1993) have found that an individual's evaluations of out-group members (and in-

group members) are influenced by the degree to which the person experiences a threat to one of his or her important social identities. Their finding is supported by the results of a recent study. Valk (1998) found that correlations between ethnic identity and attitudes toward out-groups depended largely on the specific out-group. When an out-group was perceived as dangerous and competitive, strong feelings of ethnic identity were correlated with negative attitudes toward the out-group. But when an out-group was perceived as similar and friendly, strong feelings of ethnic identity were correlated with positive attitudes toward the out-group. No relationships were found between ethnic identity and attitudes toward groups perceived as neither positive nor negative.

Thus, it is certainly wrong to say that strong and positive national/ethnic identity should be related to out-group derogation. Outgroup derogation can, if related to identity, be best classified as one strategy that may help to maintain and support identity in case of a perceived threat to inclusion, distinctiveness, and self-esteem (Brewer, 2001). Brewer herself shows how threats to inclusion are predicted to heighten negative but normally not aggressive feelings (moral superiority, intolerance of difference, and concomitant emotions of contempt and disgust) toward relevant outgroups. Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje (2000) reach a similar conclusion by showing that ‘out-group derogation can also reflect a willingness to conform to perceived in-group norms to gain approval’ (p. 56). This occurs in the cases of two most typical examples of threat to inclusion: ‘peripheral group members seeking admittance to the group or in-group members who fear expulsion’ (p. 56).

Out-group derogation is also one strategy in case of the threat of loss of distinctiveness (due to too close contact, integration, or influence from the out-group), which in this case is related to emotions like fear and anger that also propel action against the out-group rather than mere avoidance (Brewer, 2001). There are numerous studies, mainly by Branscombe and his colleagues (e.g. Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Branscombe & Wann, 1994; for an overview see Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2000), that seek to prove that threatened self esteem is a source for out-group derogation. Thus, out-group derogation might result when some aspect or motive of strong identity is threatened, but it is not a necessary by-product or condition of categorisation or evaluation.

For example, if the national narrative includes an exclusive claim to ownership of land and control of its resources, and this is in contrast with another group’s analogous narrative, then the derogation of the outgroup’s identity and outgroup as such might be a clear expression of identity itself, as shown by Kelman (2001, p.192) in the case of the Jewish – Palestinian conflict: “Negation of the other’s identity and of the narrative in which it is embedded becomes so important to the conflict that it is incorporated in the identity that each group constructs for itself and in the narrative that it presents to the world.” Similar examples could easily be found from different interpretations of history and its role in national identity. Exclusive and opposite claims about the historical events can be related to patriotic feelings about the heroism of grandfathers that is an inherent part of identity, as in the case of explaining the role of the Allies in the World War Two. While Americans see this as a crucial factor for the fate of the war and the saving of Europe, Russians explain it as a decision that the Western Alliance made only after it was clear that Soviet Union was about to win the war and they were afraid that Soviets will gain too much power in Europe.

Different explanations of history might also relate to the right of existence of states that is one of the background issues in Estonia, and also several other East European countries – Russian opposition. Russia explains the behaviour of the Soviet Union in 1944-1945 as the liberation of Eastern Europe from Fascism, while Eastern Europe sees it as an occupation that lasted for another 45 years, with serious crimes that should be apologised for, as Germany has done for its crimes during German occupation.

It is obvious that in these kinds of cases joint identity cannot be created on the bases of history, or if it can it takes time to get over the opposition. More than 60 years after the end of the World War Two and almost 50 years after the Treaty of Rome that is celebrated as a beginning of the European Union, in 2006 Germany and France have finally published a common history text-book *Histoire/Geschichte: Europe and the world after 1945*. Even then they could not agree on some issues, like the role of America in post-war Europe, or post-colonial history. In February 2007, European ministers of education agreed to pursue a common European history text-book. Its realisation is expected to be a long process.

Multiplicity of identities

In psychology, several theories deal with the relationships between different identities. Recent writings (see Reid, Deaux, 1996) have shed light to relationships between personal and social identities. The multiplicity of selves, roles or identities are considered not just conceptually reasonable but also psychologically wishful (Deaux, 1992). According to Thoits (1983) and Linville (1985) an opportunity to choose between different self-aspects or roles decreases stress. But rather than a direct relationship between the number or the salience of roles/identities and stress, there are particular role identities, identification with which increases or decreases stress (Thoits, 1992). Structured interviews conducted among 700 people showed that voluntary, less demanding and more supportive identities, like friend, son or daughter, and neighbour correlated negatively with stress, but others such as step-parent even increased stress. Thus, the multiplicity of identities decreases stress, but only when these are freely chosen.

Although on the one hand, a normal or even desirable phenomenon, the multiplicity of identities, may create problems, as in the case of concurrent identities studied in detail, of cultural/ethnic identities. Among the most widespread theories to describe changes in identity are acculturation theories. The concept of acculturation is employed to refer to cultural changes resulting from the group encounters, while the concept of psychological acculturation and adaptation are employed to refer to the psychological changes (including changes in identity) and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation. In all plural societies (Europe can be seen as one of them), cultural groups and their individual members must deal with the issue of how to acculturate (Berry, 1997).

Acculturation models

In the history of acculturation psychology several different models of acculturation have been proposed. The best known and most influential is a model presented by J.W.Berry called the *multiculturalism or bicultural acculturation model*. According to this model it is possible for different cultures to maintain distinct identities while individuals from one culture work with those of other cultures to serve common national or economic needs (LaFromboise et al, 1993). Berry suggests that in daily interaction, groups and individuals must work on the issue of how to acculturate by choosing the extent to which they consider important maintaining their own culture, and participation and contact with the other cultural groups or larger society. Four acculturation strategies can be defined by addressing these two issues: when individuals do not wish to maintain their identity but seek daily interaction with other groups, *Assimilation* is defined. When the individuals try to maintain their own culture and seek no interaction with other groups, *Separation* is defined. When the individuals are interested in both, maintaining their own culture and daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the case. When there is no interest or possibility for cultural maintenance, then *Marginalization* is the option. (Berry, 1997)

Another model describing acculturation is the *alternation model*. This assumes that it is possible for an individual to understand two different cultures. It also supposes that an individual can alter his or her behaviour to fit a particular social context. Alternation theorists argue that individuals experience less stress and are less anxious in comparison to other individuals using different acculturation strategies when learning to alternate their behaviour to fit into the cultures in which they are involved. (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Yet another way to approach acculturation is the *fusion model*. This describes the process as based on a melting-pot theory. According to this theory all the cultures that share a common economic, political or geographical space meld together to form a new culture, where the original cultures are impossible to distinguish. (LaFromboise et al., 1993)

Finally the earliest theory of acculturation needs to be mentioned. The *linear or bipolar model* introduced by sociologists sees conflict between ethnic minorities and the dominant society as inevitable; by acquiring a new culture, the individual loses a part of the heritage culture. According to this model an individual is considered to be on the way from the ethnic culture to the mainstream culture (Phinney and Devich-Navarro, 1997).

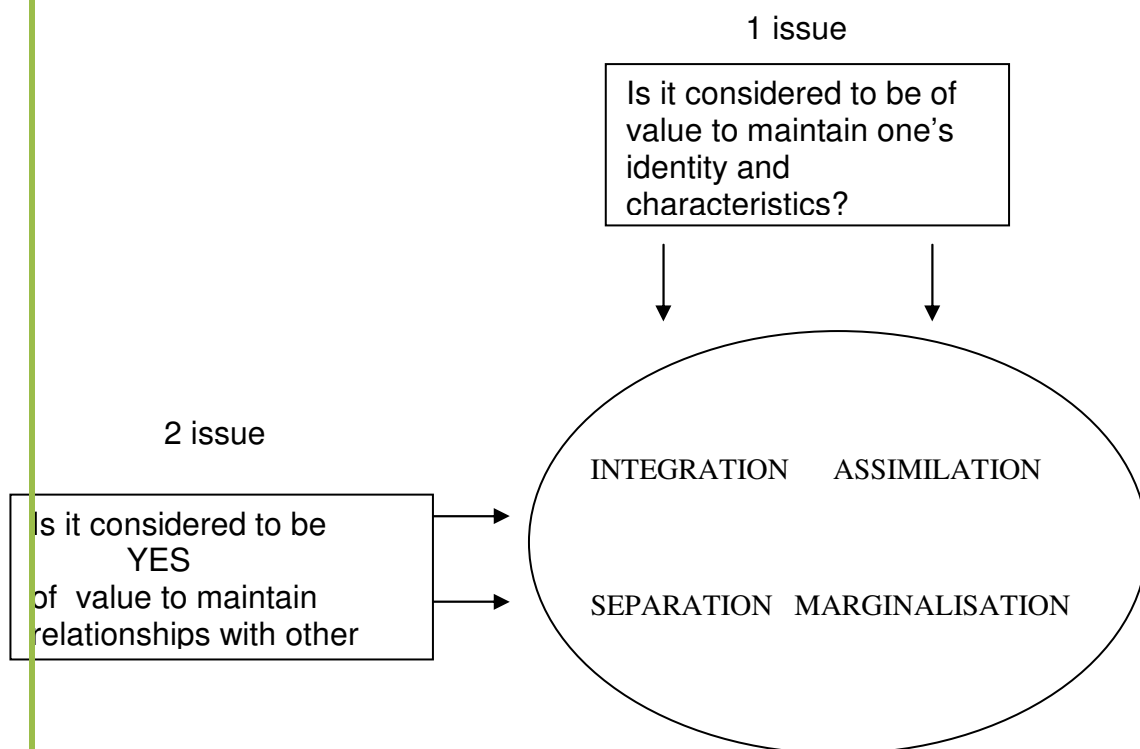


Figure 4. Four acculturation strategies (Berry, 1998)

In addition to acculturation theories that more or less describe the identity/identities that people develop as a result of an acculturation process, identity development theories (Marcia, 1966; Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973; Berzonsky, 1994) describe the process of (dual) identity formation. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1979) and writings based on it (e.g. Liebkind, 1992) deal with the issue of achieving positive identity via intergroup differentiation and social strategies to overcome negative identity.

Adaptation with multicultural identity

Independent of the particular strategy, acculturation has been connected to social and psychological difficulties that range from acquiring new social and cultural skills (Berry, 1997) to acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987) and psychological disorders (Berry & Kim, 1988). Berry (1990) has proposed that most of the psychological problems are related to marginalisation, i.e. loss of identity, and that integrated people experience the least stress. Later studies (Ward & Kennedy, 1994) have differentiated between psychological and social adaptation, and found that psychological adaptation relates first to secure identity of the in-group. Least stress is experienced by integrated and then separated people, most stress by marginalised people. Social adaptation was, however, found to be related to main-group identity. Again, the least stress was experienced by integrated people. But unlike psychological adaptation, they were followed by assimilated, then separated and finally marginalised people.

An example of psychological difficulties experienced by marginalisation is described very powerfully by a Swedish-born fifty year old Estonian woman (both parents were Estonian)

Most important is that I am right person. Then the ethnicity does not matter? But if You go deeper, then you have the roots, these I am always will be looking for and I want to belong somewhere. This is the biggest problem. If I should say today to somebody who wants to leave his/her country, I would say, do not do that because You will lose the contact to Your country. This weak relationship I had with Sweden – I lost it going to the States for 20 years. Now I feel I do not belong here. I don't know were I belong to until now. When I go to Estonia I am a stranger, when I go to the States I am a stranger, and when I am here I am a stranger too. I belong to nowhere, I am a mixture. My heart is very much in Estonia. My parents and grandparents are Estonians. But the society I was brought up is not Estonian society, my everyday life is in Sweden. I do not know what I am !(talking about the homeland) No, Sweden is not my homeland, it can't be, while I was brought up in an Estonian home. And homeland is based on the home atmosphere. But it wasn't good to rise up like that while it may make a person unhappy.

Berry (1990) and Phinney (1989) have proposed that the hardest time is when acquiring and changing the identity, using a U-shaped adaptation-curve. This means that in the beginning of acculturation, when close contacts with the new culture do not yet exist or are just about fresh and exciting experiences, the stress is low and problems are few. This is followed by a difficult period when the person has to choose between cultures and identities. The period of crisis is over when one achieves some balance between identities choosing either one or another or both for a longer time. However, empirically this model has not found much proof. Real adaptation and acquiring of new/multiple identities may include several ups and downs in stress level, that depend rather on personality traits, age, educational level, social support offered by one's group of origin, attitudes of the receiving group, and other social and economic circumstances and chosen acculturation strategies (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000).

One of the effects of multiple identities is the increase in the relevance of identity as one has to make conscious choices. Asked about the importance of being an Estonian, only a few residents but a majority of emigrant respondents considered this to be very important. Explaining the importance, emigrant Estonians gave rationales like *'Being Estonian is what I really feel I am. My parents are Estonians and it is important'*. Residents see this as a natural aspect of everyday living that cannot be changed and so it has no relevance: *'I could not imagine myself being anybody else. Most probably it is not important. If I compare myself to the others I compare myself not my ethnicity. I am conscious of the fact that I am Estonian but it does not make any difference in my life'* (Valk, Karu, 2000). Similar effect came out when reporting the pluses and minuses, and advantages and disadvantages of their ethnic belonging.

Nearly all emigrant Estonians in this qualitative study of Estonian identity in Estonia and Sweden reported that they were proud of their ethnicity, while resident Estonians were more modest in expressing their ethnic pride. The question of advantages did not seem to make much sense in the Estonian context - most resident respondents were apparently puzzled and said something like *'I don't know. What advantages or disadvantages could one nation have,'* Emigrant Estonians, in turn, found numerous arguments to explain both advantages and disadvantages of their ethnic belonging. Broadened perspective, more contacts, richer social life, a strong sense of group-belonging and the possibility to "switch" between the two communities were mentioned as some of the advantages of belonging to two cultures.

None of the emigrant respondents regretted their fate. Expressed in the words of a young Swedish-Estonian: *'Being an Estonian here has as if rendered me a wider look at the world, that you are able to understand people who come from other countries. As I am bicultural, I can view things from different angles.'*

As clearly as they were able to bring out positive moments of their bicultural status, emigrant Estonians were conscious also about the disadvantages of being from two cultures. Negative sides of the bicultural life were, however, mostly seen in the past: the first generation recalled the feeling of being different - a stranger accompanied by economic difficulties after emigration and the experience of less than full acceptance by native Swedes. Younger people mentioned some negative childhood experiences in connection with Estonian life in exile. Being bullied for their different name or an accent while speaking Swedish, and an additional obligation (given by parents) to attend Estonian complementary school were the most often recalled such events.

One of the crucial understandings regarding multiple identities for anybody - parents, teachers, counsellors, governments - who has to deal with people having the need and opportunity to acculturate, is that people can have several same level identities, and that having more than one identity is usually perceived as an advantage. The opportunities to preserve one's culture of origin as well as to adopt to the mainstream culture depends very much on the sometimes hidden attitudes and policy of the society. This means both state level policy regarding minority rights, but also little things like having text-books at school that present the existence of people with multiple backgrounds.

There are societies that assume by and large that everybody wants to forget their (miserable) ethnic background and become like the majority group - USA and France are often given as examples of this melting pot ideology. And there are opposite examples of societies that segregate groups and make very difficult both integration and assimilation of newcomers. An example of how the issue of multiple identities should not be solved by parents comes from the 25-year-old daughter of a mixed Swedish - Estonian family living in Sweden:

Father ordered me to go to this (Estonian) school while I hated this stuff! Actually it's weird that I haven't turned any more anti-Estonian, because he really pushed this schooling on me... Anyway, when I was younger, I experienced this state as an identity crisis - am I Swedish or Estonian? My father always told that 'you are not Swedish, you are an Estonian', therefore I felt that I had to choose... When I turned 15, I realised that I do not have to choose, that it's OK to be both. Now I always say that I am half Swedish - half Estonian.

European identity

All these identity issues are closely related to everyday problems of creating or finding European identity and tackling questions of national differences, supporting the multiplicity of languages, cultures and identities while building bridges between groups. Europe that is full of 'us' and 'others' should unite itself across all the distinctions. There is South and North, East and West, big and small, richer and poorer, new and old, Catholic and Protestant etc. *Unity in diversity* is a wonderful slogan for Europe but in real life it needs a lot effort to be realised. Most commentators have tended to express the belief that the potential for a European identity exists (e.g. Smith, 1991, 1992). Some have argued already, years ago, that such an identity is within the reach of most Europeans (e.g. Commission of the European Communities, 1985; Inglehart, 1977) (cited from Cinnirella, 1997). However, recent years of widening Europe and opposition

within Europe about its role in fighting terrorism in the Middle-East, have created suspicion about the strength of European identity, even among its very central members. Thus the referendum on a European Constitution in 2005 produced a No answer from the Netherlands and France.

The principle of otherness in identity proposes also the question, can we develop a common European identity without having an understanding whether the other is America, Russia, Islam, China, ... or will the future unified Europe be opposed only to the Europe of past conflicts?

Acculturation theories describing relationships between different ethnic identities can be largely applied to relationships between ethnic and European identities. Ethnic/national and European identity as different level identities should not oppose each other. Different identities could co-exist without problems if constructed at mutually exclusive levels of abstraction (Turner, 1987). This question is, however, under-researched. As found by Cinnirella (1997) in his study about British and Italian students' national and European identity, there exist different approaches towards the same issue. While the British tended to feel that their national identity was under threat from European integration and its associated European identity, Italians expressed a significantly stronger sense of European than national identity, and a stronger Euro-identity than that manifested by the British. There was a significant negative correlation between British and European identity, and a positive correlation between Italian and European identities. Thus the same question of joint identity construction was approached by British students as an issue of two incompatible identities, while Italians constructed European identity as a truly intercontinental identity at a different level of abstraction to Italian identity.

European identity and its nature is nowadays extensively debated in Europe. There are statistics about its strength in different countries, projects to promote it and discussions about its main orientation. However, there is no agreement as to what it is. Can we define it as a collective identity or is it poor political construction? Is it emerging or is it created? Can all the different meanings of European identity in different countries be brought together?

Jacobs and Maier (1998) identify three conflicting projects for a future Europe: Europe as an important power in the world; social Europe of human rights and democracy; and a Europe of strong nation states. One of the most critical questions is clearly the relationships between national identities and cultures, and European identity. Creating opposition between these two levels of identity is one of the biggest obstacles in building strong European identity. EU News and Policy positions web-site EurActiv summarises the situation as follows:

Surveys show that EU citizens continue to identify first of all with their own country. According to a Eurobarometer survey, at the end of 2004 only 47 % of EU citizens saw themselves as citizens of both their country and Europe, 41 % as citizens of their country only. 86 % of the interviewees felt pride in their country, while 68 % were proud of being European. In general, people feel more attached to their country (92 %), region (88 %), and city (87 %) than to Europe (67 %).

The same article on European values and identity proposes three models to promote European identity:

- (1) a Europe of culture or 'family of nations', emphasising that European identity has emerged from common movements in religion and philosophy, politics, science and the arts. On this basis, it is high time to define EU borders.

- (2) a Europe of citizens or ‘constitutional patriotism’ with a common political culture, or civic identity, based on universal principles of democracy, human rights, the rule of law etc. In this case cultural identities, religious beliefs etc. should be confined to the private sphere, and European identity will emerge from common political and civic practices, civil society organisations and strong EU institutions. The weakness of this approach is that the problems related to cultural differences are ignored, rather than dealt with.
- (3) Europe as a space of encounters, believing that a ‘European identity’ could emerge as a consequence of intensified civic, political and cultural exchanges and cooperation. As identities undergo constant change, European identity would encompass multiple meanings and identifications, and would be constantly redefined through relationships with others.

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