Europe behind (mis)understandings

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EUROPE BEHIND (MIS)UNDERSTANDINGS

INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATING EUROPE BEHIND (MIS) UNDERSTANDINGS

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Europe is indeed diversity, a multiplicity of identities with their own memories and desires for belonging. However, this way of understanding Europe as an agora of multiple belongings is challenged by the persistence and (re)apparition of old and new stereotypes and prejudices that reinforce the North-South, East-West and other – often not so obvious – divides. In this context, new views are needed which are capable of incorporating all kinds of irregularities, exceptions and disagreements without dividing or categorising. How can the media contribute to building a critical view of Europeanness as an open and fluid form?

In order to reflect on these issues, a participatory two-day seminar with media and communication students from different EU member states was held in Barcelona in December 2014, organised by CIDOB. A call for participation was launched and applicants were asked to select a written article published in 2013-2014 in the national press of his/her country of residence in which Europeanness was fostered and recognised in its diversity or, on the contrary, in which a common European sense of belonging was hindered. The scientific committee, in charge of selecting the participations, was composed of: Carme Colomina, journalist; Michelangelo Conoscenti, Università di Torino; and Amparo Huertas Bailén, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB).

The first part of this monograph – the result of this seminar – is devoted to a more theoretical reflection on different dimensions or elements playing a role in the way Europe is communicated. Firstly, Yolanda Onghena, senior researcher at CIDOB, explores the images and imageries of Europe, followed by the contributions of the members of the Scientific Committee. Carme Colomina focuses on the role of communication in facing Europe's challenges. Michelangelo Conoscenti, for his part, discusses the understanding and narration of another European Union by communication students and an analyst of media discourse (himself). In the last article of this section, Amparo Huertas Bailén zooms in the issue of mass media and its relation to political engagement in Europe.

The second part of this monograph, of a more practical nature, includes the contributions by the students who took part in the seminar. It must be highlighted that, during the event, the chosen articles were presented and debated by the participants providing each student with feedback that was used to rewrite his/her analysis once back home, after the seminar. These second analyses of the originally chosen press articles, fed by the input of the debates, are the ones presented in this monograph.

These short articles have been grouped according to the different debate sessions that took place during the seminar. Thus, a first part in this second section is titled "Diverse, not divided?" and includes the contributions by: Simone Fissolo, "The communication of the EU in the Italian newspapers: an analysis of Marco Zatterin's articles and the metaphor 'EU-as-supervisor'"; Yasmin Wolkow, "Europe is more than just an economic construct"; Dániel Szabó, "The future of the Union: between federalism and reality"; and Francisco Pérez Ureña, "Additional guarantee: European identity – the semantic product". Next, a second group of articles includes the reflections raised during the debate session entitled "Identity Protection". Here we find the texts by: Fatih Göksu, "Identity and foreign policy in the discourses of European commissioners in the contexts of Turkey's membership and European security"; Sofia Lotto Persio, "What we talk about when we talk about migration: the need for a new communication framework"; and Nele Goutier, "The future of Europe looks bright". Focusing on the media and their relationship to Europeanness, a third group of articles is presented: Lotte Kamphuis, "Reporting Europe: from united in diversity towards a collective entity"; Paula Meliá Garcia, "A European culture begins with European politics"; and Magda Skrzypek, "The domestication of European news: the Polish example". Finally, the last three articles correspond to the analyses presented within the last debate session, entitled "New ways?": Irene Dominioni, "What the referendum for independence in Scotland has taught us"; Hanne Bronmo, "Challenges and opportunities to European Integration"; and Ana Escaso Moreno, "Confronting voices on the European project and the role of the media".

In the third and last part of the monograph, we include a short article written jointly by Yolanda Onghena and Isabel Verdet Peris, which attempts to transmit a more optimistic view, drawing on the input of the students who took part in the seminar. Under the title "Communicating Europe: is it really that complicated?", it incorporates the main ideas in the debates and provides some clues to the different dimensions that need to be taken into account when analysing communication from/on Europe. This text was translated by some of the participants into their native languages and published on various websites or online magazines. Here we include the original text along with the translations in Catalan, Dutch, Italian, Polish, Spanish and Turkish.

The debates held during the seminar aimed to provide a meeting point to critically reflect on communication as a multidimensional phenomenon within the European sphere as both an opportunity and a challenge for, as previously mentioned, building a critical view on Europeanness as an open and fluid form. This publication, consequently, aims to disseminate the main ideas raised during the debates, but also to provide some food for thought for future discussion.

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Living cultural diversity, making it ours, is not an easy task. It requires rethinking the subtle and complex relationship between identity and difference. The new mobilities and global movements have brought with them new types of diversity and complexity, including new kinds of juxtaposition, encounter, exchange and cultural mixing. These transcultural developments present important new challenges to national and also supranational mechanisms. Europe needs to rethink the meaning and value of identity and diversity in order to deal with the increase in interdependence with real and imaginary borders which are constantly erased and intermingled, between inside and outside, us and them. How can we break the logic of inclusion/exclusion in the light of the ideals and principles that Europe represents?

At the first "Soul for Europe" meeting in Berlin (2004), where several politicians, academics and artists together thought up a soul for this somewhere abstract idea of Europe, the journalist and political analyst Timothy Garton Ash said: "Instead of a soul, the EU needs a heart and a voice; a heart to feel that we are together and a voice with which to tell it to the outside world". Five years later, on the eve of the European Parliamentary elections (2009), Garton Ash wrote: "The true symbol of Europe 2009 is not represented by yellow stars on a blue background, but a grey ostrich sticking its head in the sand" (2009). In November 2014, in an article in the *Social Europe* journal, Garton Ash (2014) commented on the failure of efforts to reintegrate the enthusiasm of citizens for Europe and to create a truly European public sphere. Seeking a common language of shared feelings, he was asked if "rather than fostering a European identity, the EU should focus simply on narrow practical goals – doing less, doing it better". For Garton Ash, a degree of European identity exists through shared history, shared memory and shared values, but we don't perceive it like that. At the moment "the real key for enthusing people about the UE again is what it does. If you could say "well Europe made the difference, for instance because it did something for the refugees of Syria and Iraq, or in relation to climate change", issues that people care passionately about could fire the people up once again.

To think of Europe as something to belong to we need a more global framework of reference which should take into account change, mobility and innovation.

When organising this monograph I had in mind some comments made by Michael Wintle in his book, *The Image of Europe. Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography throughout the Ages,* which attempted to locate the lack of a shared European feeling throughout history (Wintle, 2009). Contemporary European iconography often fails to reflect the many ways and levels on which European societies, cultures and citizens have been and are continually changing.

Here are four ideas to describe this absence, step-by-step, taking into account the previous comments made by communication students from all over Europe: identity or identification; national belonging or supranational belonging; Europe's 'other'; change and evolution.

Identity or identification?

> "Europe is a cultural construct… in flux, and there never has been full agreement about what precisely it consists of" (Wintle, 2009).

Maybe it is just as well that Europe has not succeeded in instituting a fixed, immobile identity like classical national identities, as it means we can aspire to something else that allows us to incorporate multiple identities and new identifications without competing with our coexisting local, regional and national identities. "Perhaps what we need is not a single identity that connects all the identities, but an account of Europeanisation that makes the connecting of initiatives and failures understandable. (…) Perhaps Europe's crisis lies precisely in this deficiency; that is, in the inability to understand contradictory events as being part of the Europeans' common enterprise" (Beck, 2006). How can we work in order to understand Europe as something to belong to and not as some bureaucratic fog in Brussels? And how do we make it publicly known? Does a European identity exist? Do we need a European identity? Or would it be better to speak of identification as a process with multiple effects that goes beyond the description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference as a dynamic of several forces interacting where we situate and elaborate 'our' identity as well as 'their' difference? It is in this process that strategies rise, solidarities die, mentalities change. Why? Because the people and not the cultures are the ones who interact; people with their memories, their fears and their hopes. "They are always too many", says Zygmunt Bauman. "They are the kinds that there should be less of, or better yet, absolutely none of. And we will never be enough. We are the people that there should be an abundance of" (Bauman, 2005). A debate in the political sphere and at societal level exists that is limited to thinking about or justifying what is included and what is excluded in order to strengthen this 'us', which, according to some, has become vulnerable in the face of an invading 'other'. Can the idea of a European sense of belonging overcome this essentialist thinking? How can Europe signify something else, beyond dual limitations?

Many new situations escape from the rigid and less flexible nature of the existing structures. To think of Europe as something to belong to we need a more global framework of reference which should take into account change, mobility and innovation. For some, the concept of culture "is a concept that is out-dated for analysis and should be replaced by notions of transience and mobility" (Bauman, 2005). Some sociologists talk

about how "transformations and especially the different mobilities are reconstructing the 'social as society' into the 'social as mobility'" (Urry, 2000). Other proposals are looking for new landscapes for identity and memory or ask for increased sensibility towards the effects of interdependency. We need to re-think the processes and effects of our cultural diversity and imagine a future that is able to organise desires so that everyone, in a creative way, can be capable of negotiating her place in this world.

Despite the attempts at integration and social cohesion through the management of cultural diversity, in practice, the result is often more segregation, differentiation and essentialisation. As we said at the beginning of this article, it is not easy to live cultural diversity, and despite the fact that our society is plural and our experience is diverse, we always seek 'outsiders' to be the culprits of what is going wrong 'inside'. In order to survive, our culture, like any culture, needs to question and interpret its own elements, as well as those that are foreign, in a common and continuous project. Identifying ourselves against something or someone else reinforces our identity but it is time that we stopped thinking about diversity only as a worrying 'other' or an intruder destabilising our security. In the face of globalisation, we see tense nationalisms reborn and in the face of cultural crossings, "the old demons of the tribe arise, the halting identities increasingly fold over themselves" (Shayegan, 2008). We lack the words to describe what is happening, to give the cultural the chance to go beyond the descriptive, entering that dimension where questions are asked and where problems demand solutions. The basic functions of culture in this process of identification are as a reference point of meaning for cohesion. Without this ability to construct the collective imaginary, the social community can neither exist, nor ensure legitimacy for a political project. Where is this European cultural project that might be capable of thinking of society in its diversity, of involving everyone and in which everyone might feel involved? We are referring to cultural action in its double dimension: in terms of cultural policy, appealing to the responsibility of public administrations, and the cultural practices of individual or collective spontaneous initiatives that contribute to social and public space. We also invoke culture in its capacity to build a common sense, in its capacity to set the grounds for a form of social cohesion and coexistence that would produce sense, meaning and relationships. Cultural politics is still the locus for a common language to be elaborated. Cultural discourses produce legitimation and recognition for the forging and reinforcement of inter-personal relationships. "The question of the capacity of culture to respond to the purposes and functions that are attributed to it and that justify its administration also require an interrogation into the nature of the society in which it takes place" (Caune, 2006). Culture, in this dimension of creation, makes it possible to share emotions and experiences.

The space of shared emotions, expressions and experiences is the public space, a space inhabited by socialised individuals and shaped by cultural practices. Transformations in cultural practices have contributed to increasingly diversifying and fragmenting our society. How can we speak in Europe of a shared culture that would provide a feeling of belonging, within a reality that is becoming increasingly plural and fragmented? In the case of Europe, the great cultural work of constructing a sense of belonging has not been taken into account. Nevertheless, such cultural work was, in other times, the basis for the construction of a national identity. And here we move on to the second idea.

National belonging or supranational belonging?

To speak of identification as a process with multiple effects goes beyond any description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference.

With a flag and an anthem, the construction of a European identity followed in the footsteps of national identity. In the past, in order to build national feelings of shared belonging, thinkers, writers and artists were mobilised to construct a history, a story and a common culture out of a reality that did not exist. The strength required did not emerge by itself: it had to be created; it needed culture. And culture was giving form to a collective identity and thereby achieving the will to live together. It was a way of unifying diversity, blind to the profound cultural differences that exist within national societies. But national identity isn't a natural outgrowth: it has been naturalised through the rhetoric of war and sacrifice, winners and losers, perpetrators and victims and through dichotomous categories to produce 'nationals' and 'foreigners'.

Furthermore, this process of identity construction has been (and is still) a reactive-defensive process with the logic of an external aggressor. Most national anthems call the people together against an enemy (imagined or real). It is easier to identify ourselves against something or somebody than in affinity with them. At the same time, identifying ourselves against something or someone reinforces our own identity. For instance, I remember that at the first "Soul for Europe" meeting, one of the conclusions was that the only shared feeling between different Europeans was the feeling of anti-Americanism.

As an example of this identification of a foreign threat, I propose the French FN party's advertisement for the European electoral campaign in 2009. The message is direct: "Europe hurts". *Marianne*, the symbol of 'free' France (nostalgia for the past) being hit in the eye by a 'European' enemy as if it were a case of domestic violence (insecure present). All symbols are cultural, they connect with our feelings and describe the present using an imaginary that refers back to a time when this unknown factor did not exist, which, because it is unknown, threatens us. Easily-interpretable situations, based on a certain familiarity, make communication possible and generate trust (or distrust) as a commitment to the future. This year we saw a change of imagery: if *Marianne* was suffering passively, Joan of Arc represents the soldier fighting for France, blowing away the yellow stars. Is there any discourse in favour of the European construction that possesses a similar communicative power by connecting directly with our feelings?

We need to rethink the cultural and its links with experiences and practices. Does the practice reflect the culture? Or rather, is culture the result of practical actions? And these practices: do they sustain a particular way of being in the world which might in turn necessitate the creation of new borders, precisely to maintain and strengthen the old ones? To speak of identification as a process with multiple effects goes beyond any description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference.

> "Hybrids, that's us. Our vehicle is the notion of translation or network. More flexible than the notion of system, more historical than that of structure, more empirical than that of complexity, the network is the Ariadne's thread of combined histories" (Latour, 2007).

Néstor García Canclini understands hybridisation as a possibility for departing from the essentialist discourse of cultural authenticity or purity. It allows us to speak of a process of relationship or interaction, where strategies of reconversion can be articulated. "If we speak of hybridisation as a process that one can accede to, abandon or be excluded from, it is possible to understand the different positions of subjects in regard to intercultural relations" (García Canclini, 1989). For Nikos Papastergiadis, hybridness means: "Challenging national myths of place and belonging, a rejection of the binary opposition between pure and mixed and the incorporation of the political right to mobility and the maintaining of cultural ties" (Papastergiadis, 2000).

There is no doubt that the reappearance of the term 'transcultural' has taken place as a result of the new transnational connections, the juxtapositions beyond national structures and the complex connectivity between different local realities. Interconnection is the key word, and it needs to include new spaces. Can we speak of a new social imaginary that questions who participates in what, where, how and why?

In 1996, Appadurai observed how "territories surrounded by customs offices and borders could give way to circuits and networks. What future prospects can we expect from the concept of transnation? As populations become more de-territorialised and incompletely nationalised, as nations are shattered, fractured and recombined, and as states encounter increasingly inescapable and insurmountable difficulties in constructing their people, transnations have to be the main social spaces where the different crises of feelings of belonging are expressed" (Appadurai, 1996).

The approach to interaction based on complexity and transculturality, apart from avoiding essentialist binary oppositions, has also displaced the simplistic minority/majority opposition and has even forced the issue of minorities out of its national framework. It also broadens the mental and imaginary horizon of ethnic categorisations by including differences of other kinds such as gender, age and sexual orientation. We could say that it has served to "de-ethnicise difference" (Robins, 2006), and to see difference not solely as a problematic phenomenon, but as a positive option for any cultural category. The multiplication and acceleration of transnational migrations, people, goods, information, images, ideas and discourses make it vitally important that cultural policies should not only be included in a supranational frame of reference but also treated as transcultural currents with multiple effects and a marked transnational dimension.

We can see that transnational institutions' responsibility for intervention is increasing as cultural diversity issues overwhelm and exceed the capacity of governments and national institutions. For Giddens, the present is a time of opportunity for Europe, and he considers the European Union to be "a pioneering system of transnational government" which could, in principle, serve as inspiration for other areas of the world (Giddens, 2007). The future of Europe will depend to a great extent on its ability to build pluralist societies in which diversity is not the problem, but the solution.

Europe's other

"European identity: another ideological device designed as much for exclusion of Europe's 'other'…Otherness, led often to the notions of European superiority and Eurocentrism" (Wintle, 2009).

We have filled a cultural emptiness or even a cultural perversion with significance, based on simple theories, accomplices when it comes to naming people, groups and identities: us and them ('we are not what they are'). And the device is: identity illusions shared with those inside, conflictive categories of differentiation for those outside. We categorise that which is different in order to place it where it suits us best, producing agreement and disagreement over what is included and what is excluded. We talk a lot 'about' them, but not very often 'with' them. We keep speaking on in the name of the 'others', inventing terms such as cultural diversity, the European year of intercultural dialogue, programmes of supposed proximity, tolerance and multiculturalism. "All words that make us feel good, but in today's world, many of these words have lost their innocence due to their use when proposing policies. They have become slogans, labels with no meaning, without any particular context: flirtations with a recycled otherness to maintain the status quo" (Onghena, 2014). The 'others' are no longer these silent beings on the outer peripheries, as they now form part of our society. Sometimes Europe sends them back home as soon as they arrive as they may become our enemies if they cannot become citizens. And rather than come to terms with the difference we emphasise it, measure it out and use it, given that we need to categorise the unknown in order to be sure that what is strange and foreign does not worry or threaten us.

That is where we create new borders, imaginary ones, not as an accumulation or a synthesis of different components, but as a space of tension between agreements and disagreements over what is included and what is excluded. To situate this border we categorise with the complicity of stereotypes and prejudices. We all use stereotypes and we are all the objects of them. They play an important role in our lives, and perhaps we could not live without them because we are not "gifted with enough discerning ability to judge everything that is new, everything that he or she would be asked to pass judgement on throughout his or her existence" (Arendt, 2014). Prejudices and stereotypes form part of the large family of social representations. They feed each other in a continuous dynamic, like essential pieces for elaborating our common sense. Both present themselves as group productions that reflect, at a given moment, the (pre-elaborated) point of view of one group in relation to another. They produce a kind of image that is valid in all cases and we end up thinking that this is something natural, but they are one group's representations of another, imposed with an attributive or predicative value. They help us to interpret the world, situate new elements and understand complexities, but they are reductionist thoughts: it takes less effort to think, reason and (what is more) make value judgements based on them. The lack of critical thought and the lack of knowledge favours an unconscious acceptance of the 'truths' employed in stereotypes. It is when we do not know or when we have scant information about another group that we accept a stereotype as a real image. Its meaning is obvious, because there is something of truth in it, something

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that we know, and we apply this partial truth (of an isolated case) to the whole group. In sum, they are so powerful because they are simple, easily recognisable and enjoy the acceptance of the community in general and help us to categorise, to include and exclude.

And we can see how in reality cultural differences substitute social differences. Codes and cultural baggage change. This baggage, which allows us to make sense of a chaotic world has problems being accommodated within a framework that doesn't foresee its accommodation. Inherent in identification is confrontation, which has to do with the dimension of antagonism ever present in social relations, a twin complicity in one human destiny with the ever-present possibility that the 'us/them' relationship is constructed in terms of friend/enemy. This dimension cannot be made to disappear by simply denying it.

> "Such a negation only leads to impotence, impotence which characterizes liberal thought when confronted with the emergence of antagonisms which, according to its theory, should belong to a bygone age when reason had not yet managed to control the supposedly archaic passions" (Mouffe, 2010).

But it worries us, it frightens us and this fear can be calmed by blaming culprits who are close by. A new temporal initiative: "We make the event not a final point that needs to be explained but the point of departure that explains everything" (Augé, 2008). Furthermore, in actuality, in a digital world, where here and there, past and present are all interrelated, to identify yourself ethnicity, culture and origin do not need to be denied or forgotten. "Living cultures do not, in any case, evolve from purity and contamination. Change is more a gradual transformation from one mixture to a new mixture, a process that usually takes place at some distance from rules and rulers, in the conversations on the boundaries" (Appiah, 2006).

Where is the boundary between citizen and foreigner? No one is born a 'foreigner', but you become it. That is to say that society, all of us, makes sure of that. Many foreigners are continually circulating throughout Europe: businessmen, tourists, academics and students, many kinds of professionals – they all count. But there is one foreigner who counts in a special way – the immigrant. Because we can make him responsible for what, without her, would be our responsibility. We don't have to question our responsibility, we don't have to get involved or take a position. Our passivity is the accomplice of a fiction of neutrality – our indifference is an alibi for keeping it up. We are no longer responsible to someone or for someone, but only to and for ourselves. In the face of this massive logic of individual responsibility, the feeling of victimisation is one of the ways to resist. The confusion and lack of responsibility is included, in a populist way, in a new discourse against mobility, migration and European enlargement: against the foreigner. Does Europe possess an inclusive answer for what it calls the new Europeans? Is Europe the space in which they can creatively organise their place in this world?

> "The issue of integration is the great challenge of our times, and the place where the battle will be won or lost. Either the West succeeds in integrating them by drawing them closer to the values that it upholds and thus turns them into decisive intermediaries with the rest of the world, or they will make its problem worse" (Maalouf, 2009).

Change and evolution: for a future that includes all Europeans

The processes and effects of cultural diversity need a new framework that is sensitive to the effects of interdependence so that they can organise the desire. This new grammar must combine the theoretical with the practical in any commitment to a political project. We need a knowledge that is concerned with action, that can formulate a response to the global challenge of multidimensional realities, and that can streamline fragmented, compartmentalised and immutable knowledge. How can we renew theoretical and conceptual discourses, bearing in mind the new mobilities and global movements that have brought with them new kinds of diversity and complexity based on multiple connections? Can we include new kinds of exchanges and cultural mixtures in the existing structures?

We also have to work in a public sphere that brings together many conversations and connects the speakers, to provide the conditions for plural identities to converse, construct and try out views of the future of Europe. A space, as Craig Calhoun says, in which, "by transcending the particular, every person has the right to express, participate, speak and converse with the community, and be taken into consideration" (Calhoun, 2004). This means a space of socialised individuals, shaped by cultural practices, in which culture – extensive, controversial and ambiguous – considers the multiple forms of communication, interaction and mediation as different forces that interact. Rather than an accumulation or synthesis of different static components, it is a space where we situate or organise the difference.

We need new narratives of re-interpretation. The idea of Europe has to be broadened with contemporary opinions, views and criticism to find a more global framework of reference that includes the divergence of interests, changes and meanings expressed not only in the moment or the event, but in the movement, which means including changes and transformations. New narratives could be meanings from outside Europe as multiple connections and crossovers between subjects: do we know their view of our history? It might be interesting to share the different approaches to Europe, not with the aim of achieving uniformity, but simply to discover other meanings in which we would doubtless find similarities, as well as some interesting differences. Not only from outside of Europe also inside Europe, those meanings of generations with a shared present but not a shared past: Europeans by birth but with a dual sense of belonging – one subjected to discrimination, while the other is never considered part of a collective choice or a collective action. The future of Europe will depend to a great extent on its ability to build pluralist societies, not in spite of differences, but through them; not juxtaposing, but sketching a common future using a language of shared feelings.

We would like to hear one voice defending 'European' values outside Europe. For instance: European countries are visiting China one by one to negotiate 'national' economic interests without questioning beliefs in those shared values which Europe has attempted to defend for several centuries? And at the same time export an idea of a Europe that is capable of building pluralist societies within a system of transnational government.

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"But we in Europe, who are we? Who would dare to grant the same importance to a work of culture (of art, or philosophy) as (for example) to the disappearance of communism in Europe? Does no work of similar importance exist anymore? Or have we just lost the ability to recognise it? The Europe in which we live no longer seeks its identity in the mirror of its philosophy or its arts. And where is the mirror? Where should we go to seek our face?" (Kundera, 2005).

Why haven't we managed to create, transmit and promote a feeling of common experience that represents the 'union' between Europeans as citizens involved and trusting 'their' project: "An active trust, one that has to be earned, which involves bi-directional negotiation instead of dependence, and which must be coherent and deliberately renewed" (Giddens, 2007). A new narrative that puts aside nostalgic discourses and seeks to connect with new generations, new Europeans. The originality of the European project lies, above all, in considering a 'world-ised' Europe which could serve as a model for an interdependent world. We have to unravel, once again, the question of what the European Union is for, bearing in mind the new mobilities and global movements that have brought with them new kinds of diversity and complexity based on multiple connections.

How can we, all together, work on a new knowledge which is concerned with the experiences of everyone? Maybe a shared knowledge would be able to formulate a response to the global challenge of multidimensional realities by listening to new voices which are sensitive to the effects of interdependence.

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN FACING EUROPE'S CHALLENGES

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Introduction

The EU has a communication problem and it's not a new one. Communication has been the handy scapegoat for every political crisis between governments and EU institutions and the one to blame after every Eurobarometer confirming public disengagement with the EU. But is it really a problem with the messenger – the media – or is it the lack of a strong message? Is this "communication gap" (acknowledged by every EU institution) the only cause of the degree of frustration felt by a large majority of EU citizens? According to the Pew Research Center (Stokes, 2014), even if the economic pessimism among Europeans is nowadays already declining and the sentiment towards the EU project is starting to rebound, citizens are still very frustrated about their interaction with the European institutions. The EU has a long way to go to recover citizens' trust and communication has to be a key tool in this process and neither the guilty party nor the sole miracle solution.

> "Communication cannot make the European Union function better, nor solve its economic, social, political and environmental problems. However, it helps in raising awareness and mobilising people. Communication can be a leading tool for improving understanding and confidence, for building identity, integration and democracy" (Valentini and Nesti, 2010).

But have the European institutions used this tool properly to reach EU citizens in recent years? Have they offered a coherent and consensual explanation about the deep crisis shaking the economic and political foundations of the European project since 2008?

The economic crisis has brought a new perception of Europe's power and the dramatic increase of EU's importance in citizens' daily lives. EU institutions, European policies and the economic, political and social changes in those EU member states beaten by the crisis have become a daily topic of conversation between average European citizens. The media has also widened their focus. Europeans know more about each other than ever. Germans know about Greek problems. The Spanish follow politi-

cal changes in Portugal or Italy. Finnish public opinion discusses bailouts in Cyprus and Ireland. The EU has become much more present in the mass media than ever before; previously, there was no real reciprocity between the importance of the European institutions in citizens' lives and their presence in the public sphere and therefore in the media. Thus, "horizontal Europeanisation" (Brüggemann and Königslöw, 2007) has become larger. Not only have EU institutions gained media presence in the last few years ("Vertical Europeanisation") but other member states' realities have also became daily news. "Media coverage would not only mention other European countries but actually focus more strongly on the events and debates in these neighbouring countries" (ibid.)

However, even with this enhanced presence and the certainty that we have read and learnt much more about *the other* Europeans since the crisis begun, we still don't have a sense of common destiny. The "knowledge gap" (Sinnot, 1997) has been decreased but there is still an enormous challenge in the field of perceptions and levels of trust. National public opinions were the drivers of every government position facing the euro crisis. The absence of this "we feeling" (Seoane, 2013), made it very "difficult to ground European governance on democratic, people-dependent procedures", and prevented any possibility of building a common narrative of the crisis. We have improved our knowledge about the EU and the rest of Europeans, but the problem is how this knowledge is framed. We read more about *the others*' situation but what are the perceptions we have when we do so? Do we really have a sense of common destiny? Even if the media focussed much more on the internal situation of other member states, did they really get beyond the national point of view? Therefore, did the media have any responsibility for the absence of a common narrative?

A confused landscape

Communication is the answer to the citizens' right to be informed and this communication between Europe's institutions and its citizens still depends crucially on the traditional media. Even if new technologies have changed this trend, opening up new direct ways of public communication and shaking the conventional hierarchies of those talking on behalf of the European Union, there is still an important gap with that part of the European population out of internet. Hence the fact is that the media – and more specifically the traditional mass media – are still key actors in the process of reducing the distance between citizens and EU institutions and increasing public awareness of the EU's political performance. Thus, the media helps the accountability of EU leaders and policy-making.

However, European complexity is also present in the field of communication. The European public sphere is made up of more than 500 million people, 28 countries, 23 official languages and many more considered as "minority" languages, 25,000 journalists and about 3,600 TV channels that operate throughout the whole EU territory. The world's largest transnational community, connected politically, institutionally, economically and even socially and culturally, has no media that can be considered a media of shared reference by the majority of the European population. They still function according to national media systems and policies and when they inform, they do so mainly from the point of view of their readers and listeners, that is to say, from a national perspective. Common

ground is needed. Like any image or identity, Europe's is constructed. In the same way, the EU's communications policies and strategies have been evolving. During the euro turbulence, the EU's communication became more reactive, top-down crisis management than ever. At the same time, the conjunction of the economic crisis and the media sector crisis is also promoting new forms of cooperation between the big European media organisations. A new transnational journalism is emerging to share resources and widen views. There is no doubt that the media has a role to play in informing public opinion. But the different understandings of Europe's leadership and the differences between EU members about the reasons behind the public debt crisis shows how difficult it is to build a common narrative. Over many years, political decisions have been taken increasingly frequently not by nation states but by EU institutions, while reporting to the public has remained bound to the national sphere (Machill *et al.*, 2005). So the national political debate did not move to Brussels at the same speed as decision-making process did. Nor did the narratives of the media discourse. The communication gap widened.

Do we too often confuse "media opinion" with "public opinion"? We normally stress the role of the media in the formation of public opinion. They are "the conveyors of the information" but also "active participants in the political debate" (Koopmans and Pfetsch, 2008). But even if they do much more than assume the role of mere observers, they are not the only ones tailoring a narrative to explain what the Europeans are going through. Building a narrative is much more complex than that. Especially in the EU sphere, where communication is a particularly important, strategic means of connecting with every stakeholder, with every public dimension: journalists, citizens, civil society organisations, companies, civil servants, member State governments, international organisations and non-EU governments. "For EU institutions, the number of potential publics is extremely large due to its multi-level nature (supranational, national, and local) and different types of actors involved in the policy-making" (governments, administrations, experts, civil society organisations, associations, etc.) (Valentini and Nesti, 2010).

Besides this, there are serious problems with the visibility, transparency and coordination of the different communications emerging from every EU institution. There is no one single agenda or common message between them. The media have been caught in the crossfire of all the different *senders* talking on behalf of the EU and between the national narratives and the EU institutional speeches. These are not the only public layers to manage in such a confusing public sphere. Different parts of the continent, different governments and different citizens also have different European histories, experiences and expectations, and these might alter the image and the values they associate with the European Union. Perhaps, one of the most interesting views of the crisis was to realise that the images of countries are not formed in isolation or taking into account the broadest possible context, asserts a study about the images of and the debates about the crisis published by the Spanish Confederation of Savings Banks. Europe is our framework. "When a German or a French person thinks of their image of Spain or its reputation, they probably do it with the backdrop of Europe, of the Europe of rich countries or the eurozone (…) every judgment involves an implicit comparison with other countries in their frame of reference and therefore involves establishing hierarchies" (Pérez-Díaz *et al.*, 2013). All these factors were decisive when explaining (or not) the euro-crisis and certain individual and collective responsibilities that derived from it.

Explaining the crisis

Even if during the euro-crisis the percentage of published information about the EU has increased dramatically, the absence of this common narrative and the national perspective of the media mean the communication gap between citizens and EU institutions was not bridged. More information didn't bring increased confidence. The polyphony of voices on the EU side (European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, Eurogroup, Troika, European Central Bank, and national governments [notably Berlin]) talking about the crisis contributed to a deeper disenchantment with the idea of Europe, "a malaise about its vocation within our political imaginaries as European citizens and about the future of the EU as a global actor" (Murray-Leach, 2014). A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center gathered the dominant negative stereotypes most mentioned by European citizens when describing the EU: "inefficient" was the most-used word in the UK; "intrusive" in Germany, Poland, Greece and Spain; and "out of touch" in France and Italy. Very few think the EU listens.

Communication can create emotions and attachments, but the wording and the frames used to communicate – as we saw during the financial turbulence shaking the euro – can also discourage trust and support. Words are never neutral and this crisis had its own dictionary and a very biased narrative. In 2014 the Brussels think tank Bruegel published a study on the language of the troika (Wolff and Terzi, 2014). In more than 4,000 pages written over these years of bailouts for Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus, the words predominant in every document from the European Commission were: *reform*, *taxation*, *privatisation* and *cuts*. During these years of deep economic crisis, when about a quarter of the European population were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the word *poverty* was absent from the large community reports and did not gain visibility in the European public debate until the months leading up to the May 2014 European elections. As shown in Bruegel's report, in more than a thousand pages written by the troika to guide economic reforms in Portugal, the words poverty and inequality do not even appear once. The media also has their own wording and catalogue of metaphors to describe the political, economic and social crisis damaging the European project. According to a Reuters study[1], newspapers used war terminology (e.g. bazooka, fight, attack), disease (e.g. illness, injection, virus, cancer), natural disasters (e.g. storm, tsunami, earthquake) or game analogies (e.g. soccer, chess or arm wrestling) to explain the crisis. The media took a mainly geographical approach while reporting the crisis and national focus was decisive. "Southern media were focussing on their own perceptions of the crisis", states this report.

The misreading of what is currently going on in Europe is deeply problematic. In the study on crisis discourses conducted by Tamsin Murray-Leach, four conclusions emerged: the crisis was portrayed as an "abstract given" in European press, like a 'supernatural phenomenon' almost excluding any explanations other than the economic ones, which ruled out discussions of causes and responsibilities; in this narrative, the European Union was regularly represented as a "foreign *other*", linked to, if not directly blamed for, the suffering of the home nation. Member states may also be 'othered' in relation to the home nation; however, this framing of Europe as 'foreign' took place despite the fact that the crisis discourses "revealed a high level of European integration, with both political actors and the media taking

1. "The Euro Crisis, Media Coverage and Perceptions of Europe within the EU". Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (ongoing study). See http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/publication/euro-crisis-media-coverage-and-perceptions-europe-within-eu

part" (2014), as well as a clear Europeanisation of the political information. Therefore, paradoxically, even if the crisis hit citizens' trust in the EU project, it also brought about a Europeanisation of national public spheres: EU topics – however presented – gained presence in the media; for the first time ever there was a European electoral campaign for the European Parliament with common candidates running for all the big political groups of the chamber with the promise that voters would choose the European Commission's next president; and economic and political Europe is much more integrated than before the bailouts started. And all of that happened while the ideal image of Europe as a territory of convergence and social cohesion vanished amid street protests, electoral punishments were given to traditional political parties and inequality was tearing cohesion apart.

Finally, even if Europe's presence in the media was strengthened, Murray-Leach's study regrets the lack of alternative discourses. The dominant narrative in the "discourse of the elites" also prevailed in the press, with few divergent discourses on the crisis and the possible solutions to pave the way to recovery.

Loss of legitimacy

> "Under modern (Western) conditions, legitimacy has come to rest almost exclusively on *trust in institutional arrangements* that are thought to ensure that governing processes are generally responsive to the manifest preferences of the governed (*input legitimacy*, 'government by the people') and/or that the policies adopted will generally represent effective solutions to common problems of the governed (*output legitimacy*, 'government for the people')" (Scharpf, 1999).

In the last years of intergovernmental Europe, where member states took most of the political leadership and legislative initiative from the European Commission, the Brussels executive was convinced that legitimisation would come by delivery, by responding to citizens' needs and solving collective problems. But the depth of the euro-crisis prevented this delivery from fulfilling people's expectations. There was a part of the European citizenry who felt left behind and apart from the European project. A new union emerged. A union of inequalities with winners and losers of the crisis. With creditor and debtor countries struggling with individual and collective responsibilities from the years of easy lending and investing (the abused mantra of austerity: "living beyond their means"). New concepts entered the European political debate in the form of a growing lack of mutual trust: the idea of "moral risk" or "risk of moral hazard" if rescued countries didn't stick to draconian programmes, or the concept of a "fairer solidarity", arousing the image of an "unfair solidarity" where member states with lax economic policies are bailed out by the responsible ones who played by the EU's rules.

However, even if there was no common narrative of the crisis, "there was a shared interpretation by political, economic and media elites that has – discursively – ruled out any radical alternatives" (Murray-Leach, 2014) to explain what happened in the EU after 2008 and what had to be done about it. So instead of a debate about transformation policies, we've seen the old political parties making moves to address the symptoms of the crisis

with the old scapegoats – the anti-immigration and Eurosceptic stance, and the stressing of old prejudices – rather than addressing root causes. There hasn't yet been any discourse on the responsibilities of the crisis. There were a lot of blame games but no acceptance or accountability about the rightness or the failure of the solutions taken.

A new narrative for Europe is needed. Fear and mistrust have been shadowing any European discourse since the crisis was provoked. The former president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, admitted in November 2010 in Berlin that, "the biggest enemy of Europe today is fear. Fear of 'enemies' within our borders and beyond our borders". It is a feeling all over Europe, not of the majority, but everywhere present. The number of Europeans who began to see the EU project as an "enemy", as the cause of the difficulties they were leaving, increased steadily in the worst years of the crisis. Europe gained political integration but still has to regain citizens' confidence. Only one in three still believes in the benefit of the European project. In the last Eurobarometer, from autumn 2014[2], only 39% had a positive image of the EU and more or less the same number (37%) said they trusted the European Union.

> "Popular disengagement with the EU is a consequence of the sort of cultural community Europe is, and also a consequence of the sort of political regime the EU is: elite-driven integration, corporatism (interest groups and associations co-govern with elected politicians and the bureaucracy) and diplomacy (which demands some degree of secrecy in order to reach a consensus)" (Seoane, 2013).

Therefore, the problem with Europe is not one of communication. As Seoane puts it, "it is about the paradox of wanting a European democracy without a European nation". Thus the communication gap can't be solved without solving the democratic deficit in the EU institutions.

Conclusion

The European Union has gone through a deep economic, political and social crisis without having a common and convincing narrative to explain to the citizens what the EU was doing to solve it. A polyphony of voices among EU actors and national perspectives driving media and local political debates eroded the image of Europe as a "we" community of shared problems and hopes. The interpretation of 'European' as foreign in most of the public debates meant that the blame for what was going on could be apportioned to the 'others' – the Europeans whom we were not. The more media and policy-makers used this discourse, the more it gained momentum, eroding trust in the EU project and showing "Brussels" more as a trouble maker than a solution facilitator.

However, necessity strengthened the European public space. The crisis brought a new and deep awareness by the citizens of the new powers of Europe. The EU gained media presence. Public debates were Europeanised by the knowledge of other member states' realities. What is still probably missing – or lacking conviction – is what the Euroidentities project calls a "European mental space" (Schütze *et al.*, 2010), "the construction of an imagined and defined European we-community". The scars of the crisis are still there: erosion of the democratic process in European decision-making;

The European Union has gone through a deep economic, political and social crisis without having a common and convincing narrative to explain to the citizens what the EU was doing to solve it.

loss of social cohesion and a widening distance between EU members; emergence of radical discourses and loss of confidence in the traditional party system; and the weakening of the idea of Europe as a territory of benefits and solidarity.

> "Blaming the media and national politicians (suggesting a communications gap) leaves in the dark the two real deficits which prevent Europe from enjoying a vibrant public sphere: a lack of identity (Europe is always 'out there') and a lack of conflict (deficit of politicisation)" (Seoane, 2013).

Troubles in the core of the EU project were solved with a new wave of political integration decided in the urgency of the crisis. Conflict arose but it was tainted by prejudices, by top-down measures imposed on some member states and a new hierarchy between countries and citizens. "European integration from above must be accompanied by a Europeanisation of public communication in order to overcome its lack of legitimacy and popular involvement" (Koopmans and Pfetsch, 2008): this is still missing. Crisis brought more political integration, a widening of the European public space and a clear Europeanisation of the news coverage and, nevertheless, the legitimacy of the European project remains damaged. Media and public communication can help to heal the distance and mistrust, but without a political overhaul of the European project ready to address citizens' fears there is a big risk of saving the eurozone but losing people's backing, meaning losing democratic legitimacy.

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Introduction

Throughout this paper I will frequently refer to the notion of 'narrative'. Several definitions are available, but the following one, from a document that will be soon part of NATO's Strategic Communication Doctrine, is suitable for our purposes:

"a coherent system of stories that creates a cause and effect relationship between an originating desire or conflict, and an actual or desired or implied resolution. In so doing, NARRATIVE has the capacity to express identity, values, moral basis, legitimacy and vision around [which] entities (organisations or activities) can unite".

Graphically, the same concept can be represented like this:

Figure 1. Narrative Trajectory
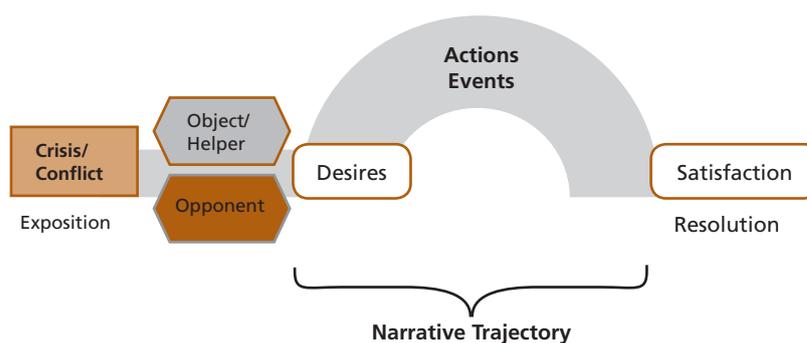
Source: Own elaboration.

Isabel Verdet (cf. in this monograph) thoroughly reports on the contributions made by the thirteen students present at the seminar. My goal is to integrate what the contributors to the monograph have expressed and add a point of view that is the one of the analyst of Media Discourse supplemented by Linguistics. In this way it will be possible to profile what

Europe is to these communication students and the role they can take in shaping public opinion's perception of the Union.

The first observation is on the criteria participants used to select their news story. During the preselection, made by the scientific committee, and the two-day discussion, a common attitude emerged. The participants, will-be journalists, showed their preference for articles that were not just 'news', but rather pieces of a larger narrative on Europe that was notable for the content, but not for the way the information was passed onto the reader. In other words, they appreciated the narrative that could be potentially expressed by the article, although they did not always subscribe to the journalist's 'treatment' or delivery of the news. In this sense, they all acted according to the principle that "news is what an authoritative source tells the journalist" (Bell, 1991: 191-192). They behaved as journalists who receive information from a reliable source (newspaper article or essay) and treat it accordingly, to develop part of a larger narrative trajectory. What is surprising, to the eye of the analyst, is that each of them built up a piece of the trajectory through smaller narratives that fitted in the final collective one, thus demonstrating that the idea of 'morphogenetic resonance' is part of our reality (Sheldrake *et al.*, 1997). Furthermore, they generated a kind of metalinguistic reflection on the discourse(s) of Europe, as instantiated by their will-be colleagues, which is quite informative on the way young Europeans perceive the Union they live in.

A prototypical case is the one of Dániel. He discusses an article by the former Hungarian Prime Minister who elaborates on the United States of Europe. After a brief introduction, Dániel veers the discussion on topics that are paramount for the Union, but not properly addressed in the article. The latter becomes the opportunity to express some personal concerns and flaws of the current European narrative. First of all he defines himself as an Eastern European, although he is immediately scolded by the Polish participant, who adds: "we are post-communist Eastern Europeans". The regional element is the opportunity to define the first asymmetry of the EU narrative, the economic one. "We are represented as the ones who steal jobs from Western Europeans. Conversely, we see you as the ones who earn more money for the same job, so it is normal that we try to come here and earn more, too". From this issue Dániel spawns a dense reasoning on the use of fear by politicians and the press, correlating it with nationalism. He thus shows an intuitive, but rather informed, approach to the complex principles of spin-doctoring.

This is why my paper will 'map' the narrative trajectories participants highlighted during the seminar. Given space constraints and the other contributions in the monograph, verbatim of single statements by students will be limited, while cross-referencing will be used to complement some key points.

Narratives of Europe and International Relations

To better frame the narrative of Europe created by the students through their selected articles, it is important to correlate their process, which is essentially a linguistic one, with the reality of International Relations, a field that affects the activities of the Union.

Campbell (2013: 223-246), in his poststructuralist approach to International Relations, maintains that:

"Every understanding of international politics depends upon abstraction, representation and interpretation…Only critical perspectives on IR demand that we understand the importance of interpretation, inquire about the relationship between power and knowledge, and reflect on the politics of identity in the production and understanding of global affairs".

Later (ibid.: 236-237), in the section 'the discourses of world politics', he points out:

"Meaning is created by discourse. Discourse refers to a specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible. For example, states are made possible by a wide range of discursive practices that include…military strategies, cultural debates…political speeches and economic investments".

Participants showed their awareness of these poststructuralist principles in their search for a 'missing element' that is imperceptible in the narrative that journalists instantiate in the daily (mis)representation of Europe. Nonetheless, this is under the surface. It is an element that, if clearly identified, would make the interpretation of all the components of the grand narrative meaningful and coherent. They are thus forced to produce messages under uncertainty (Berger, 2013: 221-244) and to fill the gaps of the narrative with elements that cannot be evident to the insider or the practitioner (cf. Colomina in this monograph). This is where the analyst of media discourse can act as a sort of 'unifier' of the partial, incomplete narrative.

The missing 'actor' that was constantly present in the debate was the United States of America and their role in the current situation of Europe. The effects that the economic crisis, generated by the credit crunch, have on the Union at political and economic level were considered, too. A possible explanation can be found in a stance that stems from a classic neoconservative attack on what are considered "the 'womanly' programs of continental Europe, an unacceptably 'feminine-materialistic conception of the welfare state'" (Kristol, 2011). This crystallises in fears of an imminent "Europeanization of America" (Du Pont, 2008). Thus, divergent strategic visions, especially at political level, are more frequent on the two shores of the Atlantic and affect the Union master-narrative, with the nation-states and the journalists trying to cope with these inconsistencies.

How Europe is narrated: main themes

From an analytical perspective, one can observe the existence of several narratives that are part of a trajectory that instantiates the neoconservative views of Europe.

The first theme is the one of asymmetry. This splits into:

Divergent strategic visions, especially at political level, are more frequent on the two shores of the Atlantic and affect the Union master-narrative, with the nation-states and the journalists trying to cope with these inconsistencies.

a) economic;
b) values;
c) visions / methodology to solve problems.

As per a) the discussion focused not only on the mere economic crisis but on the asymmetric distribution of wealth in Europe, as previously mentioned. Several participants pointed out that the Union should generate better conditions for all its citizens. This would imply an idea of improvement towards higher standards and not vice versa. It is worth noting that here the image is that of a levelling machine, as if Europe were, in this particular historical moment, a stone cruncher that destroys its founding values and its characteristic welfare state in the name of competitiveness. Setting aside the traditional – and now accepted as a matter of fact – North-South divide, some participants also mentioned another kind of asymmetry that the economic one can generate, i.e. new members vs. old members. They expressed their concern for the economies of new members once the benefits granted to them will cease thus generating further economic asymmetry.

Members of the scientific committee were present at the tables and acted as stimulators of the discussion. Although on several occasions I 'trolled' the conversation on purpose, trying to get the (provocative) issue of a hegemonic Germany to be raised, this was always dropped by participants. Actually, they claimed that their personal experience is that Germans are strongly in favour of the EU. This directly correlates with the asymmetry of values. During the discussion the latter emerged in a clear way, especially along the North-South axis. Hanne, a Norwegian, plainly and honestly stated that she is aware of having prejudices that are linked to the way certain values are interpreted throughout the Union. She frequently referred to the issue of corruption, the rule of law and tax evasion. Her attitude was so intellectually honest that not only did she not generate negative emotional reactions from other participants, but rather a kind of solidarity, expressed in the form of comparisons between Nordic and Mediterranean countries, was recorded. Other asymmetrical values that emerged are linked to the role of the family, friends and the way political partisanship should be interpreted.

These asymmetries correlate with the last set, i.e., visions / methodology to solve problems. It seems that participants rather pragmatically accept the idea that Europe is an ongoing experiment and that it is normal to have different approaches to problem solving. Apparently, they miss the distinction between task-oriented cultures vs. people-oriented ones, another way the North-South polarisation manifests itself and could offer possible explanations. Nonetheless, during the two-day seminar, most part of them was able to 'negotiate' different views and ways of addressing problems with peculiar characteristics with their peers. The way they interacted is evidence of a generation of citizens that perceives EU nationalities as a kind of 'regional marker'. It shows differences, of course, but they are ascribable to the variety human beings express. The same can be said for the gender perspective.

How Europe is narrated: the economic crisis

Another cluster of narratives that emerged from the discussion relates to the effects of the economic crisis. Again, participants were able to spot a

form of 'hidden agenda' of mainstream media that are unable to explain the core reasons of this particular situation and its origins. They thus prefer to concentrate on its effects, given that, as it frequently emerged from the discussion, "bad news sells better than good news". This apparent 'inability' of the journalists to properly report on the crisis was confirmed by Carme Colomina (cf. her contribution in this monograph) during the final conference "The role of communication in facing Europe's challenges" when we both discussed the outcomes of the seminar and tried to frame it in a wider communicative context.

The identified narratives of the crisis were correlated to the rise of two particular sentiments:

a) egoism;
b) nationalism.

Egoism has been identified as a 'corroborative' cognitive support for fears spread by the narratives of the crisis. Participants identified the correlation between these two topics and the forms egoism can take in the narrative of Europe. Typical cases indicated were the gaps generated by the national economic differences. These develop 'fear of the other' at continental and extra-EU level. The case of immigrants and asylum-seekers was frequently evoked as an example of the European Union's inability to offer a specific answer to the problem. All the cases reported during the seminar were deemed responsible of generating either anti-European sentiments or nationalistic ones, whether in the form of anti-Euro movements or xenophobic parties. According to participants "being a European citizen" is a political issue. Given that "economic decline is here", the Union is considered not proactive enough in times of crisis. In this way public opinion perceives only the negative aspects of the bureaucratic machine. Simone, an Italian, pointed out that Europe is always portrayed as a kind of stern teacher who reprimands bad pupils and delivers reports. Rather, the group summarised, Europe should be narrated as the watchdog that invigilates nations in the interest of the whole Union.

Participants maintain that although 'diversity' is one of the most important assets of the European reality, Brussels is perceived as a killer of European diversity and, consequently, an unintentional supporter of nationalistic movements. "Kill diversity and you will kill Europe" was a frequent sound bite. One of the best results of the interactions was that, although aware of the difficulties of reporting on such a complex topic, all the students brought idealistic instances to the seminar. They tried to outline possible solutions that could help the process of integration while bypassing national interests that are perceived as detrimental to the process itself. During the discussion several participants raised the issue of European elections. They wished that soon we could vote for a candidate who does not necessarily belong to our country, but who is in favour of a vision that really supports European citizens. A solution, per se, that shows how future-oriented and fully European these students are.

Flaws in the European narrative

One of the major concerns of the participants was how to improve and realise a better communication of Europe and its core values.

Egoism has been identified as a 'corroborative' cognitive support for fears spread by the narratives of the crisis.

In fact, participants established that Europe is not a popular topic, especially when politics is concerned. Besides the issues already discussed, another key element identified by them was the lengthy process of approving laws and directives. This is considered not only difficult to report, but a real obstacle to the communication of a dynamic image of Europe. Given that EU politics sections do not sell well, journalists tend to focus on negative aspects, as these are considered to have a certain news value. The immediate consequence is that anti-EU/Eurosceptic parties, present within the EU Parliament, use this kind of news as a sounding board for their political agenda. This attitude combines with a tendency of right-wing parties to look for an 'outer' enemy that is easily identified with Europe, thus fostering nationalistic sentiments mainly based on fear. Hence, the latter dominates the discourse of/on the EU.

The worst effect of this negative trajectory, which neglects all the principles listed by Westen (2008) by which to develop a compelling narrative, is the lack of a long-term vision. This is sacrificed in the name of national interests that supersede Europe. Thus, fear is the dominating emotion and the Union is transformed into a perfect scapegoat.

EU-rope, Fortress Europe or Digital Europe?

As we have seen, the selection of articles made by the students outlines a narrative that is offering two images. The first is that of a bureaucratic institution 'suffocating' citizens' aspirations, an EU-rope. The other one is that of a fortress under siege from different internal and external 'enemies'.

Fortunately, these young Europeans seem to be partially affected by these images that are over-imposed by the media narrative of our continent. A mature and well-balanced optimism was the signature of the two days and all the participants interacted as a collective body. They are perfectly aware that in the future they will have to face complex challenges at professional level in order to properly narrate a 'different' Europe. Most of them consider these difficulties normal and part of a 'lengthy' integration process. They are surprised that positive elements and achievements are not considered valuable news. When asked to list what are some of the most important advantages of a united Europe they answered, unanimously:

• the ability to travel freely without visa issues;
• the monetary union;
• food safety;
• a common set of democratic values to build upon.

Participants were proactive during the discussion and they outlined possible solutions to avoid the miscommunication of Europe. Firstly, they attach a great importance to the freedom to travel combined with the digital revolution that "has changed everything". The combination of the two allows for "a better direct communication and the opportunity to share". According to them, this should favour a process of transforming local identities into multiple identities. It is worth noting that this idea overlaps with the linguistic concept of speech community and discourse community (Swales, 1990: 21-32). In this case, we are learning how to

use a new language for a specific purpose, the European Union, while adding to, not subtracting from, our own national experiences. Of course, this is possible only if Brussels will be able to create equality with brave political decisions instead of bureaucratic ones. The Europe of welfare, the one so disliked by the American neocons, is the tool to fight Europhobia. Practically, participants were able to see the flaws of this vision, too.

First of all the limit of social media is that they help you to keep in touch with people who are like you. The 'quantum leap' of the spread of quality information is thus a serious concern (Conoscenti, in press-a). This correlates with the 'local' dimension of European information. During the sessions it was observed that nationalistic movements are gaining consensus because they are able to address 'local' issues. These are well received by public opinion and audiences (cf. Amparo Huertas in this monograph) because the idea of 'national' is a familiar one and easier to handle, either from a news point of view or cognitively. As a consequence, this activates another asymmetry that was identified, i.e. the different perception of European issues according to the level of education and social class. Last but not least, it was pointed out how journalists are unable to report certain EU-related issues. Some participants blamed journalists for being "lazy and ineffective because [they are] simply concerned by the local dimension of news and unwilling to cope with the complexities of the European scenario". While one could be inclined to agree with this harsh criticism, during the final conference Colomina (cf. her contribution in this monograph) pointed out that journalists, unfortunately, especially when the issue is Brussels, are subject to an amount of external pressure that is well beyond the boundaries of their profession. In the next section we will see where this situation generates from.

> Certain international institutions adopt some strategies to influence the way information is received, interpreted and relayed by journalists; this is achieved by a number of spinning techniques that I named Language Engineering.

How Europe is linguistically engineered and framed

In Conoscenti (2004) I discuss the strategies adopted by certain international institutions to influence the way information is received, interpreted and relayed by journalists. This is achieved by a number of spinning techniques that I named Language Engineering, since spin doctors not only work on the narrative, but also on the wording itself, in order to obtain sound bites and catchphrases that are 'palatable' to the journalist who will adopt/adapt them and make them popularly used. Typical examples are expressions like: "humanitarian war", "collateral damage", "coalition of the willing" and so on. The same is happening with Europe and the way the narrative of the crisis is framed. It must be remembered that most of the flow of economic information is generated by specialised news networks that are based in the USA and that the latter have several interests in the way the European situation is represented and evolves. The immediate consequence of language engineering is that it creates a 'mediated' reality, a media reality, to an extent that is not yet fully understood by lay people. In 2002 Karl Rove, George W. Bush's senior advisor and chief political strategist clarified the concept in an interview with Suskind (2004):

> "The aide said that [journalists are] 'in what we call the reality-based community', which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality'. I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles

and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore', he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do'".

Rove thus elaborates a working definition of master narrative (Danner, 2007) that combines, and exploits, the use of language engineering as a form of media manipulation. Some commentators have gone as far as to suggest that there is an overarching conflict between the reality-based community and the 'faith-based community', the one implied by Rove, in society as a whole. The role of political and economic framing, the use of spinning techniques and reframing (Conoscenti, 2011), the cognitive countermeasure to these processes, is paramount. As previously discussed, participants noted how the spread of social media is affecting international institutions' communicative capabilities by the introduction of alternative narratives. Nonetheless, the struggle to influence older audiences and non-digital-native ones is still part of the problem.

In Conoscenti (in press-b), I discuss a particular technique used by the US Department of State (DoS) in the years 1996-2001 in its press conferences. I defined it a 'pre-emptive narrative'. The Afghan war can be interpreted as a *diagnostic conflict*, suitable for the American Administration to 'test' its foreign policy and how reliable its internal and external supporters in such an *undefined* situation were. This conceptual and strategic spiral generated, in the nineties, a narrative that, through the concepts of *terrorism* and *asymmetrical war*, made void the differences between civil and military representational space, determining the perceptual shift from the concept of *war as exceptional event* to that of a *perpetual routine* (Oliver, 2007: 67-108). The strategic goal was to enforce a new general tenet: a daily life outside the temporal and spatial dimension of war cannot exist. This translates, at sociological, psychological and linguistic levels, into a shift from the old *us vs. them* dichotomy of the cold war into a post-communist collective stereotyping of danger, promoted by public diplomacy that can be summarised as an omni-comprehensive *us vs. threat*. The same has happened from 2008 in the discourse of the economic crisis. Colomina reported during the final conference on the 'informative vacuum', a typical spinning technique used since the Falklands/Malvinas war, that the whole issue is based upon. The crisis is present and thoroughly reported, but the agents are removed, leaving, at the centre of the informative focus, only its effects. The definition of narrative that we adopted perfectly fits this trajectory.

Thus, the new concept is extremely powerful because it is generic and impalpable and functional to the Psychological Operations carried out in times of crisis by the establishment (Steele, 2010: 28-32). Summarising, the DoS blends the use of *past*, *present* and *future* Semantic Areas (SA) to achieve a narration that is grounded in the *past.* This finding partially challenges a common assumption that a strategic foreign policy focuses to some extent on the ability to predict/control the future by means of an analysis based on past elements ordered in the present – this is the trait of strategic analysis: systemic causation and complex reasoning. The

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same technique has been used with Europe and the economic crisis with the involuntary (?) help of the Commission and the Troika.

In fact, data point to a conclusion that has been validated by several corpora I use for research purposes and that cover 18 years: the creation of a temporal cognitive and informative 'vacuum' can be observed. Institutions set the narrative in a space where the unfolding timeline and its related events are compressed in the *past*. Thus, the receiver's ability to pursue a coherent construction of a spatio-temporal representation of the narrated events is affected. A *time deficiency/compression* is observed.

Within a time-span of five years (1997-2001) the use of terms referring to the *Past* SA increases by 14.4%, indicating a 'compression' of the narrative towards this temporal area with a meaningful acceleration in 2000–2001.

Figure 2. Trend of 'Past' Semantic Area in the corpus (1997–2001)*
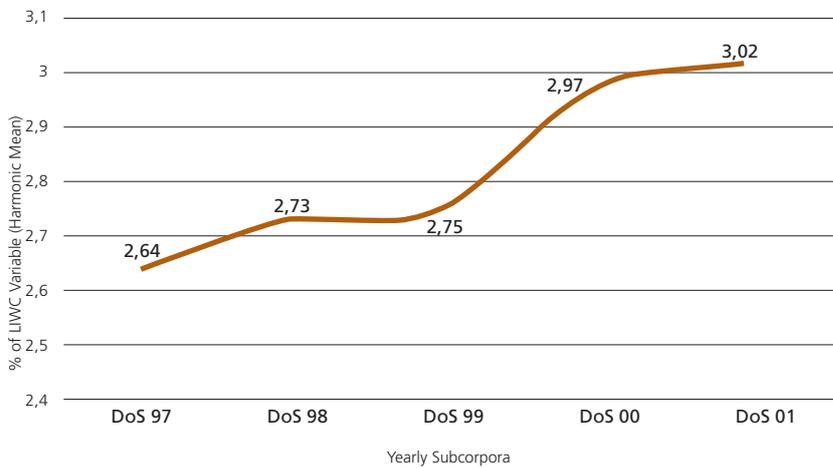
Source: Conoscenti, in press-b.
*The size of this corpus is 4,990,496 tokens and 29,426 types. It is divided into five yearly sub-corpora covering all the DoS Press Conferences from 02.01.1997 to 11.09.2001.

The same has been observed in the information regarding Europe in the last six years. This peculiar narrative subscribes to the need of a new world order as a 'tentative' solution, as envisaged by the DoS and neocon think tanks. Europe, consequently, must fit in this scheme. This is why this trajectory has been systematically offered to the public since 1996 and that explains its effectiveness.

One could ask what psychological effects can be achieved by such a narrative. Since the brain works by means of neural networks and frames which attempt to establish coherent isotopies for the interpretation of events, when a fundamental element is missing, or not confirmed, in this case the spatio-temporal dimension, the incoherence of expected products predicted by the isotopy generates emotional reactions such as fear, which is the preferred emotion of most spin-doctored narratives, as was readily identified by participants in their reports.

The first step is to place the problem in a temporal dimension which the listener can identify, determine and cognitively appropriate as his/her own, but surrounded by a halo of vagueness. The second step is to link the temporal dimension to the newly established framework for the problem: past years, past decades – generic reference – and past events, past crises – still a generic reference. The third step is to offer a concrete and possible solution anchored to the present, thus constructing an NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) swish pattern[1] that will lead to a 9-step conflicting beliefs integration pattern. Thus, data explain how spin-doctors' language engineered the perception of this particular narrative and its 'resolution'.

Conclusion

Although the seminar and its complex theme were compressed into a two-day interaction, participants achieved, as I have shown, a good perspective on what are the issues at stake in the (mis)communication of Europe and how the narratives and the language used to define and portray it play a relevant role. As I already reported, the approach of these communication students pragmatically blends reality and idealism. As one of them said: "It is a difficult task for journalists to fight lies with the truth, but we have to give it a try". These young Europeans are a real blessing for all of us EU citizens. They are the future and they reject the narratives of the past because they can bypass asymmetries and are concerned by the 'here, now and tomorrow' of the Union. At one point, when I suggested they could try to found a European e-magazine, given that they were representing an excellent potential network, either at professional or national level, Sofia, a sharp thinker who cannot tell, because of her life experiences, her precise nationality, told us: "All you (teachers, adults etc.) always suggest to start a new project or initiative. But you forget that we have to study, to work, to pay for our university fees. And then, EU-funds are not for us and it is complicated, anyway, to fill in the bidding forms". A perfect example of a European citizen who is aware of the future but with a sound anchoring to the present. This is why I feel privileged to have worked with this selection of future European journalists. They are better because they are pointing towards the future, setting aside asymmetries, the past and old schemes. They are light in a period of 'perceived' darkness. They can be compared to a little boy of the Kabbalistic tradition who took part in a camp where people of different religions and nationalities gathered together to get to know each other. At the end of the session he said: "You know what? I think we are all like clouds, rain, and rainbows. Sometimes when there's fighting going on, the clouds burst together, but after the storm is over, it is possible for a rainbow to come out".

The rainbow that this child was talking about is the idea of creating a place where we can go beyond the hatred that exists in the world and bring ourselves to the beauty of love and respect and human dignity. According to the participants in our seminar, Europe could be that place. That could be a compelling narrative.

[1]. Technically, in NLP the swish pattern works on a specific behaviour you would rather be without and "changes a problem state or behaviour by going in a new direction. It does not simply replace the behaviour, it produces a generative change" (O'Connor, 2001: 103–104). For a detailed discussion cf. Conoscenti (2011: 174–178).

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MASS MEDIA AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE

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> "*Community is itself a symbolic construct upon which people draw,
> rhetorically and strategically*. Claims to act in the best interests
> of the 'community' or to represent the 'community' are powerful.
> We're all supposed to be in favour of 'community'"
>
> (Jenkins, 2007: 136, emphasis added).

Introduction

In contemporary society the influence of the mass media has gradually been increasing and, nowadays, the media is just one identity-building resource among other socialisation agents such as school and parents, as well as social structures like gender, class or ethnicity. We want to focus on the important role that the mass media plays in the building of the "public sphere", which is understood as an imaginary community which does not necessarily require national boundaries. Jürgen Habermas wrote in 1962 about the relationship between "public sphere" and "public opinion"[1], highlighting the important role of political parties and the press in the creation of both notions. But, in this text, what we are really interested in is the "public connection" concept, that is, the relationship between the media and political engagement (Couldry *et al.*, 2007). There are multiple ways in which media consumption contributes to public connection and shows expanding political interest and there is no doubt that it is an essential question in the context of Europe. "Europeanization means contact, direct or virtual, and without such contact it is difficult to see how people from different European countries would intermarry, merge capital in practices of co-ownership, or come to see themselves as Europeans" (Díez Medrano, 2008: 9). And, in this contact, the mass media is a key agent in order to 'flag' Europeanism as a supra-nationhood.

On the one hand, the creation of a European sense of belonging can be fostered by all kinds of messages in the media. Thus, not only information and news, but also fiction, is able to shape media content. "Even the daily weather forecast can do this" (Billig, 1995: 154). Morley and Robins (1995) have said that news travels more easily across borders than entertainment

[1]. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* was translated from German to English in 1989 by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence.

Europeanism refers to a supranational identity where belonging and identification are linked to being part of Europe as a continent, as a civilization and as an organisation.

programmes because entertainment loses more from one country to another and necessitates more adaptation than news to remain relevant to local audiences. Probably, journalism has a more standardised style than entertainment and, therefore, is easier to understand. But, anyway, these journeys are not easy. While we were writing this paper, we were able to analyse the press reaction in Europe to the *Charlie Hebdo* attack and we could see the difficulty in establishing dialogue between (and within) cultural settings[2]. Some readers may think that by virtue of its extremity, such a situation is not useful as an example here. While we agree about the extreme nature of the event, we consider it useful because, somehow, it reflects the fragility of journalism (information and opinion) and, even more importantly, it is also a reflection of the predominance of the current geopolitical and cultural polarisation in the global world. Inside Europe we also find different polarisations: 'North' and 'South'; 'our country' and 'the others'; or 'one region' and 'the others' (for example, Scandinavia or Eastern Europe and the others).

On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development has increased global and transnational flows of information[3]. New transnational media have grown in Europe since the last decades of the 20th century (Chalaby, 2002; Moragas *et al.*, 1999). Here we are especially interested in those that try to create a Europeanist identity that people can identify themselves with (Carelli, 2014). These networks emerged out of the pre-existing national – and public – broadcasting structures and can operate jointly with other public service broadcasters. This is the case of Francophone TV5 Monde (launched in 1984), 3Sat (created in 1984 with the involvement of three public channels from Germany, Switzerland and Austria) and Arte, the Franco-German cultural TV network which has run from 1991. But, they can also operate jointly with commercial operators. In this group, Euronews (a multilingual news channel, developed through collaboration between Italy, France and Spain and running since 1993) and Eurosport (co-run by the French TF1 Group and Discovery Communications since 1989) are particularly prominent. These are television stations that in their "technology, ownership, distribution of programmes and audiences work across the boundaries of nation-states and language communities" (Barker, 1997: 45).

Taking this information into account, the question we will try to answer here is: can the media really contribute to public connection within Europe? Achieving this objective is not an easy task. Although media consumption contributes to public connection, it does not ensure it. The creation of a sense of European Union belonging is very difficult if we consider that the EU is "a unique international organization whose member states have different historical, cultural, political, and economic trajectories in relation to Europe and the EU" (Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2014: 49). Europeanism refers to a supranational identity where belonging and identification are linked to being part of Europe as a continent, as a civilization and as an organisation.

Do the mass media have a role in encouraging participation in Europe?

According to McQuail (2010), supranational media organisations should reflect, in their own structure and content, the various social, economic

2. On the morning of 7 January 2015, two armed men forced their way into the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. The attack reinforced the discussion about the relationship between Islam and Europe and, at the same time, was justified because *Charlie Hebdo* had published *cartoons* depicting the prophet *Muhammad.*

3. Communications satellites were the beginning and now we have the World Wide Web (WWW).

and cultural realities of the societies in which they operate. One question we have to highlight is *the difficulty for media players in overcoming cultural diversity and operating in a multinational environment (diversity of languages and of nation states)*. First, in Europe most of the media were created in order to respond to one nation (state) within a public communication system. Until the early 1980s, television broadcasting in Europe had a strong territorial and national bias. Second, although we can mention examples of transnational European media whose main aim is to expand the idea of Europe, they tend to focus on several nations rather than on the union of nations as a whole. Third, we can talk about pan-European channels that are a milestone in the process of media globalisation in Europe but whose strategy is based on localisation, which consists of adapting programmes to local audiences. Localisation is "a globalizing practice that helps cross-border channels to remain competitive in a multinational environment" (Chalaby, 2002: 184). In fact, pan-European channels began with a pan-European content strategy and had to desist from it. Chalaby (ibid.) explains four levels of localisation: introduction of local advertising windows, means of translation (dub or subtitle their programmes according to their audience), the introduction of local programming and, last, and most complex, the launch of a separate local channel with fully regionalised operations and productions facilities[4].

Another question relates to regulatory areas. The growth of pan-European television was facilitated by regulatory changes. The process of deregulation and liberation initiated throughout the 1980s and 1990s tried to create a 'supranational media space' in Europe[5]. And, in a few words, we can say that *the laws that regulate the media sector in each country were subject to reviews and reforms in line with the changes in the supranational legislation, but significant divergence in action and regulation of media at national levels remain* (Levy, 1999). But the problem was (and is) even more complex. According to Pauwels and Burgelman (2003), in order to make a European knowledge society, three aspects of EU regulation had to be fine-tuned. The first was overcoming the fact that European information society policy was to a large extent concerned with infrastructure (telecommunications policy). The second obstacle (completion policy) was the conflict between the will of the EU to install fair competition – open the market, abolish the existing monopolies, etc. – and the need for at least a stable environment with guaranteed revenues to attract the necessary investment in trans-European networks. The last concerns media policy, which is, in our view, the most important issue, because it is related to the fact of safeguarding diversity and pluralism. It is this tension between the local (nation states have been there far longer than the EU) and the global realities that makes a pan-European communication policy so problematic, much more so than the technical problems.

Therefore, it is not too surprising that the most common setting for the mass media is to show the world through a narrow lens of national interest. But, although the mass media tend to talk about nations more than about Europe, it is also important to know how they speak about Europe. After reading some authors who have analysed the means through which European identity is being defined[6], we arrived at this conclusion: there is a predominance of a banal Europeanism in the media. In global terms, the use of symbols (like flags or anthems) and the lack of deixis[7] ('we', 'our', 'the European Union' and so on) in media discourse are considered indicators of banal nationalism by the analysts.

[4.] MTV (Music Television), with MTV España, is a good example of a separate local channel. MTV is an American-based media organisation, an example of an aggressive strategist that wants to expand outside the US (home market) and sees Europe as a good opportunity to increase its revenue. Music Television (MTV) was launched in 1981 and began a European service in 1987. MTV España was created in 2000.

[5.] Two important documents related to broadcasting regulation were the *Green Book on Television without Frontiers* (1984) and the *Green Book on Telecommunications* (1987). We have to stress the role of the EBU (European Broadcasting Union), an alliance of public service media entities, established on the 12th of February 1950.

If the media keeps talking about Europe and the banality remains, the problem will stay. If we assume a link between banal representation and banal identity through the audience's identification process, the problem will increase year by year.

Here, we want to highlight the study of Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova (2014). She looked for trends of banal Europeanism in two pretty different national contexts: Bulgaria, an eastern European country, and the United Kingdom, with its anti-European position. Her study consists of two key components. First, a content analysis of seven TV programmes – four British and three Bulgarian – and an audience study comprising 174 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with children in schools in both countries. Secondly, data from the Eurobarometer was used. The field work was made from 2009 to 2010. Her main conclusions give a useful outlook, taking into account the featured differences between Bulgaria and the United Kingdom.

From a quantitative perspective, media coverage shows that the European topic is considerably more salient on the Bulgarian media agenda than on the British one. There are more stories about Europe/EU on Bulgarian TV (18.8%: 67 stories out of a total of 355) than on British TV (6.9%: 14 stories out of 202). The use of the EU flag is greater on Bulgarian TV (12.7% of total) than on its UK equivalent (0.5%). The qualitative references to Europe in Bulgarian TV stories imply an inferior position for Bulgaria and often an out-group description of Europe. For example, the analysis shows that it is usual to find news about decisions that apply in Bulgaria being justified by EU guidelines[8]. By contrast, the rare references to Europe on British TV channels described the UK as a fully-fledged part of EU and/or an equal partner. In relation to the media diet from audience's perspective, television is the main source of information on Europe and on the European Union, but, in England schools and parents also play an important role[9]. And, in reference to European identity, it was not particularly salient for children in either country but slightly more among English children. To finish, the Eurobarometer shows that the adult population does not endorse European identity in either of the countries. 43% in Bulgaria and 28% in the UK defined themselves as European.

These findings are very interesting. There is no doubt that 'flagging' or presenting Europeanism as a supra-nationhood is not an easy task for mass media. More news does not result in more people internalising a European identity. It is also necessary to monitor the quality and to know not only what the media focus on but also what is missing. The content has to be created far away from banal representations of Europe and Europeans and the mass media cannot work alone. A "public sphere" moving forward in the same direction is necessary, taking into account that 'community' is ideological: "it not only says how things are, it says how they *should* be" (Jenkins, 2007: 136). In this sense, European political intervention is necessary and the difficulty lies in indicating the degree and nature of it.

What about audience?

In order to harmonise pan-European data and an upmarket universe, the European Media and Marketing Survey (EMS)[10] was created in 1995. The national surveys, like peoplemeter panels – the television industry

> The content has to be created far away from banal representations of Europe and Europeans and the mass media cannot work alone.

6. We recommend reading Cram (2001) and Billig (1995).
7. These words normally refer to national identity (with or without State), but they can also be used to talk about Europe.
8. Examples of bad practices: saying that the EU wants Bulgaria to reduce the number of hospitals or talking about the EU only as a source of funds.
9. The audience study focused on England, the biggest and most Eurosceptical of the four UK nations.

standard – did not give the information pan-European media needed, as their sample sizes and election criteria were inadequate for measuring European audiences. We have to emphasise that the EMS only evaluates the media diet of Europe's wealthiest 20% of households, but it is the only source we have for European audiences.

EMS results say that the pan-European media audience is extremely small and its market share rarely surpasses the 4% mark. According to EMS 2014, for instance, Euronews – the channel with the highest audience – reaches 3.6% of affluent people every day in continental Europe (excluding the United Kingdom and Ireland), placing the channel first among its TV news channel competitors. Every day, around 1,600 people access Euronews. CNN and Sky News are in second place, both with around 1,500 viewers. The next in the ranking is BBC World News, with 1,075 viewers. It is, therefore, unquestionable that the size and reach of these media outlets has to be increased.

The second idea we have to think of surrounds the notion of a "homogeneous European audience". It is evident that it does not exist. In a national context, it is problematic to assume that all people will unequivocally embrace national identity, and consequently, such an assumption in relation to Europe as a whole becomes more problematic. As a curiosity we would like to quote a study that was edited in 2002 by Marieke de Mooij and Geer Hosfstede. These authors distinguish between individualist and collectivist cultures:

> "Members of individualist cultures are more textual and verbally oriented than members of collectivist cultures. Individualists read more books than collectivists, who are more visually oriented. This difference may help to explain why there are twice as many radios as television sets in Sweden and Germany, whereas in Portugal and Spain the number of television sets exceeds that of radios" (Mooij and Hofstede, 2002: 67).

It is true that when we read this quote in 2015, it sounds like a curiosity rather than an academic study, but at the same time it shows how academic studies can also contribute to creating stereotypes based on nationality. This problem is related to methodological nationalism, "the equation between the concept of society and the nation state in modernity" on which we agree with Chernilo (2006: 5): "In agreement with the thesis that methodological nationalism must be rejected and transcended, (we argue) that we still lack an understanding of what methodological nationalism actually is and, because of that, we remain unable to answer the substantive problem methodological nationalism poses to social theory: how to understand the history, main features and legacy of the nation state in modernity".

In addition to methodological difficulties, we have a deep theoretical problem. In order to have a "homogeneous audience", there has to be a "European identity" that brings it together. Hence, the question is: does a European identity exist? Here we understand identity within a sociological frame, which implies a series of identifications and on-going processes[11]. Although it is possible to take a social psychological understanding, we would rather talk about a social process and not about an individual process, in line with Jenkins (2007). "Group identification, by

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definition, presupposes that members will see themselves as minimally similar" (ibid.: 132). And according to the same author, this similarity does not mean an absence of differences, in fact, there is a constant interplay of similarity and difference.

> "Differences of opinion and more – of world-view, cosmology and other fundamentals – among and between members of the same community are normal, even inevitable. They are masked by a semblance of agreement and convergence generated by shared communal symbols, and participation in a common symbolic discourse of community membership that constructs and emphasizes the boundary between members and non-members" (ibid.: 137).

Some authors say that a European identity does exist (Bruter, 2005) while others are sceptical. Within the last group, most assume that the construction of a European identity is one of the biggest problems facing Europe and we agree with them. To finish with this problem – which leads nowhere – we suggest thinking about the emergence of European social groups. Díez Medrano (2008: 4) explains that since 1986 what we call the European Union "has moved from being a customs union to becoming a single market with a common currency and institutions that cover a whole range of economic, social, and political policy areas. The new European Union has a tremendous impact on the European citizens' lives, whether they know it or not". Díez Medrano (ibid.: 5) argues that, instead of paying attention to what people think about the European process, it is necessary to focus on "the emergence of European social groups, that is, transnational groups of European citizens whose consciousness and behavior denote solidarities that transcend national and subnational affiliations". In this sense, Díez Medrano (ibid.) talks about, for instance, the development of a growing trans-European network of voluntary civil associations. Therefore, one option is to talk more about "social action", and not only about "social identification". It is a way to show that a European society can exist, although it seems possible only through the formation of minority groups which are, at the same time, dynamic and flexible.

More than 50 years ago, Rokkan and Campbell (1960) argued that two indexes had to be taken into account in establishing political participation: namely, involvement in organised political activity and attention to politics in the media. Nowadays, we can say that the media not only has to pay attention to politicians but also to social participation. From this point of view, one of the main debates has to be centred on the place of the citizen in the media, both in terms of how they are addressed as a public (participant or not) and as citizens (strategies of engaging the public in issues around the democratic state).

What can the media do in the future?

The role of ICT seems essential. ICT has influenced communication between individuals, organisations and communities. Fears of declining regular news followers, and, therefore, political engagement are exacerbated by concern for the fragmentation of audiences. The increase in the number of channels has reduced the average audience per channel and, in the face of this, the ICT could play an important role. Social media can be used to collectively resolve 'public issues'[12].

One of the main debates has to be centred on the place of the citizen in the media, both in terms of how they are addressed as a public (participant or not) and as citizens (strategies of engaging the public in issues around the democratic state).

11. Sociology talks about self-identification and society's role (social identity). Psychology talks about perception (personal identity).
12. How to quantify the *relationship* between *television* and social media (mainly Twitter) from the audience perspective (number of users, comments about TV programmes, etc.) is one of the most important questions that companies like Nielsen, a leading global information and measurement company, have to resolve.

Audience participation is not a new phenomenon, but it is a far more prominent feature online that in traditional media. With digital interactive media, opportunities to more directly influence and participate in the production of media content have increased. Axel Bruns and Joanne Jacobs (2007) propose two levels of interaction: interactivity and intercreativity. The first one is associated with the notion of *prosumer* (producer + consumer)[13], an audience which can interact and media that lets them perform some actions, for example, leaving comments. The second one is associated with the notion of *produser* (producer + user) an audience that can produce content.

> "The Ford mass production model has been replaced by one of individuation, personalization, and customization, but this is only a first step: from customization follows interaction, from interaction follows interactivity, and from interactivity follows, in the right setting, intercreativity" (ibid.: 6).

Among researchers, widespread agreement exists that audience participation is one of the most important developments of the digital environment. However, the research into the dimension of audience participation is limited and the tendency is towards fragmented knowledge: it is usually limited to one country, one media or, even, to one audience activity. Nevertheless, we can mention some studies that draw an optimistic future. The so-called 'citizen strategy' emphasises the social contributions viewers can make to improve the quality of programming, to build up social values in the public sphere and to increase pluralism by exchanging different points of view.

As examples of good practice, José Alberto García-Avilés (2012) proposes the programme *Tengo una pregunta para usted*[14], in which the audience can ask questions to politicians live and direct, or the work of the Audience Ombudspersons, because "they increase the transparency of media processes and also give viewers and users the opportunity to discuss, comment and exchange opinions" (ibid.: 443). A study in the Danish context says that when it comes to news websites, the audience can participate in the production of news in a number of different ways: as sources and making information available for journalists; by collaborating with the professionals on the production of news; by engaging in conversation with the news workers; and by using the journalists as sources for creating more transparency in the news production process (Kammer, 2013).

Therefore, the studies suggest that increasingly complex power relations exist in the relationship between audiences and media workers in the digital environment, but how would it be used in a capitalist context? Philip Napoli (2008: 24) noted that audience activity in a digital environment "illuminate[s] previously concealed dimensions of audiences, many of which are being judged to have significant economic and strategic value, and, perhaps most important, can facilitate the gathering of types of information that previously could not have been gathered". In other words, Philip Napoli forecasted the creation of the biggest "focus group" that any researcher (sociology, marketing, etc.) could imagine, and social networks have indeed become an important source of information about customers. It is a guarantee of its expansion, but it does not ensure the "citizen strategy" linked with transparency that Europeans countries need to reinforce the idea of Europeanism as a supra-nationhood within their citizenship.

13. In his book, *The Third wave* (1980), edited by Bantam Books (USA), Alvin Toffler introduced this concept.

14. Based on the French programme (TF1) *J'ai une question à vous poser.* It was launched in Spain by public television in 2007.

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DIVERSE, NOT DIVIDED?

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THE COMMUNICATION OF THE EU IN THE ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS: AN ANALYSIS OF MARCO ZATTERIN'S ARTICLES AND THE METAPHOR "EU-AS-SUPERVISOR"

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Marco Zatterin is the only correspondent in Brussels for *La Stampa*. He won the "Altiero Spinelli" award in September 2014. This award was handed to him personally by the President of the Italian European Federalist Movement, Lucio Levi, at the end of the 33rd National Seminar on Federalism. On the 17th of May 2013, he wrote on his blog about the Ilva case. Ilva's plant in Taranto is the biggest European industrial complex for the production and transformation of steel. In September 2013, the European Commission brought its first default action against Italy because of Ilva's bad pollution management. The EU measures against the Italian government soon became a case of EU interference in domestic affairs and all the national media have been talking of it for months.

By analysing his article of May 17th, 2013, entitled "Ilva's wrong calculations" (my translation), I brought to light and shared with the CIDOB seminar participants the use of the metaphor "EU-as-supervisor". Later I linked this metaphor to the European North-South divide perception. This means that by conveying the EU as the supervisor of the southern European member states the North-South divide perception can increase. We know that the idea that the northern member states are better than the southern member states (PIGS) goes far, but the perception of the EU as the supervisor of all its member states is more recent.

> "We – the Italians – have taken on commitments which we haven't then fulfilled. Now we have to renegotiate them by paying again with our credibility" (my translation) (Zatterin, 2013).

Moreover, frequent titles such as "EU tells Italy what to do" and "EU applies sanctions to Italy" are front-page news in Italy, thereby reinforcing a negative perception of the EU in the citizens. For example, on the 15th of March 2014, some days before the second default action against Italy regarding the Ilva case, Zatterin's article was entitled: "Ilva, EU urges Italy: 'Taranto remains unlawful'" or some days before Jyrki Katainen's visit to Rome[2], he entitled his daily article in *La Stampa* (March 6th, 2015, p.8) "EU mission for monitoring judiciary reform".

> The European opinion leaders can change perception by transforming the 'EU-as-supervisor' metaphor into the 'EU-as-supporter' metaphor.

This way of narrating the EU as supervisor through our media risks deepening the gap between the southern EU citizens and their European institutions, which are perceived as northern institutions because of their strictness. In this regard, Zatterin unconsciously strengthens the belief that Italy is the "bad guy", while Europe is the "good guy". He stresses his Europeanism through the lack of trust in the local institutions. His intention to build a common sense of European belonging in his readers by underlining the EU institutions' correctness becomes an argument for Eurosceptic readers. Therefore, in spite of positive communication, the perception of the EU is negative, especially in the southern countries, because of the well-known inferiority complex.

We maintain that the gap between the southern EU citizens and the EU institutions is also an effect of the work of the national press. In fact, Italy is part of the EU as are the other 27 Member States. Nevertheless, our journalists describe the EU as apart from the national states, as different institutions and foreign compared to the member states. Zatterin, like the majority of European journalists, describes the EU as something different from Italy. This generates the contraposition between Italy and the EU. He states in his article: "The wrong calculations of Ilva" that "Europe has tried to fix what Italy has ignored for years" (my translation). This expression divides two parts of the same whole, because Italy is part of Europe. In other words: the use of the metaphor "EU-as-supervisor" increases the inferiority complex of the southern EU citizens which influences the perception of the positive communication of the EU and deepens the gap between the citizens and the institutions.

Could we communicate the EU as a helper for the local institutions instead of a judge of the national political decisions? We need other expressions and headlines instead of the well-known/criticised "being their supervisor". The EU can be communicated to its citizens as the supporter of their national states, as the coach of a 28 member-state team. Nowadays it happens that the communication of the EU is positive by identifying it as a fair judge of the member states, but its perception among the citizens is negative. We think that in times of economic crisis it is more realistic to change the communication than the perception. Therefore, the European opinion leaders can do it by transforming the "EU-as-supervisor" metaphor into the "EU-as-supporter" metaphor.

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THE COMMUNICATION OF THE EU IN THE ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS: AN ANALYSIS OF MARCO ZATTERIN'S ARTICLES AND THE METAPHOR "EU-AS-SUPERVISOR"

EUROPE IS MORE THAN JUST AN ECONOMIC CONSTRUCT

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The article, "Reform is the key for Britain and Europe, not voting 'in' or 'out'" (Lyons, 2014) that was published in *The Times* is mainly about Europe's economic situation and touches upon the question of whether Britain should stay in the EU or not. It states that when talking about the EU, this means talking about the 18 countries of the eurozone.

Asking the question of whether Britain should stay in or leave the EU is a very complex question and cannot be answered easily. Quoting the *Europe Report*, the article states that Britain should stay in a reformed EU. Furthermore, the article offers solutions on how to reform the EU, still quoting the report. First of all, the relationship between eurozone and non-eurozone needs to be secure and fair. It is also vital to ensure that the single market stays stable. Thirdly, it is important that the EU changes its mindset to a more productive and competitive one. It ends by stating that the EU and London need to work together for a growing economy.

The article focuses mostly on the economic components of the EU. Although this is a very important aspect, the cultural dimension is missing. The European countries have a long history that links them together and this is vital when discussing whether they should stay together as a union or not. Furthermore, the article talks mostly about what the EU can do to keep Britain as a member. And although it is true that the EU needs reforms in order to be more productive and to encourage growth, every member should make an effort to make this work. The citizens of the European countries should feel linked together because of their history and their geographical proximity. They share similar beliefs and goals and this should also get a mention.

What the article is missing are the consequences should Britain decide to leave the EU, economically as well as culturally. Although we all live in different countries, the EU is somehow also a *nation* and everything is interlinked, so that every decision can affect the other members of the EU. The EU is the UK's biggest trading partner and leaving it would not only have negative consequences for the Union, but also for the

UK. During the discussion, it was mentioned that British businesses do not want to leave the EU, because it would mean that they make less profit. But until now, they have kept quiet about it. Should it come to a referendum, they might make their position clearer.

Positively, the article quotes the *Europe Report*, which offers solutions to the current issues within the EU. And true enough, the EU needs reforms, whether Britain stays in the EU or not. And yes, the countries inside and outside the eurozone need to be treated equally, otherwise it is not fair. Making the EU more productive is also a demand that makes sense and should be a goal in general, not only forming part of the debate about Britain's departure.

During the discussion about this article, it became clear that there is no common understanding of a European sense of belonging. We deeply discussed the position of the United Kingdom in Europe. To us, it seems like the UK neither wants to be in nor outside the EU. They want the full benefits of the membership that comes with being in the Union, but on the other hand do not want to commit fully to it. They are not interested in taking any part in the struggles that the EU is facing. The UK does not really make an effort to make this concept of the EU work – or so it seems to us. We also discussed that whenever anyone is in England for example, we are seen as "European". This implies that the British people do not consider themselves to be European, which hinders the sense of belonging. The fact that the UK always threatens to leave the EU whenever the discourse does not move in its favour was also discussed. Even though the UK is an important member of the EU, behaviour like this is unacceptable. They already hold back by not having the same currency, which benefits them immensely since their currency is quite strong.

Instead of accepting compromises and looking for what is best for the whole EU, countries always look at themselves first. This is also the case in the local media. Even though it is important for the newsworthiness of national reporting, looking at Europe as a whole is important, too. The national angle somehow prevents the European sense of belonging. Countries need to change their perspective to make the future sustainable. Instead of thinking "what can the EU do for me" countries need to ask "what can I do for the EU".

Furthermore, we discussed the idea of the European Union. Even though it started as an economic construct, it is now so much more: culturally as well as historically the European countries are connected with each other and therefore need to stick together. In particular, we as Europeans see the open borders as a very positive thing that came with the implementation of the EU. The more we travel, the more European we feel. In order to promote the sense of belonging and to bring Europe closer together, we need to start feeling European. This does not mean that we have to give up our national identity. It means that we look over the border and recognise what is happening there. Taking an interest in foreign events is important in a globalised world and necessary if we want the concept of the European Union to succeed. Without a vision for the future, the sense of belonging to Europe will never be in the minds of its citizens.

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A federalist vision

The European Union faces various economic, cultural and political challenges these days, any of which have serious implications for European society. The main economic problems stem from the financial crisis and its consequences in the eurozone. This existential threat developed fear in many Europeans and created tension between the citizens of member states. It also led to the rise of Eurosceptic voices propagating nationalistic messages.

As a reaction to this phenomenon, a Hungarian politician, former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, provides a counter-argument that promotes common European values. In an opinion piece, he elaborates on the concept of a United States of Europe and the current public sentiment surrounding the EU. Gyurcsány argues that it is in our best interests to build even closer economic, political and cultural ties within the European Union. He acknowledges the growing popularity of Eurosceptic parties but urges citizens to stick to their shared values and their European identity instead. This historically developed identity is, according to the author, what binds the "Old Continent" together, and as a consequence, countries should take the path of cooperation. As an ultimate goal, he envisions a European government with a prime minister and a strong parliament within the framework of a United States of Europe that would serve all European citizens and provide freedom and equality to all of them.

Too optimistic?

From a theoretical point of view, Gyurcsány gave a very important message that is not often heard these days: a sense of togetherness that originates from the European people's shared history and traditions can help formulate a meaningful definition of what Europe is. History has shown that cooperation and openness are always more effective than an introverted approach that focuses on national interest.

The main task of the European Union is to educate citizens about European matters so that they can develop a more sophisticated view on the role of this institution. The media also have a great responsibility in disseminating information about the EU.

However, the end goals he set out might have far-reaching and unforeseeable consequences. Nation states, regardless of their historical proximity, will not be willing to give away more of their sovereignty after years of economic depression. That said, emphasising the benefits of economic cooperation rather than talking about a political union might be a better strategy, especially at a time when the very foundation, the economically beneficial nature of the European Union, is questioned. Many people today have to live in financial insecurity which has resulted in the emergence of new walls between them.

People fear for their jobs and see their existence threatened by others coming from foreign countries. Many Europeans today feel that the disappearance of borders and the free movement of the workforce has many disadvantages for them. In addition to this problem, the public perception of immigration does not reflect reality. According to a study published by *The Guardian* (Nardelli and Arnett, 2014), citizens tend to overestimate the number of immigrants in their home countries by large margins. From the perspective of the European Union, these ill-perceived issues are harmful because people tend to identify them with the institution itself.

Dissolving fear and raising awareness

In order to overcome this problem and improve the image of the European Union, this fear of the 'other' needs to be dissolved and the misperceptions need to be clarified. In my opinion the reason why these misperceptions can come to existence in the first place is the lack of knowledge about European Union among citizens. People do not really know the integration they are part of and there is a low level of engagement between them and the institution. This is reflected in the systematically low turnout numbers in European elections. Citizens tend to feel that Europe is an elitist project (Dempsey, 2011) and that the decisions are made at the top level without ordinary people having a real impact.

For these reasons I believe that the main task of the European Union is to educate citizens about European matters so that they can develop a more sophisticated view on the role of this institution. The media also have a great responsibility in disseminating information about the EU. Unfortunately, the European news coverage tends to be negative since positive news are often less newsworthy. Instead of only focusing on boosting their viewership, media outlets should realise their important role in the future of the Union and provide more balanced coverage in terms of valence.

However, the media and the EU institutions have only limited capacity to raise awareness among European citizens since they cannot mobilise people who are uninterested in European affairs. This process has to start at an early age so that it becomes an essential part of people's identity. Therefore, I argue that it is necessary to integrate a class on the European Union into the curricula of high schools throughout the continent. Another essential element of this education process could be the extension of European exchange programs like the successful Erasmus project. Extending it to younger students could help improve the image

of the European Union in the eyes of future generations. They could meet fellow Europeans, learn about their culture while also creating a bond based on their shared European identity.

This identity is the backbone of the whole integration project and in times of struggle it is important to find ways to protect it from the damaging effects of Euroscepticism and ignorance. It is our job to think of ways to improve the institution's image so that European citizens become aware of the numerous opportunities it provides them with. We have to recognize the importance of education and show people the essence of the EU: it is diverse, and at times it might seem to be divided but there is a strong bond between European nations that will eventually prevail and lead to cooperation.

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ADDITIONAL GUARANTEE: EUROPEAN IDENTITY: THE SEMANTIC PRODUCT

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Increasing political tensions between the countries of northern and southern Europe is a dangerous conflict that threatens the flow of friendly communication between all the nations of the European Union. This reflection was my starting point for discussing why the European discourse has suffered from aggressive dialectical attacks. Political radicalism is growing at the roots of the consciousness of European citizens who are being hardest hit by the economic crisis, coupled with the concept of loss of identity and the rise of nationalism. One of the main problems of identity found in European people should be described from a marketing perspective. We all know the importance of designing a package and a great slogan to sell our best ideas of a great product. The product in this case is Europe.

After the sessions trying to understand the concept of European marketing, all participants agreed that we had a great product that cost much sacrifice and work to integrate into a legislative, social and cultural transition that our nations urgently need. The problem is that having a great product with perfect design and great features, with a message of courage and hope, does not mean that you can run your communication strategy through your consumers, European citizens. And the dilemma when a communication strategy does not connect with the audience is that when the real problems with your product or service appear, the 'warranty' begins to disappoint your target audience. What is the guarantee of European identity? This is the key question to be asked.

"The European Union needs to help in the translation of the demand for democracy into a political will"

(Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey).

Democracy has begun to deteriorate, corruption levels are too high and citizens no longer believe in their rights. Misinformation continues to evolve in the media of different countries and regulatory mechanisms on the content of these communication systems have not been enough. Each collective triumph that our 'product' has achieved has been manipulated by different

countries to achieve these successes under their own umbrella, and the communication tools of the European Union have failed to connect with audiences in each country in order to refute the manipulation of the mass media. You cannot build a brand if your distributors and major suppliers identify your product as if they were the owners.

Therefore, we have a worrying situation in the birth and evolution of political radicalism, because when the guarantee fails and when the communication has no connection to the target, consumers desperately seek a new speech to identify all deficiencies, both moral and functional. This lack of empathy is born of the fine print that European citizens were unable to read or failed to write. Europe should have prepared a crisis communication plan to prevent deep disaffection of some countries, especially in southern Europe. We cannot change the weather, but we can dress for the weather: the solution must begin by discussing directly with citizens of different states to discover where the belonging and identity problems started.

Another phase should start through the creation of new cultural and symbolic communication tools. We all know the long-standing ties that integrate the states of Europe but we have not released too many initiatives to link this sociocultural connection. We believe that every European citizen should travel for a period of time to another neighboring country, we believe that the cultural industry that manages to unite European states must organise new collaborative events. Maybe we should create new tools of identity that are not only associated with the new generations, and make guarantees about our product to a broader demographic audience. In this way, the evolution of old ideologies that corrupt the ideas of the younger generations would be reinforced in a European perspective. It is possible that the European Union has focused its efforts on selling a young, dynamic product, forgetting a large part of Europe's memory – those generations who lived through the birth of our ideology, our common vision and the joining of values.

Another phase must see the European Union change its policy of communication with the different states, erasing the tracks of disinformation provided by mass media, establishing a purely European communication channel. Finally, Europe needs a slogan that identifies the needs and concerns of all states, a claim to uphold the ties between civilisations. The best part of a slogan is that it is able to synthesize all the symbolic values of a discourse in less than five words and also present the irrational feeling of value that you are part of a brand that goes beyond stereotypes.

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> Maybe we should create new tools of identity that are not only associated with the new generations, and make guarantees about our product to a broader demographic audience.

IDENTITY PROTECTION

IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN THE DISCOURSES OF EUROPEAN COMMISSIONERS IN THE CONTEXTS OF TURKEY'S MEMBERSHIP AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

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Identity, foreign policy and enlargement

History, beliefs, values, norms. Along with many other things, they connect to construct an identity. When 'the other' has different types of god, history, beliefs or values, it is normal to see them as others. It makes sense to talk about differences when we mention our own identity, because as well as similarities, identity is constructed by differences and, in relation to this article, at some point the definition of Europe is also dependent on others.

Manuel Castells (2010), the writer of *Power of Identity* argues that identities can be formed by dominant institutions. He claims that these institutions might become the main identity builders when social actors adopt them and construct their meaning around this adaptation. These institutions also take part in one study done by Turkish author Senem Aydin Düzgit (2013). In her article she mentions how to form identity in foreign policy and in this formation she discusses two types of state identity. One is 'role identity' and the other one is 'type identity'. Here, role identity comes to the fore because it is constructed in relation to other states. She also mentions how policy and identity are ontologically interlinked when foreign policy-makers give the feeling of survival to the people in Europe by using words such as doors, pressure or protection.

Turkey's membership and European security

The accession of Turkey to the European Union has been a very dramatic issue since 1963, when Turkey applied to become a member for the first time. Since then, the full membership option has never been a reality for several reasons. When Turkey finally became a strong, committed candidate, many things changed along with the excuses. In the last couple of years, security issues have become a major obstacle to full membership for Turkey. The many differences between Europe and Turkey have been cultural, mostly, but lately these differences are all about security issues.

Security is indeed a very important problem, especially in the current decade, because of the situation in the Middle East, but there is also another reason why security is discussed in all meetings related to Turkey. Turkey was an important ally in the Gulf war or more recently that against the Syrian regime. So the country is a kind of protector but is also a threat to Europe in the field of security. Düzgit (2013) mentions this issue in her article and gives an example of a speech made by one official.

"With the formerly communist East now part of the family, we no longer face the East–West arms race. (…) But relations between Europe and Islam – inside and outside Europe – is (…) a challenge of our time" (Düzgit, 2013).

So here we can easily observe that Turkey reproduces the "clash of civilisations" discourse. Düzgit (ibid.) explains that Huntington's clash discourse (1996) became almost hegemonic in the Commission's security-related discussions on Turkey. She also claims that "the key assumptions of the thesis are being discursively reproduced over the topic of Turkish accession. For instance, in the excerpt above, the communist 'East', which constituted the major other of 'Western' Europe during the Cold War, is no longer constructed as a security threat, now that it is integrated into the 'family', a metaphor which naturalises 'Europe'". As she gave an example of eastern Europe, we can here insert another speech made by one commissioner in relation to Turkey's accession and security issue. The border question is a very complex one. You cannot expect that a country bordering regions or countries like Iraq and Iran just applies the same Schengen standards as Poland does with Belarus or Ukraine. The situation is completely different (Düzgit, 2013). According to Düzgit (ibid.) the excerpt mentions Turkey's accession, and makes 'migration' an issue of security by constructing it as an 'existential threat'. Migration is also predicated as a 'problem' for the EU because of the southern region that Turkey borders.

Conclusion

In my opinion, it is not easy to make a conclusion about this article as we still have not decided if Turkey belongs to Europe or not. If we accept that Turkey is a European country which will be a member in the future, I must say that it is understandable that the European Union needs to have a common identity to continue its togetherness, but using notions such as security to create 'the other' causes some damage and creates stereotypes and prejudices for the people of Europe and Turkey especially when we note that support for European Union in Turkey has decreased to 18% and nationalism is on the rise in Europe.

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WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT MIGRATION: THE NEED FOR A NEW COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

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The sinking of a boat of the coast of Lampedusa and the more than 250 deaths it caused exposed the weaknesses of the European Union's borders and the laws governing them. It also exposed the thorny issue of responsibility over migration and asylum seekers between member states. *The Guardian* article (Traynor and Kington, 2013) discussed at the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) "Europe: behind (mis)understandings" workshop highlighted the divisiveness of the issue. The following paper will briefly summarise the article, then discuss the challenges emerging from the media report of the event, and finally offer solutions that emerged from the panel sessions at the event.

A week after the tragedy, *The Guardian* reported on an EU meeting in Brussels to deliberate on a policy response. The European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, called for a rescue mission in the Mediterranean. The EU's border force, Frontex, would carry out an operation covering Mediterranean shores in an effort to track, identify and, if necessary, rescue migrant boats. At the time, Malmström's call failed to receive much support from the 28 member states, as most national governments were reluctant to delegate immigration policies to Brussels. Italy, one of the main recipients of migrant boats, has repeatedly called for more EU help to control the migration influx. The Italian interior minister recalled that the borders are not just Italy's, but the EU's too. The German interior minister instead claimed that other EU countries, like Germany, are doing their part by hosting great numbers of asylum seekers and warned that most migrants are seeking better economic conditions rather than escaping adversarial political conditions at home. The article also included accounts of the shipwreck's survivors and other migrants protesting in Lampedusa against the poor living conditions they endure, as their future remained uncertain.

Immigration policies are portrayed as one of the most divisive issues in the EU, and they may very well be, as most national governments are reluctant to allow a higher number of migrants to cross the borders into their countries. Italy and Germany's positions are emblematic of the arguments dividing the member states: the countries receiving migrants on their shores ask for increased support, while the countries hosting most

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asylum-seekers claim they are already making a contribution. Perhaps in the name of neutrality and objectivity the journalists fail to challenge those claims, despite Italy's shortcomings in providing accommodation for refugees and Germany's argument disregarding the difficulties in distinguishing between economic and political adversities in countries affected by wars and famine. The authors note that Germany's interior minister's comments seem to be a rather common view in the UK too: the minister's attempt at differentiating between 'economic' migrants and political refugees suggests that the EU is unable (or unwilling) to accommodate migrants looking for better living conditions.

From what emerged in the CIDOB discussion, when coming to terms with understanding the issue of migration to the EU, the communication problems are rooted in two aspects, one of which is political, and the other has to do with the media.

From the political side, there is a lack of leadership in tackling the issue of migration and asylum seekers in the EU. The development of the financial crisis has overshadowed human rights issues, with the political discussion no longer engaging with issues of European responsibilities. Regarding the issue of migration, but not limited to it, the EU seems to have given up on the idea of being a global player.

At the media level, the issue of migration is framed too often as one of economic or social security for those of the receiving country, rather than a universal human rights issue. The focus is often on the problems potentially faced by the receiving country rather than the ones faced by the migrants, who are too easily framed as antagonists or threats. There is also a lack of appropriate language and explanation. The policies and regulations are mentioned with hardly an explanation of what they require. The migrants, potential asylum-seekers or economic, are mostly represented as a number rather than as human beings, with their own stories and reasons to leave the country mostly ignored.

This is not a situation without solutions. Politically, member states should keep revising the Dublin Regulation, now in its third stage, and discussing a cohesive foreign policy. If Europe truly has to be a union, border regulation and diplomacy with foreign countries have to be equally developed. Involving the more recent member states in this operation is also a necessity to equalise the EU's shares of privileges and responsibilities.

The media have perhaps the biggest power in shaping the general image of migration to the EU. Firstly, it is recommendable to use more consistent and accurate language in reporting migrants' circumstances. Secondly, the human dimension of these stories should not be lost to policy or economic arguments, but highlighted as a way to better understand the reasons for migration. There is also a need for the media to report more often and more in depth about the migrants' countries of origin. This would allow the public to be better informed about the issues affecting migrants' decisions to leave their countries in search of a better future. Fact-checking the various politicians' claims would also be of benefit to the public, to give them the means to evaluate the extent to which politicians' claims are feasible policy proposals or simple slogans.

In conclusion, a reframing of communication of migration issues is needed both at the political and media level to recognise migration, which is essentially freedom of movement, as not just a part of Europe's past, but also as a present feature of European's identity.

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THE FUTURE OF EUROPE LOOKS BRIGHT

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"Feast of the awards" (my translation) is an article that was published by the Dutch national newspaper *De Volkskrant* (Van Ewijk, 2014) and depicts the chances that eight different candidates – with eight different nationalities – have to gain a position in the European Commission. Since the division of positions is framed as a contest between different member states, the article is a clear instance of how the media can create and strengthen division between the different member states of the European Union.

The article shows a clearly national focus, in which nationality is made explicit both verbally, through subheadings with the names of the countries, and visually, through pictures of national flags. The division of portfolios is compared to a sporting competition in which the contestants defend their country's dignity. They are drawn with medals around their necks. Phrases such as: "The Spanish have hit the jackpot" and "It seems that the Dutch have won the first prize" indicate a European Union of rivals rather than allies. This kind of framing suggests that the most important characteristic of politicians is their nationality rather than their competence. This hinders a common European sense of unity.

Framing that focuses on national aspects rather than European ones should not necessarily be considered the result of a reluctance to relate to people in other member states. In many cases, national framing is the direct outcome of the audience's decreasing interest in current affairs and journalists' attempts to deal with this trend. Such attempts include simplification of the news and disproportional attention paid to dramatic aspects. The game framing that was used in *De Volkskrant*'s article is an understandable attempt to try to popularise a political topic that is generally considered complicated and dull. But despite the comprehensibility of such a practice, the consequences stand in the way of fruitful European collaboration.

One way to deal differently with the audience's disinterest in European politics is by ensuring a higher level of basic understanding of the field, which could and should be enabled through more attention being paid to politics in educational curriculums. If a higher degree of common

One way to deal differently with the audience's disinterest in European politics is by ensuring a higher level of basic understanding of the field, through more attention being paid to politics in educational curriculums.

understanding among members of the audience can be assumed, this leaves more possibilities open to journalists to report substantially on developments and events at the European level. This would help to avoid a simplified, nationalistic focus and enable a move towards more nuanced coverage.

Despite many concerns that were raised during the seminar, I belief a certain degree of optimism is justified when it comes to the future of European collaboration. History has shown that the presence of a common enemy or threat plays a great role in strengthening ties between allies. In the context of ever-increasing globalisation, increasing competition from emerging economies and the threat of terrorism, European countries will increasingly realise that their commonalities are stronger and more important than their differences.

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MEDIA AND EUROPEANNES

- REPORTING EUROPE: FROM UNITED IN DIVERSITY TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE ENTITY

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REPORTING EUROPE: FROM UNITED IN DIVERSITY TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE ENTITY

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"Europe is what Europe is not", states the title of an article by the Dutch website *De Correspondent*. The author (Wijnenberg, 2014) observes that the European sentiment is not strongly held amongst Europeans. Yet. Europe as a primarily economically-motivated partnership hinders its inhabitants from seeing the rather ideological dimensions of its alliance as well. The extensive size of the continent, the diverse cultures it holds and the adverse interests of the European countries do not contribute to unification either. Besides which, people tend to identify more easily with their known, near and familiar country than with the relatively new and abstract unity of Europe.

Few citizens contemplate their European sense of belonging. This mindset could be very different, as Europeans experience a lot of benefits from their continent. The disappearance of many armed border posts between European countries makes it possible to smoothly travel around the continent. People can just carelessly pack their bags and go, as Europe is predominantly safe and proper. The European surroundings of peace, freedom, security and prosperity are taken for granted. Except by travelling outside of Europe – where one might have to worry about matters such as being a lone female traveller, LGBT prohibition, corrupt authorities, vaccinations, unsafe food and water and money exchange – a remedy to this European lack of awareness has not been found so far.

The media can largely provide a substitute for non-travellers to experience what will be absent when Europe is suddenly out of reach. There is an ongoing debate on how the media could play a significant role in creating awareness of Europe amongst Europeans. When reporting on European-related issues, national media generally adopt a domestic focus. This continuously reinforces the distinction between the nation State and Europe: that is not increasing Europeanisation. Whereas various pan-European platforms have been established to convey the European story, not all of these turned out to be viable. Due to language barriers, for instance, pan-European media largely serve a niche audience. And whereas reporting across borders should create understanding for diversity around Europe, in practice, pan-European media often present one point of view on different topics. Transnational media,

There is already a demand for a new view on (trans)national media that focusses on stimulating people to go beyond their current understanding of Europe.

where journalists from different countries work together on one topic and provide different points of views, could offer a solution. This way reporting across borders can support European integration.

In addition, national media tend to pay more attention to negative rather than positive news concerning Europe. Issues such as high unemployment rates, economic depths and increasing xenophobia in some European countries are often reported on in the media. This is less the case with subjects that are going well in Europe, like the exchange of knowledge in science and art. Here it seems the more success, the less newsworthy it is and consequently the fewer people will hear about it. National media could therefore contribute to European awareness by reporting more on positive news concerning Europe.

Lastly, by slowly and constantly implementing more European news in the national media, people will get more familiar with Europe. It is especially stimulating for people that have never travelled either in or outside the continent to see how they benefit from being European. At the same time, European-related news should focus less on politics, as citizens are only marginally interested in this topic. Instead, the media strategy should be more Eurovision and less European Union.

These ideas are a challenge for today's financially unstable European media landscapes. Besides this, it demands a new mindset for European journalists. Many established journalists started their practices in a different time, yet the new generation of journalists is educated with a more globalised worldview. It will take a while before this has a discernible effect on the European media landscape. But, the enlargement of the Schengen area from five to twenty-six states took sixteen years, there had been discussion about a European currency for almost two decades before implementing it, and Europe is still not unrest-free. Patience is a virtue.

It is a matter of time before citizens genuinely want to turn on the television to watch European news, but there is already a demand for a new view on (trans)national media that focusses on stimulating people to go beyond their current understanding of Europe.

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A EUROPEAN CULTURE BEGINS WITH EUROPEAN POLITICS

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José Manuel Durão Barroso, the outgoing president of the European Commission on the date of publication of the article, wrote an op-ed piece (Durão Barroso, 2014) on the occasion of the elections that were to be held from May 22nd to 25th, 2014. It encourages us to vote for a united Europe and not to give up on the European project. It starts by pointing out the consequences of the economic crisis. It has divided Europe between "creditors" and "debtors" and between North and South. There is the sense of a loss of fairness and equity. In addition, there has been a dramatic increase in unemployment and our social model faces enormous difficulties. But the most important thing is that this crisis has made clear the need to undertake reforms if we want to maintain European productivity, employment and our European growth model. It has also made us more aware of our interdependence. To preserve peace and prosperity in Europe, we need to be much more willing to act together, to project power on the international stage and to strengthen the role and the influence of the European Union. A new world order is coming. Either we help to shape it or we will lose out in the future.

Mr. Barroso thinks we should improve our political union following the path of reform, not revolution. For the next phase of European integration we must achieve a true national and European commitment to the European project. But firstly, we must ask ourselves: What is the agreed goal of our Union? To what extent do we unite our destinations? How wide and deep do we want our integration? Who wants to participate in what, and why? Before we talk about greater economic integration these issues should be discussed. The problem is that dialectics in the European policy are characterised by a system in which everyone nationalises the successes and the difficulties are Europeanised. National leaders need to understand that their role is not only national but also European.

Analysis and proposal

The first idea that came up in the seminar "Europe behind (mis)understandings" was that opinion pieces written by political figures are

The mass media tend to nationalise the achievements and defeats are Europeanised, specially with crisis issues, leading us to mutual mistrust between countries and dividing them into debtors and creditors.

perceived as political propaganda and cause rejection among readers, so the article results in the opposite effect to that desired. Secondly, a healthy media system is fundamental for any democracy in two ways: for keeping citizens informed, and for ensuring that politicians are fulfilling their functions properly. In order to have a healthy media system, it needs to be well informed, however there are information blocks and it does not reach every European citizen, causing low participation in European elections (43.09 % last May)[1].

In addition, if the media worked as in theory it should, Europe would be understood as a multiplicity of identities that belong to a community. However, nowadays, as Mr. Durão Barroso says, the mass media tend to nationalise the achievements and defeats are Europeanised, especially with crisis issues, leading us to mutual mistrust between countries and dividing them into debtors and creditors. That is the major reason for the increasing support for Eurosceptic nationalist parties in the last elections in states like France, the UK, Denmark, Austria, Greece or Hungary. The election results showed that, in the end, neither northern nor southern countries are satisfied with European policies. Finally, I agree with José Manuel Durão Barroso that we will need institutional and political unity of the EU to fit into the emerging world order. However, a unified European image is hard to achieve without a common foreign policy and if Europe does not take a position as a global player. A European culture begins with European politics.

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THE DOMESTICATION OF EUROPEAN NEWS: THE POLISH EXAMPLE

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There is a variety of literature on the media coverage of the European Union. However, most authors seem to agree that a fully functioning European public sphere is not yet a reality. One of the factors that could impede its creation is the domestication of the news on the European Union, exemplified in the analysed article. An article published in Polish by *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Bielecki, 2014) and entitled, "Co dla Polaków w Unii. Dziś pierwsze posiedzenie nowego europarlamentu" ("What Poles get from EU. The first meeting of the new EP", my translation), describes the first session of the new European Parliament at the end of June, focusing on the Polish perspective. The domestication could be tracked by the fact that the majority of actors, defined as individuals (e.g. MEPs) or groups of persons (e.g. political parties), are domestic. The examined article mentions 15 actors from the country of the news outlet, compared to 11 foreign or EU actors. Moreover, the angle from which the news is presented has national character, concentrating on the effects of the nominations and allocations of functions on Poland.

The presented article features national domestication, as the EU news is subjected to "domestic adaptation with national colors". Consequently, it strengthens the "us" versus "them" distinction, in this case Poland versus Europe, which hinders a common European sense of belonging. The detected domestic bias would correspond with other studies that note that even during election campaigns, one of the rare truly pan-European events, the coverage of the European Union across member states is still national in focus.

Having acquainted themselves with the article, participants at the CIDOB workshop listed numerous reasons for the prevalence of the nationally domesticated news. Some focused on the role of the media. They recognised the media's inherent nationalism, emphasising that their role is to provide news for national audiences within specific linguistic and cultural boundaries. Others mentioned that insufficient EU knowledge among journalists or a declining number of EU correspondents could also lead to domesticated coverage. Moreover, some of the participants pointed towards the influence of journalistic news values and the role of

Despite discouraging the creation of a European public sphere, the national angle can also have positive implications; for instance, by relating the EU to a national context, it could become more comprehensible to the citizens.

proximity in determining the newsworthiness of an event, as featured, for instance, in the most prominent list of news values proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965).

Undoubtedly, the media is not the only responsible party, with some of the participants blaming citizens' detachment from the European Union. In this sense, domestic bias could be driven by 'EU fatigue', citizens' lack of interest and knowledge about the EU and the inability to see the significance of EU affairs for their daily lives.

In their proposed ways to improve the quality of EU news coverage and decrease the amount of domestication in EU coverage, the participants incorporated utopian or realist perspectives on the European public sphere. Some of them proposed the introduction of new denationalised channels of communication, which would correspond to the utopian vison of a unified pan-European media sphere that stretches beyond nation states. Others have rejected the idea of pan-European media, doubting that it would attract sufficient audience. Instead, they suggested a change in reporting, with stories focusing on the interconnections between different countries, giving more voice to actors from the EU and other member states. This idea corresponds to the realist perspective, which favours Europeanised national public spaces with interlinked communicative spaces connecting different national public spheres.

All in all, participants in the seminar acknowledged that the coverage of the EU is characterised by a low degree of Europeanisation on the one hand and a high level of domestication on the other. However, some of them also remarked that despite discouraging the creation of a European public sphere, the national angle can also have positive implications. For instance, by relating EU politics and institutions to a national context, the organisation and work of the European Union could become more comprehensible to the citizens of member states. Consequently, the issue of domestication is not clear-cut and thus demands further investigation.

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NEW WAYS?

WHAT THE REFERENDUM FOR INDEPENDENCE IN SCOTLAND HAS TAUGHT US

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The article "La diversità da rispettare" ("The diversities to respect", my translation) (Panebianco, 2014) appeared on the main Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, in the aftermath of the result of the referendum on independence in Scotland in September 2014. The editorial puts forward a reflection on the broader meaning that this result represented for European states, as relief in the face of a negative outcome. The enthusiasm of secessionist groups such as those in Spain and Italy, in fact, would have become more concrete if the Scottish nationalists had won. According to the author of the article, there are three lessons to learn from the Scottish referendum: national states in Europe are not outdated, still being perceived as the political organisation to rely on for the future; the importance of history, which founds its strength on the memory of local communities; and European integration, which is not to be intended to be a synonym of the obsolescence of the State. Europe, the author states, is in fact a club of national states united by common interests, and if part of them crumbles, the Union suffers. The different motivations, histories and geopolitical needs mark the European-ness of each state and these diversities need to be taken into account in order to increase integration and contain the growing Euroscepticism. The author concludes that Europe needs the old states, as well as a federation that can better handle certain common problems.

The article addresses the difficult balance between the peculiarities of the different member states and the common scope of the Union. In order to pursue integration and build a common identity, differences between the states in terms of culture, aims and expectations towards the EU should be introduced in a common discourse, based on shared rules and goals, mutual respect, flexibility and openness to negotiations. This complex process is not only traceable at the macro-level of the Union, but also at the micro-level of the single nations, which makes crucial horizontal and vertical integration twice as arduous. Italy, for instance, reflects a deeply multicultural reality, a north-south divide, separatist groups in the northern regions, and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia with their own local identities. Multiculturalism, in sum, is recognisable within the countries and among them, where different cultures coexist, sometimes clashing or holding back the other. To see them as an opportunity for progress as

Whatever action the EU is undertaking in the direction of integration might not bear fruit in the short term, but it is certainly meaningful and important for the generations to come.

part of an intercultural approach is a challenge that requires a dynamic contamination of cultures and identities, working towards the construction of a shared European culture in which everyone is able to mirror him/herself. "Identity contamination" phenomena are already happening: the obsolescence of traditional geographical boundaries, the introduction of the euro and the free movement of goods and people have set the premises for integration. In the era of the Internet and social networks, the downfall of these boundaries has become even more evident, to the extent that our mental boundaries are reshaped and our identities are put into question and rendered multiple. Proof of this is a recent study conducted on Italian identity and Europe, which shows how Italians are conscious of having dual identities: Italian and European. The online presence of the European public and their continually redefined identities could represent a way to promote tangible integration, if addressed constructively by the European Union, by truly making the online media a platform for participation.

The discussion at the seminar "Europe behind (mis)understandings" developed around the theme of public participation online and the opportunities that the Internet represents for the European Union to foster a sense of common belonging. The question of the role of Europe in the process of globalisation was addressed along with how it inserts itself into the reality of the Internet as a "global village", in the words of Marshall McLuhan[1], who draws the conclusion that the Internet plays a controversial and somehow contradictory role within the EU context. Social media was acknowledged as having huge potential in terms of the participation and involvement of the public in European matters, presenting a chance to construct targeted campaigns. The Internet represents an instrument endowed with the possibility to extensively reach the European audience and create a form of horizontal communication, such as online debates. The idea of "sharing knowledge", resounding with the tools that are offered nowadays on social networks, was appreciated. A number of obstacles, on the other hand, were observed and pointed out by the participants. One of the most prominent of these is the digital divide that is still present in our society, often in the form of spoken language, since the main language of exchange between people at international level is English, which is still not part of the everyday life of many people in European countries, and which could therefore represent a shortcoming in online interaction. Also, an online communication strategy could mobilise only those who care about a discussion over Europe and stimulate them, leaving a good portion of those who do not have particular interest in the EU outside the discussion. It was also acknowledged that the initiatives that the European Union has already promoted in terms of online discussion have mostly proven unsuccessful, arousing a series of negative reactions that managed to unite people in different countries, but against the EU. The Internet, in sum, remains a "mood thermometer" of the audience, an unsurprising fact given the amount of misinformation and incivility that the freedom of the World Wide Web allows. With these factors in mind, the question of how to set the premises for a constructive online discussion on the EU and positive, extensive involvement in the EU still remains.

The discussion also touched upon the theme of identity and the difficult integration of local and national identities within the construction of a hypothetical European identity. The participants observed how individual and national views on Europe are still stereotyped and that the need for future citizens is somehow to overcome part of national identity, in order

1. For more information, see http://www.openculture.com/2010/04/marshall_mcluhan_the_world_is_a_global_village_.html

to obtain a more European one. This is yet not happening, because of the strength of national identity and its related selfishness of interests, on the one hand, and the inconsistency of a true meaning of a European identity on the other. European citizens may like to think of themselves in international terms, but in practice what being European involves is not clear. Europe itself is a concept that is still evolving, and despite the pessimists, some participants have observed that we have already witnessed great achievements in the European project and there is still room left for progress. New generations are undoubtedly closer to the concept of Europe than the old ones, further from memories of war and closer to peace and dialogue. This might represent the most suitable understanding for the future: whatever action the EU is undertaking in the direction of integration might not bear fruit in the short term, but it is certainly meaningful and important for the generations to come, who are those in need of being preserved.

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This article is an analysis and a reflection on the paper "Rethinking European integration after the debt crisis", by Giandomenico Majone (2012). Majone's paper explains how as the European Union has grown stronger, its country members have declined Europes international status and most of its member nations are unsatisfied with the Union.

Analysis

Majone's criticism in the article mainly consists of three topics:

1.the decline of Europe's international status;
2.only Germany benefitting from European integration;
3.one size fits all politics, decisions and policy-making.

Giandomenico Majone is a clear critic of European integration. In this paper he gives an interesting view that the present crisis should be viewed as a sort of blessing for giving attention to flaws of the traditional integration methods and questions the continuation of the integration process. He points out important findings in the different countries: how most member countries' economies have stagnated or contracted since the launch of the single market programme and the EMU. Maybe the clearest criticism is pointed towards the full harmonisation of laws and policies, which is difficult because of the socioeconomic heterogeneity in the enlarged Union: different needs make for different policies. Is the EU an elitist project with no room for public opinion? I don't see how the EU is the main forum for close European cooperation, or why people insist on this. However, the concentration of decision-making powers in very few hands has reached a level never attained before. The problem of a high level of heterogeneity, already noted in the case of monetary union, arises with any type of policy harmonisation.

How to face the described challenges

It may seem as if EU policies are too far away from normal people's everyday concerns. Even the title of this article can be misleading. I don't see the point

> European leaders
> should be clearer
> about which problems
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of making the laws and policy-making of the Union more flexible than they are today: that could also be seen as unfair to those countries who will experience the less flexible side of the lawmakers. This can be well-known for Norwegian authorities if one takes a look at their connection to EU policy-making through the EEA agreement. A good thing that comes out of clear criticism of the EU is all the strong feelings Europeans have towards the Union. I think the European leaders should be clearer about which problems you can blame on the European Union and those that would have happened regardless. Somebody should be put in charge of exchange rate policy-making and make this not only a political project but also an economic one. With responsibility taken and better cooperation between the South and the North, hopefully Europe can stay even stronger together in the days to come.

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CONFRONTING VOICES ON THE EUROPEAN PROJECT AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

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An op-ed article in *The New York Times* published by the end of 2013 captured the interest of Jorge San Miguel, a journalist for the online magazine *Jot Down*. In that article a famous Spanish writer, Almudena Grandes, remembered with nostalgia bygone times. According to her, Spain's society is nowadays "as poor as it was before" but now it lacks "pride and [is] unwilling to rebellion because Europe has taken all this away". Grandes' nod given to the past was hardly criticised by San Miguel, who stands up for the great development Spain has gone through since its integration into the EU. These represent the classic opposing points of view – 'Eurosceptic' and 'integrators'– that feeds an on-going debate on the European project that today seems more relevant than ever before.

On the one hand, Grandes brought up the idea that "any past time was better than today", evoking personal memories from the post-war period that strike a national chord. Over that time Spain, according to Grandes, ruled itself and still had personality. She based her argument on the assertion that "Germany is who runs our country and before we were free". On the other hand, San Miguel disagrees with Grandes' romantic illusion, highlighting that the economic and cultural development of Spain was mostly thanks to the work done together with the rest of European countries. San Miguel refuses that Spain's society wants to step back in time because, as the title of his article says, "we don't want to be poor Almudena". These confronting ideas represent a nation forever ideologically divided.

Indeed, there is a feeling of lacking sovereignty in those European countries most affected by the financial crisis. However, it seems that the majority in Spain aims to move forward and not to be stuck in the past, as San Miguel states. Kapuscinski once said that a journalist should report in a way that tries to help mankind and not to foster hatred and arrogance (Kapuscinski, 2006). Therefore, giving a biased and decontextualized romantic idea of old times, as Grandes did, may undermine Spain's desires for winds of political and structural change.

Past experiences have shown that in times of difficulties a cooperative work among nations brings more benefits than isolation. In this regard, it was concluded from the discussions at CIDOB workshop last December that the

less nationalist a country is, the higher the European feeling. Michelangelo Conoscenti, member of the scientific committee, explained how Europe was a project with the aim of improving people's lives but what people actually perceive is that quality of life is decreasing.

Voices in favour of a withdrawal from the EU are whispered shyly for diverse reasons, for instance by Greece or the United Kingdom. A debatable idealistic economic independence is the main claim, which would squeeze Spaniards' pockets (in this case) even more sharply than current austerity measures. Although this is not what appeals the majority in Europe. Grandes' negative approach to the European project portrays the so-called 'Eurosceptic view', which is also a trend in reporting European affairs. Her discourse blames the richest countries in Europe, taking a domestic angle of the story and separating the EU from the home country, breaking up 'them and us'. As it was discussed at the CIBOD seminar, this is one of the most common 'misunderstandings' when reporting on Europe within the mass media. It was also identified that the majority of the press tend to address European issues from a negative approach. This seems to attract public interest more than positive news angles, which are usually too idealistic. European news are usually treated from a local angle for the same reason: it attracts more audience. Cottle identifies this phenomenon as the 'pull of the national' (Cottle, 2009). Grandes' analysis, furthermore, was made on an international media platform, what leaded us to bring into question how convenient is for non-European countries – such as the US – to portray a negative image of the EU.

The truth is that there is not a strong attachment between Spain and the EU. Europe still remains a distant place for many Spaniards. Although, as a result of many advances in technology and communication, we all have broken down barriers and modified the way we see the world. People are more able to engage with each other than ever before. And a 'respatialization' of the world is taking place while transnational connections happen simultaneously, as Scholte's definition of globalisation states (Scholte, 2005 [2000]). For instance, conflicts and famine in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1990s caused a massive influx of immigrants arriving to Spanish coastline, and at the time that became a focus of national interest. There again is the 'pull of the national'.

Overall, how do we, as journalists, integrate diversity from all European countries? How can we make citizens feel part of a common project? Should we avoid the 'pull of the national'? The answer may be in re-educating citizens on what the European common project is about, where the media play a fundamental role. The two confronting views previously described – 'Eurosceptic' and 'integrators'– lead the debate. The media need to meet a balanced news discourse when reporting on European issues. And, at the same time, journalism is seen to have the responsibility to play the 'watchdog' role. It is a time of transition, a time of change. North, South, East are all Europe. If Europe wants to rebuild the common project, we all need to work together. Younger generations are more pro EU than the previous ones. European citizens are more willing to give up some of their particularities in favour of an integration process, which globalisation is definitely encouraging.

European citizens are more willing to give up some of their particularities in favour of an integration process, which globalization is definitely encouraging.

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COMMUNICATING EUROPE/ COMUNICAR EUROPA/COMMUNICEREN OVER EUROPA/ COMUNICARE L'EUROPA/ KOMUNIKOWANIE NA TEMAT EUROPY/ COMUNICAR EUROPA

COMMUNICATING EUROPE: IS IT REALLY THAT COMPLICATED?[1]

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Talking about how Europe is communicated seems to inevitably lead to that ungraspable something that is usually called "European identity". However, when trying to overcome this seemingly insurmountable barrier and go out the "identity loop", the obstacles Europe – and, more specifically, the EU – faces in terms of communication appear to have a triple dimension: how Europe is communicated from the European institutions themselves, how the message is perceived by citizens, and the role of media, as it name implies, as mediators between the institutions and citizenship.

EU institutions have been traditionally accused of a lack of transparency and self-criticism in their communication. That comes already from some years ago, when it could be said that the European project, even if it was never too convincing, used to be at least convenient. In times of crisis, however, citizens wonder what is it that makes European membership worthy in spite of the differences and difficulties. The EU's communication strategy did not contribute much to reverse this situation – neither before, nor during the crisis –, since it seems to have failed in referring to things that have a direct presence in people's mind. EU communication, with an official discourse usually appealing to further political integration, is closer to a kind of propaganda than to an effective communication able to reach more than 500 million people across the continent. In other words, how could a one-sided, too technical and too little transparent information connect to very specific local realities such as that of, let's say, a 3.000 people village somewhere in Sweden, Croatia or Spain?

Needless to say, communicating is not only conveying messages, but also receiving them. In the case of Europe this reception is mediated by old and new stereotypes and prejudices, which separate the North from the South, the East from the West, debtors from creditors. Furthermore, the EU is often perceived in many member states as an 'other'. That is to say, the way the EU has reacted to the crisis and its insistence on implementing measures against the people's will result in an image of the EU as a supervisor, an external entity, rather than as a supporter or as a project of which member states and their citizens are also part. This is worsened by

the fact that success is nationalised – i.e. national governments attribute every successful action to themselves, whether Brussels had something to do with or not – and failures are Europeanised. As a result of all this, the prevailing image of the EU is that of an 'other' who imposes destructive austerity measures over national sovereignty.

And here the media play their part, between an almost completely inefficient communication between EU institutions and its citizens, sometimes fighting against and more often reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices; trying to give accurate information while struggling in a panorama marked by rapidness and EU's lack of transparency. In this context, it is hard to make EU-related contents appealing to the wider public. With an almost inexistent European public sphere or public opinion as such, those contents quite seldom fit the criteria of newsworthiness. Instead, media tend to make use of the national angle in order to make information more appealing, what reinforces the view of a Union fragmented in many different national realities. While there have been some attempts to create pan-European media, they have generally failed in their purpose of creating a European public opinion. The trend now is to promote transnational media, which would not only treat pieces of information from different perspectives, from different national points of view, but would also share and discuss them.

> Does European political sphere really want to be understood by citizens, considering that it would imply a higher degree of accountability? If so, future European communicators are willing to assume their role as mediators between EU institutions and the wider audience.

So this seems to be the trap of communicating Europe: on the one hand, citizens hardly claim for their right to be informed because Europe is a too distant and hard to understand reality for them; on the other hand, decision-makers and the media cannot or do not want to reach an audience that seems uninterested. In spite of all these difficulties, there might be still some place for hope, especially when one listens to students of journalism with an interest in Europe, the way it is managed, how it is perceived by the citizens and affects them. Most of Europe's future journalists were born in an already consolidated EU, have travelled or studied in more than one European country and speak one or more languages in addition to their native tongue. But, what is more important, they are not anchored in a past that is too distant for them: they are fully aware of how EU politics affects – negatively or positively – their daily life. They know that changes to make Europe newsworthy and understandable might take a while, and they are patient, but they will not just sit and wait for changes to happen.

Is the European political, economic and social panorama really so complex to be properly communicated? They do not think so. That leads us to another question: does European political sphere really want to be understood by citizens, considering that it would imply a higher degree of accountability? If so, future European communicators claim for their right to be properly informed, and are willing to carefully listen and assume their role as mediators between EU institutions and the wider audience.

COMUNICAR EUROPA: ÉS REALMENT TAN COMPLICAT?[1]

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L a qüestió sobre com es comunica Europa sembla conduir inevitablement a aquella «cosa» inabastable que se sol denominar *identitat europea*. No obstant això, si es tracta de superar aquesta barrera aparentment insalvable i sortir del «bucle de la identitat», els obstacles als quals s'enfronta Europa – i, més concretament, la UE – en matèria de comunicació semblen tenir una triple dimensió: com es comunica Europa des de les mateixes institucions europees, com són percebuts els missatges pels ciutadans, i el paper dels mitjans, com a mitjancers – tal com el seu propi nom indica – entre les institucions i la ciutadania.

Les institucions de la UE han estat tradicionalment acusades de manca de transparència i d'autocrítica pel que fa a la seva comunicació. Això ve ja de fa alguns anys enrere, quan el projecte europeu, que mai no va ser massa convincent, era, almenys, convenient. En temps de crisi, tanmateix, els ciutadans es pregunten què és el que fa que la pertinença a la UE valgui la pena, malgrat les diferències i les dificultats. L'estratègia comunicativa europea no ha ajudat gaire a donar-li la volta a aquesta situació – ni abans ni durant la crisi –, ja que sembla que no ha aconseguit fer referència a aspectes que connectin amb les preocupacions vitals de les persones. La comunicació de la UE, amb un discurs oficial que apel·la habitualment a més integració política, és més pròxima a una mena de missatge de propaganda que a una comunicació efectiva capaç d'arribar a més de 500 milions de persones en tot el continent. En altres paraules, com podria una informació unidireccional, massa tècnica i massa poc transparent, connectar amb realitats locals tan específiques com la de, posem per cas, un poble de 3.000 habitants en algun punt de Suècia, Croàcia o Espanya?

No cal dir que comunicar no consisteix només a transmetre missatges, sinó també a rebre'ls. És aquí on la recepció juga un paper important, i, en el cas d'Europa, aquesta recepció està mediatitzada per vells i nous estereotips i prejudicis que divideixen el Nord i el Sud, l'Est i l'Oest, els deutors i els creditors. A més, la UE sovint és percebuda en molts estats membres com «un altre». És a dir, la manera en què la UE ha reaccionat davant d'aquesta crisi i la seva insistència a implementar mesures contra la voluntat de les persones han donat com a resultat una imatge de la

UE com a entitat externa i supervisora, més que de col·laboradora o de projecte del qual els estats membres – i els seus ciutadans – també en formen part. Això es veu agreujat per la tendència a nacionalitzar els èxits – en altres paraules, els governs nacionals s'atribueixen els èxits amb independència que Brussel·les tingui alguna cosa a veure-hi o no – i a europeïtzar els fracassos. Com a resultat de tot això, la imatge de la UE que predomina és la d'aquest «altre» que imposa mesures d'austeritat destructives per sobre de la sobirania nacional.

I aquí ens trobem amb els mitjans de comunicació, entre un missatge gairebé ineficient del tot per part de les institucions de la UE cap a la seva ciutadania, en ocasions combatent estereotips i prejudicis, i, amb més freqüència, reforçant-los; intentant proporcionar informació rigorosa mentre lluiten en un entorn marcat per la rapidesa i la falta de transparència de la UE. En aquest context, resulta complicat fer que els continguts relacionats amb la UE siguin atractius per al gran públic. Amb una opinió pública europea pràcticament inexistent com a tal, els esmentats continguts rares vegades són noticiables. Per suplir això, els mitjans tendeixen a utilitzar la perspectiva nacional a fi de fer la informació més atractiva, la qual cosa reforça la imatge d'una Unió fragmentada en moltes realitats nacionals diferents. Si bé hi ha hagut diversos intents de crear mitjans paneuropeus, generalment aquests han fracassat en el seu objectiu de crear una opinió pública europea. La tendència ara és la promoció de mitjans transnacionals, que no només abordarien la informació des de diferents perspectives, des de diferents punts de vista nacionals, sinó que a més les compartirien i les discutirien.

Així doncs, tot apunta que la trampa de comunicar Europa sigui aquesta: d'una banda, la ciutadania gairebé no reivindica el seu dret a estar informada, perquè la UE és una realitat massa distant i difícil d'entendre; de l'altra, els decisors polítics i els mitjans no saben o no poden arribar a una audiència que sembla desinteressada. Malgrat totes aquestes dificultats, pot ser que quedi lloc per a l'esperança, en particular quan s'escolta l'opinió d'estudiants de periodisme interessats en Europa, en la manera com es gestiona la Unió, com la perceben els seus ciutadans i ciutadanes i com els afecta. Els futurs periodistes europeus, majoritàriament, han nascut en una UE ja consolidada, han viatjat o estudiat a més d'un país europeu i parlen una o més llengües europees a part de la seva materna. I, més important encara, no estan ancorats en un passat que els queda massa lluny, sinó que són plenament conscients de com els afecta – negativament o positivament – la política europea en la seva vida quotidiana. Saben que els canvis perquè Europa sigui noticiable i resulti comprensible necessitaran el seu temps, i són pacients, però no s'asseuran simplement a veure'ls venir.

És el panorama polític, econòmic i social europeu tan complex com perquè no pugui ser comunicat adequadament? Ells no ho creuen així. Això ens porta a una altra pregunta: vol l'esfera política europea realment ser comprensible per a la ciutadania, tenint en compte que això implicaria un grau major de rendició de comptes? Si la resposta és *sí*, els futurs comunicadors europeus reivindiquen el seu dret a ser informats correctament i estan disposats a escoltar amb atenció i a assumir el seu rol com a mitjancers entre les institucions europees i l'audiència.

COMMUNICEREN OVER EUROPA: IS HET WERKELIJK ZO MOEILIJK?[1]

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Vertaald door Yolanda Onghena, Lotte Kamphuis en Nele Goutier.

De vraag hoe er over Europa wordt gecommuniceerd blijkt onvermijdelijk te leiden tot het ongrijpbaar begrip dat meestal "Europese identiteit" wordt genoemd. Als het echter gaat om het overwinnen van deze schijnbaar onoverkomelijke barrière en we even uit de "identiteitsdicussie" stappen, blijken de hindernissen met betrekking tot communicatie waarmee Europa – en meer specifiek de EU – te kampen heeft een drievoudige dimensie te hebben: hoe communiceert Europa vanuit Europese instellingen? Hoe wordt deze communicatie gezien door de burgers? En wat is de rol van de media als bemiddelaars, zoals zijn naam doet vermoeden, tussen instellingen en burgers?

De EU-instellingen worden van oudsher beschuldigd van een gebrek aan transparantie en zelfkritiek met betrekking tot communicatie. Dit is al zo sinds het begin van het Europese project, dat nooit erg overtuigend is geweest maar op zijn minst nuttig was. Niettemin, vragen burgers zich in tijden van crisis af wat het EU-lidmaatschap de moeite waard maakt, ondanks verschillen en moeilijkheden. De Europese communicatiestrategie heeft niet geholpen om deze situatie te veranderen – voor noch tijdens de crisis – omdat er een grote nalatigheid was in het verwijzen naar aspecten die verband hielden met de vitale belangen van de mensen. De communicatie van de EU draait hoofdzakelijk om officiële toespraken, waarin gevraagd wordt om meer politieke integratie. Dit soort communicatie staat dichter bij een propagandaboodschap dan bij effectieve communicatie die in staat zou zijn meer dan vijfhonderd miljoen mensen te bereiken over het hele continent. Daarom is de vraag: hoe kan eenrichtingsverkeer, dat te technisch en te weinig transparant is, aansluiting vinden bij de lokale realiteit van bijvoorbeeld een stadje van 3.000 inwoners in Zweden, Kroatië of Spanje?

Het is onnodig te vermelden dat de communicatie niet alleen bestaat uit het verzenden, maar ook uit het ontvangen van berichten. In het geval van Europa wordt deze bepaald door zowel oude als nieuwe stereotypen en vooroordelen die noord en zuid, oost en west, debiteuren en crediteuren, verdelen. Bovendien wordt de Europese Unie in vele lidstaten als de "ander" beschouwd. Dat wil zeggen, de manier waarop de EU heeft gereageerd op de crisis en de nadruk die wordt gelegd op uitvoeringsmaatregelen tegen de wil van het volk, leiden tot een beeld van de EU als een externe entiteit die

controleert in plaats van een project waarin de lidstaten en haar burgers zich een onderdeel van voelen.

Dit beeld wordt versterkt door de tendens om de positieve resultaten te nationaliseren. Daarmee wordt bedoeld dat nationale overheden zich het succes toeschrijven, ongeacht de rol van Brussel, terwijl mislukkingen aan Europa gewijd worden. Als gevolg hiervan overheerst er een imago van de EU als de "ander", die destructieve bezuinigingsmaatregelen oplegt en over nationale soevereiniteit heen stapt.

Daartussen bewegen zich de media: tussen een inefficiënte communicatie van de EU-instellingen en haar burgers. Soms vechten ze tegen stereotypen en vooroordelen die ze dan tegelijkertijd – en steeds meer – versterken. Er wordt weliswaar getracht juiste informatie te geven, terwijl dat moet gebeuren in een context die bepaald wordt door enerzijds een opgevoerd werktempo en anderzijds een gebrek aan transparantie van de EU. In een dergelijke context is het moeilijk om de EU-gerelateerde inhoud aantrekkelijk te maken voor het grote publiek.

Met een bijna onbestaande Europese publieke opinie, zijn thema's met betrekking tot de EU vrij zelden "nieuws". Om dit gebrek aan interesse te compenseren en de informatie aantrekkelijker te maken, hebben media de neiging om nieuws in een nationaal perspectief te plaatsen, wat op zijn beurt de fragmentatie binnen de EU versterkt. Alhoewel er verschillende pogingen zijn geweest om pan-Europese media op te richten, zijn deze er over het algemeen niet in geslaagd om een Europese publieke opinie te creëren. De trend is nu om transnationale media te bevorderen, die niet enkel de informatie behandelen vanuit verschillende perspectieven en standpunten maar deze ook delen en bespreken.

Dit is wat juist de valkuil van de communicatie in Europa lijkt te zijn. Enerzijds is er een burgergemeenschap die nauwelijks bewust is van haar recht op informatie, omdat de EU een verafgelegen en moeilijk te begrijpen realiteit is. Anderzijds lukt het de beleidsmakers en de media niet om een – volgens hen – belangeloos publiek te bereiken. Ondanks al deze moeilijkheden, is er ruimte voor hoop, in het bijzonder wanneer de mening van studenten journalistiek in ogenschouw wordt genomen. De nieuwe generatie heeft belangstelling voor Europa en voor de manier waarop Europees beleid tot stand komt en wordt uitgevoerd. Ook de manier waarop de EU wordt waargenomen door de burgers en hoe deze perceptie hen beïnvloedt, interesseert studenten. De toekomstige Europese journalisten, veelal geboren in een geconsolideerde EU, hebben vaak gereisd of gestudeerd in meerdere Europese landen en spreken meerdere Europese talen. Nog belangrijker is dat ze niet verankerd zijn in een verleden. Ze zijn zich bewust van de effecten die Europees beleid op hun dagelijks leven heeft. Ze weten dat de veranderingen om Europa begrijpelijk en nieuwswaardig te maken tijd vergen en ze zijn geduldig maar niet passief. Is het politiek, economisch en sociaal panorama van Europa zo complex dat het niet op een overtuigende manier kan worden overgebracht? De studenten geloven van niet. Dit leidt tot een andere vraag: wil de Europese politiek echt begrijpelijk zijn voor het publiek, rekening houdend met het feit dat dit tegelijkertijd meer verantwoording vereist? Als het antwoord ja is, dan moeten de toekomstige Europese journalisten hun recht om naar behoren te worden geïnformeerd opeisen. Ze zullen bereid moeten zijn om aandachtig te luisteren en hun rol als bemiddelaar tussen de Europese instellingen en het publiek op zich te nemen.

Wil de Europese politiek echt begrijpelijk zijn voor het publiek, rekening houdend met het feit dat dit tegelijkertijd meer verantwoording vereist? Als het antwoord ja is, dan moeten de toekomstige Europese journalisten hun recht om naar behoren te worden geïnformeerd opeisen.

COMUNICARE L'EUROPA È DAVVERO COSÌ COMPLICATO?[1]

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Discutere di come viene comunicata l'Europa sembra ricondurre inevitabilmente a qualcosa di inafferrabile, a ciò che comunemente chiamiamo "identità europea". Tuttavia, per provare a superare questa barriera, apparentemente insormontabile, bisogna svincolarsi dal concetto di identità e cominciare da tre domande: come viene comunicata l'Europa, o meglio l'Unione Europea, dalle sue stesse istituzioni? Come viene percepito il messaggio dai cittadini? E infine, come valutare il lavoro svolto dai media, in quanto insieme di strumenti di mediazione tra la cittadinanza e le istituzioni?

Le istituzioni dell'UE sono state accusate tradizionalmente di mancanza di trasparenza e autocritica per quanto riguarda la loro comunicazione. Ma ciò si riferisce ormai a qualche anno fa, quando si pensava ancora che il progetto europeo dell'UE fosse almeno conveniente, anche se non del tutto convincente.

In tempi di crisi, invece, i cittadini si chiedono cosa rende l'appartenenza europea degna di tante differenze e difficoltà. La strategia di comunicazione dell'UE non è riuscita a cambiare questa percezione, presente sia prima sia durante la crisi, e sembra aver fallito di fronte a ciò che invece riesce a essere presente nella mente delle persone.

La comunicazione dell'UE è qualcosa di più simile ad una propaganda che racconta spesso la necessità di una maggiore integrazione, piuttosto che a una comunicazione efficace in grado di raggiungere più di 500 milioni di persone presenti sul continente. In altre parole, come può un'informazione unilaterale, molto tecnica e troppo poco trasparente riuscire a connettersi con le realtà locali quali, per esempio, una cittadina di 3.000 persone situata da qualche parte in Svezia, Croazia o Spagna?

Comunicare non vuol dire solo trasmettere messaggi, ma anche riceverli. Quando si parla di Europa la ricezione del messaggio viene mediata da vecchi e nuovi stereotipi e pregiudizi che separano il nord dal sud, l'est dall'ovest e debitori da creditori.

La sfera politica europea vuole essere compresa dai suoi cittadini, anche se ciò richiede un maggior grado di responsabilità? Se così è, i futuri comunicatori dell'Europa sono disposti ad assumere effettivamente il ruolo di mediatori fra le istituzioni europee ed il pubblico.

Inoltre, in molti Stati membri, l'UE viene percepita come qualcosa di "altro". In altre parole, il modo attraverso il quale l'UE ha reagito alla crisi, insistendo sull'applicazione delle misure di austerità, avverse all'opinione pubblica, ha contribuito a costruire l'immagine dell'UE come un'entità atta alla mera supervisione dei conti degli Stati membri. Al contrario, sarebbe auspicabile che venga identificata come un attore che agisce a sostegno degli Stati. Questa situazione peggiora poi se si pensa che il successo è nazionalizzato dai governi, mentre il fallimento è "europeizzato". Considerati questi aspetti nel loro insieme, l'UE appare come un alieno di fronte all'opinione pubblica degli Stati capace solamente di sanzionare e imporre politiche a dispetto della sovranità nazionale.

I media si trovano esattamente in mezzo tra una comunicazione insufficiente da parte delle istituzioni europee e i cittadini dell'Unione, divisi da un lato nel rinforzare pregiudizi e stereotipi, dall'altro nel cercare di offrire un'informazione accurata in un ambiente veloce e poco transparente. In tale contesto, è difficile creare contenuti che hanno a che fare con l'UE e che possano interessare il pubblico generale. Data la quasi inesistenza di un'opinione pubblica europea, i contenuti raramente soddisfano i criteri di ciò che fa notizia. Inoltre, i media tendono a usare una prospettiva nazionale che, rendendo la notizia più interessante, rafforza l'idea di un'Unione frammentata da varie realtà nazionali.

Nonostante gli sforzi compiuti per creare dei media pan-europei, essi non sono riusciti nel loro scopo di creare un'opinione pubblica europea. La tendenza attuale è di promuovere media transnazionali in grado di trattare notizie da diverse prospettive, ponendo i punti di vista nazionali in discussione tra loro.

Pare essere questo il problema del comunicare l'Europa: da un lato, i cittadini raramente rivendicano il proprio diritto ad essere informati, poiché l'Europa è per loro una realtà troppo lontana e difficile da comprendere; dall'altro, gli attori pubblici ed i mezzi di comunicazione non sanno, o non intendono, raggiungere un pubblico che sembra essere disinteressato. Nonostante queste difficoltà, c'è ancora spazio per la speranza, soprattutto se si leggono i lavori degli studenti di giornalismo che provano interesse per l'Europa, per come viene amministrata e per l'impatto che ha sui propri cittadini. La maggior parte dei giornalisti di domani sono nati in un'Unione Europea già consolidata, hanno viaggiato o studiato in più di un Paese europeo e parlano una o più lingue straniere oltre alla propria. Essi sono quindi consapevoli di come la politica dell'UE riguardi le proprie vite, sia negativamente sia positivamente. Sanno che i progressi che porteranno l'Unione Europea ad essere mediaticamente più rilevante e più comprensibile dovranno essere attuati non senza fatica, seppure con pazienza. Il panorama politico, economico e sociale europeo è davvero così complesso da non poter essere comunicato efficacemente? La risposta negativa conduce ad un'ulteriore questione: la sfera politica europea vuole essere compresa dai suoi cittadini, anche se ciò richiede un maggior grado di responsabilità? Se così è, i futuri comunicatori dell'Europa devono rivendicare il proprio diritto ad essere giustamente informati e devono essere pronti ad ascoltare attentamente, assumendo effettivamente il proprio ruolo di mediatori fra le istituzioni europee ed il pubblico.

KOMUNIKOWANIE NA TEMAT EUROPY: CZY TO NAPRAWDĘ TAKIE TRUDNE?[1]

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Dyskusja o tym, jak komunikuje się na temat Unii Europejskiej nieuchronnie prowadzi do rozmowy na temat tożsamości europejskiej. Mianowicie, główną i pozornie nie do pokonania barierą stojącą przed Europą, a w szczególności przed Unią Europejską, jest właśnie brak wspólnej tożsamości europejskiej. Do tego dochodzi problem jak o Europie informują nas same Unii Europejskiej, jak ta informacja jest postrzegana przez obywateli, a także jaką rolę w tej wymianie informacji pełnią media, jako mediatorzy między instytucjami a obywatelami.

Instytucje UE są często krytykowane za brak przejrzystości i samokrytyki w komunikacji. Jeszcze kilka lat temu, projekt Unii Europejskiej, nawet jeśli niezbyt przekonujący, postrzegany był jako dogodne rozwiązanie. Sytuacja uległa zmianie w czasach kryzysu, kiedy to obywatele zaczęli zastanawiaę się czy członkostwo w Europejskiej jest warte pokonywania różnic i trudności. Strategia komunikacyjna UE nie pomogła w zmianie tego postrzegania, zarówno przed, a także podczas kryzysu. Nie udało się połączyć abstrakcyjnej UE z rzeczami bliskimi jej obywatelom. Oficjalny język używany w komunikacji UE sprawia, że odwołania do dalszej integracji politycznej są bardziej przypominają propagandę niż komunikat, który mógłby skutecznie dotrzeć do 500 milionów ludzi na całym kontynencie. Pojawia się zatem pytanie, w jaki sposób dostosować tej jednostronny, zbyt techniczny i mało przejrzysty komunikat do bardzo szczególnych lokalnych realiów panujących, na przykład na wsi liczącej 3000 mieszkańców gdzieś w Szwecji, Chorwacji czy Hiszpanii?

Rzecz jasna, komunikowanie to nie tylko przekazywanie wiadomości, ale także jej odbieranie. W przypadku Europy, ten odbiór zostaje zniekształcony przez nowe i stare stereotypy i uprzedzenia, które oddzielają Północ od Południa, Wschód od Zachodu, dłużników od wierzycieli. Ponadto, w wielu państwach członkowskich UE jest często postrzegana jako „obcy". Po reakcji na kryzys i wprowadzeniu polityki oszczędności i drastycznych cięć wbrew woli obywateli, Unia Europejska odbierana jest jako przełożony, podmiot zewnętrzny, a nie jako zwolennik lub jako projekt, którego państwa członkowskie i ich obywatele są częścią. Sytuację pogarsza także fakt, iż sukces jest znacjonalizowany – rządy krajów członkowskich przypisują sobie powodzenia, nie ważne czy UE miała z nimi coś wspólnego czy nie. Z dru-

giej strony, porażki są „europeizowane" i zrzucane na Brukselę. To wszystko kreuje wizerunek UE jako „obcego", który narzuca działania oszczędnościowe i lekceważy suwerenność narodową.

Tu media odgrywają ważną rolę – mogą wspomóc nieefektywną komunikację między instytucjami UE i jej obywatelami, walczyć ze stereotypami i uprzedzeniami, dostarczyć dokładne informacje pomimo pośpiechu i braku przejrzystości w UE. W tym kontekście, trudno jest przekazywać informacje związane z UE w sposób atrakcyjny dla szerszego grona odbiorców. Z niemal nieobecną europejską sferą publiczną i brakiem zainteresowania opinii publicznej, wiadomości o UE rzadko spełniają kryteria „dobrego newsa". Zamiast tego, media mają tendencję do przedstawiania informacji z perspektywy krajowej, co potwierdza tezę o Unii podzielonej na wiele różnych państw członkowskich. Ponadto, próby stworzenia ogólnoeuropejskich mediów na ogół nie powiodły się. Nową tendencją jest promowanie mediów międzynarodowych, które nie tylko przedstawiałyby informacje z różnych perspektyw i różnych krajowych punktów widzenia, ale także propagowały debatę.

Wydaję się, że komunikowanie o Europie to pułapka: z jednej strony obywatele nie są zainteresowani informacją, ponieważ UE jest zbyt odległa i trudna do zrozumienia; z drugiej strony, decydenci i media nie mogą lub nie chcą dotrzeć do publiczności, która wykazuje brak zainteresowania. Pomimo tych wszystkich trudności, pozostaje jeszcze cień nadziei, zwłaszcza gdy słucha się studentów dziennikarstwa zainteresowany tematem Europy. Większość z nich urodziła się w już skonsolidowane UE, podróżowała lub studiowała w więcej niż jednym kraju europejskim i mówi w innych językach poza swoim językiem ojczystym. Ale, co ważniejsze, nie są oni zakotwiczeni w przeszłości, która jest dla nich zbyt odległa. Są w pełni świadomi tego, jak polityka UE wpływa, pozytywnie lub negatywnie, na ich codzienne życie. Wiedzą, że sprawienie by tematyka europejska stała się interesująca i zrozumiała może trochę potrwać. Są cierpliwi, ale nie będą bezczynnie czekać na zmiany.

Czy europejska panorama polityczna, gospodarcza i społeczna jest naprawdę tak skomplikowana, aby w odpowiedni sposób o niej informować? Nieprawda. To prowadzi nas do kolejnego pytania: czy UE naprawdę chce być rozumiana przez obywateli, zważywszy na to, że doprowadziłoby to do wyższego stopienia odpowiedzialności? Jeśli tak, to Ci, którzy w przyszłości będą informowali o EU apelują o dostęp do informacji. Są gotowi uważnie słuchać i przyjąć rolę pośrednika pomiędzy instytucjami UE i szerszą publicznością.

Czy UE naprawdę chce być rozumiana przez obywateli, zważywszy na to, że doprowadziłoby to do wyższego stopienia odpowiedzialności? Jeśli tak, to Ci, ktorzy w przyszłości będą informowali o EU apelują o dostęp do informacji.

COMUNICAR EUROPA: ¿ES REALMENTE TAN COMPLICADO?[1]

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La cuestión sobre cómo se comunica Europa parece conducir inevitablemente a ese «algo» inabarcable que suele denominarse «identidad europea». No obstante, si se trata de superar esta barrera aparentemente insalvable y salir del «bucle de la identidad», los obstáculos a los que se enfrenta Europa – y, más concretamente la UE – en materia de comunicación parecen tener una triple dimensión: cómo se comunica Europa desde las propias instituciones europeas, cómo son percibidos los mensajes por los ciudadanos, y el papel de los medios, en tanto que mediadores – como su propio nombre indica – entre las instituciones y la ciudadanía.

Las instituciones de la UE han sido tradicionalmente acusadas de falta de transparencia y de autocrítica en su comunicación. Esto viene ya de hace algunos años, cuando el proyecto europeo, que nunca fue demasiado convincente, era al menos conveniente. En tiempos de crisis, sin embargo, los ciudadanos se preguntan qué es lo que hace que la pertenencia a la UE valga la pena, a pesar de las diferencias y dificultades. La estrategia comunicativa europea no ha ayudado mucho a darle la vuelta a esta situación – ni antes ni durante la crisis –, ya que no parece haber logrado hacer referencia a aspectos que conecten con las preocupaciones vitales de las personas. La comunicación de la UE, con un discurso oficial que apela habitualmente a una mayor integración política, está más próxima a una especie de mensaje de propaganda que a una comunicación efectiva capaz de llegar a más de 500 millones de personas en todo el continente. En otras palabras, ¿cómo podría una información unidireccional, demasiado técnica y demasiado poco transparente, conectar con realidades locales muy específicas como la de, pongamos por caso, un pueblo de 3.000 habitantes en algún lugar de Suecia, Croacia o España?

Huelga mencionar que comunicar no consiste sólo en transmitir mensajes, sino también en recibirlos. Es aquí donde la recepción juega un papel importante, y en el caso de Europa esta recepción está mediada por viejos y nuevos estereotipos y prejuicios que dividen el Norte y el Sur, el Este y el Oeste, los deudores y los acreedores. Además, la UE es a menudo percibida en muchos estados miembros como «otro». Es decir, la manera en que la UE ha reaccionado ante esta crisis y su insistencia en

¿Quiere la esfera política europea realmente ser comprensible para la ciudadanía, considerando que esto implicaría un grado mayor de rendición de cuentas? Si la respuesta es sí, los futuros comunicadores europeos están dispuestos a asumir su rol como mediadores entre las instituciones europeas y la audiencia.

implementar medidas contra la voluntad de las personas han dado como resultado una imagen de la UE como entidad externa y supervisora, más que como un colaborador o un proyecto del cual los estados miembros – y sus ciudadanos – también forman parte. Esto se ve agravado por la tendencia a nacionalizar el éxito – esto es, los gobiernos nacionales se atribuyen los éxitos con independencia de que Bruselas tenga algo que ver en ellos o no – y a europeizar los fracasos. Como resultado de todo ello, la imagen de la UE que predomina es la de ese «otro» que impone medidas de austeridad destructivas por encima de la soberanía nacional.

Y aquí nos encontramos con los medios de comunicación, entre una comunicación casi totalmente ineficiente por parte de las instituciones de la UE y su ciudadanía, en ocasiones combatiendo estereotipos y prejuicios, y con mayor frecuencia reforzándolos; intentando proporcionar información rigurosa mientras luchan en un entorno marcado por la rapidez y la falta de transparencia de la UE. En este contexto, resulta complicado hacer que los contenidos relacionados con la UE sean atractivos para el gran público. Con una opinión pública europea prácticamente inexistente como tal, dichos contenidos rara vez son noticiables. Para suplir esto, los medios tienden a utilizar la perspectiva nacional a fin de hacer la información más atractiva, lo cual refuerza la imagen de una Unión fragmentada en muchas realidades nacionales diferentes. Si bien ha habido varios intentos de crear medios paneuropeos, generalmente estos han fracasado en su objetivo de crear una opinión pública europea. La tendencia ahora es la promoción de medios transnacionales, que no sólo abordarían la información desde diferentes perspectivas, desde diferentes puntos de vista nacionales, sino que además las compartirían y discutirían.

Así que esta parece ser la trampa de comunicar Europa: por un lado, la ciudadanía apenas reivindica su derecho a estar informada, porque la UE es una realidad demasiado distante y difícil de entender; por el otro, los decisores políticos y los medios no saben o no pueden llegar a una audiencia que parece desinteresada. A pesar de todas estas dificultades, puede que quede lugar para la esperanza, en particular cuando se escucha la opinión de estudiantes de periodismo con interés en Europa sobre la manera en que se gestiona la Unión, cómo la perciben sus ciudadanos y ciudadanas y cómo les afecta. Los futuros periodistas europeos, en su mayoría, han nacido en una UE ya consolidada, han viajado o estudiado en más de un país europeo y hablan una o más lenguas europeas aparte de su lengua materna. Y, más importante aún, no están anclados en un pasado que les queda demasiado lejos, sino que son plenamente conscientes de cómo les afecta –negativa o positivamente– la política europea en su vida cotidiana. Saben que los cambios para que Europa sea noticiable y resulte comprensible necesitarán su tiempo, y son pacientes, pero no se sentarán simplemente a ver estos cambios venir.

¿Es el panorama político, económico y social europeo tan complejo para que pueda ser comunicado adecuadamente? Ellos no lo creen así. Esto nos lleva a otra pregunta: ¿quiere la esfera política europea realmente ser comprensible para la ciudadanía, considerando que esto implicaría un grado mayor de rendición de cuentas? Si la respuesta es *sí*, los futuros comunicadores europeos reivindican su derecho a ser informados correctamente y están dispuestos a escuchar con atención y a asumir su rol como mediadores entre las instituciones europeas y la audiencia.