WHO ARE WE? NATIONALISTS OR EUROPEAN?

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Who are we? Nationalists or European?

When the second world war was over, Europe was in an anguished way. After two wars that had killed thousands, European countries needed to shape itself again. The co-operation between these countries was disappointing and this was the reason why wars were continuous. Moreover, the wars proved that after all Europe worked better when cooperation between states occurred. Starting with trading and economical aspects the 6 founding countries Luxembourg, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Belgium and France paved a way for a new Europe by creating the European Economic Community (EEC). The EEC included the states cooperating in producing steel and coal, which in a way improved the states` relationships with each other especially states such as France and Germany. Over the years this community grew and more states became members over the years. The community itself was also changing and growing in also to adapt to the new era. In 1992, this community was given the name: the European Union and progress has been made ever since. This type of union created a new identity for the people living within the new member states, now they did not only belong to a state but also to as European Union. Many member states feel that they have two identities while other believe they have only one. This is a continuous debate that has been discussed continuously however no definite conclusion can be

The European Union itself does not seem to focus on the topic and rather lets this issue to be discussed between its members. The member states all have different cultural identities that comes along with a long history that eventually formed the state and this was also formed by European integration. However, such a union of states as the European Union might not really prevail a common identity. Moreover, after reviewing such points who are Europeans? What defines a European identity? When we focus on the term European it includes a geographical and cultural aspects that subsidize producing a European identity that eventually came from different values, concepts and historical relations however also not forgetting different national identities. The main aim of the European Union was to create a merger for eternal peace which labelled Europe to be an area of free rights, This mainly focuses the core believes that is right in the heart belonging to the Union and its widening process. Canditate states that wish to join the European Union have to conform to article 49 of TEU which more or less states that "any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union. "Proving how core the European values are to the Union. The European Union is community mainly biased on the values credited by the treaties which mainly are: democracy and freedom, equality between people, having respect for human dignity and most of all the rule of respecting Human Rights; a society where all men and women are treated the same and no discrimination between the two.

The concept of identity brings out to which to we most feel to belong to or desire to belong to. However, this is diverse on several aspects such as culture, economy and political groups. However, the issue of a European identity is very convoluted and is very hard to understand. Especially since the European identity itself is even sometimes considered as a "hybrid identity" and even a "dual identity" where people in member states do not only have a national identity but also an identity which makes them belong to Europe. It is debatable whether this European identity is after all imaginary or not however this proves what a progress the European societies within member states have made after the second world war, a progress which increased dramatically after the fall of the Berlin Wall; introducing a united Europe. Europe created its own identity by integration normal social forms such as social class or religions were destroyed. A Roman Catholic women was expected to marry a Roman Catholic man which does not necessarily happen today. Through the integration of states people are more accepting towards other religion creating an identity where we accept and love each other no matter what we believe in. On another note, people could not move up the social classes, people were expected to marry people of the same class while the less fortunate that had the potential could not work hard and achieving their goals and eventually improving their class. The concept of having a social class is also diminished within the European Union nowadays especially since one of the main values of the European Identity is equality.

One also has to mention the EU-Turkey issue. It seems as though Turkey is trying har in order to be part of the European Union however most Europeans do not seem to have it. The European Union has its own identity and gives importance to its values. Turkey has violated many times these values and is even considered on of the dangerous places in the European area. It shares borders with countries such as Serafina and Iran; countries where there is an absolute absence of all the values that Europe believes in. The EU believes in saving its identity and does not to share borders with any of these types of countries. However, one of the main aspects

that contradicts with the EU seems to be the Turkish culture and religion. Turkey is a Muslim nation while the majority of Europe is Chrisitan. Moreover Europe has suffered many terrorist attacks that have made by the ISIS; an organization which is commonly compared to Muslims. Moreover, most Europeans seems like that they should stay away in order to protect themselves from any similarities. This makes Europeans feel uncomfortable and proves that a different identity is felt. In this aspect one could say that the citizens themselves are protecting not only themselves but also their identity.

Like any other nation state Europe shares disastrous moments together with one territory, a single history and the same people. Several nation states are looking forward in order to work on their nation and become part of our European Union creating a vast united unity belonging all to the same Union. However, what makes someone German, French or Spanish? All these countries have their own national identity also. Other things that give Europe its identity is from an economical aspect such as the free market, common currency and the single market. The European Union has learnt from its previous wars that as mention before important values such as rule of law, human rights and democracy are an important part to shape the union. It has learnt to co-operate peacefully where one must negotiate differences not imitate arguments. Respect must be given to each and every state while being treated all equal.

Apart from all aspects mentioned above that give the European Union its identity, there is also an aspect of political culture. No-where else in the world you would find an identical "soft power", a union where negotiations are made awar are not an option, while accepting self-obliging European Institutions and treaties. The most important has to be the European Constitution where it is based on human rights in their own European specific implementation, a Constitution that safeguards and endorses its cultural diversity by the use of the Principle of Sunsidiarity. However are all these institutions affective enough to make people belong to the European identity?

It is hard to perceive the way that people feel in a way of belonging to this union, after all it is not easy to understand decision making processes that are mainly navigated by the governments and other repetitive that take care of legislative and political decisions. However, on the other hand, the European Parliament is elected by the people within the member states; the people of Europe. This means that members of the European Union have a fairly role in the decision process. When the people are given a chance to help out or given the decision themselves, they would definitely feel more included and the receiving the respect that they deserve from Europe. Moreover, such elections bring the union closer to its members.

Can we create a European Identity? Europeans introduced the sharing of different factors that are also shared between nations within member states that make part of the European Union. This factor includes things such as mentioned before having similar values, but also symbols internship. The union includes symbols, which their distribution is vital in order to initiate a common sense of belonging between the people of the union. Such symbols include the European flag and the European Anthem which is called "Ode to Joy". The European Union also has its own Europe Day; celebrated on the 9th May. All these symbols are al found within any member states which makes the members look at Europe as another aspect of home creating an identity that belongs to them. Over 50% of the people that are part of the European Union are able to speak English and even in some countries this language is the first or second language. The English language is also one of the 5 official languages. Moreover, the Maastricht Treaty introduced the European citizenship's citizenship does not alternate the national citizenship but adds a citizenship which is common to all member states. Thanks to this citizenship nationals in member states can participate in the European elections, however not many Europeans are using this right where not more than 50% use this opportunity. This proves that maybe After all we need to create a European identity in order for the citizens to truly make their voice. After all I do not think that anyone would really care about something if they do not feel part of it if their opinion is going to actually make a difference. So, in aspect of creating a European identity it is important to make people more interested and do their duty in participating in European elections.

Oxford dictionary describes nationalism as: "Identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations". This describes perfectly the way that most people within member states feel about their own nation. Nationalism is a fact and it is very common for the members to sometimes feel more nationalists than European. Moreover, such an issue includes diverse debates such as the issue of European integration that has brought further to the argument of nationalism vs European identity's European union has brought given the free movement of people to its people as part of its identity. Moreover, countries also integrate in order to work together and succeed in not only improving their evenly but also continue to progress Europe`s state as a whole. The integration process from the aspect of integrating people is one of the issues that is mostly particularly mentioned. People travel from one-member state to another and take with them their own national identity, this national identity includes various elements such as food, culture and values which are mainly represented in that country. Integration in reality has no borders and is very hard to stop, whatever the reason a person moves from on member state or another is will one way or another leaves traces of who or she really is. This process takes place obviously by many people and eventually in some cases might leave an effect on people`s national identity. Their mind set culture might be

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changed, some call it being more open minded however for other this might only be their nationalism fading away.

Integration makes people think further than what their ancestors gave importance to and look at the world at a higher level. However, should never be damages but just emotionally and politically progressive. It is a very common mistake that nationalist think that their national identity should be abandoned for a European Identity which might not be meaningful for them and maybe this is one of the reasons why some citizens within member states are suspicious or not supportive of the European Union; scared that it will just take their national identity away. However, from one point of view, the European Union as whole, rather then viewing nationalism as a subject that only remains to the past (since the European identity is now introduced) should learn from with so a sense of belonging can be brought to the European Identity.

The idea of a national identity has been around for a long time, nations like Spain, France, Italy and many other had their significant descriptions of what defines that nation state even though they might not have been considered as states the way that they are today. However, their own language, values and most (influential at the time) religion where what gave their nation its own identity. This identity brings with it, its history and the way that citizens of that nations can express themselves. Can this comfortability of a person occur to a any citizen on a European level? It is very debatable since a national identity relates more to the cultural aspects and what defines the state that they were born in. Where a European identity includes bureaucrats such as the European institutions, politicians an researchers' reality the European identity also spready its own "culture" and spread their identity, however this is from a political point of view with the use of the institutions forward to the population

The fathers of the Europe believed in the potential that the union offered and eventually became what it is today. Moreover, thanks to their continuous work it has made a huge impact on our daily life. Things we take for granted such as importing French wine are nowadays not viewed a foreign but a European item. The Europeans are free to travel within the union from one place to another and no passport is needed; making the process easier for the members themselves. It has also made it easier for students to study abroad and aid them in in their further career. One way or another with the privileges we are given we have to belong to a European Identity and we have to accept it. The European Identity is an incomplete cultural development.

When we say that we feel that we have a national identity it means that as a person we have a good relation with the country we were born in or live with. If I am from Malta, I feel that I am Maltese and and understand the sense of belonging with other Maltese. To be entitled to be identity I was born in Malta and both of my parents are Maltese. My passport says I am Maltese and I do feel that I am one. However, is nationalism the same for everyone? Although the majority of the citizens feel that they are part of a country and support nationalism it might not be the same for everyone. When people move and live in a different place from, they were born, they might feel more of a connection to that state then from their origin. Some might think that rules are too strict or religion is too literal or that people are not open-minded compared to what the other state has to offer. It is understandable to the fact that maybe after all nationalism does not really define or it can be changed us. Therefore, what is the use of my passport said I am Maltese if for example I feel that I am more Estonian?

When passing through passport control, there are separate queues for EU and non-EU passports. These signs do not ask you if you are Italian, German or Spanish, but simply I you are European. If one does not feel that he or she belongs to their own national identity we always have the European to define us. After all, even though the characteristics between member states are not exactly the same, the majority are very similar. The European Union was formed in order to create peace within the states. States that has fought mainly because of the issue of nationalism. States such as Spain. France, Great Britain and Germany took it to the extent of defending their own nationalism by going to war and dividing Europe. From these past events, one must learn and understand that nationalism must not be take to a certain extent of violating or disrespecting any other nations.

What could be merged from the European Identity is a European Federation. If we totally focus on having just a European Identity and a bonding our national one it could lead to a federation. After the second world war for some theorists Europe needed to get rid of nationalism in order to avoid any future wars. This meant that the Europe had to unite and become one in order to avoid any conflict in the modern times. Such an idea goes way back to the William Penn and Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte himself stated that "Europe thus divided into nationalities freely formed and free internally, peace between States would become easier: The United States of Europe would become a possibility." This idea of a united states of Europe has influence from the United States of America where there are majority issues only for one state.

As mentioned before, we must not supress the idea of having a national identity. This is a position that would be hard to live in; especially since a lot of citizens feel that they connect to this identity. A federation might swipe away the roots which each country has and eventually remove the idea of even having a national identity. Wars were initiated for having the freedom, independence and nationalism of a state; this will all go to waste. This is an extreme state which could be highly avoided. Therefore, one has to understand that maybe

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after all we need both of the identities as the extreme of any one of the two would be a disastrous situation creating an unfairness to both the identities and the citizens.

So, at the end of the day who are; Nationalists or European? This question cannot be justified. This whole paper proves that there is an identity of both, available for us to reach out to. Which identity you belong to seems to be a subjective and personal matter at the end of day. National identity is closer to home so is has a deeper meaning and much more of importance to some. While on the other hand the European Identity is on a higher level which is perceived in a political and clustered point of view and could potentially be the future. Moreover, one can believe in the potential of both. it is understandable to feel overwhelmed by the feeling of culture or when hearing your own state`s history whether you are currently in that state or not; National identity is an identity that remains relevant. At the same time, integration is happening fast and after all collectively we are Europeans and we have different characteristics than you might find in other parts of the world. Nationalist or European we are still significantly with a unique identity in our own way.

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