

# The Making of *Homo Europaeus*: Problems, Approaches and Perspectives

Kiran Klaus Patel

## RESÜMEE

Erst seit relativ kurzer Zeit, so die These dieses Beitrags, sprechen Menschen über sich und andere als „Europäer“. Bis in die Frühe Neuzeit hinein blieb dieser Begriff zur Selbst- und Fremdbeschreibung weitgehend unbedeutend, was angesichts seiner heutigen Allgegenwärtigkeit verwundern mag. Der Artikel geht zunächst den Schlüsselmomenten nach, in denen der Begriff an Bedeutung gewann, und er schlüsselt seine Kerndimensionen auf. Danach diskutiert er verschiedene Konzepte, um der Geschichte des „Europäers“ und der „Europäerin“ angemessen nachgehen zu können. Schließlich werden mit Schwerpunkt auf das 20. Jahrhundert einige Arbeitshypothesen zur Geschichte des „Homo Europaeus“ vorgestellt.

Some thirty-five years ago, British cultural historian Peter Burke published an article with the provocative title: “Did Europe exist before 1700?”\* Rather than treating “Europe” as a neutral geographical entity or as a presupposed cultural or social reality, he was interested in how the term “Europe” was used in the past and the extent to which it expressed a sense of shared experiences or even of belonging in different historical contexts. Burke claimed that outside the very limited circles of intellectuals and politicians, an awareness of “Europe” only emerged in the late seventeenth century. Even if the term was coming to fruition during the Early Modern period, older concepts such as Christendom or local and regional identity markers were still much more important than identification with Europe. Seen from the perspective of a history of *mentalités collectives*, as he called it, Burke thus warned us against too easily imposing our understanding of the concept on earlier epochs.<sup>1</sup>

\* I would like to thank the other project members as well as Benoît Challand, Mia Saugman and Johan Schot.

1 P. Burke, Did Europe Exist before 1700?, in: History of European Ideas 1 (1980), pp. 21-29; now also see e.g., O.

This article argues that we must arrive at a similar conclusion if we consider the people inhabiting the continent. The time that has elapsed since they began being referred to as “Europeans” is surprisingly short, much shorter than the rather common use of the term “Europe” – even if most research in European history has tended to neglect this fact and its consequences. This article will first look at some key moments in and features of the history of the discussions and social practices related to *Homo Europaeus* and to Europeanness.<sup>2</sup> It will then discuss conceptual strategies for analyzing the way in which the “European man” was imagined and implemented – thus taking into account the history of the *mentalités collectives* Burke concentrated on, but also opening other avenues of approach. Thirdly, it will propose some working hypotheses on how the construction of *Homo Europaeus* can be conceived and interpreted if one focuses on the twentieth century.

\* \* \*

Today, the self- and hetero-identification as European seems to be ubiquitous. Not in the least due to the strength of the European integration process, the term is very often used to describe a particular population. These days, it is frequently employed as shorthand for EU citizens, thus giving it strong political overtones. However, there are also other layers and dimensions.<sup>3</sup> For example, the identification of individuals or groups as the “first Europeans” takes us far back into history. Intellectuals have often described Charlemagne, Cicero or Moses as the first European or the “father of Europe.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, paleontologists and life scientists of various disciplines regularly provide new insights into the origins and attributes of the “first Europeans” – that they immigrated to Europe via Asia rather than directly from Africa, or that Cro-Magnons might indeed have been direct ancestors of present-day Europeans. Thus, very different criteria are used to identify Europeans – political in the sense of belonging to a political union, moral as an embodiment of particular qualities or biological vis-à-vis other populations. Also, the level of concreteness varies widely – from metaphorical rhetoric to scientific proof. Therefore, vagueness abounds. Yet, there is still some common ground between these different fields of discussion (and several others that could be mentioned): the

Asbach, Europa, vom Mythos zur Imagined Community? Zur historischen Semantik “Europas” von der Antike bis ins 17. Jahrhundert, Hannover 2011 and and particularly K. Oschema, Bilder von Europa im Mittelalter, Ostfildern 2013. While Oschema’s book qualifies the older literature’s argument that the term “Europe” was only used rarely in medieval times, also he finds only few uses of “European” to denote a specific form of identity or group of people.

- 2 On the concept of Europeanness, now also see K. K. Patel, Where and when was Europe? Europeanness and its relationship to migration, in: National Identities 15 (2013), pp. 21–32.
- 3 The English wikipedia entry for “European” differentiates three main subcategories: “a person or attribute of the continent of Europe”; “a person or attribute of the European Union”; and “a person descended from a European ethnic group”; see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European> (consulted on 10 October 2012).
- 4 See e.g., R. G. Hesse, Aristide Briand, premier européen, Paris 1939; A. Barbero, Carlo Magno. Un padre dell’Europa, Rome 2000; H. Berve, Gestaltende Kräfte der Antike: Aufsätze zur griechischen und römischen Geschichte, Munich 1949, 186 (on Cicero); Hannes Stein, Moses der Europäer, in: Berliner Zeitung, 10 March 1999.

implicit or explicit claim that “European” is a useful category for classifying individuals and populations.<sup>5</sup>

However, throughout most of human history, people have not used the term “European” to identify themselves or others. Admittedly, the first ideas about the “European man” – or rather woman! – can be traced back to antiquity and the mythical figure of Εὐρώπη, a Phoenician princess whose name the continent was given. Greek authors of the fifth century BC, such as Herodotus or Hippocrates, provide lengthy descriptions of a geographical entity of that name, and for them the continent was largely defined by the particular characteristics of its inhabitants. Newer research has shown, however, that the use in these Greek sources of “European” to denote a specific group of people remained vague and inconsistent, contradictory and contested.<sup>6</sup> During the subsequent period characterized by Rome’s rise and fall, “Europeanness” was not a very meaningful category. For instance, Europe does not figure at all among the dozens of geographical names Caesar lists in “*De Bello Gallico*,” such as Gallia, Helvetia, and Germania.<sup>7</sup>

“Europenses” was then famously used to describe the Frankish and Burgundian forces under Charles Martel who defeated the army of Muslims led by Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi at the battle of Tours in 732. Later on, the military clash came to be characterized as bringing a halt to Islamic expansionism in Europe; today, the event is often regarded as a turning point in both European and world history. Still, it is interesting that most contemporary chronicles paid no particular attention to the incident or its “European” actors. At the time, it was just one Spanish chronicler who used the term “europenses” to label the Christian armies – and even he stressed that after their victory, “Europenses ... se ... recipiunt in patrias.” Obviously, their identification as Europeans remained rather ephemeral.<sup>8</sup>

In line with this volatility, some traits that later on became quite typical for characterizing Europeans had not yet been established in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The first Western travelers to China considered the Chinese to be white-skinned, particularly similar to the Germans – of all peoples! Also, early European travelers to Japan perceived the skin color and manners of the inhabitants there to be “just like us” – and

5 See e.g., *Erste Europäer kamen über Asien*, in: Spiegel, 7 August 2007; Christian Thomas, *Der erste Europäer*, in: Frankfurter Rundschau, 17 July 2008.

6 See entry “Europe” in: Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, vol. VI, 1, Stuttgart 1907, 1287–1309; on this, now also see G. Jonker, *Naming the West: The Production of Europe as a Locality 750 BC to 750 CE*, in: Contexts: The Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society, 1 (2009), 34–59 e.g., also see Herodotus, *Historien*, vol. I, ed. by J. Feix (German and Greek), Düsseldorf 2000, I 15; I 16; IV 11; R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion*, Cambridge 2000, especially pp. 75–101.

7 G. I. Caesar, *The Gallic War*, with an English Translation by H. J. Edwards, London 1970.

8 *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Chronica Minora saec. IV. V. VI. (II)*, p. 362: “moved back into their fatherlands” (own translation); e.g., also see U. Nonn, *Die Schlacht bei Poitiers 732. Probleme historischer Urteilsbildung*, in: R. Schieffer (ed.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum*, Sigmaringen 1990, pp. 37–56; E. J. Schoenfeld, *Battle of Poitiers*, in: R. Cowley and G. Parker (eds.), *The Reader’s Companion to Military History*, New York 2001, p. 366; as examples for how this source is referred to today, see e.g., O. Issing, *The Euro – A Currency without a State*, Center for Financial Studies Working Paper, No. 2008/51, p. 15; D. Scholz, *Europa. Herkunft und Gegenwart*, Münster 2008, p. 27; V. D. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power*, New York 2001.

often did not even bother to describe physical differences. When Christopher Columbus reached the New World, he did not find the skin of the indigenous people strange; rather, it reminded him of the inhabitants of the Canary Islands. Hence, new experiences did not always lead to the creation of new categories; rather, they were integrated in existing ones. This way of seeing the other, which is sometimes referred to as “nostrification,” only slowly gave way to a clear-cut understanding of Europeanness as a distinct quality differentiating some people(s) from others; accordingly, it was only later that these “non-European” peoples came to be perceived as yellow or red, and uncivilized or inferior.<sup>9</sup> This process of differentiation ran parallel to the gradual replacement of the Ptolemaic worldview by Copernican heliocentrism, the latter contributing to man’s increased ability to conceive of other worlds, cultures, or peoples as distinct and different entities.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, some ideas about “Europeanness” can also be detected in fourteenth-, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources. However, the main distinction between “Them” and “Us” remained between Christians and “pagans.” Many sources of the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period speak – if at all – of the “European peoples” rather than “Europeans,” thus implying a lower level of aggregation and homogeneity. Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), for example, wrote of “Asyani” and “Affricani,” but not of “Europaei”: instead, he used the description “Europam colentes,” *i.e.*, “those who live in Europe.” The use of “apud nos Europæos” by Francis Bacon (1561–1626) when philosophizing about the importance of naval potency for the rise of the states in his day seems quite accidental – the term appears just once in the whole book.<sup>11</sup> For most of the Early Modern period “Europeanness” was not central, and reference to Europe remained more common when differentiating the variety of human existence than for identifying one population directly with the category “Europeans.”<sup>12</sup> This trend also holds true for the debates that drove the rise of this category among literati in subsequent centuries, *i.e.*, the increasing contact with individuals and groups from

- 9 See, e.g., M. Kevak, *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking*, Princeton 2011; P. Münch, *Wie aus Menschen Weiße, Schwarze, Gelbe und Rote wurden*, in: *Essener Unikat*, 6/7 (1995), pp. 87–97; W. Demel, *Wie die Chinesen gelb wurden. Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte der Rassentheorien*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 225 (1992), pp. 625–666; R. Kowner, *Skin as a Metaphor: Early European Racial Views on Japan, 1548–1853*, in: *Ethnohistory*, 51 (2004), pp. 751–778; more generally, also see M. Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, Ithaca 1998, pp. 21–32 on the closeness of technological practices and world views between Europeans and the peoples whom they met in these first encounters.
- 10 A. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, Cambridge 1982; D. N. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise*, Oxford 1992; J. N. Wilford, *The Mapmakers: The Story of the Great Pioneers in Cartography from Antiquity to the Space Age*, London 2002.
- 11 Dante Alighieri, *De Monarchia*, 3, p. 13, e.g., in: *Studienausgabe*, ed. by R. Imbach and C. Flüeler (Latin-German), Stuttgart 2007, p. 236; F. Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, in: *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. by J. Spedding, R. L. Elles and D. D. Heath, vol. I, London 1858, p. 801; also see W. Schulze, *Europa in der frühen Neuzeit – Begriffsgeschichtliche Befunde*, in: H. Durcharadt and A. Kunz (eds.), *Europäische Geschichte als historiographisches Problem*, Mainz 1997, pp. 35–65.
- 12 Many examples in H. Gollwitzer, *Europabild und Europagedanke. Beiträge zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 1964, pp. 27–38; also see Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, Wien 2001, pp. 11–40.

different parts of the world. Albeit slow, cultural encounters would eventually stabilize the idea of “Europeans” as a distinct category. In these acts of delimitation and inclusion, three sub-dimensions can be differentiated.

Firstly – and most importantly in the long run – people started to recognize themselves as Europeans when they invaded other territories. Brazil is a good example: one preoccupation of sixteenth-century visitors to and commentators on South America was to reflect on differences and similarities to their home cultures. Some, like André Thevet (ca. 1502–1590), emphasized the differences between the “savages” and “nostre Europe”;<sup>13</sup> others, like Jean de Léry (ca. 1536–1613), highlighted the similarities, both in manners and in physical constitution:

*The Tupinamba ... are no taller, fatter, or smaller in stature than we Europeans are; their bodies are neither monstrous nor prodigious with respect to ours. In fact, they are stronger, more robust and well filled-out, more nimble, less subject to disease, there are almost none among them who are lame, one-eyed, deformed, or disfigured.*<sup>14</sup>

Léry’s rather positive description of non-Europeans is more the exception than the rule. In most cases, the differentiation between “Them” and “Us” was now used to establish, legitimize, and enforce the physical, intellectual and moral superiority of Europeans. Still, these new contacts with peoples from hitherto unknown parts of the world strengthened the tendency to use “Europe” and, in the long run, also “European” as an identity marker.<sup>15</sup>

This is also true if one turns to the second dimension: self-identification as European when invaded by “non-European” others. The “Turkish threat” is the most obvious example in this context. Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464), the Tuscan humanist, historian, poet and scholar who was to become Pope Pius II, offers good early examples of this. In “De Europa,” one of the earliest attempts to write a European history, he notes: “apud Europeos et, qui nomine christiano censentur” (moving Europeanness very closely together with Christian belief).<sup>16</sup> Still, the ambivalences should not be overlooked. Even if Piccolomini contributed tremendously to “othering” the Turks by decoupling them from Troy as the cradle of a whole host of Western peoples and placing them among the “barbarians,” the term “Europeans” was still not central for him. Instead, he praised individual European peoples for their qualities and their particular roles in the fight against

13 A. Thevet, *Les singularitez de la France antarctique, autrement nommée Amérique*, Paris 1556, p. 390: “our Europe”.

14 J. de Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America: containing the navigation and the remarkable things seen on the sea by the author; the behavior of Villegagnon in that country; the customs and strange ways of life of the American savages; together with the description of various animals, trees, plants, and other singular things completely unknown over here*, Berkeley 1992 (1580), p. 56. In the French original, it reads: “que nous sommes en l’Europe”, see J. de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil – 1557*, ed. by F. Lestringant, Montpellier 1992 (1580), p. 85.

15 Another notable exception are Early Modern views of Japan: The Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) found them even superior the Europeans; see D. F. Lach, *Asia and the Making of Europe*, Chicago 1993 (1965), p. 685.

16 E. S. Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), *De Europa*, ed. by A. van Heck, Rome 2001, p. 27.

the Turks. A more direct equation between the anti-Turkish forces and Europeans was reserved for later authors and centuries.<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly, “Europeanness” was evoked to bridge the deep political and confessional divisions of the continent. For instance, Amos Comenius (1592–1670) emphasized in “Panegersia” that all Europeans were sailing on one ship and that at the same time, “the Asians, Africans and others are floating on their own ships in the same ocean of the world.”<sup>18</sup> Maybe even more important than delimitation from the non-European other was that Comenius tried to stress inner-European communalities in an attempt to overcome the confessional divide that was, at the time, devouring the continent from within. Clearly, there were many overlaps and synergies between these different debates, and in incremental and contorted processes they gave rise to the idea of identifying a specific population as “Europeans.”

Having said this, it would be problematic to ignore the voices of those who were “othered” in these processes – even if, so far, we have very little research on how those who were not part of this in-group used, dismissed or negotiated this label. In general, it is quite impossible to generalize how “non-Europeans” named and perceived “Europeans” in these cultural encounters. A few vignettes have to suffice. As is well known, it did not take very long before sixteenth-century Aztecs downgraded the Spanish conquerors from “gods” to regular and rather fierce humans.<sup>19</sup> Quite generally, one can identify a development from integrating the newcomers into existing social or mythological concepts to a mental reorientation with more experience-driven and sometimes also hybrid categories – not just, as said before, for the “European” side but also for the “non-Europeans.” A good example for the latter are the Arabic terms “Ifraṅṅ”, “Afraṅṅ” and “Farāṅṅ” which translate as “Franks” and which were widely used by Arab writers from the time of the Crusades onwards to refer to Christian Europeans regardless of their nationality. The term also found its way into Persian (farangi and farangistan for Europe), Turkish (Frenk) and other languages, primarily meaning (Christian) Europeans, and it may also be related to the Thai Farang. From its non-European contexts, the expression then also travelled back into European sources. For example, the German “Herders Conversations-Lexikon” of 1856 defined concisely: “die sich in der Türkei aufhaltenden Europäer

17 J. Helmuth, Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II.) – ein Humanist als Vater des Europagedankens?, in: R. Hohls, I. Schröder and H. Siegrist (eds.), *Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen Geschichte*, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 361–369; D. Mertens, “Europa, id est patria, domus propria, sedes nostra...” Funktionen und Überlieferung lateinischer Türkenreden im 15. Jahrhundert, in: F.-R. Erkens (ed.), *Europa und die osmanische Expansion im ausgehenden Mittelalter*, Berlin 1997, pp. 38–58, here pp. 54–55.

18 I. A. Comenius, *De Rerum Humanarum Emendatione, Consultatio Catholica*, vol. I, Prague 1966, pp. 30–31: “Nos nimirum Europaei unâ qvali communi vehimur Navi: contemplamurque Alianos, Africanos, Americanos, caeterosque ut luis Naviculis in eodem communi Mundi et Mundanarum calamitatum ... Oceano fluctuantes”.

19 See J. Lockhart (ed.), *We People here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*, Eugene 1993, particularly p. 58, with an account in Nahuatl (from the Florentine Codex); on the broader context, see J. Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*, Stanford 1992. On this topic in general, now also see J. Becker and B. Stanley (eds.), *Europe as the Other: External Perspectives on European Christianity*, Göttingen 2014.

heißen Franken.”<sup>20</sup> Things were even more complicated, however, because Arabs also used the word “Rum” to distinguish the Orthodox Christians from the Franks. All in all, the term “Europeans” thus seems to have been coined, and for the longest time also used, primarily as a concept of self-definition. This is also confirmed by sources from China: Particularly since the seventeenth century, Europeans – as well as persons from other Western countries – were often referred to as “foreign devils” (*yang guizi*). This is a sharp reminder that non-Europeans often did not see Europeans through European eyes but used their own concepts and terminology to speak about the “other”. In some cases, finally, any kind of clear-cut distinction between “European” and “non-European” even collapses, for instance if one studies members of the colonized elites visiting or even living in the metropolises of their respective empires during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

The propagandistic pamphlets and travel accounts, literary texts and encyclopedias mentioned so far also stood in close dialogue with another form of knowledge production, *i.e.*, with the scholarly world. The Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) was the first to use *Homo Europaeus* as a genuinely scientific concept – although simultaneously drawing heavily from travel accounts and other forms of knowledge production that today would be labeled as non-scientific. In “*Systema Naturae*” (1735), Linnaeus treated mankind as one species, called *Homo sapiens*, which he loosely divided into four types. In the tenth edition (1758), however, Linnaeus elaborated on the description of races and attributed to them specific moral, emotional, physical and cultural characteristics: *Homo americanus* (red, choleric, erect); *Homo africanus* (black, phlegmatic, indulgent); and *Homo asiaticus* (sallow, melancholic, covered with loose garments and ruled by opinions). The peculiarities of *Homo Europaeus*, finally, were “white skin, a full-blooded and sanguine temperament and a fleshy body. The hair is yellowish and curly, the eyes blue, the emotions fickle, rational and preordained for inventiveness. They wear close-fitting clothes and are ruled by laws.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Linnaeus gave new dignity to this category by turning it into a scientific concept. His system of human taxonomy promoted a European racial awareness and a sense of superiority. At the same time, his work was part of a much larger literature on the study of human races that grew enormously in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. François

20 See e.g., C. Niall, The Origins of Suffixed Invocations of God’s Curse on the Franks in Muslim Sources for the Crusades, in: *Arabica*, 48 (2001), pp. 254–266; B. Lewis, Some Reflections on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire, in: *Studia Islamica*, 9 (1958), pp. 111–127; Herders *Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 4, Freiburg 1856, p. 420: “all Europeans residing in Turkey are called Franks” (own translation); on Arabic views on the crusaders, see Amin Maalouf, *Les croisades vues par les Arabes*, Paris 1983.

21 See T. Klein, The Missionary as Devil: Anti-Missionary Demonology in China, 1860–1930, in: J. Becker and B. Stanley, *Europe* (see footnote 19); K. Rüther, *Europa im späten 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Afrikaner in Großbritannien und Deutschland*. Presentation at the Historikertag in Mainz, Germany, 26 September 2012; more generally, also see M. Wintle (ed.), *Imagining Europe: Europe and European Civilisation as Seen from its Margins and by the Rest of the World, in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Brussels 2008.

22 Latin original: C. von Linné, *Systema naturae per regna tria naturae, secundum classes, ordines, genera, species, cum characteribus differentiis, synonymis, locis*, vol. 1, 10th edition 1766 (1735), p. 29 (English is own translation); on Linnaeus’ changing nomenclature, see W. Demel, *Chinesen* (see footnote 9), pp. 625–666.



Bernier (1625–1688), for example, wrote about a “first race” that encompassed the inhabitants of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) later introduced a racial classification system that highlighted the “Caucasian race,” which – at least in his earlier works – he saw as superior to all other races. Even if Blumenbach’s term has survived in a modified form to this very day – as its use in American English might exemplify – Linnaeus’ concept also turned out to be highly influential for later developments, *i.e.*, to differentiate between “We, the Europeans” and “They, the others.”<sup>23</sup>

The nineteenth century, especially, saw the rise of the idea of European racial superiority in a development heralded in 1799 by Charles White’s (1728–1813) often-cited “An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man,” in which he praised Europeaness on the basis of ideas of racial and physiognomic hierarchy.<sup>24</sup>

Still, it has to be said that the ascription of “European” continued to be just one among many. For a long time, religion and estates had been criteria of differentiation; increasingly, ethnic and national criteria started to play a role. However, there were also many other attributions – racial sub-categories, micro- and macro-region or, for example, as members of Western civilization. All of these concepts partially overlapped with and partially rivaled that of *Homo Europaeus*. Thus, the latter was only one of many attempts to understand and to organize the variety of human existence hierarchically.

Particularly since the nineteenth century, the concept of the “European” has travelled beyond the narrow circles of the educated few to become a truly meaningful category of attribution and differentiation.<sup>25</sup> Today, the terms “European” and “Europeans” have permeated every aspect of daily life. One example of the recent trend is a brochure published by the European Union in 2001, whose title, “How Europeans See Themselves,” not only implies the existence of Europeans, but also that they are united by specific views, including a shared perception of themselves and that it is indeed possible to gain access to this perception. The brochure summarizes public opinion surveys conducted by the European Commission since the 1970s and arrives at the conclusion that while a relative majority of the interviewees do not think that a common European identity exists, most of them feel “to some extent European.” The brochure also includes a graph detailing “the values of Europeans,” showing that the most important value that Europeans share is “to help others.”<sup>26</sup>

These findings almost sound like a late echo of the German novelist Heinrich Mann (1871–1950), whose essay “Der Europäer” (1916) began:

23 See, e.g., S. Stuurman, François Bernier and the Invention of Racial Classification, in: *History Workshop Journal*, 50 (2000), pp. 1–21; B. Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity*, New York 2006; T. Todorov, *Nous et les autres: La Réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, Paris 1989.

24 See C. White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man and in Different Animals and Vegetables*, London 1799, particularly pp. 41–68; also see C. L. Brace, *Chain of Being*, in: F. Spencer (ed.), *A History of Physical Anthropology: An Encyclopaedia*, New York 1997, pp. 259–265.

25 Also see W. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas* (see footnote 12), p. 39.

26 European Commission, *How Europeans See Themselves: Looking through the Mirror with Public Opinion Surveys*, Luxembourg 2001, 10, 8.



*His spirit has many potentials but he is determined by reason and industriousness. We love proportion and usefulness. Between the self-destructive ecstatic and the saint who wants to help others, we see as European not the enchanted but the helper.*<sup>27</sup>

However, not everybody thought so positively about Europeans. Charles Darwin (1809–1882), for instance, complained: “Wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal.”<sup>28</sup> Although it is obvious that the core characteristics that define Europeanness on the individual and group levels have remained contested, the British naturalist of the nineteenth century, the German novelist of the twentieth century, and the recent document from Brussels all share an implicit consensus that the category “European” is meaningful and consequential.

This brief overview of how the term “European” has been used throughout history has demonstrated that *Homo Europaeus* is very often characterized by a combination of physical, mental and socio-cultural qualities. Concepts of the “European man” position this creature between metaphysically charged poles, for example between determinism and self-determination, universality and particularity or nature and nurture. Europeans are thus identified by a whole cornucopia of features – genetically, culturally and socially, and even more often by a combination of these factors with all the ensuing unifying, as well as divisive, consequences.

\* \* \*

There are several ways of studying the history of *Homo Europaeus*, the history of the discourses and the practices of “Europeanness.” The main current of research starts from an implicit and common-sense notion and analyzes the history of Europeans, within Europe and beyond, without paying particular attention to defining them. Most grand narratives of European history – even the most recent ones – start from such a premise; also, many studies on global encounters adopt this take.<sup>29</sup> It is obvious that these literatures have borne much fruit and have enriched our knowledge tremendously. Still, there is also the danger of anachronisms that might even produce a distorted teleology, or consciously or unconsciously legitimating later ideas and practices such as the European integration process of today.

Therefore, I would argue that the more interesting approach to studying ideas and social practices surrounding *Homo Europaeus* must adopt an explicit social constructivism.

27 H. Mann, *Macht und Mensch. Essays*, Frankfurt am Main 1987, p. 129, „sein Geist trägt alle Keime, bestimmt aber wird er durch Vernunft und Fleiß. Wir lieben das Maß und den Nutzen. Zwischen einem selbstzerstörerischen Ekstatiker und einem Heiligen, der anderen helfen will, empfinden wir als europäisch nicht den Verzückten, sondern den Helfer“ (own translation).

28 C. Darwin, *Voyage of the Beagle*, London 1989 (1839), p. 322.

29 E.g., see N. Davies, *Europe: A History*, Oxford 1996; B. Wasserstein, *Barbarism and Civilization: A History of Europe in our Time*, Oxford 2007; U. Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters between European and non-European Cultures, 1492–1800*, Cambridge 1989; J. Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405*, New York 2007, particularly pp. 14–27.

Here, Europeans are seen not as a stable, clear-cut group whose individual members can be identified consistently, but rather as the discursive and practical result of endless exchanges of people, ideas and institutions all around the world. The main reason for this is the simple fact that there have always been question marks over who actually belongs to this population. Any answer to the question of which nationalities, ethnicities or groups are to be included is based on cultural assumptions. When one refers to Europe – be it defined by geography, history or culture – one is using criteria that are themselves socially constructed because most historians today would agree that no stable vision of Europe can be identified: the delineation of Europe’s eastern frontier as the Ural Mountains, for instance, is an eighteenth-century invention, supporting Russia’s claim to be one of the great European powers. Ever since antiquity, the definition of Europe’s borders has been contested. Similarly, ideas of how to categorize humans have also been quite volatile. For example, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and some of his contemporaries thought that the Arabs belonged to the same category of people as the inhabitants of the northern shores of the Mediterranean.<sup>30</sup> Nor can modern biology provide adequate unambiguous criteria to define *Homo Europaeus* because genetic and other bio-scientific methods are incapable of defining precisely what “Europeanness” constitutes.<sup>31</sup>

The social constructivist approach is not interested in what is European about *Homo Europaeus*, i.e., how he became what he “is.” Rather, it focuses on how and why ideas of Europeanness have evolved, how they circulate and change in relationship to other such concepts of organizing human diversity, and on the practical consequences for those affected. At the same time, a social constructivist approach does not deny the power and implications of the emergence of this “imagined community.” More than twenty years ago, Benedict Anderson noted, “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and maybe even these) are imagined.” Therefore, one should not endeavor to distinguish between “genuine” and “false” communities, but rather between different styles of imagining and enacting such entities; social constructivism is simply a viable means to analyze them from a perspective that transcends essentialist approaches that would see them as presupposed, eternal unities.<sup>32</sup> In sum, people understand themselves and are seen by others as Europeans, and they behave as such. They attribute meaning and prestige to this category, create specifically European habitats and treat others as non-Europeans. They thus represent imagined – and living – creatures and communities. Hence, *Homo Europaeus* does exist after all. However, the social constructivist understanding of its epistemic status differs from the essentialist models.

30 See e.g., M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York 1997; F. B. Schenk, *Mental Maps: Die Konstruktion von geographischen Räumen in Europa seit der Aufklärung. Literaturbericht*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28 (2002), pp. 493–514.

31 V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, *Auf der Suche nach dem Europäer. Wissenschaftliche Konstruktionen des Homo Europaeus*. In: *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2007), in: <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=204> (consulted on 10 October 2012).

32 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, New York 1991, p. 6.

At the same time, one has to face the dilemma that when working on this issue, one cannot avoid attributing further meaning to it. By describing and analyzing this social construct, one also adds to its very creation. Without the process of European unification under the banner of the EEC and the EU since the middle of the twentieth century, the whole topic would be less relevant. Therefore, one could argue that any interest in *Homo Europaeus* risks simply affirming the EU of our days. It might even seem that the most sophisticated take would be to ignore the whole topic. However, this is exactly what has been done so far, leading to a lack of critical studies. Trappist silence has rarely been a sound, scientific strategy. Even if the analysis of *Homo Europaeus* delineated here is quite new, there are several lines of research on which one can build.

A first point of reference for such a take is the constructivist literature on nationalism already mentioned above. Anderson coined the term “imagined communities” in the context of this specific literature, and together with authors such as Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm, he provides a solid basis for tackling essentialist concepts of identity and group affiliation.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the constructivist literature on nationalism can serve as a major point of orientation when studying *Homo Europaeus*.

However, there are also some reservations. Anderson, Gellner and others wrote about nationalism and nations, not about the “European man” – which does not necessarily mean a group, but can also be singular. Even more importantly, there is the danger of false analogies: Europe is not a nation, let alone a nation-state; as a point of reference for *Homo Europaeus*, it lacks many of the characteristics of a nation. Research on nationalism is, for example, very much geared towards a political model and an institutional framework, whereas the term “European” draws a good part of its vagueness from the fact that these political and institutional dimensions have played no important role for most of its history. In addition, even if one finds identical criteria of classification, they are often hierarchized and organized differently than in nationalism. All in all, it is therefore highly fruitful to use the works of Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm and others as a source of inspiration, while remembering that they can also be misleading.

The ongoing research on European identity can be seen as a second point of reference. This literature experienced a first climax in the 1950s and the 1960s, with studies by authors such as Federico Chabod, Heinz Gollwitzer, Denys Hay and Denis de Rougemont. One major motivation of their work was to search for viable alternatives to the extreme forms of nationalism and resulting catastrophes that they themselves had experienced. Eruditely, they searched for past visions and concrete concepts of European integration as an alternative past to the dominant nation-centered narrative, and the volume and diversity of the sources they unearthed in the process is still impressive today. It is obvious, however, that they were looking for a usable past, and any such process implies certain blinkers. In line with broader historiographical trends of the time, they privileged great

33 See, e.g., B. Anderson, *Communities* (see footnote 32); E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca 1983; E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, New York 1983.

minds and were less interested in the social reach of ideas in popular culture or in social practices. Also, they were primarily focused on ideas of Europe, not of the European.<sup>34</sup> Newer studies, especially since the 1990s, have introduced a more critical dimension. They often refer explicitly or implicitly to constructivist concepts. They have demonstrated the extent to which European identity – both as a self- and as a hetero-perception – has been subject to historical change, even in recent centuries and decades. Recently identified traits include not only feelings of superiority but also of crisis: strong communalities vis-à-vis non-Europeans on the one hand, yet an insistence on internal differences on the other. Methodologically, many historical works on European identity are part of a – more or less socially grounded – intellectual history, for example, in the books and projects by Hartmut Kaelble, Robert Frank and Gérard Bossuat or Anthony Pagden.<sup>35</sup> This take is highly fruitful, particularly if it transcends the concentration on Western European sources that has characterized it for a long time. Of particular value are the works of Bo Stråth and others who have also adopted an explicitly constructivist approach.<sup>36</sup>

However, not only historians have contributed to this research on European identity. Sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists and many others have also written about this issue. Very often, however, they have a rather presentistic tendency and focus primarily on political identities or the politics of identity – and thus on only one subset of possible questions. Still, many of their studies are highly valuable, especially because they tend toward multiple, nested identities and highlight the ephemeral and situational qualities of European identity.<sup>37</sup>

A third literature that is highly fruitful comes from cultural studies and focuses on performative acts and cultural practices. It thus leads beyond a focus on ideas, concepts, and debates to the question of the material practices of abstract discourses, as well as social action more generally. Performances might then be seen as “acts, gestures, enactments” that purport identity as “fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporal signs

34 See, e.g., F. Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, Bari 1995 (first 1961); H. Gollwitzer, *Europabild* (see footnote 12); D. Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, Edinburgh 1968 (first 1957); D. de Rougemont, *Europa. Vom Mythos zur Wirklichkeit*, München 1962; C. Curcio, *Europa. Storia di un'idea*, Florence 1979; also see W. Fritzemeyer, *Christenheit und Europa. Zur Geschichte des europäischen Gemeinschaftsgefühls von Dante bis Leibniz*, München 1931. Many of these authors are portrayed in: H. Duchhardt, M. Morawiec, W. Schmale and W. Schulze (eds.), *Europa-Historiker. Ein biographisches Handbuch*, 3 vols., Göttingen 2006/2007.

35 See, e.g., H. Kaelble, *Europäer über Europa. Die Entstehung des europäischen Selbstverständnisses im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M./New York 2001; R. Frank (ed.), *Les identités européennes au XXe siècle: diversité, convergences et solidarités*, Paris 2004; W. Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*, Stuttgart 2008; A. Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, New York 2002; A. Pagden (ed.), *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*, 2 vols., Aldershot 2000; M. Wintle, *The Image of Europe: Visualizing Europe in Cartography and Iconography throughout the Ages*, Cambridge 2009.

36 B. Stråth (ed.), *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, Brussels 2000.

37 See, e.g., T. Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*, Ithaca 2010; J. T. Checkel and P. J. Katzenstein (eds.), *European Identity*, New York 2009; R. K. Herrmann, T. Risse and M. B. Brewer (eds.), *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*, Lanham 2004.

and other discursive means.”<sup>38</sup> Certainly, within the specific field, “performance” means different things to different people. More interesting than the fight over nuances might be the fact that the discussion opens up whole new horizons of analysis, and that for the concrete case under study here, it could be particularly interesting to research “*Homo Europaeus* in the Making.” Wolfgang Schmale is one of the very first to have worked with such an approach to our subject. His “Geschichte Europas” is not the rather general account of European history its title might suggest. Rather, Schmale analyzes instances in which “people imagine and visualize Europe,” thus seeing Europe as a “result of discourses and performative acts.”<sup>39</sup> A few others have also already worked with such a social constructivist approach and emphasized material practices by focusing on “Europe.” Johan Schot and Thomas Misa, for instance, highlight the role of technology by analyzing how “actors design and use technology to constitute and enact European integration (or fragmentation).”<sup>40</sup> Yet, for images and social practices regarding Europeans, there is still a lot to do.

\* \* \*

Building upon recent findings on this issue, the final part of this article outlines four more general characteristics for discourses and practices on *Homo Europaeus*.<sup>41</sup> It is generated primarily from research focusing on the twentieth century. In a further step, it might be worth relating these to the experiences of other centuries and other contexts, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

Firstly, I argue that ideas and practices constructed around the “European man” have always remained plural, fragmented, and polyvalent. Even in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “Europeanness” has been only one of many attributions used to differentiate between groups of people. National, religious, confessional and many other criteria also existed, and sometimes they coalesced with “Europeanness,” but in many contexts these other attributions proved to be more relevant for thoughts and modes of action. In addition, a person who might have identified him- or herself as a European at one moment might have seen him- or herself as a Catalan or a Catholic, a conservative or a consumer in the next. Furthermore, certain characteristics and criteria used to define Europeans might be important in some fields and at some times, but much less so in others. For example, life scientists tend to use different categories than intellectuals

38 J. Butler, *Gender Troubles: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York 1999 (1990), 173; e.g., also see E. Fischer-Lichte and C. Wulf (eds.), *Praktiken des Performativen*, Berlin 2004.

39 W. Schmale, *Geschichte Europas* (see footnote 12), pp. 14-15: “Menschen Europa imaginieren und visualisieren”; “Ergebnis von Diskursen und performativen Akten” (own translations); also see W. Schmale, *The Making of Homo Europaeus*, in: *Comparare*, 1 (2001), pp. 165-184, and now for example also F. Bösch, A. Brill and F. Greiner (eds.), *Europa-Bilder im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2012..

40 See J. Schot and T. J. Misa, *Inventing Europe: Technology and the Hidden Integration of Europe*, in: *History and Technology*, 21 (2005), pp. 1-19, here p. 8.

41 Basically drawn from L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel (eds.), *Der Europäer – ein Konstrukt. Wissensbestände, Diskurse, Praktiken*, Göttingen 2009.

in order to define Europeans. The 1920s, for example, saw a lively debate among biologists on whether Europeans were united by a specific type of blood that distinguished them markedly from other populations on the globe. Even if culturally grounded, these debates were deeply rooted in serology, bacteriology, and other fields of medicine and, more generally, natural science.<sup>42</sup> Intellectuals such as the German social democrat Carlo Schmid (1896–1979) resorted to completely different categories. Instead of biological evidence, Schmid saw shared experiences and values as the central common denominator for the gradual emergence of the “European man”:

*Which traits characterize this European man? ... For the first time there emerged a creature gifted with a hitherto unknown degree of freedom: the freedom of choice – and to choose implies the possibility to say ‘no’! Since then man has the possibility to resist the imperative of fate, the yoke of causality.*<sup>43</sup>

The juxtaposition of these very different notions of “Europeanness” also demonstrates that the criteria used pass through different cycles over time. Today, the idea of Europeans being defined by bondage of blood is obsolete. Schmid’s *bildungsbürgerliche* and Eurocentric invocation certainly has also gained some patina, but the rhetoric of defining Europeanness by freedom and indeterminism is far from forgotten. Therefore, it is highly interesting not just to look at the popularity of particular ideas or practices. Special attention should also be paid to the question of where different notions and practices of Europeanness meet, how they are negotiated and how they conflict or coalesce. At the same time, it is important to notice that every field of discussion generally has its own vision and practice of what it means to be a European.

Secondly, even when used, *Homo Europaeus* often appears to be an unclearly defined category of knowledge. Also, one finds many cases in which criteria of one specific group are used to characterize all Europeans. With regard to Europe – and not to Europeans – Peter Burke once characterized this vagueness as a “historical synecdoche” (A synecdoche is a figure of speech where a part of something is used to refer to the whole, similar to the Latin expression *pars pro toto*).<sup>44</sup> This idea can also be found in discourses and practices that have to do with Europeans – e.g., when ancient Greeks were seen as defending Europe against Persian invaders at the Bosphorus – whereas the question of the other boundaries of this “Europe” and the exact gestalt of its population were quite

42 For details, see M. Spörri, Das Blut in den Adern des Homo Europaeus. Zur sprachlichen und visuellen Konstruktion der Blutgruppe A als europäisch, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, Europäer (see footnote 41), pp. 73–96.

43 C. Schmid, Über den europäischen Menschen, in: D. de Rougemont, Europa, p. 361. “Welche Eigenschaften kennzeichnen den europäischen Menschen? ... So entstand zum ersten Mal ein Wesen, das mit einer bisher unerhörten Freiheit begabt ist: der Freiheit, wählen zu können – und wählen heißt: ‘nein’ sagen können! Seitdem hat der Mensch das Vermögen, sich gegen alles aufzurichten, was nichts ist als der Imperativ des Verhängnisses oder die Zwingherrschaft der Ursachenreihen.” (own translation); on the context of this statement and similar positions at the time see Wolfgang Schmale, Vom Homo Europaeus zum Homo Europeanus. Zur Debatte über “den europäischen Menschen” in den 1940er und 1950er Jahren, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, Europäer (see footnote 41), pp. 118–134.

44 P. Burke, Europe, p. 22.

unimportant. But it is not just discourses that relate to a distant past in which the trope of *pars pro toto* can be found. For example, national entities continue to play an important role, such that different nations might experience quite dissimilar discussions about the key characteristics and qualities of *Homo Europaeus*, each of them driven by their own national experiences and needs. Again, in such contexts specific claims – vis-à-vis a certain, quite clearly defined “other” – are often more important than the motivation to reach a holistic and precise definition of Europeanness.<sup>45</sup>

Quite often, the person who speaks also happens to be part of this subgroup of “Europeans” – especially if Europeanness is seen as a positive category. An example of reflection on an extreme example of this kind is provided by Emil Janvier, a French resistance fighter during World War II:

*Since the luck of the battlefield turned against him, Herr Hitler has discovered that his vocation is to be a “European”. Of course it is perhaps a bit late to be a “European”, but it sounds well. ... What he wants is to save the whole of Europe – lock, stock and barrel – from the Judaeo-pluto-democratico-sovietico-Freemasons who have it in their grip. ... Certainly this is quite attractively put, and above all it is well orchestrated.*<sup>46</sup>

“Europeanness” often also remains a historical synecdoche because it is closely linked to common sense. Common sense can be defined as a basis of knowledge and trust, of experience and expectation that a certain group shares and considers to be sound and convincing. It is obvious that common sense can mean different things at different times and in different cultures. Many modern societies seem to have developed a common-sense notion about Europeanness. As a common understanding, this often remains part of implicit knowledge – simply because most speakers think or believe that the audience will understand the message without going into too many details.

Thirdly, *Homo Europaeus* is always associated with specific notions of time and space. Often, different concepts of time mix, bringing together linear and cyclical understandings of time. Frequently, the European man is seen as a perennial category, who has existed since a (undefined) beginning. At the same time, he is often perceived as a future project, with a certain population on the way to the realization of an ever-more-perfect model. And yet, this process is often also seen as the return to an earlier stage. For example, the Polish dissident Romuald Szeremietiew wrote in 1987, “Poland is part of Europe, and Poles are Europeans,” explaining that “nobody had to wonder that we wanted to be where freedom, democracy and prosperity rule.”<sup>47</sup> The quotation is so interesting

45 For a discussion of these distinct national traits and their links see e.g., L. Bluche and K. K. Patel, *Der Europäer als Bauer. Das Motiv des bäuerlichen Familienbetriebs im Westeuropa nach 1945*, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, *Europäer* (see footnote 41), pp. 135-157; also see M. Rempe, *Crashkurs zum europäischen Entwicklungsexperten? Das Praktikantenprogramm der EWG-Kommission für afrikanische Beamte in den 1960er Jahren*, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 207-228.

46 E. Janvier, *Pan-Europe* (1943), reprinted in: W. Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. I. *Continental Plans for European Union*, New York 1985, pp. 320-321; on the context, see M. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe*, London 2008, pp. 553-575.

47 Rada Naczelna Polskiej Partii Niepodległościowej/Romuald Szeremietiew, *Powstań Polsko! Zarys myśli progra-*



because it alternates between characterizing a certain population with specific, intrinsic “European” qualities, while at the same time defining these very qualities as a future goal for this group of people.

These notions of time frequently coexist with the idea of certain spaces – seen as places of geographical origin and, particularly important during the modern period, as spaces of expansion for which Europeans have to be prepared accordingly. Colonial history might be a particularly suitable example: here, Europeans entered regions they perceived as markedly different from what they knew back home. Especially in the tropics, they were faced with many challenges. With the idea of racial superiority looming large and confronted with the fact that local populations had often found good ways of accommodating themselves to their environment, Europeans had to invent new techniques to legitimize their claim of predominance. It was very often in light of these situations that rival colonialisms found a common ground and language: they did not seek solutions for the British, the French or the Belgians, but rather for Europeans vis-à-vis indigenous populations – this again reinforced and reinvigorated the relevance of “Europeanness” as a useful category.<sup>48</sup>

Fourthly and finally, *Homo Europaeus* is often used as a positive concept by the respective in-group, but it remains rather exclusivist. Three sub-dimensions can be differentiated. The first one has to do with the *other as part of us*. Becoming European is thus seen as a process of perfecting one’s own qualities or those of a peer group. People with the potential to become European are thus turning into Europeans; “underdeveloped” Europeans become “real” or even “super” Europeans – or might not, if they fail to act appropriately. The discourses and practices that have to do with Eastern Europe offer many examples of this – where there have been changing needs to be more or less European. One can find this in Early Modern times, but also in the context of EU enlargement discussions today. Generally, it has often remained doubtful whether a person or a group really belongs to the Europeans, and this very instability of the category adds to its dynamism, and perhaps also to its attractiveness.<sup>49</sup>

As a second sub-dimension, there is the question of the *others here with us*. In a nutshell: is it possible for a person of a completely different ethnic, cultural, or geographical background to “become” European? At first glance, racist or ethnic considerations seem to be a thing of the past. Today, it is – at least technically – possible to become a citizen of the EU, regardless of one’s background. But, can one also become a European? The

mowej nowej prawicy polskiej, Warsaw 1987, 59, quoted in: C. Domnitz, Europäische Vorstellungswelten im Ostblock. Eine Topologie von Europeanarrationen im Staatssozialismus, in: J. M. Faraldo, P. Gulińska-Jurgiel and C. Domnitz (eds.), *Europe in the Eastern Bloc. Imaginations and Discourses (1945–1991)*, Köln 2008, pp. 68–69.

48 See e.g., S. Maß, *Weißer Mann – was nun?* Ethnische Selbstverortung zwischen kontinentaler Solidarität und nationaler Identifikation nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, *Europäer* (see footnote 41), pp. 57–72; U. Lindner, Colonialism as a European project in Africa before 1914? British and German concepts of colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa, in: *Comparativ*, 19 (2009) 1, pp. 88–106.

49 See, e.g., J. M. Faraldo, *Das Europa der Gentlemen. Eine polnische Konstruktion des Europäers in den 1950er Jahren*, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, *Europäer* (see footnote 41), pp. 187–206; E. von Rautenfeld, *Die Anrufung zum “lernenden Europäer” in der EU-Bildungspolitik*, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 255–272.

phrase “new Europeans” continues to sound like an oxymoron and, at least in English, it is today often used with regard to people from the EU’s new member states.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, there is little evidence that “becoming European” in the most radical sense was or is a true option.<sup>51</sup>

As a third sub-dimension, we can discuss the relationship between *oneself and the other elsewhere*. As explained above, Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, and others who had first encounters with “non-European” others did not always differentiate between Europeans and non-Europeans. Today, Eurocentric ideas of superiority may have been divested of their narrow, imperialist tropes. The language of globalization now dominates, situating the European in global markets as a hopefully successful competitor – without clear and explicit delimitations of others. Still, Europeaness does not seem to be a very open category.<sup>52</sup>

To conclude, *Homo Europaeus* might best be understood as the product of moments of crisis, in which other identifications for individuals or groups fail. No matter if Europeaness is defined by blood, skin color, culture or other criteria, *Homo Europaeus* is forged as a subject – and not a mere object – of history, *i.e.*, a creature that is able to project itself and its power into the world, that is recognized and distinguished from others, and that “exists.” Certainly, this fundamental claim has also characterized many other projects and practices of identification. Yet, apart from national affiliation, “Europeaness” exerted the biggest influence in the more recent past, at least during the twentieth century.

50 See e.g., What Do “New Europeans” Think about Turkey, in: Euroactiv, 30 September 2005; New Europeans “prop up rural UK”, in: BBC News, 9 November 2004; The Birth of New “Europeans”, in: The American, 27 April 2007.

51 E. Kudraß, Kultur-Körper. Der ausgestellte Europäer, in: L. Bluche, V. Lipphardt and K. K. Patel, *Europäer* (see footnote 41), pp. 229–254.

52 See, e.g., K. Poehls, Performing Europeaness. Kategorien und Praxen sozialer Differenzierung am Europakolleg, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 273–298.