One Europe or many? Reflections on becoming European

Ray Hudson

Europe is being re-defined as a result of the combined effects of a complex set of processes. What sort of Europe is emerging from them? What criteria are being deployed to define Europe, Europeans and Europeanness and their respective boundaries? Such questions are considered via exploring a number of themes about and through Europe. They centre on the ways in which, and criteria by which, geo-political and economic spaces in Europe have been defined and divided. These practical cartographic processes are linked to changes in systems of, and the construction of new scales of, governance and regulation. As both supra-nationalism and the emergence of an EU 'super-state' and sub-nationalisms challenged the authority of the national state, new multi-scalar complex systems of governance and regulation resulted. These in turn are related to questions of singular and multiple identities, discussing these in the context of the possibilities for the emergence of a European civil society. Recognizing that the future map of Europe will not be determined by Europeans alone, the legacies of the division within Europe between NATO, the Warsaw Pact and neutral states and implications of the neo-imperialist geo-political ambitions of the USA state and military-industrial complex are then explored. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.

key words Europe uneven development governance identities boundaries

University of Durham, Department of Geography, Durham DH1 3LE

revised manuscript received 29 June 2000

Introduction

What does it mean to 'become European'? This question, one with considerable practical as well as theoretical consequences, is posed in the context of rapid change within and for Europe, much of it disconcerting and disturbing, some of it challenging accepted notions of civilized behaviour. The least serious of these changes relates to the processes of deepening and enlargement of the EU. But even those changes are of immense significance. Furthermore, they are taking place in the context of a dramatic re-drawing of the geo-political map of Europe post-1989 as the ideological struggle between East versus West became simply a division between eastern and western Europe. The subsequent dramatic impacts of the break-up of the USSR, the uneasy emergence of the CIS and, above all, the carnage in the Balkans and the Caucasus as long-suppressed ethnic nationalisms re-surfaced in savage fashion brought a sharp reminder that Europe could be a dangerous place.

A complex set of processes is therefore both re-defining and re-working Europe. What sort of Europe is emerging from them? What criteria are being deployed to define Europe, Europeans and Europeanness? Where are the boundaries of Europe, both internal and external? Put another way, where is Europe? In this paper I will consider these and related questions via exploring a number of themes about and through Europe. First, the changing geo-political map of Europe over the last half-century is briefly described and related to the criteria used in this changing division of geo-political space. In particular the criteria that governed the process of widening of the EU via spatial
expansion are analysed. Secondly, the emergence of a homogenized political-economic space within this expanding part of Europe is discussed. This ranges from the formation of the ECSC in 1951 and the EEC in 1957 to the deepening of economic integration via the creation of the Single European Market and Economic and Monetary Union within the EU in the 1980s and 1990s. The implications of deepening (at the same time as widening) for socio-spatial inequality are also considered. Thirdly, changes in governance and regulatory systems are considered as both supra-nationalism and the putative emergence of an EU ‘super-state’ and sub-nationalisms challenged the authority of the national state. Fourthly, questions of singular and multiple identities are explored, relating these to the possibilities for the emergence of a European civil society. Fifthly, the legacies of the division within Europe between NATO, the Warsaw Pact and neutral states and the issue of the extent to which the future of Europe lies in the hands of Europeans, in the context of the neo-imperialist project of the USA state, will be explored. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn.

An exercise in practical cartography: re-drawing the geo-political map of Europe

Broadly speaking, three sets of criteria, of varying weight and significance, have been decisive in partitioning geo-political space and in the creation of boundaries between different groupings of national states within Europe and in deciding which states will be part of which blocs over the post-war period. First of all, there has been a fundamental political-economic division between those states embracing capitalism, the market and the formal separation of the political and economic spheres and those embracing state socialism, the planned or command economy, and the fusion of state and economy. Secondly, within those accepting the pre-eminence of capitalism, there has been a division between those committed to some form of parliamentary democracy and those characterized by some form of dictatorship. Thirdly, and partly overlapping the second criterion, there has been competition between different models of national capitalisms and varying relationships between the national economy and the (welfare) state (for example, see Albert 1993; Lash and Urry 1987; Esping-Andersen 1990). There has also been competition between national states and national interests and supra-national interests reflected in the emergent EU. The evolving geo-political map of Europe in the post-war period has thus been the product of highly contested processes, sometimes with very dangerous implications.

The East-West partition of Europe in the late 1940s, following the building of the Berlin Wall and the lowering of the imaginary but nonetheless highly influential Iron Curtain, was undoubtedly the most significant influence shaping the post-war geo-political map of Europe as the countries of the East rejected (though not always willingly) the model of capitalist developmental and its parliamentary democratic shell (see Jessop 1978). It had a profound and lasting effect, with implications that extended far beyond Europe itself. At one level, it tied the West of Europe to the USA via the Marshall Plan for economic reconstruction and, more significantly, via NATO. Within Western Europe, there were strong pressures to check the spread of communism from the East and create a more effective political voice for Western Europe in the international arena. There were equally powerful desires to ensure that there were no future wars between its major states, especially between France and Germany, or associated tragedies, such as the holocaust. These combined to give rise to a series of moves to create supra-national institutions to guard against the dangers they posed (Williams 1998). In so doing, it alluded to an ideal of European unity grounded in a common heritage of Christianity and the Enlightenment and saw this as being reinforced by moves towards integration (see Heffernan 1998). Somewhat ironically, there was no recognition that the evils against which integration was to guard were in any way a product of that tradition (Amin 2000). Perhaps the most significant of these moves was the creation of the ECSC, formed in 1951 by the six countries that were later to be the founder members of the EEC. In this way the founding processes of the EU became entangled with the involvement of the USA in the post-war reconstruction of Europe and resistance to communist expansion.

In the early 1950s there were highly contentious proposals for political union as well as economic integration. Overt plans for political union were abandoned in 1954, with the collapse of proposals for a European Defence Community. This had a number of important consequences. It allowed NATO to become the de facto ‘European’ defence organization. It marked a switch in emphasis
One Europe or many?

among political élites, especially in France, Germany and Italy, to economic integration and the creation of a common market, both as an end in itself and as a way of covertly advancing the agenda of political union. This common political-economic space had specific rules of entry, defined by a combination of market capitalism and parliamentary democracy as necessary but not sufficient conditions, which delimited the initial possible boundaries of the EEC. Not all countries that met these conditions wanted membership of the EEC in 1957 and several formed their own European Free Trade Area (EFTA) in 1960, explicitly rejecting any concept of overt political union, while other initially remained outside of both groupings. Subsequently the boundaries between non-member states, EFTA and the EEC were gradually re-drawn, especially as members of EFTA sought to join the EEC (Figure 1). In the first instance, this involved Denmark and the UK joining the EEC in 1973, along with Ireland, and in 1974 a free trade agreement between the EEC and EFTA came into force (Williams 1991). Other countries met the test of capitalism but not parliamentary democracy. Thus it was not until the ending of dictatorships in Greece, Portugal and Spain that they were allowed to join in the 1980s as a way of underpinning their embryonic democracies despite the weaknesses of their national economies. With the entry of Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1994, the number of member states rose to fifteen. Thus over the three decades following the formation of the EEC there was an ongoing redefinition of the boundaries between the EEC and EFTA, originally competing economic spaces within Western Europe. Each of the enlargements of the EU in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s effectively drew the two sets of member states together, driven on geo-political considerations and by the logic of international trade, the competitive threat posed first by the USA and later Japan, and concerns over market access.

The post-1989 redefinition of the relationship between East and West into one between central and eastern and western Europe was intended to help insert the CEE states into at least the margins of the wider global economy. Consequently, by the 1990s, the expansion of the EU assumed an even greater significance as it contemplated extension into the previously forbidden territory of the East. This on-going expansion thus centres on the extent to which these former COMECON countries are to be allowed to join as they strive to undergo successful transformations to capitalism, create parliamentary democracies, and meet the economic and political criteria for entry. With the moves towards EMU and the deepening of the economic integration process within the EU itself, however, and the specification of more precise macro-economic and fiscal targets, the political and economic entry criteria have become rather more rigorously defined than in past expansions. Consequently, ‘[a]t one and the same time, the EU has appeared as a model of democratic and economic stability to be pursued by the new or newly democratic countries of Europe, and as a symbol of how far they have to go to reach the promised land’ (Smith 1996, 6). Within central and eastern Europe, the longer-term possibilities for successful establishment of new regulatory regimes and of capitalist development seem greatest in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (European Commission 1996b, 26). Other current applicants are Cyprus, Estonia and Slovenia and as of the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 Turkey, subject to certain conditions relating to democracy and human rights (Figure 1).

In addition, other states (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania) may become applicants for accession in the foreseeable future. More speculatively, it has been suggested that some of the Republics of the CIS may seek entry (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). Indeed, the President of Kyrgyzstan, the easternmost of the CIS Republics was recently reported as saying, ‘We are dreaming of being part of Europe’. Were his dreams to be fulfilled Europe would stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific as well as the Mediterranean to the Arctic. On the other hand, as Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign minister noted in 1999 at the Fifth European forum in Berlin: ‘enlargement will have to end somewhere’ (both quoted in Peel 1999). In summary, then, even at national level the European space has been – and continues to be – subject to complex processes of (re)partitioning that have re-drawn the political-economic map with some frequency and increasingly this has been associated with an extension of the boundaries of the EU itself and a consequent re-definition of the meaning of Europe.

Finally, it is important to remember that the EU has not only expanded to increase the number of its constituent member states but has also been actively involved in constructing links between itself, other parts of Europe and other parts of the
world. Sometimes these linkages within Europe (such as flows of migrant labour into the EU, of development aid and direct foreign investment from EU countries) have been a prelude to the incorporation of states as full EU members once the required economic and political criteria were met (for example, Greece, Portugal and Spain). In other cases, close links have developed but without leading to membership for a variety of cultural and political reasons (for example, although the Association Agreement with Turkey made clear that it could eventually become a member, in practice until very recently it was not considered as eligible for membership, largely because of its record on human rights).4 There has also been a variety of trade, aid and migrant labour links constructed with areas outside of Europe, particularly the former colonies of France, the Netherlands and the UK. One consequence of this has been to add to the variety of peoples in Europe. The increasing numbers of asylum seekers and political and economic migrants from the Balkans, Africa, Asia and Middle East further amplified this variety in the 1970s and 1980s (Williams 1996), although asylum requests did begin to decline significantly in the latter part of the 1990s. This growing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity has had important implications for the ways in which

Figure 1 The changing geo-political map of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century
the boundaries of Europe are conceived, European-ness is thought of and criteria for defining Europeanness are specified.

**Becoming a common economic space? Homogenization versus differentiation within the deepening European Union**

From the outset, the proponents of the EEC (as it then was) sought discursively to construct it as a model of liberal capitalism within a Christian-Enlightenment European tradition. The dominant assumption of such a position is that the self-interest of enterprise can be harnessed in the public interest through a liberalization of trade and capital and labour markets (see Holland 1980, 4). The implication was that all would be better off, that spatial inequalities would be reduced, as markets were freed up and capital and labour moved to where returns were highest. Such claims did not go unchallenged. The history of the moves to establish and deepen a common market by the six signatories of the Treaty of Rome is well known. Initially, progress towards deepening economic integration was reasonably rapid. The main achievements of the EEC in the 1960s were the creation of a customs union, a common external tariff and the Common Agricultural Policy (Swann 1995). Moreover, national economic growth rates in the six member states were consistently high (see for example Madison 1964; 1982) and seemed to vindicate at least some of the arguments for forming the EEC. However, national differences in economic performance and well-being remained and growth was very uneven regionally and sectorally (for example see Hudson and Williams 1999). This unevenness sat uneasily with the claims of liberal capitalism.

Over the next two decades, the processes of further deepening slowed markedly as the emphasis switched to widening, expanding the number of member states from six to twelve. Even so, they did not grind to a complete halt. It was not until the 1980s, however, that the pace of the process of integration via new forms of supra-national regulation again accelerated. From the mid-1980s the processes of deepening and creating a truly ‘common market’ entered a new phase, with the projects for the Single European Market, Economic and Monetary Union and the creation from 1999 of a single ‘Euro’ currency, following the 1991 Treaty on European Union. These initiatives were indicative of the intensified drive to create a unified and homogenized economic space, a significant extension of neo-liberalism in response to intensifying pressures on international markets. In this space market forces were to have much greater scope to influence the sectoral and socio-spatial distributions of economic activities, resources and income. These changes coincided with renewed pressures for expanding the constituent territory of the EU (as it became on 1 November 1993). Via these processes of deepening and widening the EU sought to bring about a homogenization of the European space, establishing the hegemony of capitalist social relations within a common regulatory framework over most of Europe. While significant national and regional variations remain in the forms in which these relations are constituted, the project to both widen and deepen the EU and create a common regulatory framework over its territory is reducing this variability.

This is but one reading of the changes, however. An alternative lays much more emphasis upon their incomplete character and the contradictory nature of the process. It queries the extent to which freely competitive markets can be constructed and challenges the claim that ‘free’ market allocation is necessarily in the public interest. Indeed, it suggests that at least some aspects of EU policy have deliberately sought to shape markets in particular ways or mediate their effects precisely in recognition of the fact that the public interest is better served in this way. As such it raises critical questions as to how the public interest is to be defined and who benefits from such policies. Seen in this way, deepening has been a problematic process throughout and continues to be so, generating inequalities and divisions within the EU. The new supra-national systems of regulation are themselves problematic and contradictory. Several points can be made in this connection.

First, from the moment of its creation, it is debatable whether the EU really was committed to market forces as the prime economic steering mechanism. Its major collective policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, was strongly interventionist, designed to insulate European farmers from the effects of global market forces. It dominated its expenditure. This reflected the power of the political lobby for agriculture and a political preference for rural under-employment rather than urban unemployment. While the proportion of the EU budget that the CAP absorbs has shrunk, it still
absorbs the largest share of EU expenditure. The CAP is symptomatic of the contradictions encompassed within one particular political-economic conception of Europe, and recognition of the political constraints on free market policies. As such, it sits very uneasily with the rhetoric of the superiority of market resource allocation.

A second point relates to the motives for creating the EU and its global competitive position. The formation of the EU can in part be seen as a conscious attempt to counter the threat of European markets being dominated by multi-national capital based in the USA. Such multinational capital was increasingly penetrating and dominating key sectors of the national economies of Western Europe from the 1950s. This, for example, was very much the position advanced by Servan Schreiber (1968). By the 1980s the EU was seen to be one of the three key macro-regions of the Triad within a globalizing economy, now in competition with Japan as well as the USA (for example, see Ohmae 1990; 1995). The EU could seek to respond to these challenges in two ways. Firstly, through the protection offered by the Common External Tariff and in other ways via tariff and trade policies. From the outset the EU was conceived as a customs zone and common market surrounded by a CET wall. The dominant ideology of free trade and liberal capitalism was to apply only within the CET wall. The CET and trade treaties would mediate trade relations between the EU and other parts of the world. As such, the intention was to create a territorially-bound space in which ‘free’ markets would be the prime resource allocation mechanism, but with a significant degree of closure and protection from competitors located outside this European space. Secondly, via creating a space in which capitalist processes of competition and market allocation of resources could flourish. This would facilitate the emergence of globally competitive Europe-based multinationals that could compete with those based in Japan and the USA. EU policies on R&D, mergers and acquisitions and competition were shaped to encourage the emergence of ‘Euro-Champions’, especially in key sectors of technologically sophisticated manufacturing. Moves towards the SEM encouraged a wave of cross-border acquisitions and mergers within Europe that were often the prelude to corporate restructuring, capacity closures and job losses (Hudson 1999). Mergers and acquisitions within the EU rose to record levels in 1999 and 2000 as European companies sought Pan-European alliances following the creation of the Euro-zone.

Encouraging and facilitating the emergence of globally-dominant oligopolies in these ways again sits uneasily with (neo)liberal claims about the virtues of competition and ‘free markets’ as superior mechanisms for resource allocation that champion the rights of consumers. It seems that Marxian claims about tendencies towards an ongoing centralization of capital (Mandel 1975) have continuing validity.

This relates to a third point. The deepening of the EU and wider changes in the global economy were the proximate (and inter-linked) causes of a profound rationalization of commodity production, with powerful shifts in social, technical and spatial divisions of labour. Such changes had significant implications for geographies of economic well-being, both within the EU and in Europe beyond the EU, as companies re-organized production processes via varying combinations of technological, organizational and spatial changes. Much of this change in manufacturing was seen as a necessary response to competition from new models of ‘lean’ production developed in Japan. This posed a threat both from imports to the EU and from the products of transplants within the EU as Japanese companies sought to penetrate the EU market in key sectors such as automobiles and micro-electronics (for example see Hudson 1995). There was also a significant and spatially uneven growth in service industries and occupations, leading some to claim a transition to a new sort of economy – post-industrial, post-Fordist, service-dominated (for a discussion of such claims and the evidence on which they are based, see Hudson 1999). Whereas the rhetoric of the SEM stressed the promise of an overall rise in aggregate economic welfare, this did not automatically equate to increasingly even development, with capital and labour flowing to equalize differences between sectors and areas. In practice, such sectoral and spatial uneven development became more pronounced.

Fourthly, the process of deepening economic integration has created and is creating major divisions within the EU at various spatial scales. At national level, there are continuing marked divergences in economic performance and wealth (for instance, see Dunford and Hudson 1996). There is an important and recently created division between those eleven states that have become
members of the common currency Euro-zone and those four that have not. The latter group comprise those countries that fail to meet the convergence criteria for entry and those that have met them but for national political reasons choose not to exercise their right to join. On the other hand, Greece is close to meeting the entry criteria while in practice the Danish krone is pegged to the Euro. The extent to which various applicant states meet these more stringent criteria for entry to the EU (relative to those that applied in the case of past expansions) will decisively influence where its boundaries will be drawn. The inclusion of some EU states within the Euro-zone and the exclusion of others from it, as well as the continuing significant differences in national economic performance within the former group, is contributing to the emergence of a two-speed (or multi-speed) EU, in part a consequence of processes of deepening and widening. Furthermore, it is recognized that ‘...some important causes of differences are likely to remain. They concern essentially disparities in various structural features, such as dissimilar potential growth rates and propagation mechanisms’ (European Commission 1999, xi).

Despite assertions that deepening economic integration would reduce socio-spatial inequalities and lead to generalized increases in economic welfare as a result of trickle down effects, in fact there is considerable evidence of widening inequalities within the EU (Glyn and Miliband 1994). The inequalities of incomes and wealth between rich and poor people grew (Hudson and Williams 1999). Deepening integration has also exacerbated existing sub-national territorial inequalities and helped create new ones. While regional inequalities (for example, in GRP per caput or unemployment rates) narrowed somewhat from 1960 to the mid-1970s, they have subsequently widened again (Dunford 1994). Although in the Sixth Periodic Report on the Regions the EU Commission (1999) asserts that regional inequalities are again narrowing, the evidence does not support such a strong claim. For example, unemployment rates in east Germany grew in 1999 while those over much of southern Italy and Spain remained in the range 25-30 per cent. Elsewhere, the persistence of regional inequalities within the Euro-zone as well as more generally within the EU is acknowledged (see, for example, European Commission 1999; Martin 2000). As companies made increasingly sophisticated use of spatial differentiation in pursuit of heightened profits, differences in economic health and prosperity between cities and regions within Europe widened and deepened. Creating more scope for market forces to shape flows of capital and labour has tended to reinforce territorial inequalities, not least because labour remains relatively immobile compared to capital. Seemingly paradoxically, processes of homogenization are enhancing the significance of differences between places in influencing the locations of economic activities and the quality of peoples’ lives within Europe.

A corollary of growing inequalities is that cohesion within the Union is undermined. The dominance of the CAP in EU expenditure priorities, coupled with resistance from national governments to cede competence to the EU in social welfare matters, precluded the development of extensive industrial (beyond the provisions of the ECSC) and welfare policies. While the Structural Funds have been increased, as the share of the EU budget that the CAP absorbs has declined (Bachtler and Michie 1993), they are simply insufficient to cope with the burgeoning inequalities that accompany deepening economic integration (Begg and Mayes 1993). Even so, the expansion of the Structural Funds can be interpreted as evidence of socio-political pressures for an EU in which issues of redistribution and social justice are placed higher on the policy agenda, challenging the claims of liberal capitalism as to the efficacy of market allocation. Nevertheless, this is an agenda that remains tightly circumscribed by the hegemony of capitalist priorities and the imperatives of global competition and the accumulation process. The policy responses to combat growing inequality have therefore been, at best, muted, both at national and EU-levels. This is partly legitimated by claims that widening inequalities are a transient phase. Processes of economic change and the resultant widening of social inequalities are assumed to be simply ‘shocks which temporarily threaten regional and social cohesion’ (Commission of the European Communities 1996, 51, emphasis added).

Empirically determining the extent to which increasing inequalities are a result of deepening rather than widening or of other EU policies is problematic, however. This indeterminacy has implications for the policy debate (see Hudson 1996). For example, while the CAP sought to protect farmers’ incomes it also contributed to the
widening of income differences within and between rural areas (for instance, see Podbielski 1981). Policies to encourage the emergence of globally-competitive ‘Euro-Champions’ often further exacerbated qualitative as well as quantitative regional inequalities by encouraging knowledge-intensive economic activities to locate in the core regions of the EU (for example, see Amin and Tomaney 1995). The expansion of the EU from six to twelve increased the ratio of Gross Regional Product per caput between its richest and poorest regions from 6:1 to 12:1 (Hudson and Lewis 1985). The unification of the former East and West Germanies greatly magnified the scale of regional inequalities in the EU. Further expansions eastwards will undoubtedly change the character and exacerbate the depth of inequalities (see Hudson and Williams 1999). Added to this, processes of integration following entry further sharpened the effects of these ‘one off’ effects of successive enlargements. The emergence of a two-speed or multi-speed EU will further heighten intra-EU socio-spatial inequalities. This in turn will put further strain on the EU’s budget and its capacity to address these problems in ways that will maintain its legitimacy. There are already signs, at least in terms of expenditure, of a weakening commitment to cohesion.

In summary, there have been powerful pressures to deepen and transform the character of the Union itself. However, this process of deepening coincided with the most problematic phase of widening, raising some hard questions. First of all, about where the boundaries of Europe are to be drawn. Secondly, about the extent to which growing inequalities are a product of one set of processes rather than the other. Thirdly, about the capacity of the EU adequately to deal with such problems of growing inequalities within its expanding boundaries. From the perspective of the European Commission, the processes of economic restructuring set in motion by further deepening and widening will lead to temporary expansion of socio-spatial inequalities but in due course these will return to socially and politically tolerable levels. They will not, however, disappear. Perhaps the critical point in this connection is that the project to create a unified economic space within the EU rests on the premise that capitalist social relationships both will and should be dominant within the emergent European Social Model. As such, the developmental model is based upon antagonistic class structural relationships between capital and labour. While these may be mediated and softened in various ways via different regulatory and welfare regimes, the structural inequality upon which such relationships are based is a defining feature of capitalist economies. As such, there are strict limits to the extent to which wealth and power can be evenly and equitably distributed, socially and spatially. As Lipietz (1996, 371) has put it, ‘[t]he social crisis of the EU stems from the dichotomy of social norms which are still “social democratic” on the one hand, and ultra-liberal institutions which condemn these norms on the other’. The Social Agreement in the Treaty on European Union provided a modest reinforcement of social democratic norms but this is far outweighed by the macro-economic implications of the convergence requirements of EMU. Equally, the chronically problematic character of state involvement – at EU and other spatial scales – in addressing problems of socio-spatial inequality hangs as a constant threat over the perceived legitimacy of such policy interventions and state institutions. Socio-spatial inequality and the political problems that it poses will not be abolished by discursive appeals to communitarian values and a political ‘Third Way’.

New patterns of governance and regulation: towards a European super-state?

The construction of a unified economic space has been paralleled by – indeed predicated upon – the creation of a degree of regulatory capacity at EU level. This can be seen as one expression of the emergence of an EU ‘super-state’ and moves towards the creation of a political Union. Having subsided from view in the 1950s support for such an idea re-surfaced again in the 1960s (for example, see Servan Schreiber 1969).

There has certainly been an upward drift of power from the member states. The regulatory competencies of the EU have increased and new areas of (weak) regional, social and welfare policies have been developed alongside the dominant CAP. This can be seen as evidence of ‘hollowing out’, one element in a more complex restructuring of national states (Jessop 1994; 1997). Much of the discussion about ‘hollowing out’ and regulatory restructuring has been developed in relation to the
EU experience (for example, see O’Neill 1997). Indeed, Servan Schreiber’s vision embodied a normative claim that European national states needed to be ‘hollowed out’ in order that the EU could emerge as a super-state, with national and local levels subordinate to it, and become a bulwark against USA political power and neo-imperialist ambitions. This was a vivid expression of a vision of the EU as a powerful political actor, formed by the mutual consent of sovereign national states in pursuit of their shared interests. Seen in this way, the ‘deepening’ of the EU can be seen as simply shifting state regulation ‘up’ a spatial scale, to a larger version of existing national states.

Whether it constitutes an emergent super-state is much more debatable, however. In part, this is because national Governments have ceded powers to the EU institutions without trusting them fully to use such powers. The 1987 Single European Act brought in increased majority voting on a range of issues, providing an important precedent for constraining national sovereignty. The post-Maastricht settlement involved a compromise between more supra-national powers (via monetary union and the European central bank) and loose co-operation between national governments on issues of defence and justice. The political changes of the 1980s and 1990s resulted in decision making processes in the EU assuming a complex hybrid form, a mixture of inter-governmentalism and co-operative federalism (Kirchner 1992). However, it can be argued that this hybrid form will come under increasing pressure as the Union expands and becomes still more heterogeneous and become increasingly unstable. In part, it is because of the smallness of the EU budget relative to the size of the EU economy and the paucity of its resources relative to the magnitude of the policy agenda that it seeks to address. Furthermore, politically, it is at best a flawed emergent ‘super-state’, weak and dogged by a deep democratic deficit, lacking the checks and balances that evolved (often via painful struggle) in the national states of western Europe. This, however, can be legitimated as a temporary, albeit undesirable, state of affairs since existing European national states are (allegedly) ‘hollowed out’ and ineffective in the face of globalising pressures.

The EU nonetheless remains clearly subordinate to the USA, which remains visibly dominant in the global geo-political and economic arena. While it is still possible (following Servan-Schreiber) to see the EU as a political project intended to counter USA political-economic domination, on this interpretation it remains a demonstrably incomplete project. Even so, given the erosion of national state capacities, the EU will in time inevitably evolve and mature to fill this vacuum in political space. There is, however, another view of the EU, which sees it as one element within a more complex multi-level and multi-dimensional system of governance in Europe (Snyder 1998). Such a governance system requires that appropriate mechanisms be established to ensure political accountability to the relevant constituencies at each territorial level. The concept of subsidiarity, and the debate around it, represents an attempt to ensure that in practice decisions should be taken at the territorial administrative level as close as possible to those affected by these decisions (Snyder 1994). Great emphasis is placed upon the democratising aspects of shifting power to the local/regional levels, of bringing political decision making nearer to those directly affected by its consequences. To a degree, however, this more complex governance system also necessarily involves a networked and ‘de-territorialized’ approach to governance as not all communities of interest in Europe are territorially defined and delimited. There is no good a priori reason as to why one type of community of interest is privileged over others within a truly democratic Europe. However, issues of democratic deficit again arise as a consequence of such a network model of governance. The implications of the anti-democratic aspects of moving political power from state to civil society and/or to democratically unaccountable supra-national organizations and of creating undemocratic and unaccountable decision making organizations are increasingly being acknowledged. This is especially so in terms of foreign policy and international relations, given the uneasy relationship between at least some EU member states and NATO, a networked organization that is increasingly democratically unaccountable in its new self-proclaimed role as global policeman (Ali 1999).

While the EU represents the most elaborated example of the emergence of a multi-level system of governance and regulation, there are strong continuities with the past—especially in relation to the continuing significance of national states. For ‘despite the best efforts of the private sector and of international institutions to downgrade them, states have more power than they often appear willing to recognize’ (George 1999, 9, emphasis added).
although not all states have the same amount of power. Some new forms of economic and financial globalization ('stateless monies', for example: see Martin 1994) do take matters beyond the effective control of many (but not all) national states. Indeed, leading capitalist states in collaboration with private sector TNCs, banks and financial institutions and organizations in the public sphere such as the IMF, WTO and the World Bank, positively encourage such developments. They actively seek to create global markets via persuading or coercing weaker national states and organizations that such markets are desirable. Thus such (pseudo) global markets – and the accompanying transfer of power from national states that they presume – are largely constructed and/or permitted by national state action and agreements between the USA and other powerful national states (notably the rest of the G7) and various international organizations.

The USA undoubtedly has a uniquely powerful role in pressing the interests of global capital. In the 1950s President Eisenhower expressed this relationship in terms of the military-industrial complex. Subsequently, the military-industrial complex has been joined by the 'Wall Street-Treasury Complex' (Bhaghwati 1998) as a mechanism through which the USA has taken the leading role in encouraging economic and financial globalization. That said, the extent of truly global markets for financial commodities is actually very limited, as time and space continue to pose barriers to processes of globalization, notwithstanding a significant increase in time-space compression (Harvey 1989). Furthermore, capitalist social formations continue to be strongly territorially grounded, allied to strong national and regional identities, generating significant sites of resistance to processes of globalization.

In summary, globalization is a highly uneven, partial and strongly contested process. The view that the significance of the national state is being eroded via 'hollowing out' is increasingly being challenged on various grounds (for example, see Boyer and Drache 1996; Weiss 1997). The 'hollowing out' thesis is strongly Euro-centric and at best relevant to a few national states (and even here the reading of changes in these in the 1980s and 1990s is sometimes seriously flawed. For example, it is hard to map the restructuring of the state in the UK in this period in terms of decentralization as it was a period of almost unprecedented centralization of state power in central government ministries: Hudson and Williams 1995). In many respects, even in the EU, national states retain considerable powers (Anderson 1995; Mann 1993) – and the national states of the EU are perhaps the paradigmatic case for 'hollowing out' theorists.

However, the main problem with this thesis is that it ignores the theoretical and practical lessons to be drawn from the historical geography of imperialism, from a history of combined and uneven development. At global level the USA remains the dominant capitalist power, 'the only remaining super-power' (Taylor and Flint 2000, 90), with little evidence of its powers being 'hollowed out' and a significant gap between it and its rivals for super-power status across a wide range of political and socio-economic indicators. In part this has come about because since the formation of the IMF, the USA has often used its policies as an extension of US foreign policy to reduce the autonomy of other national states in their economic policy formation. Other national states, notably those of the (enlarging) EU, are in a more ambiguous position. On the one hand they are 'voluntarily hollowing themselves out', giving up some of their state powers to emerging European institutions. On the other hand, in other respects they are vulnerable to 'involuntary hollowing out' as a consequence of the strategies of the USA and its supra-national allies. In this regard, the EU states occupy an intermediate position within a global state hierarchy. In sharp contrast, many other national states were undeniably cast in a dependent and marginalized mould from the outset, marked by their colonial histories which led into emaciated post-colonial state forms that lacked significant power, evident political and practical legacies of imperialism and expressions of the desires of dominant states to reproduce a global system based on asymmetrical relationships between national states. As such, they possessed very little to lose via being 'hollowed out'. Similar points can be made with regard to the territories of the former state socialism and their post-state socialist trajectories. For example, in the former Yugoslavia economic crisis was used by social groups there and in the West to undermine the collectivist core of the economy and push Yugoslavia '... towards a full capitalist restoration. The Yugoslav government accepted an IMF plan that shifted the burden of the crisis onto the Yugoslav working class' (Gowan 199, 85) – and in
so doing helped fan the flames of ethnic cleansing and nationalist ambition. In summary, in encouraging processes of globalization and seeking to make the discourses of globalization hegemonic, the USA in particular is actively involved in seeking to 'hollow out' other national states while reinforcing its own pre-eminent position in the capitalist world order. This strategy has usually been pursued in active collaboration with international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, which are strongly under its influence. What this involves is neither more nor less than the latest forms of inter-imperialist struggle between powerful national states, with significant implications for Europe.

Singular or multiple identities within a European civil society?

There is certainly a neat – and for some attractive – symmetry in the notion of the EU as the coincidence of a homogenized political-economic space, a unified regulatory space of an EU super-state, and a singular, truly European, civil society transcending existing national and regional differences in culture and identity. In some respects there has been progress towards such a European civil society. For example, the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights have had an important role in defining acceptable standards across Europe (for example, see Mayall and Miall 1994). However, even the proponents of the Idea of Europe as defined by a common Christian-Enlightenment heritage accept that this nurtures diversity of European national cultures even as it binds them together. Nevertheless, there are clear limits as to the forms and extent of legitimate diversity, as the EU’s response to the far-right Freedom Party joining the Austrian Government in 1999 illustrates. This suggested a political agenda and concept of acceptable norms in civil society that extended well beyond the realms of common economic and defence policies. This raises questions as to the acceptable extent of political and cultural diversity and variety of identities within the context of an integrated but unevenly developed economic space coupled with a complex multi-level system of governance.

The issue of European identity and the criteria used to denote ‘Europeans’ is clearly a critical one. For as Soledad Garcia has put it: ‘Europe will exist as an unquestionable political community only when European identity permeates people’s lives and daily existence’ (cited in Demos 1998). Not only is identity a key issue but it is also a shifting one. In recent years, for example, the Idea of Europe has ‘gradually softened . . . away from Christian values, Beethoven, and lofty Enlightenment ideals towards global solidarity, Balsamic vinegar and experience of the other’. What does seem clear, however, is that ‘. . . both the lofty and the banal vision generalize from partial and relatively fixed territorially defined cultural identities in Europe’ (Amin 2000, 6). At the same time, the member states of the EU have clearly become de facto multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. As a result, there are serious unanswered questions as to how cultural and ethnic variation and issues of (multiple) identities at national, regional and local scales are to be treated within the homogenized political-economic space of the EU beyond the fairly empty rhetoric of phrases such as a ‘Europe of the Regions’. Equally, serious questions remain about where the boundaries of this common space are to be drawn and what happens on and/or beyond these boundaries in a wider Europe and beyond. This process of boundary definition is closely tied to issues of ‘otherness’ and processes of ‘othering’ (Said 1978) and the criteria by which ‘Europeanness’ is to be judged, how ‘we’ are to be differentiated from ‘them’. As the EU expands, particularly eastwards into areas that border on or are part of Asia as commonly understood, these issues become more pressing.

One conception of a singular European identity would see it constructed through a process analogous to that involved in the creation of national identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Whereas in the past the aim was to create those national identities, the project now would be to transcend them. Whereas previously the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1982) was national, in the new imagination it is to be European (or perhaps more accurately EU) in its extent. There is no doubt that, for many people, there is now a much greater degree of awareness of the culture and lifestyle of other people elsewhere in Europe, a result of changes in consumption patterns, increased foreign travel on holidays, and the images projected via the mass media. Such shared activity and communication spaces do not necessarily translate into a shared European consciousness, however, especially as the media typically present European issues through national
or regional/local lenses. The EU’s policy initiatives in the field of education over the last two decades, such as the Joint Studies Programme, ERASMUS and SOCRATES, have sought to ‘Europeanize’ curricula and promote movement of staff and students between member states in an attempt to encourage the formation of such a common consciousness and shared identity. So too have various initiatives to promote a sense of European cultural identity beyond existing local and national affinities. There is no doubt that this is a view of European identity and ‘Europeanness’ that would sit comfortably with the preferences of many members of political elites within Europe. There are, however, no EU-wide, let alone European-wide, equivalents of the myths and stories that define the imagined communities that are the constituent subjects of national identities. Without them, as Smith (1995, 139) has put it, ‘who will feel European in the depths of their being, and who will willingly sacrifice themselves for so abstract an ideal? In short, who will die for Europe?’

On the other hand, there are evident pressures from national states and their citizens to resist any further erosion of national identity as well as sovereignty – not least those revealed in the division of the EU into an Euro-zone and a non-Euro-zone. Indeed, the electoral success of extreme right-wing political parties in countries such as Austria and France, for example, is suggestive of the resurgence of more insidious and xenophobic nationalisms and racisms (see White 1999). Furthermore it is clear that pressures from ‘suppressed nations’ to create their own national states, seeking an identity that meets the nationalist ideal of the coincidence of nation with territory, are far from a thing of the past in Europe. As events in the Caucasus and the Balkans in the 1990s have made painfully clear, such ambitions can often be violently pursued, prosecuted through the politics of ethnic cleansing. This raised difficult questions within Europe as to whether such areas were beyond the pale and as to which of their citizens could qualify as legitimate Europeans, as issues of ethnicity and religion became entangled in broader geo-political struggles.

At the same time, however, there are strong resistances to national states as localist and regionalist movements seek greater autonomy from central states, asserting their particular cultural and territorial identities over the national. Often this builds upon past histories of the national state seeking to suppress sub-national variation and culture as part of the process of seeking to build national identities. This was perhaps most powerfully expressed in Spain following the ending of the Francoist dictatorship, with the emergence of the ‘Spain of the Autonomies’ in the post-Franco period, especially in the Basque country and Catalonia (for example, see Schech 1988; Fernández Rodríguez 1985). Such tendencies were by no means confined to Spain, however, but were expressed much more widely over Western Europe (Anderson 1995). These regionalist and sub-state nationalist tendencies often emerged in a complex relationship to processes of globalization, Europeanization and the emergence of the EU. Often they were seen as a way of resisting global forces via forging alliances between the regional and supra-national EU levels, while bypassing the national state. Thus complex geographies of hybrid identities were forged, with allegiance to territories at different scales.

In addition, however, there was a growing recognition of the significance of non-territorially defined dimensions of individual identities, such as ethnicity, gender and religion, as class seemingly became less salient within Europe. Constructing identity around such dimensions allows the emergence of various communities of interest in discontinuous spaces within Europe and beyond (Robins and Aksoy 1995). Such communities are defined and organized more through network structures than within contiguous structures of bounded territories. This further complicates the processes of cultural hybridity in identity formation. Seen from this perspective, creating Europe becomes a project of integration based upon not only multiple senses of territorial identification but also the celebration of multiple and mixed identities of self. This is a vision of a hybrid Europe as an ongoing project in continuous cultural movement and re-invention rather than of one as defined by overlapping settled identities and fixed and known points of departure and destination. Viewed normatively, such a perspective opens the possibility of a ‘heterophilic Europe of multiple and mobile identities and a gradual erosion of the difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’ (Amin 2000, 10). This imagines Europe as a place in which mainstream and minorities move inexorably towards a cosmopolitan self, as cultural mixing – maybe ‘culture smashing’ – begins to challenge identification.
One Europe or many?

with an essentialized tradition or a homogeneous community. It offers the promise – and no doubt to some at least, the threat – of overlapping, weakening and fuzzy boundaries as people come to acknowledge multiple territorial ties and complex geographies of identity formation. As Adorno (1978, 103) puts it, reflecting on the horrors of the Holocaust and the Second World War, ‘an emancipated society ... would be the realization of universality in the reconciliation of difference’.

Admittedly, there is as yet little evidence of Europe becoming emancipated in this way. Indeed, such an imagination of a ‘borderless Europe’, a Europe without the old certainties of belonging and knowing one’s place, might as easily produce a fractured self and defensive, intolerant and even violent reactions to difference. The contemporary resurgence of ethno-communalism, racism, religious fundamentalism and regionalist and nationalist sentiment within a ‘heterophobic’ Europe in which people seek to re-discover ‘tradition’ suggests that this may well be the case. Multi-culturalism is often perceived threatening, both by dominant and dominated social groups, leading to a retreat into quite sophisticated imaginaries of difference, homeland and tradition to preserve ethnic and/or national identity (Morley and Robbins 1995). Such reactions involve closure and the recovery of spatial and cultural boundaries rather than cultural hybridity and plural identification. And as the bitter experiences of the Balkans and Caucasus only too clearly demonstrate, the politics of cultural difference can become entangled with fundamentalist demands for a Europe of blood-and-soil based strong nations, ethnically cleansed of immigrants and the foreign cultural influences of ‘the other’.

European imaginations versus the neo-imperialist ambitions of the USA

Who then is to decide the shape and form of a future Europe? It is clear that this question cannot be answered solely with respect to Europe and Europeans but must also take account of the role of the USA. The participation of western European states, including the members of the EEC, in organizations such as NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) helped underpin an uneasy peace between East and West for some forty years. Participation in NATO in particular and the widespread presence of USA military forces in western Europe also tied moves to political supra-nationalism within Europe in a complex way to the global ambitions of the USA, especially given the strongly Atlanticist tone of UK foreign policies. Equally, the development of the EU as a political actor and site of governance can be seen as an attempt to develop a counter-weight to the growing power of the neo-imperialist USA state in shaping the global geo-political agenda. The relationship between the EU, its constituent states and the USA has often been an uneasy one, not least because of the position of the EU and its constituent states as junior partners within NATO. In many ways these tensions came to a head in the 1980s and 1990s in the Balkans (for an analysis of the background to this, see Carter et al 1995).

Douglas Hurd, when UK Foreign Secretary, described the Cold War as ‘unfriendly but stable’ (Budd 1993, 6). Following the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact and the thaw in the Cold War, this stability was eroded. One consequence of this is that NATO in many ways became redundant, an anachronism. As such, it also posed particular problems for the USA state and military complex in terms of its global role. It became necessary to find new ‘regional’ wars in order to sustain the military-industrial complex and maintain the momentum of the ‘permanent arms economy’ (as Mandel 1975, characterized late capitalism), devalorize capital and open up new possibilities for accumulation. As such, in the post-Cold War era, the USA sought to construct new, decisive and related roles for itself and NATO in Europe. Gowan (1999, 96–7) identifies three possible political scenarios for Europe in the 1990s, two of which were ‘absolutely unacceptable’ to the USA. The first option was a pan-European collective security system, embracing all European states, Russia and the USA in a norm-based institutionalized framework – a much strengthened and streamlined Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). There would be clear rules that all should enforce. All would coerce any state that breached them. The second option involved a two-pillar structure involving the EU and WEU in Western Europe, Russia and the CIS in the east. NATO would fade into the background as the ultimate guarantor of its members’ security, while the WEU/EU, with Russian acquiescence, would expand into east central Europe. Neither of these options was acceptable to the USA, however,
for Europe lies at the heart of its military and economic interests. A corollary of this is that the military involvement of the USA in Europe was and is embedded in hard-nosed self-interest rather than altruism. The third option therefore involved NATO under the leadership of the USA taking command of European politics. Supra-national European institutions (the OSCE, the WEU and the EU) would be marginalized, subordinated to the USA via NATO which would expand eastwards but exclude Russia. Europe would be re-polarized between an USA-dominated Western Europe and a weakened Russia. At issue here was both a debate about European security and a political battle over the future geo-political contours of Europe.

During the early 1990s there was resistance to this third option from Russia and many western European states as the USA, allied to the UK, sought to translate it into reality. In this context, Yugoslavia became the central arena for realizing this third way of projecting NATO power and containing Russia by military intervention and widespread use of force, whatever the costs to people who lived there, culminating in the Kosovo operation as the latest expression of the new policy (Blackburn 1999; Gowan 1999; Hadjimichalis and Hudson 1999). In the process, NATO became ‘... essentially nothing more than an instrument to secure US hegemony in Europe...’ (Ali 1999). Put another way, ‘the USA keeps the peace on its own terms. While the war against Serbia was fought under NATO’s banner every significant military decision was taken in the Pentagon and every significant political one in the White House (see Chomsky 1999). Furthermore, NATO’s military involvement in the Balkans, its tragic human consequences, and the marginalization of Russia in the determination of Europe’s future helped create space for Russia’s equally brutal interventions in the Caucasus. Furthermore, it made it difficult for European states complicit in NATO’s incursions into the Balkans to criticize and effectively challenge atrocities inflicted by the Russian military in Chechnya. In these circumstances NATO and its constituent member states were in no position to condemn Russia as they already stood condemned for the same politics of violence. They had long since conceded the moral high ground.

Questions about the future of Europe, what it can become and what it might be allowed to become, thus take on added urgency in the face of the visible ambitions of the USA. The post-Kosovo discussions about the development of a limited EU military capacity have not abolished the fears raised by such questions. For the emergent architecture of a European defence force remains at best skeletal. It will require radical restructuring of national defence forces and industries – and considerably increased public expenditure – to put flesh on the skeleton. There is little sign of any of this happening. It will also require a generalized acceptance that it is right and proper that European military personnel should ‘die for Europe’. This too remains to be demonstrated. Even when – or perhaps more realistically, if – it does, it would still be decades before the EU could conduct serious military operations without the technologies of the USA and the intelligence available to NATO. As such, the questions about the future of Europe are not to be settled by Europeans alone. For the ‘brutal fact’ is that western Europe remains largely a USA protectorate, with its allied states reminiscent of ancient vassals and tributaries (Brezinski 1997). This graphically illustrates the inequalities of power between Europe and the USA. In an earlier era of asymmetric power geometries, Europeans once went out to civilize ‘savages’ in the colonies and mould them in their image. In the 1990s and into the new millennium, the USA state sought to generalize a particular conception of ‘human rights’ as universal and mould Europe in their image through the example of NATO intervention in the Balkans. Is this, however, the sort of Europe and conception of Europeanness that Europeans themselves want?

Conclusions

I have argued in this paper that the processes of defining Europe, specifying its boundaries and of becoming European are complex, contested and contradictory. Furthermore, the questions that they pose will not be settled by Europeans alone as the neo-imperialist ambitions of the USA state to achieve global dominance and the globalizing ambitions of transnational capital will both have a profound effect on the future anatomy of Europe. There seems little doubt that the future for most of Europe will be both capitalist and parliamentary democratic, although the precise forms of both remain to be determined. It is important to emphasize that while capitalist class relations dominate such societies, they also encompass a variety of other class and non-class relations. A
capitalist future is nonetheless one that will be characterized both by uneven development and inequality as an integral part of capitalist economies and by socio-political checks and balances via systems of governance and regulation to keep such inequalities within ‘acceptable limits’.

There are very different visions of how such a Europe might be constituted within such parameters, however. One model for the future would in many ways seek to mimic the USA as a neo-liberal economy and society. It would centre on a singular imagination of Europe, with economy, polity and civil society re-territorialized at the scale of the EU, and with a common and singular European identity and identifiable singular European interests. In this case, the democratic deficit within the EU might be removed via concentrating power at EU scale in a much stronger and sovereign directly elected European Parliament. On the global stage, Europe re-constituted on these lines might well sit alongside the neo-liberal military-industrial and Wall Street-Treasury complexes of the USA. The USA would remain dominant within NATO in its role as ‘global policeman’ even if the EU did develop some limited autonomous military capacity for deployment within Europe.

In contrast, an alternative future of Europe encompasses a complex mosaic of governance and regulatory processes at local/regional, national and supra-national scales but with direct and transparent democratic accountability at each level. In this case, a closer and more transparent matching of powers, responsibilities and accountabilities at each scale might narrow the democratic deficit. The issue of accountability would be further complicated, however, as this alternative would also embrace complex, multiple and fluid hybrid identities, involving both territorial and aterritorial dimensions. The latter might raise new issues of democratic deficit. Such a vision of internal diversity and variability would sit uneasily alongside a vision of Europe as a powerful global actor for this would be a Europe in which it would be difficult to pin down a singular and unified European interest. As such, it might well eschew seeking to play a global role that echoed the USA.

Given this, can the EU nonetheless play a politically progressive role and if so in what way? Almost forty years ago, Servan-Schreiber set out a case for the EU becoming a ‘super-state’ in the context of the real politik of the global political economy. A rather different case can be made out today, focusing on two related issues linked to recognition of and support for difference. First, the EU could seek to enable and support a range of alternative models of economy and lifestyle to those of mainstream capitalism. In particular, it could help underpin exploration of varied conceptions of a social economy within localities and regions (Amin et al. 1999). Secondly, it could seek to underpin a progressive cultural politics of difference with Europe (and beyond) and to defend currently unpopular modernist aspirations. In particular, it could promote a European conception of human rights and social justice that would apply to all residents of the EU. A first, tentative step was taken in this direction when the Treaty of Maastricht formalized the notion of European citizenship in 1992, albeit a limited conception of citizenship that was still tied to and so dependent upon holding national citizenship rights of a member state. But many residents of the EU are not citizens of these states. This generalization of rights within the EU, based on residence rather than national citizenship, would be seen to offer material benefits from European citizenship. This would be especially so if it sought to harmonize and level up, rather than down, economic, political and social rights available to all of those who live within its external boundaries. As such, multiculturalism and social inclusion within civil society could be underpinned by a new model of EU citizenship based upon post-national rights in the EU. A strong post-national EU state is thus a necessary pre-condition for and guarantor of diversity of culture, economy and lifestyle rather than an alternative to it. The EU could therefore change its policies and vision in innovative and progressive ways. It could promote socio-economic diversity and an imagination of Europe that celebrates and supports polyvocal societies and multiple participation within a Europe of complex geographies of identities, a Europe of people with shifting, hybrid and multiple identities which will include a progressive European dimension.

Acknowledgements

This is a revised version of the Chair of Conference’s paper presented to the Annual Conference of the RGS/IBG, University of Sussex, 5 January 2000. The title of the paper specifically reflects one of the three major conference themes. Ash Amin, Joe Painter and Helen Wallace kindly and helpfully
commented on the first draft of this paper; Ash Amin also made available to me a draft of a forthcoming book chapter that I have drawn upon, especially in the section on identities. I have also drawn upon a joint paper with Costis Hadjimichalis in the section on USA neo-imperialism, based on conversations in various parts of Greece in 1999, and gladly acknowledge his input to this paper as a result. In addition, Ron Martin and two anonymous referees made valuable comments on the original draft, to which I have sought to respond here. The usual disclaimers apply, however.

Notes

1 Austria and Finland were prevented from seeking EEC entry because of the terms of their political neutrality. EFTA created a special Associate Member status to allow Finland to join.

2 The Copenhagen Criteria were agreed in June 1993 at an EU Summit. In summary, they stipulate that applicants must have stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities as well as a functioning market economy that can withstand competitive pressures within the EU.

3 By 1999 the Czech Republic was seen by the EC to have slipped behind Hungary and Poland.

4 Whilst this is the reason stressed in official discourse, the fact that Turkey is a secular state with a largely Moslem population has undoubtedly also been of relevance, as has its continuing disputes with Greece over a range of issues.

5 It is also the case that many other countries have similarly protectionist agricultural policies, notably the USA.

6 While this became the dominant ideology, it only did so after a process of contestation and struggle. There were, for example, French worries about free trade and, more broadly, a range of views within the EEC of Six.

7 The criteria for entry into the Euro related to national inflation rates (no more than 1.5 per cent greater than the average of the three best performing countries), interest rates (average long-term rates no more than 2 per cent above the average of the best three), budget deficit (no more than 3 per cent of GDP) and public debt (no more than 60 per cent of GDP): see Artis and Lee 1994.

8 There are for example continuing differences in inflation rates, productivity levels and economic growth rates between Italy, Portugal and Spain on the one hand and France and Germany on the other that pose questions about the ability of the former to compete with the latter longer-term.

9 As a result, national states remained key actors in these spheres, albeit with the scope for involvement via such policies more constrained than in the past; see below.

10 For example, note that the Structural Fund budget was intended to increase to 35 per cent of EU spending by 1999.

11 For example, even with the increases in Structural Funds, they would contribute at most 8–9 per cent of regional income. In contrast, the net fiscal transfer from the Centre-North of Italy to the Mezzogiorno is around 22 per cent of regional income in the South.

12 There is another reading of Servan Schreiber’s book as an attempt to popularize Gaullist foreign policy and decouple France from the USA, especially via withdrawing from the military arm of NATO.

13 Recognizing that for the moment at least key issues such as welfare policy remain at the national level and that the EU’s competencies are in the spheres of regulation rather than direct service provision.

14 The EU’s budget only constitutes about 2 per cent of the combined GNP of constituent member states.

15 There is evidence of variable support for increasing the power of European level institutions in ways that could reduce these deficits. For example, a survey of citizens of seven EU countries revealed a majority supporting the creation of a common European government in four (Belgium, France, Italy and Spain) and a majority supporting direct election throughout Europe for a European President in five (the previous four plus Germany) Only in Denmark and the UK, especially the former, was there majority opposition to both these proposals. Clearly this survey was only a partial one of EU states but even so the variability of enthusiasm for moving to a more EU scale of governance and regulation is evident (Guardian 1 June 1999).

16 While there is no space to explore the point here, it is worth noting that the nature of a ‘democratic deficit’ cannot be divorced from the concept of ‘democracy’ that is called upon: see Painter 1999. In broad terms, however, there is a consensus that the democratic deficit in the EU has three dimensions: an institutional deficit; a transmission deficit; and a citizen deficit (see Barratt 2000, Chapter 2 for a full discussion).

17 As in many other spheres, however, policy intentions do not necessarily coincide with outcomes.

18 As the activities of organizations such as ETA in Spain and various para-military groupings in Northern Ireland make clear, the pursuit of nationalist political ends within Europe via direct action and violence is by no means confined to the Balkans and Caucasus.

19 Given the continuing references by political elites in the UK to the UK’s ‘special relationship’ with the USA, it is salutary to remember the comments of President Carter’s former national security advisor,
Zbigniew Brezinski about this relationship: 'its [the UK's] friendship needs to be nourished but its policies do not call for sustained attention' (cited in Stephens 1999).

20 Formalized in a proposal for a rapid reaction force of up to 60,000 troops at the December 1999 Helsinki summit of EU leaders that will lead the WEU to be absorbed into the EU. Whether this will be sufficient to reverse Smith's (1996) judgement that the EU and WEU fell short of constituting effective geo-political institutions independent of established military powers remains an open question.

21 Zbigniew Brezinski was President Carter's national security advisor and, as such, well qualified to comment on such issues.

22 President Clinton's comments in 1999 about the need to 'construct a better Europe for our children' can be seen as acknowledging the need to persuade USA citizens that there were good grounds for USA military intervention and justify the deaths of military personnel in the Balkans.

23 Clearly there is scope for considerable debate as to precisely which rights should be included but the point I want to focus upon here is the broader one of the principle of such rights.

References

Adorno T 1978 Minima moralia Verso, London (original German edition, 1951)

Albert M 1993 Capitalism against capitalism Whurr, London

Ali T 1999 Springtime for NATO New Left Review 234 62–75


— Cameron A and Hudson R 1999 Welfare as work? The potential of the UK social economy Environment and Planning A 31 2033–51


Artis MJ and Lee N eds 1994 The economics of monetary union: policy and analysis Oxford University Press, Oxford


Begg I and Mayes D 1993 Cohesion, convergence and Economic and Monetary Union within Europe Regional Studies 27 149–54

Bhagwati J 1998 The capital myth Foreign Affairs 77 May–June


Brezinski Z 1997 The grand chessboard Basic Books New York

Budd A 1993 The EC and foreign and security policy' European Dossier Series No 28 University of North London, London


— and Hudson R 1996 Successful European regions: Northern Ireland learning from others Northern Ireland Economic Council, Belfast


European Commission 1996 Reform processes and spatial development in central and eastern Europe EC, Brussels


Fernández Rodríguez F ed 1985 La España de las autonomías Instituto de Estudios Administracion Local, Ministerio de Administracion Territorial, Madrid


Gowan P 1999 The NATO powers and the Balkan tragedy New Left Review 234 83–105

Guardian 1999 1 June

Hadjimichalis C and Hudson R 1999 Reflecting on the Balkans: on the importance of remembering the lessons of imperialism and the continuing salience of the national state in the process of 'becoming European' Paper presented to the Paros Seminar of the Aegean, Towards a Radical Cultural Agenda for European Cities and Regions 30 August–5 September 1999