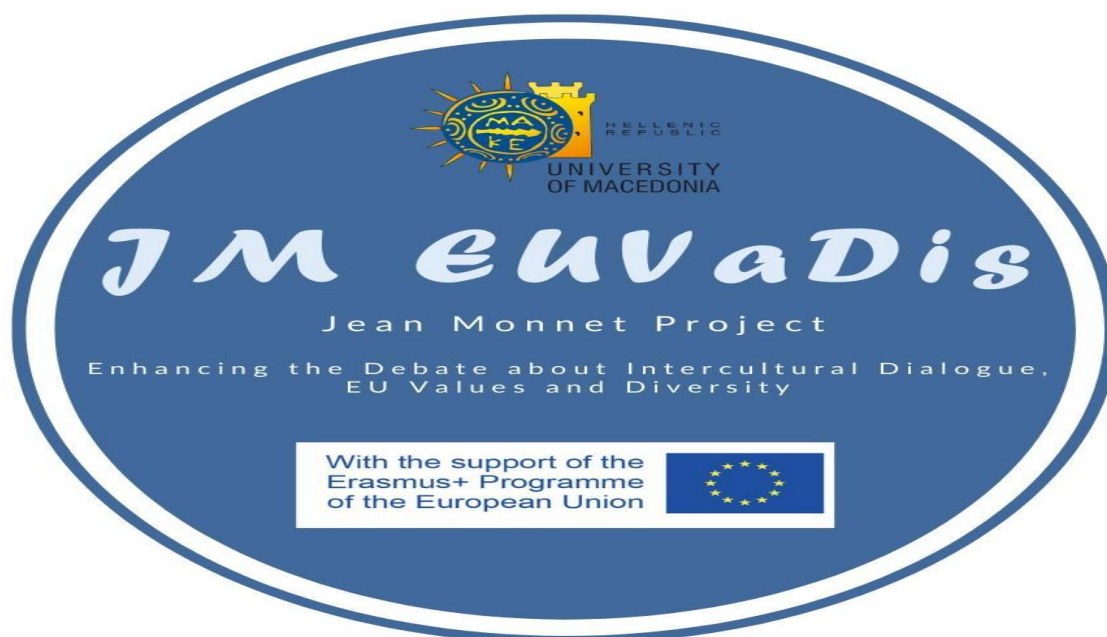


JEAN MONNET PROJECT EUVaDis
RESEARCH PAPER 2
European Identities, Inclusion, and Equality

“The trajectory to European Identity and the role of the European Union in shaping European identities through equality”



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UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA, THESSALONIKI, GREECE

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“European Identities, Inclusion, and Equality: The trajectory to European Identity and the role of the European Union in shaping European identities through equality”

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Summary

This research paper is authored as a part of the works of the “[Enhancing the Debate about Intercultural Dialogue, EU Values and Diversity- EU VaDis](#)” Jean Monnet project funded by ERASMUS+ programme on EU Values, Diversity, and Intercultural dialogue.

The paper researches on the historical and cultural background, as well as the initiatives that led to the formation of the European Union and how these have impacted the notion of the “European identity”. In addition, it examines the extent to which European societies have achieved social, economic, and other forms of equality and inclusion within the European edifice and the values governing it. It provides a brief overview of the European history and culture, including the diverse range of identities and experiences that have shaped the continent and consequently, the formation of the European Union over time.

It explores the role of the European Union in shaping European identities, including the challenges and opportunities presented by the EU integration by analysing debates over the EU's role in promoting cultural exchange, economic integration, and political cooperation among Member- States.

European history in a nutshell

Europe is a vast and diverse continent with a rich and complex history that spans thousands of years¹. From ancient civilizations to modern-day superpowers, the continent has been shaped by a diverse range of cultures, languages, religions, and experiences. It is this diversity that has ultimately led to the formation of the [European Union](#), a political and economic union of 27 Member- States² that was established with the aim of promoting peace, stability, and prosperity across the continent³.

The earliest known civilization on the European continent was the Minoan civilization on the island of Crete, which flourished from around 3000 BCE to 1400 BCE⁴. This was followed by the ancient Greeks, who established city-states such as Athens and Sparta and made significant contributions to philosophy, art, literature, and science⁵. The Romans, who conquered much of Europe in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, left a lasting legacy in the form of their language, law, architecture, and engineering⁶. However, their empire⁷ eventually collapsed, leading to the emergence of a patchwork of kingdoms and empires across Europe⁸. The Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, continued to

¹ Indicative bibliography covering the European continent's history: Davies Norman, "Europe: A History", Oxford University Press 2015; Heather Peter, "Empires and Barbarians: Migration, Development, and the Birth of Europe", Pan Macmillan, 2010.

² In 1951, six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) founded the European Coal and Steel Community. The six members became nine in 1973 when Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined the European Communities that were formed after the 1958 Treaties of Rome. Greece became the 10th Member-State in 1981, followed by the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986. The 1958's European Economic Communities transforms into the European Union after the Maastricht Treaty (1993) and in 1995 gains three more members: Austria, Finland, and Sweden. The greater expansion of the EU took place in 2004, when 10 new countries joined; Cyprus, Malta, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, followed by Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. Croatia became in 2013 the 28th country to join the EU which, a few years later, would become a Union of 27 Member-States, following the decision of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to leave the organisation. Find out more about the history of the European Union [here](#).

³ Figes Orlando, "The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture", Penguin Books, 2019.

⁴ Branigan Keith, "The Foundations of Palatial Crete", Routledge, 1999, Branigan Keith, "The Minoans" in Morris Ian; Scheidel Walter (eds.), The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Cline Eric H., "The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean", Oxford University Press, 2014,

⁵ Indicative bibliography: Freeman Charles, "The Greek Achievement: The Foundation of the Western World", Penguin Books, 1999; Osborne Robin, "Greece in the Making, 1200-479 BC", Routledge, 2009; Cartledge Paul, "The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others", Oxford University Press, 2017.

⁶ Christopher Kelly, "The Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction", Oxford University Press, 2006; Alessandro Barchiesi, Walter Scheidel, "The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies", Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁷ The Roman Empire dominated Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East for centuries, beginning with its foundation in 27 BCE.

⁸ Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The Fall of Rome: And the End of Civilization", Oxford University Press, 2005.

thrive until its fall in 1453 CE. The Byzantine Empire was known for its artistic achievements, particularly in the areas of mosaics and religious iconography. It was also a major center of learning, with scholars preserving and translating the works of ancient Greece and Rome⁹. Following the collapse of the Roman and Byzantine empires, Europe entered a period known as the Middle Ages, which lasted from the 5th to the 15th century. Their collapse also led to the emergence of new cultural forms and innovations that continue to shape the continent to this day.

During Medieval times, much of Europe was dominated by the Catholic Church¹⁰, which wielded significant political and cultural influence in the continent, as well as overseas¹¹. However, this period was also marked by numerous conflicts, including the Crusades, which saw European armies attempt to retake the "Holy Land"¹². Despite the upheaval and instability of this period, Europe continued to produce important cultural achievements. Gothic architecture¹³, which originated in France in the 12th century, spread throughout Europe and became a dominant style in the construction of cathedrals and other important buildings. *Beowulf*¹⁴ and *The Song of Roland*¹⁵, as well as Arthurian romances¹⁶ and the poetry of Dante Alighieri¹⁷ and Geoffrey Chaucer are some examples of poetry emerged during the turbulence of Middle Ages and literature saw some important works such as Dante's "Divine Comedy" and Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"¹⁸. Medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham made significant contributions to the development of Western philosophy, grappling with questions about the nature of God,

⁹ Mango Cyril, "Byzantium: The Empire of the New Rome", Scribner, 2002; Laiou Angeliki E. (ed.), "The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century" Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002;

¹⁰ Michael Mullett, "The Catholic Church and the Making of the West, 1200-1700", Routledge, 2003.

¹¹ William Chester Jordan, "Europe in the High Middle Ages", Penguin Books, 2001; Jacques Le Goff, "The Birth of Europe: 400-1500", Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

¹² Tyerman Christopher, "The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction", Oxford University Press, 2005; Asbridge Thomas, "The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land", Ecco Press, 2010.

¹³ Gothic architecture is characterized by its pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttresses, emerged in the 12th century and became prevalent throughout Europe in the following centuries. Gothic cathedrals, such as Notre-Dame de Paris and Westminster Abbey, remain some of the most impressive examples of medieval architecture.

¹⁴ Heaney Seamus, "Beowulf: A Verse Translation by Heaney", W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

¹⁵ Burgess Glyn S., Busby Keith, "The Song of Roland translated by Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby, Oxford University Press, 2016.

¹⁶ Tichelaar Tyler R., "King Arthur's Children: A Study in Fiction and Tradition by Tyler R.Tichelaar", Modern History Press, 2011.

¹⁷ Alighieri Dante, "The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri", translated by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, Random House, 2003.

¹⁸ Chaucer Geoffrey, "The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer", translated by Nevill Coghill, Penguin Classics, 2003.

morality, and the relationship between faith and reason, with their works still being celebrated today¹⁹.

The 14th century marks the beginning of the Renaissance, which initiated in Italy and spread throughout Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries²⁰. This period is characterized by renewed interest in the arts, literature, humanism, science, and the ideas of ancient Greece and Rome. This movement, which is often seen as a bridge between the Middle Ages and the modern era, had a profound impact on European culture, leading to innovations in art, science, and philosophy. One of the most significant ways²¹ in which the Renaissance influenced European culture²² was through its emphasis on humanism. Humanism was a philosophical and cultural movement that focused on human potential and achievements, as opposed to religious dogma or the afterlife²³. This led to a renewed interest in classical Greek and Roman texts, which were seen as embodying the ideal of humanistic values²⁴. The legacy of the Renaissance period can still be felt today in fields ranging from literature and art to science and philosophy, but also in the values upon which the European Union was based²⁵.

¹⁹ Kretzmann Norman, Kenny Anthony, and Pinborg Jan (eds), "The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600" Cambridge University Press, 1982.

²⁰ Burckhardt Jacob, "The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy", Penguin Classics, 1990.

²¹ The Renaissance also had a significant impact on art and architecture, with artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael creating some of the most famous works of art in history. Renaissance artists were inspired by classical forms and techniques, but they also introduced new ideas and innovations, such as the use of perspective and the creation of lifelike human figures. In addition to art and philosophy, the Renaissance also had a significant impact on science and technology. Renaissance thinkers were interested in understanding the natural world through empirical observation and experimentation, which led to significant advances in fields such as astronomy, physics, and medicine.

²² Martines Lauro, "Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy", Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

²³ Black Robert, "Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century", Cambridge University Press, 2001.

²⁴ Some examples of the Renaissance works that emerged based on the renewed interest in classical Greek and Roman texts and were seen as embodying the ideal of humanistic values are Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man (c. 1490, this iconic drawing depicts a male figure with arms and legs outstretched, standing within a circle and a square, it is based on the work of the Roman architect Vitruvius, and embodies the Renaissance ideal of the harmonious proportions of the human body), William Shakespeare's Hamlet (c. 1599-1601, a play that explores the human condition and the complexity of the human psyche, reflecting the humanistic values of self-reflection, introspection, and individualism), Niccolò Machiavelli's The Prince (1532, a treatise on political philosophy, based on the author's observation of the political machinations of Italian city-states during the Renaissance, it embodies the humanistic ideal of the rational, autonomous individual who can shape his own destiny), and Galileo Galilei's Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems (1632, a work that challenged the geocentric model of the universe and argued for a heliocentric model, based on empirical observation and experimentation, reflecting the humanistic values of rational inquiry, empirical observation, and the pursuit of knowledge).

²⁵ Wight Martin, "The Renaissance and the European Union", The Review of Politics, 2001; Canfora Luciano, "The Renaissance Legacy: Humanism and the Future of Europe", The European Legacy, 2004; Zielonka Jan, "The Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and European Integration", Journal of Common Market Studies, 2004.

The 16th century was a period of great cultural and intellectual ferment in Europe, marked by the spread of humanism, the Reformation, and the rise of nation-states. The Renaissance continued to influence art in the 16th century, as artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael produced some of their greatest works during this time. The emergence of the Baroque style also began to take shape in the late 16th century. The continent's culture was certainly impacted by the Protestant Reformation, which saw a split in the Catholic Church and the emergence of numerous Protestant denominations²⁶. The Reformation led to the establishment of Protestant churches throughout Europe and the decline of the Catholic Church's political and cultural influence. It also contributed to the growth of individualism, as Protestants emphasized the importance of personal faith and individual interpretation of scripture. The Reformation had a significant impact on European history, leading to religious wars, political conflicts, and changes in social structures²⁷. This period was also marked by significant exploration and colonization, with European powers such as Spain, Portugal, and England occupying lands and establishing vast empires across the globe. The acquisition of new territories led to the introduction of new products, ideas, and cultures into Europe, leading to a period of cultural exchange and hybridization²⁸. For example, the introduction of coffee, tea, and chocolate from the Americas and Asia led to the establishment of coffeehouses and teahouses, which became important social and intellectual centers in European cities²⁹.

The influx of new ideas from different parts of the world also contributed to the development of new intellectual and artistic movements, such as the Enlightenment in the 18th century, which emphasized reason, science, and individual liberty and challenged traditional authority and the prevailing religious and political dogma of the time³⁰. Key figures of the Enlightenment included thinkers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire, who championed ideas such as natural rights, social contract

²⁶ The Protestant Reformation was a religious movement that began in the early 16th century and resulted in a schism within the Catholic Church. It was sparked by the criticisms of religious leaders such as Martin Luther, who protested against the practices of the Church, such as the sale of indulgences, and called for a return to what he saw as the pure teachings of the Bible. Other Protestant leaders, such as John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli, also emerged in this period. Read more about this period at MacCulloch Diarmaid, "The Reformation: A History", Penguin Books, 2004; Dixon C. Scott, "Contesting the Reformation", Blackwell Publishing, 2012; Bradshaw Brendan, "The Reformation", The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750, ed. by Hamish Scott, 530-548, Oxford University Press, 2015.

²⁷ Bradshaw Brendan, "The Reformation", The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750, ed. by Hamish Scott, 530-548, Oxford University Press, 2015.

²⁸ Mitchell Timothy, "The Culture of Empire: Colonial Exhibitions and the Making of Victorian Britain", 1-12, University of California Press, 2001; McCormick John, "Europe in the World: The Persistence of Power Politics", 27-34, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

²⁹ Moreno Beatriz González, Gómez-Galisteo Mari Carmen, "Cultural Encounters in the New World: Literature, Art and Transculturation in Early America", Routledge, 2019.

³⁰ Robertson John, "The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction", Oxford University Press, 2015.

theory, and the separation of powers and with their works helped shape the cultural landscape of the era. This period was also marked by significant political upheaval, including the American Revolution³¹ and the French Revolution³², which saw the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic in France³³.

Significant industrialization and the rise of nationalism, with many European states seeking to establish their own identity and assert their own sovereignty, and the Napoleonic Wars were some of the events that labeled the 19th century. This period saw numerous conflicts with the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815)³⁴ being the most influential on European history and politics, as they involved much of Europe and witnessed the rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte, who sought to extend France's influence and power all over the European continent³⁵. His defeat led to the reshaping of the European politics scene and borders in 1815, at the Congress of Vienna³⁶. The development of new technologies and manufacturing operations led to the economic and societal transformation of this period, as the industrialization, hand-in-hand with the technological developments, changed the way

³¹ The political upheaval in the 18th century led to the formation of the United States of America. The American Revolution and the Enlightenment in Europe of the 18th century were closely linked movements that shared many philosophical and ideological similarities. The American colonists were deeply influenced by Enlightenment thought, and many of the key figures of the American Revolution, such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, were themselves Enlightenment thinkers.

³² Israel Jonathan, "A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy", Princeton University Press, 2010.

³³ Doyle William, "The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction", Oxford University Press, 2001.

³⁴ Esdaile Charles J., "Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815", Penguin Books, 2008.

³⁵ Fremont-Barnes Gregory, "The Napoleonic Wars: The Empires Fight Back 1808-1812", Osprey Publishing, 2004.

³⁶ From September 1814 to June 1815, a conference called "The Congress of Vienna" was convened in Vienna in order to redraw the political map of Europe after the downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte, who had conquered much of the continent during the Napoleonic Wars. The Congress aimed to restore a balance of power among the European states and to establish a stable international order that would prevent another major war from breaking out. During its works, representatives from more than 200 European nation-states and principalities gathered to negotiate a series of treaties and agreements that would shape the future of Europe. The key players at the conference were the major European powers of the time, including Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. The Congress was chaired by the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich, who was known for his conservative and anti-revolutionary views. The Congress created a new political order in Europe, which was based on the principle of legitimacy, meaning that legitimate monarchs and dynasties would be restored to the thrones they had lost during the Napoleonic Wars. This meant that many of the smaller states that had emerged during the revolutionary period were dissolved and incorporated into larger territories. The Congress also established a series of international organizations, including the Concert of Europe, which aimed to maintain the balance of power and prevent future wars. Read more about the Congress of Vienna at Schroeder Paul W., "The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics After Napoleon", Harvard University Press, 1996; Kissinger Henry, "A world restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace, 1812-1822", Echo Point Books, 2013; Jarett Mark, "The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon", I. B. Tauris, 2016.

people lived and worked³⁷. It also had impacts on the growth of new nation-states- that contributed to the growth of nationalism³⁸ as people began to identify themselves more strongly with a reference to their country, religion or culture.

The 20th century was marked by two devastating world wars, which had a profound impact on European society and identity. The World War I led to the collapse of several European empires, including the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires, and the rise of new nation-states³⁹. The World War II, which ended in 1945, was a defining moment in European history⁴⁰. It resulted in the deaths of millions of people and the displacement of millions more, saw the devastation of much of Europe and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers⁴¹. In the aftermath of WWII, European leaders sought to establish a new political and economic order that would promote peace, stability, and prosperity across the continent⁴². This led to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community⁴³ with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1951, which aimed to integrate the economies of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. to ensure economic cooperation between six European countries: Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands⁴⁴. The idea was to integrate the coal and steel industries of these countries in order to promote economic growth and prevent future conflicts between them. The establishment of the European Economic Community and the European Community of Atomic Energy followed in 1957 to create a common market among Member- States⁴⁵.

³⁷ Polanyi Karl, "The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time", Beacon Press, 2001; Landes David, "The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the present", Cambridge University Press, 2003;

³⁸ Gellner Ernest, "Nations and Nationalism", Cornell University Press, 2009

³⁹ Strachan (2001) argues that World War I had a profound impact on European society and identity, leading to the collapse of several European empires and Mazower (2000) supports that the Balkan region played a significant role in the lead-up to World War I and its aftermath. Read more about this era at Mazower Mark, "The Balkans: A Short History", Modern Library, 2002; Strachan Hew, "The First World War: to arms", Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁴⁰ Davies Norman, "Europe: A History", HarperCollins, 1996; Mark Mazower, "Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century", Vintage, 2000.

⁴¹ Europe was divided into two spheres of influence, with the United States and Western European countries forming NATO and the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries forming the Warsaw Pact. This division lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

⁴² Antony Beevor, "The Second World War", Little, Brown and Company, 2012.

⁴³ Following the completion of its original mission to promote economic cooperation among European countries, the ECSC was dissolved in 2002. Find out more about the history of the European Union [here](#).

⁴⁴ Pinder John, Usherwood Simon, "The European Union: A Very Short Introduction" Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁴⁵ Pinder John, Usherwood Simon, "The European Union: A Very Short Introduction" Oxford University Press, 2013.

In the decades following the second world war, Europe experienced rapid economic growth and social change. The 1960s and 1970s were a period of social, cultural, and political upheaval in Europe and were marked by social and political movements for civil rights, students' rights, women's rights, and gay rights⁴⁶, as well as increased migration from former colonies and other parts of the world, while the continent saw the decolonization of many European powers and the emergence of new independent states. The 1970s saw the expansion of the EEC with the accession of the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Ireland and were also marked by a period of economic stagnation and political instability, particularly in Southern Europe.

The youth culture played a significant role in the period, with new forms of music, fashion, and lifestyles emerging. One of the most important youth-led movement of this period was the one that took place in May 1968, in Paris. The protests began as a student movement against the government's education policies, but quickly evolved into a broader movement against capitalism, consumerism, and traditional values, joined by other citizens, intellectuals, and workers. The events of May 1968 had a significant impact on French society and culture, with many people seeing it as a turning point in French history^{47 48}. May 1968 also had a broader impact on European culture and politics as the protests inspired similar movements in other countries and helped to create a sense of shared purpose among young people across Europe. The ideas and values that emerged from the protests, such as feminism, environmentalism, and anti-authoritarianism, would continue to shape European culture and politics for decades to come⁴⁹. In terms of the European Union, the events of May 1968 can be seen as part of a broader movement towards greater social and political integration⁵⁰. The protests helped to create a sense of European identity among young people, and led to calls for greater cooperation and unity among European countries. This sense of shared purpose would eventually lead to the creation of the European Union, and the ongoing project of European integration.

The decade to follow found Europe in a period of significant social, cultural, and political changes. One of the most notable events of the decade was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new era in European

⁴⁶ The period saw major protests and social movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, Anti-Vietnam War Movement, Women's Liberation Movement, and the emergence of the counterculture movement.

⁴⁷ Gordon Daniel A., "May 1968 and French Intellectual Culture," *Journal of Contemporary History* 44, no. 2, 2009: pp 261-277.

⁴⁸ The protests led to changes in French politics, including the resignation of President Charles de Gaulle and the introduction of reforms in education and the workplace.

⁴⁹ Schalk David L., "The May 1968 Events in France: A Social Movement Analysis," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 2, Apr., 1980: pp 325-355.

⁵⁰ Ross Kristin, "May '68 and Its Afterlives," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 2, Winter 2013: pp 294-319.

history⁵¹. This event had a significant impact on the shaping of a European identity, as the continent became more united and integrated in the aftermath of the Cold War. The decade was also marked by increased globalization and economic liberalization, with the growth of multinational corporations and the expansion of trade between countries. The 1980s also saw important strides made in terms of equality and inclusion. The feminist movement gained momentum across Europe, and many countries began to introduce laws aimed at promoting gender equality⁵² in the workplace and in society more broadly⁵³. In addition, there was a growing awareness of social issues, such as environmentalism⁵⁴ and LGBTQI+ rights⁵⁵, which led to significant social and political changes.

The 1980s, in addition, saw the early days of the notion of the European identity⁵⁶, which this paper discusses. The EU – European Communities at the time- aimed to promote economic cooperation and integration among its Member- States, while also advancing the values of democracy, human rights, and social justice. The expansion of the Union during the '80s brought in new Member- States from Southern and Eastern Europe, helping to build a more diverse and inclusive European community. However, the decade has also witnessed social and economic inequality, with the rise of neoliberal policies and the decline of the welfare state leading to growing disparities between rich and poor⁵⁷ and the uprise of nationalistic and racist movements⁵⁸. This led to social unrest, protests, and strikes across Europe, particularly in response to austerity measures and labor market reforms.

The 1990's saw significant progress made in terms of equality and inclusion. The formation of the European Union in the 1990s was a significant milestone in the European history, as it represented a new era of cooperation and integration among European nations. The EU was founded on the principles of peace, democracy, and human rights, and aimed to create a common market and promote economic and political stability. The adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 established the legal framework for the European Union and set out the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. The Treaty also included provisions aimed at promoting gender equality and combating discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

⁵¹ Read more at Judt Tony, "Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945", Penguin, 2005.

⁵² Heather Macrae, Gabriele Abels, "The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics", Routledge, 2021.

⁵³ Offen Karen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach", *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14(1), 1988: pp. 119-157.

⁵⁴ Pellow, David. N., Brehm Hollie N., "Environmental sociology: From analysis to action", Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

⁵⁵ Schlagdenhauffen Régis (ed), "Queer in Europe during the Second World War", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 25(3), 2016: pp 468-487.

⁵⁶ Duyvendak Jan W., "European identities and the revival of nationalism", *Social Compass*, 42(1), 1995: pp 19-34.

⁵⁷ Kaldor Mary, "New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era", Stanford University Press, 1999.

⁵⁸ Fekete Liz, "Europe's Fault Lines: Racism and the Rise of the Right", Verso Books, 2005.

The creation of the European Union brought about a new sense of European identity, as citizens of its Member- States began to see themselves as part of a larger, unified community⁵⁹. This came in light of the concept of European citizenship that was first introduced by the Maastricht Treaty. The innovative and newly conceptualized and established notion provides citizens of EU Member- States with a number of rights and privileges, including the right to move and reside freely within the EU, the right to vote and stand in local and European Parliament elections in their country of residence, and the right to receive consular protection from other EU Member- States when outside the EU. It also includes social and economic rights, such as access to social security and healthcare, and the right to work in any EU Member- State.

This decade was also a time of cultural change, with the rise of new forms of music, art, and popular culture. The growth of the internet and digital technologies transformed the way Europeans communicated and consumed media⁶⁰, leading to the emergence of new forms of social and cultural expression, and supplementarily had a significant contribution in shaping the grounds for a common European identity⁶¹.

The most recent decades of 2000s and 2010s saw events that semantically impacted the European Union and the notion of the European identity. The two decades saw significant strides in terms of equality and inclusion. The legal recognition of same-sex marriage and LGBTQI+ rights, in general, became more widespread across Europe. Additionally, there was a growing recognition of the need to address the issue of discrimination and inequality faced by minority groups, such as immigrants, Roma people, and people with disabilities. The arts, fashion, and design industries continued to thrive from the previous decade, with many European cities emerging as centers of creativity and innovation. But then, the economic crisis of 2008 came and had a significant impact on Europe, leading to high levels of unemployment and social unrest in many parts of the continent. This crisis also sparked a renewed interest in social and economic justice, with many Europeans calling for a more equitable and sustainable economic system. The rise of nationalism and far-right politics in Europe also became more visible during this period. Several countries, including Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Italy, witnessed a significant shift towards nationalist and anti-immigrant politics and far-right political parties, leading to concerns about the future of European unity and cooperation.

⁵⁹ Fabienne Bossuyt, "Cultural Identity and European Integration: A Critical Hermeneutic Study of Identity Recognition Processes in the European Union", Peeters Publishers, 1998.

⁶⁰ Jose van Dijck, "The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media", Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁶¹ Jones Erik, Menon Anand, Weatherill Stephen, "The Emergence of a European Identity", Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

One of the most notable events of the decade was the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, which saw ten new Member- States joining the union, including several countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This expansion had important implications for the cultural and political identity of Europe, as it challenged the traditional boundaries of the EU and highlighted the importance of diversity within the Union. Over time, the European Union expanded its membership and remit, evolving into a political union that aimed to promote a shared identity and values based on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law⁶². The Union has now grown to include 27 Member- States and has become a major player in global politics and economics. These changes laid the foundation for the modern European Union, which continues to play a central role in European politics and economics today.

While national identities continue to be important, the EU has managed to create a new layer of identity that transcends national borders. European citizens are now able to move freely within the EU, and can work, study, and live in other member states. This has led to increased cultural exchange and a sense of shared identity among Europeans. One can tell by reading the above that the history of the European continent, and more specifically, the formation of the EU has had a significant impact on shaping a common European identity (or identities).

In conclusion, the European history and culture, especially of the 20th and 21st centuries, have been marked by significant social and political change, as well as the formation of the EU, which has created new opportunities and challenges for cultural identities in Europe. However, the formation of the EU comes with antilogies as concerns have been raised about the loss of national identity and sovereignty. As we will discuss in the next chapters, some argue that the EU is eroding national identities and traditions, while others argue that the EU is promoting a new, more inclusive European identity.

The role of the European Union in shaping European identities

The European Union (EU) has played a significant role in shaping European identities since its establishment. Although the key driver of the European integration has been the desire to promote peace and stability across the continent through economic cooperation, the Union has also taken steps to promote a sense of shared European identity among its citizens. This has been achieved through the creation of a common market, the establishment of common policies and regulations, and the development of a shared sense

⁶² Figes Orlando, "The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture", Penguin Books, 2019.

of identity and purpose⁶³, but also done through a range of measures, initiatives, and legislation aimed at fostering both a common European identity and the recognition of existing national, regional, and minority identities.

One of the earliest initiatives taken to promote a sense of European identity in the European continent was the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. This was the first step towards a united Europe and aimed to integrate the economies of six European countries in order to promote economic growth and prevent future conflicts between them. The ECSC was followed by the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Community of Atomic Energy (Euratom) in 1957 (Treaties of Rome), which aimed to create a common market among Member- States and promote economic cooperation.

Following the establishment of the European Communities, in 1973, the Heads of State at the Copenhagen Summit adopted a relevant to the European identity declaration that emphasized on the “common heritage, interests, and special obligations” as essential for Member- States’ foreign policy. While there was not clear substantiality to the- then- used term of “European identity”, the notion was further explored within the framework of the so-called “Adonnino Report”, a text that was suggesting a comprehensive list of measures and projects (such as student exchange programs, the predecessors of the Erasmus program in order to foster a common identity between the citizens of the Member- States. It was after the Adonnino Report that the European flag and anthem were composed and the pilot student exchange programs were established. paved the way for the most prominent identity-constructing approaches of the following decades like Erasmus.

But the most significant step towards the development of a shared European identity was taken with the Treaty of Maastricht that was signed in 1992. The Treaty established the European Union and introduced the concept of the European citizenship. Although a newly introduced notion, the European citizenship coined additional to the existing national rights as the European citizens were granted a range of freedoms, including the right to move and reside freely within the EU, the right to vote and stand in local and European Parliament elections in their country of residence, and the right to diplomatic protection from any EU member state when outside the EU⁶⁴. Yet, according to Eriksen and Fossum (2002), the "*EU citizenship provides an opportunity for the development of a supranational political identity,*

⁶³ Figes Orlando, “The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture”, Penguin Books, 2019.

⁶⁴ Find out more about the European citizenship at the [European Commission’s website](#).

*but this opportunity is limited by the fact that EU citizenship is still secondary to national citizenship*⁶⁵.

Another significant initiative taken by the EU to promote a shared European identity is the Erasmus program. This program, established in 1987, provides students with the opportunity to study or undertake an internship in another EU country. The Erasmus program aimed to promote cross-cultural understanding and cooperation by giving students the opportunity to experience different cultures and learn new languages. The program has been very successful, with millions of students participating since its inception.

The EU has also taken steps to recognize and promote the diverse range of identities that exist within Europe. One way was through the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which was adopted in 1992. The Charter recognizes the importance of regional and minority languages and aims to protect and promote them within the EU while it requires from the Member- States to take measures to protect and promote regional and minority languages, including education, media, and public services.

In addition to promoting linguistic diversity, the EU has also taken steps to promote cultural diversity within Europe, an action that allowed for existing or new European identities to nurture. Maybe the most widely known and successful initiative is the one of the “European Capital of Culture” program, which was launched in 1985, aiming to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures by designating a European Capital of Culture each year. The city chosen is expected to organize a range of cultural events throughout the year, showcasing the local culture and promoting cross-cultural exchange.

The EU has also taken steps to promote gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights within Europe. The EU has adopted a range of directives aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace, including measures to address the gender pay gap and promote work-life balance. The EU has also adopted a number of directives aimed at promoting LGBTQ+ rights, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In recent years, the EU has faced a number of challenges to its efforts to promote a shared European identity. The economic crisis of 2008 and the subsequent rise of nationalism and populism in many EU countries have led to a questioning of the EU's legitimacy and effectiveness. However, the EU has continued to take steps to promote a shared European

⁶⁵ Eriksen Erik O., Fossum John E., "The European Union and Supranational Political Identity", Routledge, 2002: pp 68.

identity, recognizing the importance of such an identity in promoting unity and cooperation within Europe.

Overall, the EU has played a significant role in shaping European identities. The establishment of the EU and the introduction of European citizenship have been important steps towards the development of a shared European identity.



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