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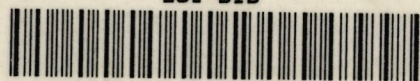
EUI Working Paper **SPS** No. 90/3

**Where Nations meet: National Identities
in an International Organisation**

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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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in an International Organisation**

NICO WILTERDINK

BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO (FI)

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PREFACE

In this EUI working paper the EUI itself is taken as an object of investigation; it has been studied as a place "where nations meet", where people construct, affirm and modify ideas and feelings about their own and others' nations through international contacts. The paper does not deal with the functioning of the EUI as an organisation, nor with any of its achievements. Aspects of the organisation are mentioned only in so far as they are immediately relevant for the subject-matter with which the paper deals.

The field work for of this case-study was carried out during my stay as Jean Monnet fellow at the European University Institute in 1986-1987. I wish to thank all those who, in one way or another, have contributed to this result. My special appreciations are to Dominique Merllié (then a colleague at the EUI), who helped with the questionnaire and the analysis of the data; Bart van Heerikhuizen and Johan Goudsblom, who commented on an earlier draft; and Gale Strom, who corrected my English.

While the case-study itself is a modest, small-scale exploration, the problems dealt with are wide-ranging. This working paper is part of a larger, ongoing project. Comments on this part of the project are therefore very welcome.

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June, 1990

Introduction

Like sex, age, and occupation, the nation a person belongs to seems to be of primary importance for his or her personal identity, at least in the Western world of the present age. To say "I am French", "I am American", "I am Danish" indicates more than a geographical place of living or a bundle of formal rights and obligations with respect to a particular state; it refers to a group of people the speaker identifies with (or at least is expected to identify with) and is identified with, a group whose members share common knowledge, behavioral rules and customary ways of doing things, - in short, a common culture.

These statements sound perhaps more self-evident than they actually are. The degree to which a person can be said to belong to a certain nation - identifies with it, is identified with it, shares cultural traits with other members of the same nation - varies, as does the importance of this sense of belonging for one's personal identity or self. Indeed, the existence of nations itself is a matter of degree. A nation may be said to exist to the degree that people share a distinct culture and, in relation to that shared culture, have an identity as members of the same actual or desired political community (i.e. a sovereign state). In other words, a nation exists to the degree that its (presumed) members have a common national identity, a common awareness of belonging to something called the nation (1).

In recent years the concept of 'national identity' has become somewhat fashionable among historians and social scientists. In a world of growing international interdependencies the existence of

nations as self-contained, more or less autonomous wholes has become less self-evident. Theoretical treatises have been written on social and cultural processes conducive to the emergence of nations and nationalism (Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983; Smith 1986), and historical studies have been devoted to the spread of national core cultures from geographical centres and elite groups to larger masses of the population (Boerner 1986; Weber 1976; Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983). Hardly any attention has been paid, however, to the question of how ideas and feelings of national identity are related to everyday life experiences - how they are rooted in, formed and changed by such experiences and how they are shown in everyday life situations.

The present article enters into this question by focusing empirically on the case of one international - European - organisation. It is particularly in international settings, in the confrontations between people who define each other as 'foreigners', that ideas and feelings of national identity are experienced, tested, and modified.

The organisation which has been taken as a case for study is called European University Institute (EUI); it is an institute for higher education and research in history, law, economics, and political and social sciences, financed by the member states of the European Community (EC), and located in Italy. People from different countries - mostly but not exclusively countries of the European Community - become members of this organisation for one to seven or more years, having a position of post-graduate student, professor, researcher, or member of the administrative staff. For most of them the interaction experiences with people from other nations are direct, frequent, and intense. These experiences do not only pertain to work

situations, but also to "social" situations outside work; since most of the Institute's members are single and fairly young, and do not have strong personal relations in the surrounding Italian society, they are predominantly oriented toward each other for informal sociability. Unlike other international organisations, moreover, the members of this organisation do not act as representatives of their governments; their behaviour is in no way formally constrained by their belonging to this or that nation. The organisation can be taken therefore as an interesting social laboratory, a case "where nations meet" directly and intensely and in relatively free and unconstrained ways.

The field stage of this investigation was conducted in the first half of 1987; it consisted of 1) participant observation as a member of the organisation, 2) handing out a questionnaire, answered by one-hundred respondents, and 3) having long interviews with some senior members of the administrative staff (2). Leading questions in the investigation were the following: How important are ideas and feelings of national identity for the members of this international organisation, and what is the nature of these ideas and feelings? To what extent and in what sense are ideas and feelings of national identity modified, strengthened or weakened under the impact of experiences in this organisation? To what extent and how are patterns of informal interaction determined by nationality? What ideas do the members of the organisation have about their own and other (European) nations, to what extent and in what sense do they make generalizing distinctions between members of different European nations, and how are these ideas or images related to experiences within and outside the organisation? To what extent do the members

of the organisation have ideas and feelings of a common European identity, and what is the nature of these ideas and feelings?

This article will deal with these questions. The empirical results of this investigation are sociologically interesting, it is claimed, because they have wider significance than this specific case alone; they contribute to our insight into the nature of national identities as real life experience. The organisation studied has specific characteristics which influence the results: most of its members are well-educated and can be called intellectuals; most of them come from Western European countries, which are not only geographically, but also socially and culturally close to each other; the organisation is part of the European Community and one of its official goals is the enhancement of European cultural integration; and it is located in one of the countries of the European Community, Italy. These characteristics limit the possibilities of generalisation. At the same time they make specific observations and hypotheses possible. The results of this case study will be compared with other empirical data, placed in a wider framework of social developments, and interpreted with the help of theoretical insights. In my presentation I will shift frequently from description of research data to broader interpretations and discussions. It is this combination which may enhance our sociological understanding.

The importance of nationality

To begin with: national differences are socially significant in the perception of the members of this organisation. One of the first things people want to know, and get to know, when meeting for the first time, is from what nation they are. Very often people are referred to by mentioning their nationality: "the German law professor", "these two Dutch girls", "that Italian secretary". Apparently nationality is regarded as a basic personal attribute, to which other attributes can be connected. It is used as one of the main criteria for classifying people, for ordering the social world.

In conversations between people from different nations very often information about their countries is exchanged; this may range from the political system to the prices of consumer goods, from intellectual traditions to food habits, from the organisation of the mass media to typical manners and mores.

It is assumed and confirmed in these conversations that members of different nations live in different social worlds, to which they are related as insiders versus outsiders, experts versus laymen. Members and non-members of a certain nation are differentiated, according to this assumption, in their social knowledge, their knowledge of a certain part of social reality.

The behavioral trait which distinguishes the members of a given nation most clearly is their use of a specific language. It is the most visible - or better, most audible - part of a specific national culture, that basic aspect of behaviour which makes the cultural and

behavioral differentiation of nations immediately apparent and undeniable. To be sure, language boundaries and national boundaries do not coincide completely, as e.g. the Scots and the Irish also speak the language of the English, and Belgians use either French or Dutch as their first language; but for the immediate experience of national differences in this international setting these are relatively minor complications.

In other words, when people from different nations communicate, their "foreignness" for each other is indicated by the fact that at least one of them cannot use his first language, the language he knows best and uses most frequently. In this Institute English is the most-often used lingua franca, spoken and understood by almost all members to a certain extent; which means that the British, the Irish and the Americans differ from the members of other nations in their degree of control of English plus their accent. Other languages however are also often used as a common second language: French, Italian, sometimes German. This means that in many situations several language options are open; a Spaniard and an Italian, for example, may hesitate between speaking Italian, French, or English with each other; likewise, a German and a Dutchman may choose between English and German. Complications are even larger when more than two people with different first and second-best languages are talking (or try to talk) together. The plurality of languages which is a basic characteristic of this organisation is a source of communication problems, confusion, misunderstandings, conflicts, and also of excitement. In this situation some language virtuosi win prestige by speaking fluently (or so it seems) four or five languages and switching

quickly and without difficulty from one to another language.

Language is also a much-discussed topic of conversation, the focus of interest being the relation between language and national identity. Language is taken as a basic feature of a nation, while at the same time it is recognized that the boundaries of language and those of nation are not identical: this is a source of intellectual puzzle. From it questions arise concerning the language of such groups as the Flemish, the Scots, the Catalans and the people of Luxemburg, all of whom are represented in this organisation. The interest in such questions seems to be motivated by the search for cognitive order by drawing clear boundaries and at the same time the pleasure in recognizing complexities.

In spite of the keen interest in national differences shown by the members of this organisation many of them are reluctant in expressing a strong identification with their own nation. Less than one-fifth (19%) of the respondents to the questionnaire said they fully subscribed to the statement "The nation I belong to means a lot to me"; the proportions of those who could subscribe "to a large extent" or "somewhat" to the statement were much larger: 31% and 33% respectively; while 12% did not subscribe at all. Agreement with the less personal statement "My nation is characterized by certain distinct traditions" was much stronger: 43% agreed "fully", 36% "to a large extent", while only one person did not agree at all. Respondents showed much reluctance, on the other hand, toward statements expressive of national pride: only 26% supported "fully" (16%) or "to a large extent" (10%) the statement "I am proud to be from..."

(France, England etc.), while 29% did not subscribe to it at all (37% said they subscribed "somewhat"). Interestingly, the respondents expressed more feelings of shame "when compatriots do certain things which are frowned upon by foreigners" than feelings of pride "when compatriots achieve something which is recognized internationally as being important". In short, while the respondents had no difficulty in recognizing the distinctiveness of their own nation, most of them showed at least some hesitation in showing feelings of identification with their nation, and even more in showing positive feelings of identification such as national pride.

According to surveys national populations in Western Europe show on the whole much more national pride than the group investigated here. Thus, in a survey held in 1984 in five EC-countries - France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Netherlands - almost 80% of the respondents in these countries taken together (weighted proportions) said they were "very proud" or "quite proud" of their nation; while, as mentioned, only 26% of the respondents of EUI (and only 21% of the respondents from these same five countries) answered in a similar way (Euro-Barometer 21: 56-57).

The relatively low level of national pride shown by the respondents can be connected to the norm of internationalism prevalent in this organisation: the norm that one should get along well with people irrespective of their nationality, that one should be open-minded and unprejudiced toward people from other nations, and that one should learn from them. This norm was shown paradoxically where

respondents criticized members of other nations - e.g. the French or the English - as being nationalistic, chauvinistic, parochial, isolationist, or xenophobic. Internationalism as a norm or ideal fits with the international character of the organisation: it is not far-fetched to assume that in the recruitment of new members there is a selective bias in favour of those who are internationally oriented, and that within the organisation - with its official ideology of European integration - social pressures lead to further adjustment to that norm.

There is more to say about this, however. Internationalism also fits with the ambitions of many people in Western Europe today who seek to attain high-status positions, whether in science, in business, or in the government bureaucracy (and all these three kinds of ambitions could be found among the post-graduate students of this institute). With intensified international interdependencies and communications the nation-state has become too small for them. Business corporations, banks, law firms, bureaucracies like the EC administration, - all offer increasing numbers of well-paid jobs for which knowledge of foreign languages, international experiences and an international orientation are important assets. Moreover, the ideal scientific attitude, which is cultivated in this organisation, is one of universalism, of detachment from any narrow group interest (cf. Merton 1942; Gouldner 1979); scientists have learned to orient themselves to a stock of knowledge which is not nation-bound, and they form bonds of cooperation and competition which cross-cut national borders. This does not mean that scientists cannot be nationalistic; "universalism" with respect to their own specialist field can go together with parochialism in other fields. But in the sphere

of science too international mobility has become more important in recent times.

Internationalism appeared in the respondents' answers to the question as to whether they liked or disliked working with people from other countries than their own: 84% said they liked it, while only one person said he disliked it (the rest said they neither liked nor disliked it). Asked for reasons for this preference, they gave answers such as "you learn a lot from it", "it broadens your perspective", "it widens your cultural horizon", "it is intellectually stimulating", is "interesting", "challenging", "makes you more aware of your own limitations and prejudices". All these answers can be interpreted as typical for "educated" people - the reasons they give correspond to what they have learned to be desirable as part of their formal education.

Internationalism as a norm and ideal appeared more indirectly in the answers to the question if the respondent had experienced specific problems in this institute arising from the fact that people from different countries worked together. From observation it could be established that such problems abounded, if only because of the plurality of languages; discussions in seminars, for example, were clearly hampered by this fact; and in the administration a language struggle was going on between those who preferred French (being the dominant language in the EC bureaucracy), those who stuck to Italian (the language of the surrounding society), and those who insisted on speaking English. Given these and other problems, which were often discussed in informal talks, it is remarkable that more than half of the respondents (52%) denied that they had experienced them, - which

might be explained as resulting from the tendency to eliminate cognitive dissonance between the perception of such problems and the ideal of smooth and harmonious international cooperation. Those who answered that there were such problems often referred to language differences (19 times); besides, differences in academic and scientific traditions and, more in general, in cultural backgrounds were often mentioned. These differences resulted, according to the respondents, in misunderstandings and confusion. Only a few respondents referred in this context to differences in mentality or character.

All in all most respondents showed ambivalence in their attitudes toward their own nation. While suggesting on the one hand that their national background did not matter much to them, they did not deny completely, on the other hand, feelings of national identification and even of national pride.

The degree to which respondents expressed feelings of national pride varied by nationality. Italians and Irish were fairly proud of their country, while Germans and Dutch showed such feelings to a very low degree. An intermediate position, near the over-all average, was taken by the French and the English, - which contrasts, incidently, with the widespread idea among the respondents that the French and (to a lesser degree) the English were very nationalistic.

Given the small numbers of respondents from each nation one cannot attach much importance to these results. Yet it might be interesting to compare them with the results of the 1984 survey mentioned above in five Western European countries - France,

United Kingdom, Italy, Western Germany and the Netherlands. In this survey the British expressed the strongest national pride; almost half of them (49.5%) said they were "very proud" of their country, and the large majority of the rest said they were "quite proud". The British were followed by the Italians, the French, and the Dutch, in that order; the differences between these three national samples were small, however, and each of them was near the over-all score. By far the least national pride was expressed by the Germans; less than one-fifth (19%) said they were "very proud" of their country, 44% said they were "quite proud", while 20% chose for "not very proud" and 10% for "not proud at all" (Euro-Barometer 21: 56-57).

In this relatively low degree of expressed national pride the Germans in the survey and the Germans in our sample are similar. This lack of positive German identity, as some German historians would put it, can only be understood in the light of the German past, particularly the period of National Socialism. To the extent that Western Germans share the official standpoint of their government and the major political parties toward that period and acknowledge a certain continuity between past and present, they have every reason not to be proud of their country.

Given the way the period of National Socialism is publicly discussed in present-day Western Germany (3) and recognized as "our past" (and not "their past", as tends to be the case in Eastern Germany and Austria (4)), one could have expected even fewer expressions of national pride than are found in this and other surveys.

A relatively low degree of national pride is also shown by the Dutch, both in the survey and in our case-study. This corresponds

with a widespread intellectual style, an inclination among Dutch writers and journalists to emphasize the insignificance of their own country. It also corresponds with the image given in many Dutch writings of the Dutch as being extremely modest about themselves as a nation. However, according to the survey the Dutch are not very different from other Europeans in their intensity of national pride. The Dutch in our case-study on the other hand indeed express an extreme modesty about their own nation. Comparison between these two results suggests that the proverbial typically Dutch lack of national boastfulness is more an intellectual style than a common characteristic of the Dutch population as a whole.

The most striking dissimilarity between the survey results and our data in relation to national differences is the position of the Italians: in our case they are relatively nationalistic, while according to the survey they are near the European average. This difference may be explained by the fact that the self-selection of the Italian members of EUI is different from that of the non-Italian members: in the recruitment of the Italians an internationalist orientation probably plays a less important role.

Changes and ambivalences in national identity

How do ideas and feelings of national identity change under the impact of experiences in an international organisation and a foreign country? Theoretically we could expect two contrasting types of responses: on the one hand an increasing intensity of ideas and

feelings of national identity, as one becomes more aware of the importance of one's national background and seeks to defend it against undermining influences; on the other hand a decreasing identification with one's original nation, as one is influenced by members of another nation (or other nations) and recognizes and accepts that influence. Both types of responses - which can be called the "fundamentalist" and the "assimilationist" response, respectively - have been found among groups of immigrants in various societies (Reitz 1980).

In the self-report of the respondents of this case-study both types of responses, too, could be found, with a slightly higher proportion of the "fundamentalist" response. Exactly one-quarter of the respondents declared that their feelings of identification with their own country had become stronger since they had come to EUI, while 21% answered that these feelings had become weaker (the rest did not answer the question or said that their feelings of identification had not changed). Much stronger was the tendency to express a sharpened awareness of the specific characteristics of one's nation: 42% of the respondents said that the distinctiveness of their nation seemed more marked to them since they had become members of EUI, while only 13% answered to the contrary. In other words, there is a clear tendency toward a stronger cognitive recognition of one's own nation as a distinct sociocultural entity in response to the experiences in the international setting, but this does not always go together with a stronger emotional identification with one's nation.

Non-Italian members of EUI who had worked there for a fairly long

Non-Italian members of EUI who had worked there for a fairly long time often reported a feeling of growing distance from their original country combined with an increasing awareness of the importance of their national "roots". This appeared in particular in the interviews held with some members of the administrative staff. One of the interviewed, a German librarian, aptly compared it with the changing attitude toward childhood: as you grow older, you feel less a child, but at the same time you become more aware of the importance of your childhood for your present personality; in the same way - she said - the more distance from Germany she felt, the more she became aware of the importance and inevitability of her Germanness.

National identity is likely to become a vexing problem for those who stay long and do not know if and when they will go back to their "home country". For them a redefinition of their group-belongingness becomes inevitable. Some of them identify increasingly with the country they live in - they follow the road of "italianization". This is most likely to happen with those who marry an Italian man or woman and thus become members of an Italian family (actually I found this option in no other cases). Others feel more and more detached from any nation; they clearly and consciously distinguish themselves from their Italian environment while at the same time feel a growing distance from their country of origin (even though they may remain attached to it to some extent). Some of them tend to idealize Italy - as if they were permanent tourists - and criticize their home country from that perspective. More common among these long-stayers is however the tendency to criticize Italian society and to complain bitterly

about Italian manners, mores, and institutions.

The degree to which the long-stayers defined their situation as good or bad, harmonious or problematical, also varied. Those who "italianized" present this as a choice with which they were happy; they felt proud to behave like real Italians and to be accepted as full members in Italian circles. Some of those who felt distance from any nation also presented their situation as a good one; they regarded their not-belonging to any particular nation as advantageous, as giving them flexibility and freedom. This attitude corresponds with the ideal of internationalism, and could be found in particular among some professors and researchers, who defined themselves as wandering scholars, detached from any narrow national interest. Their main reference group was not a nation, but the international community of scientists or scholars in their field.

Others however - especially some members of the administrative staff - presented their situation as problematic. One of the interviewed, for example, said that she lived in an "artificial world", in which she felt confused about where she stood and where she belonged to. Negative feelings about this situation of enforced marginality were often expressed indirectly, e.g. in the vehement complaints about Italians and Italian society. Such feelings can be transmitted to children; thus, the four-year old child of an American divorced secretary invented fantasy stories about a dreamland, a country where she and her mother would be happy and feel at home.

Nation and interaction patterns

To what extent does nationality, or national culture, determine interaction preferences and informal interaction patterns? Several investigations have shown a clear correlation between interaction preferences and patterns on the one hand and cultural similarities (indicated by stated opinions and attitudes, education, class origins etcetera) on the other hand: the more people are culturally alike, the more likely they are to establish relations of an affective nature (see e.g. Baron & Byrne 1984: 226-229). Since such investigations have only been carried out within one-nation groupings (as far as I know), nationality has not been included among the indicators of cultural similarity/dissimilarity; but we may expect that the general relation holds true as well if "culture" is specified as "national culture", which is indicated by nationality. On this basis the following hypotheses about interaction preferences and patterns in an international setting may be advanced:

- 1) Participants in an international setting express a stronger preference for interaction with people from their own nation than with people from other nations.
- 2) Participants in an international setting who are members of a given nation express a stronger preference for interaction with members of another nation the smaller the cultural differences between the two nations are.
- 3) Participants in an international setting have more informal (non-work) contacts with people from their own nation than would be expected on the basis of random choice.

4) Participants in an international setting who are members of a given nation are more likely to have informal (non-work) contacts with members of another nation the smaller the cultural differences between the two nations are.

EUI offered a good opportunity to test these hypotheses, not only because it is an international organisation, but also because disturbing factors often found in such organisations were absent in this case: people of the same nationality did not know each other before they came to EUI; and the organisational setting as such does not require or stimulate in particular cooperation between people of the same nationality. In other words, in so far as members of this organisation exhibited a relatively high frequency of interaction with people of the same nationality, this could be interpreted as a matter of "personal" preference.

The empirical data largely confirm the hypotheses, with the exception of the first one:

1) The respondents did not express a clear preference for informal contacts and friendly relations with co-members of the organisation who were from the same nation. A large minority (37%) denied having any preference at all for "people from a certain country or countries" in their "informal (non-work) contacts and friendly relations with people related to the Institute". Among those who said they had such a preference (59%), a large majority defined that preference as "moderate" (49%) rather than "strong" (10%). Some more respondents than would be expected on the

basis of random choice expressed a preference for informal contacts with people from their own country, but this difference was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) and did not hold true for all nationalities. This weak or even non-existent verbal preference for one's own nation can be understood if it is seen in connection with the prevalent norm of internationalism, which condemns the openly expressed preference for compatriots as indicative of narrow-mindedness and parochialism. In other words, expressing a particular preference for friendly interaction with compatriots is socially undesirable; but this does not preclude, as will be seen, preferences for compatriots as shown by actual interaction patterns.

2) Apparently the norm of internationalism did not forbid, or did so to a much lesser degree, the expression of a preference for certain other nations than one's own. The stated preferences confirm hypothesis 2: respondents expressed relatively strong preferences for interaction with members of nations which are culturally similar to their own nation. To be more specific: people from "Northern" or Germanic countries (Britain, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium) tended to prefer the company of people from other "Northern" countries, while people from "Southern", Mediterranean or Latin countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece) expressed stronger likings for people from other Southern countries. The following table shows the frequencies (preference for one's own country is calculated as random, in order to eliminate this possible influence):

Table 1 - North (N)-South (S) distribution in stated preferences
for informal interaction with people from certain nations

	chosen nation		total
	N	S	
respondent's N	53 (65%)	28 (35%)	81 (100%)
nation S	14 (36%)	25 (64%)	39 (100%)
total	67	53	120

$p < 0.01$ in chi-square test

The North-South dichotomy was suggested by some respondents themselves: five of them declared that they preferred the company of people from Southern, Mediterranean, or Latin countries, while two said that they particularly liked people from Northern countries. This dividing line was also suggested by my own observations. Thus, the Institute's bar, which very much looked like a Northern pub, was mainly visited by Northerners. This is a clue to one of the probable reasons for this interaction preference gap: a difference in leisure habits. Another reason was language: while the Northerners easily communicated in English, most Southerners spoke better French and/or Italian.

Yet the hypothesis is confirmed only partially: when the dichotomy is broken down into separate nations, a nonconsistent relation between cultural similarity and interaction preferences is found. Thus, to give the most striking example: the Germans were never chosen by the Dutch as preferred company, nor were the Dutch chosen by the Germans. The Germans were hardly chosen

Dutch chosen by the Germans. The Germans were hardly chosen by other North Europeans too. The interaction preference network among North Europeans was actually a North-Western network, or, more specifically, a predominantly Anglosaxon network in which Danish, Dutch, and Flemish Belgians also took part.

The Germans were atypical in that they 1) had relatively strong mutual bonds with the Italians (they preferred them relatively often and were relatively often preferred by them), 2) were hardly preferred by members of other nations, and 3) showed relatively often a preference for members of their own nation (which is, incidentally, in striking contrast with their low degree of expressed national pride). This last characteristic may have been a consequence of the second one, - because of their relative impopularity in particular among members of other Northern nations, they often preferred to be among themselves. Their relative social isolation with respect to other Northern nations (confirmed by data about actual contacts - see below) is an indication of a covert cultural dissimilarity. From various observations one may get the impression that there is a "North-Western" - more specifically, British - style of informal sociability which involves irony, making quick jokes, being funny, and which is different from the German style. As will be pointed out more extensively, Germans were often described as over-serious, too disciplined, "heavy", lacking sense of humour, and these judgments were given most often by respondents from other Northern countries. It is unclear to what extent such judgments were really based on personal experiences, as they conform to traditional

stereotypes. They may partly reflect negative prejudices, fed by memories of the Second World War (even among those who were born after the war, as most respondents were). In this respect too the relations of the British, the Danish, and the Dutch to the Germans are different from those of the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese.

3) Hypothesis 3 is confirmed. The respondents were asked to mention the nationality of the five persons related to the Institute with whom they had most contacts outside their work, and in their answers they showed a tendency to have relatively frequent contacts with compatriots. All together they mentioned 105 contacts with people of their own nationality, which was almost one-quarter of the total of 428 contacts, and much more than could be expected on the basis of randomness. To all likelihood these results still underestimate the degree to which the members of this organisation are biased toward having friendly relations with compatriots: the answers are probably not completely reliable due to the social desirability of showing a wide range of international contacts. A few answers sustained this suspicion; thus, one Portuguese remarked that he did not mention the other Portuguese who lived in the same apartment, since they were a kind of family together (however, he did mention the Englishman who also lived in that apartment).

Unsystematic observations in the Institute's restaurant and at other places also gave the impression that the tendency of group formation along lines of nationality was even stronger than the

answers to the questionnaire suggest.

Even apart from this, the difference in the degree of confirmation of hypotheses 1 and 3 is remarkable. While the respondents hardly expressed explicitly any special preference for having friendly contacts with people from their own nation, their self-reported interaction patterns clearly indicated something different. Here a gap appears between values and behaviour, between the ideology of internationalism and the actual reasons for having contacts with the one or the other person. In interviews and informal conversations people hinted at such reasons in admitting that interaction with compatriots had its advantages: it was often easier, more relaxed, they said, because you had no language problems and could refer to the same background knowledge.

4) Hypothesis (4) is also confirmed, as is shown in the following table (contacts with compatriots are again calculated as random):

Table 2 - North (N)-South (S) distribution in self-reported informal contacts

		nation of respondent's acquaintances		
		N	S	total
respondent's N		144 (59%)	102 (41%)	246 (100%)
nation S		45 (43%)	59 (57%)	104 (100%)
total		189	161	350

Both the North-North contacts and the South-South contacts are

significantly more frequent than would be expected on the basis of randomness ($p < 0.01$ in chi-square test). This tendency is not very strong, however, and - contrary to what might be expected - somewhat weaker than the corresponding tendency in stated interaction preferences. The tendency was weakened by the fact that it was not shown by all the Northern nations nor all the Southern nations represented in this investigation. The Germans, in particular, were an exception again: in congruity with their stated preferences, they mentioned not only a relatively high number of contacts with other Germans (25 out of a total 64 contacts, i.e. 39%), but also many more contacts with Southerners - Italians in particular - than with non-German Northerners. The Italians for their part mentioned more contacts with Northerners, and Germans in particular, than with non-Italian Southerners. Thus, both in stated preferences and in mentioned contacts a special bond between Germans and Italians was found, which crossed and mitigated the interactional dividing line between Northern and Southern Europeans.

Speculating about the reasons for this bond between Italians and Germans one might refer to the historically strong relations between both nations. Before any serious explanation can be advanced, however, more research would be needed to see if the relation found here is more than coincidental.

The over-all conclusion of this section is that nationality is indeed a nonnegligable determinant of informal interaction patterns. Nationality should be read here as a shorthand for national

culture, which includes language, interaction styles, social knowlegde, and leisure habits. All these aspects of culture which vary between nations to greater or lesser degrees may explain why respondents tended to have more contacts with members of their own nation than with members of other nations (although most of them denied having any special preference in that direction), and why they tended to have more contacts with members of nations which were relatively culturally similar to their own nation than with members of nations with a greater cultural distance from their own nation.

These findings are in accordance with well-founded sociological generalisations. Yet they are noteworthy in themselves, particularly in the light of special characteristics of this international organisation: the strong norm of internationalism, and the relatively small cultural differences between the different national categories. It is to be expected that the tendency of group formation along national lines will be stronger in international organisations whose members do not adhere to a norm of internationalism to such a degree, are not as well-versed in several languages, come from nations with larger national differences, and/or have special interests in cooperating with compatriots. It is also likely that problems will arise from this: misunderstandings, lack of cooperation, mutual distrust, and open conflicts. With the increasing importance of international organisations these problems will deserve more attention.

Images of national character

The notion that each nation is a unique world of its own, radically different from other nations, is expressed most concisely in the concept of national character, which refers to the idea that the members of a certain nation are not only characterized by a common culture (knowledge, language and other symbols, rules of behaviour), but also by a typical mentality, by psychological traits deeply ingrained in their personality (cf. Duijker & Frijda 1960).

EUI is a place where the psychological or behavioral peculiarities of persons from different nations are often discussed. In spite of their internationalist orientation, many members of this international organisation cannot resist the temptation to speculate about what is typical for the English, the Germans, the Italians or the French. In this way the image of nations as different sociocultural worlds - and, even more, as different psychological wholes - is confirmed and strengthened.

At the same time members of this organisation often intimated that they were not very sure about the nature of the psychological differences between members of different nations. When I asked people informally if they thought there were such differences, they almost always answered in the affirmative; but when I asked further to be specific about these differences, they very often said that they could not answer, that they had to think about it, that this was a difficult problem; and when they made some remarks about such differences, they sometimes added that these were

merely speculations and crude generalisations, which should not be taken too seriously. As intellectuals they had learned to be suspicious of "prejudices" and "stereotypes" of all kinds, and they did not want to be blamed for holding them themselves.

Hesitations with respect to the reality of national characters also appeared in the answers to the question as to whether the respondent agreed with the statement "The people of my country have certain personality traits which are, on the whole, different from those of people from other countries". A large majority of the respondents agreed with this statement, but most of them did so with reservations; while only 7% rejected it completely and 22% agreed with it fully, most respondents opted for the intermediate alternatives - they subscribed to the statement "somewhat" (37%), or "to a large extent" (32%).

In spite of these hesitations, only a few respondents refused to answer the questions about the mentality or personality traits of members of specific nations. Contrary to the common practice in the research of "stereotypes", these questions were kept open-ended. This was done in order to elicit more spontaneous answers (nearer to real-life situations), to avoid the restricting and biasing influence of fixed answer-alternatives, and to leave room for nuances, specifications, and even explanations. It was considered, moreover, that the question if and to what extent certain central tendencies (i.e. some consensus) can be found is more interesting with the use of open-ended questions, since the likelihood of finding such tendencies is smaller then, and the informational

content correspondingly higher.

Questions about the mentality or personality traits of the members of five Western European nations were asked: France, England, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. The first four are the largest and most powerful nations of Western Europe and of the European Community in particular; the last one is a smaller nation, - among the smaller nations of Western Europe the one with the largest representation at EUI. The questions were put in comparative and relative terms ("In the following items you are asked to mention personality or mentality traits which, according to you, can be found more often among the people of a certain country in Western Europe than among the people of other Western European countries..."), which made it easier for critical respondents to answer at all, and which implies that the answers should not be interpreted simply as reflecting crude stereotypes.

The results clearly indicate differential images of national character; that is, the frequency with which certain traits were mentioned varied considerably between the nations in question. For each nation certain central tendencies were found, i.e. characteristics which were attributed frequently to it and which were attributed much less frequently or not at all to the other nations. From these results composite images of all the five nations could be inferred. In what follows I will deal with these images.

The French - The characteristic attributed most frequently to the French is that they are nationalistic or chauvinistic: 46% of the

respondents mentioned this trait by using these very words and/or other terms which could be interpreted as belonging to the same cluster of meanings - patriotic, militaristic, isolationist, ethnocentrist, xenophobic, racist, oriented to their own culture, reserved/cold/indifferent to outsiders. Next to nationalism came arrogance or pride as an often-mentioned French trait; 27% of the respondents said that the French were arrogant, proud, pretentious, snobbish, intimidating, showing superiority. Both traits, nationalism and arrogance, were clearly related in the eyes of at least some respondents; the French, they suggested, tend to isolate themselves from foreigners and treat them with contempt, because from their narrow-minded point of view they feel superior.

It must be added that these characteristics were not only attributed to the French: both nationalism and arrogance were also mentioned as English traits, but less frequently; and arrogance was also attributed to Germans, but again, less frequently. (The Italians and the Dutch were regarded as neither nationalistic nor arrogant.)

What are the reasons for this perception of the French as nationalistic and proud or arrogant? We may distinguish here between direct experiences (observation of and interaction with French people) and indirect experiences (information about French people through mass media and personal communication). Some respondents suggested indirect experiences as reasons for deeming the French nationalistic; they referred to France's foreign, military, and cultural policy, - the stress on military autonomy and strength (the nuclear force de frappe), the propagation of the French language and French "culture and civilisation". This French

government policy was interpreted as nationalistic and as reflecting the mentality of the French people. Like in other cases, sociopolitical phenomena were made understandable through translation into collective-psychological categories.

Some respondents used stronger adjectives in typifying the French, such as "xenophobic" and even "racist". Here too information through mass media probably has played a decisive role; one may think of the electoral successes of the party of the extreme right, the Front National led by Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Recent survey data do not confirm the image of the French as being extremely nationalistic. Although - as mentioned above - most of them say they are (very) proud of their country, they show less national pride than the British, and about the same as the Italians and even the Dutch (Euro-Barometer 21: 56-57).

As far as direct experiences are concerned: some respondents suggested a reason for the perceived "arrogance" by complaining about the French inability or unwillingness to speak any other language than French ("they only speak French and expect others to do so too"). Language behaviour may be indeed the key to explaining the perception of this trait. Although all French EUI-members spoke English, many of them apparently had difficulties with it and did not like to do it. This may be a reason why they preferred the company of compatriots, - and this in turn may have been the reason for others to regard them as arrogant and nationalistic.

The definition of the French as arrogant, proud, self-assured or pretentious is however not bound to this particular organisation; it

corresponds to some extent with the results of other investigations of national images (5). It seems very difficult, if not impossible, to establish to what extent French people (or any people) "really" are arrogant or proud; as such categories do not only reflect observable behavioral traits but also normative judgments, they are hardly amenable for objective empirical research. This does not exclude the possibility that some aspects of what is regarded as "typically French" behaviour might give the impression of a certain arrogance to some observers - e.g. the way the French language is spoken, the habit of puffing, or a customary gesture like the shrugging of the shoulders.

These same or similar behavioral aspects may have contributed to the perception of other, related traits which some respondents attributed to the French: that they were distant, cold, aloof, indirect (mentioned by 10% of the respondents); and that they were individualistic, self-centered, self-indulgent, egocentric (mentioned by 14%). The second of these traits has also been found in other investigations of national images; thus the respondents of Peabody (1985) defined the French as relatively uncooperative and independent, much more than the English and the Germans. Besides, several authors have mentioned "individualism" as a typically French trait (6). Again, the extent to which the French really are "individualistic" is difficult to establish, if only because the term has various specific meanings. In so far as it refers to an ideal of critical distance from authority and freedom from restrictive morality, it can be found in much of French literature, ranging from Villon's poems to Sartre's novels. In so far

as it refers to a relatively low degree of "civic spirit" or a certain critical distance from formal rules and formal organisations, "individualism", according to some investigations, has been found to be somewhat stronger in France than in most other Western European countries (see e.g. Stoetzel 1983: 148). However, not all operational definitions of the concept lead to this result (see e.g. Hofstede 1980: ch. 5).

Contrary to such qualifications as distant or aloof, a nonnegligible proportion of the respondents (13%) described the French as vivacious, enthusiastic, passionate, open, or charming. This corresponds with many written descriptions of the French - their reputation as charming socializers, brilliant talkers, and passionate lovers (Zeldin 1983: 32-33). Some respondents tried to bring this in accordance with the perceived trait of aloofness: the French, they suggested, are charming and vivacious within their own social circles, but to outsiders they show indifference and coldness. These respondents then bridged the gap between "aloofness" and "charm" by linking them both to nationalism.

One other trait was mentioned frequently about the French: 19% of the respondents - and 38% of the French respondents - said that the French were refined, civilized, cultured, elegant, that they had taste and style for eating and clothing, and a fine sense for arts and literature. This conforms with a widespread image of the French and in particular with a French self-image. In so far as French people affirm this self-image toward foreigners, they may be either admired as refined and civilized, or condemned as arrogant,

snobbish, and pretentious. This image is rooted in the past, particularly the age of Absolutism, when the royal court at Versailles was the main centre of European civilisation, where the aristocracy cultivated increasingly refined manners, mores, and fashions, imitated by both the bourgeoisie within the French borders and the aristocracies elsewhere in Europe. Today certain norms of politeness and forms of style can still be found among French people - at least the upper and middle strata - that are connected with that aristocratic past: think e.g. of the elaborate forms of address in letters, or the refinements of cooking and eating (Zeldin 1983: 289 ff., 353; Mennell 1985). Such behavioral norms and forms confirm the image of the French as highly civilized. It is also confirmed by the reputation Paris still holds as a world centre of culture, of old and modern arts, architecture, literature, and fashion.

Not all social facts correspond to the idea that the French are particularly interested in "culture" in the narrow sense; thus, the number of books bought or borrowed from libraries per head of the population is low in France compared to other Western European countries. At the same time the formal emphasis on the value of "high culture" is strong, as it appears in the educational system and in public statements of politicians (Heilbron 1981; cf. Bourdieu 1979).

The English - Like the French, the English were described by a fairly large proportion of the respondents (35%) with words such as

nationalistic, chauvinistic, and isolationist. The differences with the French in this respect are not only a lower over-all score but also a different emphasis: terms like "nationalistic" and "chauvinistic" were used less frequently, terms which referred to a tendency of isolation ("isolationist", "insular", "ethnocentric", "parochial", "provincial") somewhat more.

Another similarity with the French is that two traits which could be (and sometimes were) associated with nationalism were mentioned rather often: pride or pretentiousness; and the tendency to keep a distance. However, while for the French the first trait got much more emphasis than the second one, for the English it was the other way around: 13% of the respondents described the English as proud, pretentious, snobbish, self-convinced, smug, or arrogant (although this last word was used only once), but no less than 35% reserved for them terms like reserved, distant, closed, cold, stiff, formal, withdrawn, or even "dead". More positive terms which could be placed under this umbrella were "phlegmatic", "self-controlled", and "polite". The key-word here, used most often, is "reserved", expressing that combination of distance, formality and politeness which is, according to some observers, the essence of Englishness.

Some respondents (14%) attributed to the English other, positive interaction qualities; they typified them as friendly, kind, cordial, well-meaning, nice, cooperative, easy, informal. Some of these terms, such as "informal", contradict the image of the English as reserved and formal, but most do not: "friendliness" can go together with "distance", a combination which is expressed most aptly in the (often-used) term "polite".

In analysing the reasons for the ascription of these traits we may again distinguish between direct and indirect experiences. The definition of the English as nationalistic and isolationist is based largely, we may assume, on indirect experiences. It may have been shaped by reports on such recurring English rituals as the Changing of the Guards at Buckingham Palace and the Last Night of the Proms, on events like the Falkland War, on royal marriages and the popularity of Thatcher's nationalist conservatism. In line with such information, some of the respondents (9%) described the English as conservative, traditional, old-fashioned.

According to many respondents English nationalism takes the form of isolationism. An important reason for this interpretation is probably the perceived European policy of the British government and the reluctant attitude of cabinet ministers, party politicians, and journalists toward European integration. As symbolic of this attitude may be regarded the common British distinction between Britain and "Europe" or "the Continent" (see e.g. Morgan 1987). English isolationism is then above all an isolationism as seen from a Western European and in particular a European Community perspective - much more than, say, from an American perspective; the perception of this trait by (other) Europeans is a function of the traditional and still continuing English orientation to the former colonies and dominions, the United States of America included. The suspicion that the English or the British are not very European-minded finds support in opinion polls: among the populations of the EC countries the British, together with the Danes, are the least in favour of European integration, although their opinions have changed in a

more pro-European direction in recent years (e.g. Euro-Barometer 21: var. 170; Eurobarometer 31, June 1989).

One possible reason for the alleged isolationism of the English, however, is not bound to a Western European perspective: the fact that Britain is an island. This easily leads to the image (and also the self-image) of Britain as a self-contained whole, isolated from the rest of the world. "Island" may be taken both as a supposed reason for isolation and as a metaphor for it. The metaphorical application of the island-image appears in the adjective "insular", which was used by several respondents.

The same metaphor can also be used, and has been used, to characterize the tendency toward isolation of individual English persons. As Emerson put it more than a century ago: "... everyone of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, uncommunicable" (quoted by Mayne 1972: 128). From this literary caricature an direct line of continuity can be drawn to present-day qualifications like reserved, distant, closed, and withdrawn. This image is affirmed in numerous books, plays, and films. Some research data on national stereotypes indicate that the image is fairly widespread both as an English self-image and as an other-image held by foreigners (7).

Studies of English "national character" have stressed this same trait. Thus, according to Gorer (1955) the English are characterized by a strong control of primary impulses, particularly aggressive impulses, which is embedded in the individual personality through strict child-training, and which results among adults in reserve, politeness, and often shyness (8). This also explains, in Gorer's view, the typically

English sense of humour: irony and humour are defense mechanisms for coping with situations of uncertainty, for hiding one's feelings and canalizing hostile impulses in socially accepted ways. In attributing to the English a fine sense of humour Gorer again reflects a more popular idea, which was expressed by 10% of our respondents; they described the English as humourous, witty, or cynical.

Although the image of the English as reserved, distant and formal (and humorous) is a traditional and conventional one, it may well be that it is partly confirmed - not formed - by direct experiences at EUI. The fact that the English in this organisation are well-educated members of the middle class is relevant in this context: the traditional image refers primarily to the upper and middle classes, and members of these classes are much more likely to conform to it. Probably some aspects of the behaviour of some English members of the organisation - e.g. the habit of not making gestures while speaking - were interpreted by respondents as confirmations of notions about the English they already had before entering the organisation.

The apparent strong continuity of the image of the English is nevertheless remarkable in view of the momentous changes of British society and life styles during the last decades, in which new groups came to the fore and attracted public attention. Fashionable youth groups, pop singers, and football hooligans, - their behaviour as it is reported by the mass media deviates completely from the traditional image of the typical Englishman. But hardly any influence of such groups on the over-all image of the English can be detected in the answers to this questionnaire.

Some respondents nevertheless gave a more complex view by

pointing out that there were large differences within British society. First of all, some British respondents emphasized that England is not Britain and that the English should not be identified with the British in general. Scottish respondents in particular defined themselves as quite different from the English - a different nation with different characteristics. Thus, one of them contrasted English class consciousness, pretentiousness, and formality with Scottish egalitarianism, modesty, and informality. Secondly, a few respondents referred to the large class differences in England and linked them to variations in discipline ("either over-disciplined or undisciplined") and civilisation ("ordinär bis extrem vornehm"). Class differences were sometimes linked to the geographical division between the North of England (predominantly working class, relatively poor) and the South (more middle and upper class, wealthier, more conservative). By such answers it was suggested that the conventional image of the typical Englishman refers to a particular social category: the well-educated and relatively well-to-do of the male sex, mainly living in the Southern part of the country.

The Germans - In contrast to the French and the English, the Germans were never defined as nationalistic, chauvinistic, or isolationist. Some non-German respondents (5%) described the Germans even as receptive, open to foreign influences and interested in other cultures. This non-perception of nationalism as a German trait corresponds with the relatively low degree of national pride, noted above, which - according to surveys - is expressed by present-day Western Germans in general (at least until recently) as well as by

the German respondents in this investigation. As remarked, this can only be understood in reference to the German past, particularly the period of National Socialism, and the way this period is officially dealt with in present-day Western Germany. A few respondents probably referred implicitly to that period when stating that Germans are "broken in their identity" and "ashamed of being what they are"; they suggested that Germans feel guilty about their past and therefore lack any positive identification with the German nation.

The attitude of condemnation or strong scepticism toward one's own nation is more likely to be found among German intellectuals than among other groups of Germans, and actually could be found among some German members of EUI. The perception of Germans as relatively nonnationalistic was also confirmed by the language behaviour of the German members: unlike many French members, they never assumed that foreigners would speak their language, - generally they did their best to speak English even to those non-Germans who understood German perfectly well.

The characteristic which was observed by far the most frequently about the Germans was, however, quite different, and referred to what was sometimes called their bureaucratic mentality. No less than 44% of the respondents used these or similar words, - they said the Germans were orderly, (over-)disciplined, (over-)organized, efficient, rule-obeying, punctual, rigid, inflexible. Moreover, according to many respondents (19%) Germans were hard-working, industrious, laborious, ambitious, "living for work", "oppressed by Leistungspflicht". The German style of social behaviour was typified by 25% of the

respondents with terms like serious, dull, boring, "heavy", lacking sense of humour. Between these three perceived traits - orderliness, industriousness, and seriousness - there is a clear "elective affinity", to the extent that we may speak of one complex. The typical German here appears as the bureaucratic personality (cf. Merton 1968: 249 ff.), who has internalized the social duties of work, discipline, and rule-obeying to such a degree that they block potentials for social expression and enjoyment.

The German as a bureaucratic personality is a widespread image, which can be found both in data on national stereotypes (9) and in several treatises on German national character. Thus, four of the six traits advanced by Willy Hellpach (1954) as being essential to "the German character" refer to that image: industriousness, perfectionism (Gründlichkeit), love for order (Ordnungsliebe), and persistence or endurance. These traits have been interpreted psycho-analytically as symptoms of an "anal character", an interpretation which is corroborated, according to the anthropologist Alan Dundes (1984), by the many German expressions, verbs, curses, rhymes showing a particular interest in human excretions.

Another psychological interpretation of the bureaucratic complex, which became influential shortly after the Second World War, is that of the "authoritarian personality": the character type of those who, due to their strict and severe upbringing, combine the tendency of blind obedience to authority with the wish to dominate others with less power, and who therefore are potentially attracted by one or another version of Fascism. While according to the originators of the theory (Horkheimer 1936; Adorno et.al. 1950) this character type

could be found in all advanced capitalist societies, the thesis was advanced that it was particularly widespread in German society; and some comparative research in the fifties, which made use of the F-scale, confirmed the thesis, although only to a limited degree (Cohn & Carsh 1954; cf. also Kaldegg 1948). Needless to say that this theory and its application to Germany were developed under the impact of the emergence of National Socialism and the Second World War; with the help of this theory National Socialism could be explained as being rooted in the German authoritarian character. After the forties, when the Federal Republic of Germany developed into a military ally of the United States and a fairly stable democracy of the Western type, this idea of Germans as being particularly authoritarian became less popular, both among social scientists and - presumably - a larger public.

Among the respondents in this investigation the term "authoritarian" was never used for Germans. Quite a few (17%), though, used other expressions referring to hierarchy: they said Germans are "arrogant", "know everything better", "are convinced that they are right". In other words, in particular intellectual arrogance was attributed to Germans. In this respect too the respondents reflected a more popular idea about the Germans (10).

It is more than likely that the definition of Germans as bureaucratic, order-loving and hard-working was based, at least to a large extent, on indirect experiences. The image dates back to the nineteenth century, when the kingdom of Prussia developed into a powerful state with the help of a bureaucracy which emphasized hierarchical control and strict obedience to rules and an army which

carried the art of drilling to the utmost perfection. It was confirmed by the Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and the subsequent German unification under Prussian domination. From that time on the typical German was largely identified with the typical Prussian, and Germany as a whole became feared by members of other European nations as an entity of monstrous efficiency threatening the international balance of power, - a fear which was intensified by the rapid industrial development of Germany during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Anecdotes about German reverence for formal rules and uniforms and authorities became well-known, partly factual and partly fictitious, told in (both German and non-German) history books, short stories, novels, plays and films (see e.g. Moore 1978: 307). The dramatic events of the Second World War and especially the systematic organisation of mass killing in that period confirmed and sharpened the image of Germans as blind followers of rules and orders; it was shortly after the war that the phrase with which Germans accused of war crimes justified their deeds, "Befehl ist Befehl" (an order is an order), received its ominous meaning.

While the events of the Second World War are still widely discussed today, they are less interpreted in terms of differences in national mentality or character. Among the respondents in this investigation no-one explicitly referred to that period. The definition of the Germans as disciplined, rule-obeying, efficient and hard-working is still quite common, but much less associated with those past events. It has been confirmed after the war by the Wirtschaftswunder, the successful economic development of Western

Germany from an exhausted, poverty-stricken country to the first industrial economy in Western Europe and one of the wealthiest countries in the world (some respondents referred to this development). Confirmation of this same definition might also be found in East Germany, the state in the communist bloc (still existing in 1987) with the highest per capita output and notorious for its achievements in athletics.

Among scientists and scholars, like those of EUI, the reputation of Germans as serious and hard-working is confirmed by stories and anecdotes about the industriousness and Gründlichkeit of their German colleagues. Thus it is reported that discussion sessions at German scientific congresses are particularly long and exhaustive. Here again, personal experiences, hearsay and written sources probably reinforce each other in forming a composite and more or less consistent image.

In particular the fairly frequent definition by EUI-members of the Germans as over-serious, dull, boring, lacking sense of humour is probably related to direct experiences, in the sense that it reflects differences in interaction style between German and non-German members of this organisation. As noted before, it is especially the British-dominated style of informal sociability to which most Germans (in contrast to e.g. the Dutch or the Danish) do not seem to be able or willing to conform. This interpretation is confirmed by the above-mentioned data about interaction preferences and actual contacts between Germans and non-Germans within this organisation.

Some respondents suggested that the bureaucratic complex is only

one part of the typically German personality: they said that Germans are "romantic", "sentimental", "emotional", "pathetic", "extreme" (7%); or they described them as "complex", "full of complexes", "awkward", "difficult to understand", "Angst-ridden" (10%). In these ways they intimated that bureaucratic rationality has its counterpart in irrationality, and that German formal correctness is a front behind which strong emotions are hidden - and sometimes suddenly expressed.

The typification of Germans as romantic or sentimental corresponds with both a widespread self-image and a reputation they have among foreigners, as may be inferred from many writings (e.g. Hellpach 1954). Romanticism as a literary and artistic movement became particularly influential in the German-speaking part of Europe. It was intimately connected here with the search of members of the bourgeoisie - particularly intellectual members - for ideals, norms and a life style of their own, different from and even opposed to those of the dominant Frenchified aristocracy. The ideals they propagated and sought to follow were expressed most concisely in the German word Kultur, referring above all to the cultivation of the inner virtues of the mind - thinking and feeling, and the authentic expression of one's thoughts and feelings - as opposed to the aristocratic stress on outward appearances and polished manners implied by the word civilisation. The value put on Innerlichkeit, the inner virtues of the mind, reflected the weak economic and political position of the German bourgeoisie in the 18th and the greater part of the 19th century: as their chances for economic success and political power were very slight, they tended to lay most emphasis on

that in which they could feel superior to the aristocracy - in one word Kultur (Elias 1939, vol. 1: 1 ff.).

Kultur referred to both feeling and thinking, both the literary and artistic expression of "true" emotions and the systematic exposition of philosophical ideas about the connections between the human mind and the outer world. From Kant to Heidegger and Habermas, from philosophical idealism to existentialism and critical theory, German philosophers have won a reputation as outstandingly "deep" thinkers. Some respondents to the questionnaire (9%) confirmed this reputation by typifying the Germans as philosophical, deep (tiefsinnig), theorists, or metaphysicians.

All in all however, the respondents to this questionnaire laid much more stress on what is called here the bureaucratic complex as typical for the Germans - orderliness, industriousness, seriousness. Apart from some negative evaluations of German sociability (expressed in terms like dull and heavy), the respondents thus conformed to a well-known, widespread, and long-established national image.

Only two respondents referred to a change in German mentality by calling attention to intergenerational differences. While elder Germans, they said, are traditionally authoritarian and strict, the younger ones are open, critical, searching, experimenting with new life styles. In this way, they suggested, Germans become less German and more generally European or Western.

The Italians - The image of the Italians among the respondents in this investigation contrasts in many ways with that of the English and

the Germans. While English and Germans are described by many as stiff, formal, withdrawn, or emotionally repressed, the Italians appear as spontaneous, expressive, lively, open, uninhibited as well as sociable, available, oriented to personal contact. Italians, some respondents complain, are "noisy" and "talkative", but according to many more their sociability is a positive asset: they are warm, affectionate, friendly, kind, charming, sensitive, sympathetic. More than half of the respondents (54%) used these or similar terms, which may be regarded as referring to one personality trait: that of high expressiveness, or emotional sociability.

This trait can be associated with another one, put forward by 21% of the respondents: Italians are optimist, cheerful, joyous, gay, outgoing, "gourmands et gourmets", they have "joie de vivre", they know how to enjoy life. For some respondents this meant that Italians are "superficial" or "childish"; but many more used only positive terms for this trait.

In other respects however Italians were characterized in less positive terms; more than one-fifth (21%) of the respondents labeled them as undisciplined, unreliable, disorganized, chaotic, inefficient, imprecise. Another 21% suggested a similar trait by describing the Italians as self-centered, egocentric ("males in particular"), egoistic, opportunistic, not oriented to the common welfare, lacking civic spirit. However, this was contradicted or at least amended by those (14%) who put forward a strong family spirit or, in more general terms, a strong group loyalty among Italians.

The label of "spontaneity" was contradicted or amended by those respondents (8%) who stated that Italians are image-conscious,

theatrical, insincere, conceited, concerned about appearances, "macho". Another 12% used similar, but more positive-sounding adjectives by stressing the Italian feeling for style; according to them, Italians are elegant, cultivated, artistic, well-dressed, rafinés.

These traits, and in particular the first three of them - spontaneity or expressiveness, cheerfulness, and lack of discipline and efficiency - are recognizable as elements of connotative meanings associated with "the South"; they reflect typical attitudes of Northern Europeans towards Southern Europeans as well as typical self-definitions of Southerners when comparing themselves with Northerners. These attitudes do not only pertain to relations between Northern and Southern nations, but also to the relations between Northern and Southern regions within one European country (e.g. Italy or Germany or the Netherlands). Northerners tend to project certain desires and ego-ideals in which they feel they themselves fall short on Southerners, - human warmth, natural affection, passion, spontaneity and enjoyment of the good things of life. "Warmth" has a double meaning in this context: it refers both to the higher temperatures in the South and to greater intensity and affectivity of social life, and both are seen as interconnected (11). From the 18th century travellers and tourists from Northern regions have sought this double warmth along the Mediterranean coasts and particularly in Italy. And often they found what they missed in their home country there, or pretended to find it, as is testified by scores of travel books, diaries, poems, novels, and short stories.

On the other hand Italy gave travellers and tourists reasons for

criticism and complaints, - about its dirt and sloppiness, the bad organisation of its public affairs, the unreliability of many of its inhabitants. Just as tourists came back home with stories about romantic nights, charming men and beautiful women, they reported about trains that were never on time, pickpockets, crazy policemen, and swindling shopkeepers.

It is not difficult to see a connection between the supposed good and bad sides of the Italians - spontaneity, affectivity on the one hand, lack of discipline on the other hand. One might even say that spontaneity is lack of discipline, seen from another perspective, as both words refer to the immediate following of primary impulses and stimuli at hand. The same type of behaviour which is ingratiating in informal social intercourse ("spontaneous"), may become a nuisance for the performance of some official task ("undisciplined"). In the continuum from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft the behaviour of Italians is perceived as relatively close to the Gemeinschaft pole; or, in terms of Talcott Parsons' "pattern variables", it is seen as being characterized by a relatively high degree of affectivity, diffuseness, and particularism (Parsons 1955: 134ff.).

The widespread perception of these traits does not prove that they are typically Italian in reality, even if only compared to other Western, and more Northern, European nations. The degree to which Italian social behaviour is characterized by spontaneity, liveliness, warmth, charm, and friendliness is difficult to establish, because such terms are highly normative and emotional, and only partially refer to observable behavioral traits. We may hypothesize that Italians in statistical comparison with members of other Western European

nations 1) speak with louder voices, 2) make more gestures when speaking, 3) are quicker in their verbal responses to each other, 4) touch each other more frequently in direct interactions, and 5) interact more frequently among each other in streets, squares and other public places. As far as I know, no systematic research has been undertaken to confirm these hypotheses. In so far as they hold true, they form the empirical basis for value-laden interpretations expressed by words like liveliness, warmth, and spontaneity. Such interpretations however do not only reflect observed facts, but also norms, ideals, wishes, and sentiments of the interpreters. The ideals and wishes they express are often contrasted with what are regarded as Northern shortcomings - lack of spontaneity, inhibitedness, coldness or shyness - and connected with the perception of these shortcomings.

The bad side of the imagined Italian type too - inefficiency, unreliability, lack of discipline, lack of civic spirit - is not unrelated to observations and experiences. It is confirmed in stories which circulate among foreigners who stay for one or several years in Italy, such as the members of EUI - stories about problems with getting a telephone or buying a house or crossing the Italian border with your own household furniture, the importance of having friends or "friends of friends" for getting things done, the slowness and unpredictability of the postal system, the bad medical care, and so on. Foreigners from Northern countries are also often amazed, and sometimes outraged, when confronted with Italian "flexibility" in matters of time and money.

The definition of Italians as undisciplined and inefficient is connected then to empirical observations and experiences; but this

connection is not self-evident or logical. The interpretation, and condemnation, of certain types of behaviour as indicative of untrustworthiness, lack of discipline etc. depends, first of all, on one's own norms of reliability and discipline and the degree to which one clings to these norms as being universally valid. And secondly, the interpretation of this behaviour in psychological terms, i.e. as indicative of a certain mentality or character type, is only one of several possibilities.

There are indications, however, that the definition of Italians as undisciplined, inefficient etc. is not only held by many foreigners and in particular by inhabitants of North Western Europe and North America, but is also part of a widespread auto-image held by Italians about themselves. The Italian respondents to the questionnaire gave this definition as frequently as the other ones. Among Italians too stories about the corruption and inefficiency of their bureaucracies abound, both in private conversations and in the mass media. Many of them tend to take over North-Western norms of efficiency and public morality, and apply them to their own society; and in comparison to other nations Italy is regarded then as lagging behind, chaotic, corrupt, less developed. (The fairly high rate of economic growth in Italy in recent years compared to other industrialized countries has mitigated this self-criticism somewhat and given reasons for national pride.) This image is held more particularly by Northern Italians with respect to the South of their country: all the bad characteristics of Italian society in general are seen as concentrated there. In this we-they-relation Northern Italians tend to hold similar attitudes with respect to Southerners as many foreigners hold with

respect to Italians in general (see e.g. Schnapper 1974: 6ff.).

A partial similarity in this respect between hetero-images and auto-images of Italians is borne out by the results of some surveys among samples of Western European national populations. Thus, in a survey from 1981 Italians were regarded as by far the least "trustworthy" of Western European nations; compared to the French, the British, the Germans and the Dutch they were the only ones about which negative opinions concerning their trustworthiness dominated. This is not quite what Italians thought of themselves: they expressed positive opinions about their trustworthiness more frequently than negative ones. But while the respondents from the other considered nations thought much more positively about the trustworthiness of members of their own nation than that of members of any other nation, this tendency was not shown by the Italian respondents: they judged the trustworthiness of their compatriots as about the same - on the average - as that of the people from the other countries, and even less than the trustworthiness of the Germans and the Dutch (derived from Eurobarometer 14: var. 28-36).

The perceived traits of "spontaneity" and "lack of discipline" may also be interconnected by linking them both to a third one: the observed strong orientation of Italians to their own family or family-like group; or, in sociological terms, a high degree of "particularism". According to some social researchers and observers (Banfield 1958; Almond and Verba 1963; Barzini 1964) this is the key to understanding Italian - more specifically, Southern Italian - society and culture. For Italians, these authors suggest, loyalty to one's own family or personal group

has absolute priority compared to loyalty to the wider community; while within the personal group or family a private morality of solidarity, altruism and mutual support reigns supreme, a public morality of respect for general rules and legitimate authority, honesty to one's fellow-citizens, and an orientation to the common good is only weakly developed. Thus, the government is not regarded as an instrument for the common good, but as an alien force with interests of its own, which one should either try to evade or to profit from. Social relations outside one's primary groups have only some sort of stability, in this orientation, in so far as they can be perceived as extensions of primary group relations. This strong particularism in Italian society has been explained historically by referring to the long period of "foreign" domination of large parts of Italy - the rule of Spaniards, French, and Austrians in the 16th to 19th centuries -, in which Italians could not identify themselves with the government, but, instead, learned to accommodate to it in opportunistic ways (Barzini 1964). In the Southern part of the Italian-speaking area and especially in Sicily it was the low degree of state formation and monopolization of the means of violence which gave rise to "private" solutions to social order problems, such as the Mafia organisations (Blok 1974).

Although this picture of Italian society is something of a caricature, some quantitative data of comparative research confirm it to a certain extent. As noted above, Italians ascribe a relatively low degree of trustworthiness to their fellow-citizens. They also express a relatively low level of trust with respect to their government and the political institutions of their country. They agree less frequently with statements like "you should trust your fellow-men" or "the government works in

the interest in the people", and they express more discontent with "society" in general than other Europeans do (Stoetzel 1983: 65, 180, 182, 190; Euro-Barometer 21: 109-110).

It is not difficult to see a strong and immediate connection between a high degree of primary group particularism on the one hand and a low degree of public "discipline" and conformity to public rules (be they tax laws or traffic rules or housing regulations) on the other hand. A less evident, yet plausible connection may be established between group particularism and perceived "warmth" and "friendliness" in social intercourse. To the extent that people cannot and do not count on the general application of universalistic - legal, bureaucratic, contractual - rules, they will establish personal relations, involving diffuse mutual obligations, in order to get things done; in other words, they will extend particularism beyond their primary groups. In these relations the performance style - giving signals of loyalty, trust, and friendship - is highly important. As this performance style extends to all kinds of social interactions, it may give the impression of warmth and natural friendliness to the observer. A paradoxical interconnection may be noticed then between a relatively high degree of general social distrust and the perception of a high degree of friendliness in social intercourse.

If this interpretation is true, it also means that the perceived "spontaneity" is only limited, that "warmth" is not a free expression of emotions, and "expressiveness" a stylized expressiveness. And in so far as this is perceived by observers, it may give rise to the labeling

of Italian behaviour as theatrical, conceited, insincere. It may also lead to more positive qualifications like "refined". (However, some respondents to the questionnaire gave a somewhat different reason for this last qualification: they connected it to Italy's reputation as a country of great artists and excellent designers.)

We may conclude that more or less plausible - logical or empirical - connections between the different frequently mentioned traits ascribed to Italians can be established. These traits form a composite whole, a true character type - which facilitates the perception of the Italians as "really different".

The picture of the typical Italian emerging from the different labels is however not a completely coherent one. Tensions are to be noticed in particular between the interpretations of Italian behaviour as natural versus unnatural, and as positive (good, desirable) versus negative (bad, undesirable). A positive evaluation of "natural" behaviour means that it is regarded as spontaneous, expressive, warm. In a negative judgment "natural" behaviour is undisciplined, disorganized, egocentric. "Unnatural" behaviour is labelled in negative terms as theatrical, conceited, insincere; in positive terms it is refined, elegant, sophisticated. These four possibilities indicate disagreements about how Italians really are.

A final question concerns the reasons for labelling Italians as cheerful, optimistic, able to enjoy the good things in life. This description is understandable from the tourist's perspective, where leisure, luxury, good weather and good food combine to give a rosy

view of the social environment; but it is shared apparently by many of those foreigners who stay longer in Italy and have the opportunity to get to know Italians better. Clearly it fits with the description of Italians as affectionate, spontaneous, warm, and expressive. In common-sense psychological categorisations "expressiveness" or "spontaneity" is associated with cheerfulness rather than sadness. And both labels, expressiveness and cheerfulness, may have an observational base in behavioral characteristics mentioned above: the tendency of Italians (statistically spoken, and compared to members of more Northern European nations) to speak with loud voices, to make gestures, to respond quickly, and to touch each other in direct interactions.

The image of Italians as cheerful and optimistic is, however, not confirmed at all by much of modern Italian literary fiction; novels and short stories by such authors as Italo Svevo, Alberto Moravia, Cesare Pavese, and Natalia Ginzburg exhibit an extremely dismal view of life. Something similar could be said of films by famous directors as Antonioni, Fellini, and Bertolucci. Quite another refutation of the image of Italians as cheerful and optimist comes from ethnographic accounts of the lives and mentalities of peasants and workers (see e.g. Ariëns 1986); thus the Southern Italian peasants described by Banfield (1958) showed an extreme pessimism, - for them life was controlled by alien and arbitrary forces and dominated by misèria. According to comparative survey research data too Italians are relatively pessimistic rather than optimistic. In responses to survey questions about general satisfaction and happiness Italians show themselves by far the least satisfied and happy among the nations of

Western Europe. Thus in 1984 only 10% of the Italian respondents said they were "very satisfied" with their lives compared to e.g. 44% of the Dutch respondents; 26.5% of the Italians said they were "not very satisfied" with their lives (compared to 6% of the Dutch), and 10% that they were "not satisfied at all" (against 1.5% of the Dutch) (Eurobarometer 21: var. 11). To a survey question in 1977 about personal happiness only 7% of the Italian respondents answered that they were "very happy", against 46% of the Dutch respondents; while 34% of the Italians, and only 5% of the Dutch, reported themselves to be "not too happy" (Eurobarometer 8: var. 118). Other surveys have yielded similar results; they all show that the differences in reported satisfaction and happiness between different Western nations are much larger than those within each nation along dimensions like class (income, education), sex, and age (Inglehart/Rabier 1984), thus testifying to striking differences in national culture. It would be naive to assume (as Veenhoven 1984 and Inkeles 1988 did) that these variations in self-report only reflect real differences in satisfaction or happiness. One explanation for the low level of reported satisfaction and happiness among Italians is that it is expressive of the high degree of social distrust: by downgrading one's own happiness one indicates to others that there is no reason to be jealous. However this may be, the tendency among Italians to describe themselves as dissatisfied and not too happy is an remarkable social fact, which contrasts strikingly with the widespread typification of the Italians as being cheerful and optimistic.

The Dutch - At least one difference between the Dutch and the other four Western European nations considered here is undeniable: the Dutch comprise a much smaller, less powerful and less influential nation, which consequently attracts much less international attention. It is to be expected therefore that fewer Europeans have any idea whatsoever about the Dutch than about the French, the English, the Germans, or the Italians. This expectation is confirmed to some (slight) degree by this investigation; 21% of the respondents did not say anything about the Dutch, a higher percentage than the percentages of non-response with respect to the other four nations.

A relative lack of previous knowledge and beliefs about the Dutch among the respondents might have had one advantage: images of the Dutch were formed to a relatively high degree on original observations, i.e. on experiences with Dutch people in this organisation. This might explain the fact that the trait ascribed to the Dutch with the highest frequency referred to an interaction quality which is not known as a widely popular stereotype: 30% of the respondents declared that the Dutch were friendly, kind, pleasant, sociable, easy-going. A smaller number of respondents (12%) expressed a different view by typifying the Dutch as reserved, cold, boring (more positive terms referring to similar behaviour were also used, such as calm). A few respondents suggested that these seemingly contradictory traits were actually two sides of the same character type: they described the Dutch as "reserved but friendly", or "friendly but a bit boring".

The second-most frequently mentioned trait about the Dutch - after friendliness or sociability - referred to their orientation to other nations: 20% of the respondents stated that the Dutch were internationalist, cosmopolitan, multilingual, "open to the world". Multilingualism is the most specific and most easily observable aspect of this cluster. As remarked before, the ability to speak and understand several languages is regarded as an important asset in this international organisation, and the Dutch members had a reputation of being very good at it: not only did they speak English well (better at least than most people from the Latin countries), they also spoke German (contrary to almost all other non-Germans), often French, and, to a lesser extent, Italian; besides they had of course their own special language to be used among themselves, incomprehensible for all non-Dutch apart from some Belgians. By virtue of this ability and because the Dutch were not suspected of seeking domination (being representatives of a small nation), they were often seen as ideal intermediaries, as middlemen between different national groups with stronger interests and outlooks of their own. This reputation probably contributed to the definition of the Dutch as friendly, pleasant people.

Cosmopolitanism can also be linked to yet another trait, or cluster of traits, put forward by 12% of the respondents, implying that the Dutch are tolerant, egalitarian, democratic, progressive, liberal. Here we touch upon a widespread and well-known image, particularly as indicated by the terms "tolerant" and "egalitarian". Tolerance has been noted as a characteristic of Dutch society by many foreigners, and is also cherished by inhabitants of the Netherlands as part of their

collective self-image (cf. Van Heerikhuizen 1982). In history books it is described as being rooted in a tradition which dates back to the seventeenth century, when persecuted refugees - like Protestants from Flanders and France, and Jews from the Iberian peninsula - entered the Dutch Republic and built up a new living there, and several religious groups co-existed fairly peacefully. Indeed, several foreign observers were struck by the tolerant social climate in Holland at the time, especially in religious matters (Haley 1988). (Catholics, Jews, and several Protestant minorities were however excluded from government positions, and it was only at the end of the 18th century, with the help of French revolutionaries, that they got full citizenship rights.) In recent years the image of tolerance has been confirmed - though not always in favourable terms - for an international public by mass media reports about the amazing Dutch policy (more specifically, the policy of the capital, Amsterdam) toward criminals, drug addicts, unemployed, and ethnic and sexual minorities. The same reputation has been confirmed also by serious social scientific comparative policy studies (Bagley 1973; Downes 1988).

Egalitarianism seems to be less central to the Dutch self-image, but has been put forward by foreign observers as a striking Dutch trait. It has not always been interpreted favourably; it has been regarded by some as a lack of feeling for true greatness, as an inclination to deny excellence and a preference for ordinariness and mediocrity (Baena 1966). (At least one respondent seemed to share this view by stating that the Dutch were "too democratic".) In more neutral terms, the image of Dutch egalitarianism refers above all to outward appearances and performance style - a preference for

soberness among the well-to-do (12), a tendency to de-emphasize hierarchical differences among the occupants of authority positions. This has been interpreted by some authors (like Phillips 1985) as hypocrisy: class differences in the Netherlands are not lesser than in other Western countries, they say, but they are hidden more effectively by the public stress on soberness and ordinariness.

Contrary to the image of egalitarianism, a few respondents described the Dutch as arrogant, proud, arrivistic, or even (according to a Flemish Belgian) "megalomaniac". Somewhat more frequently terms were used which could be interpreted as indicating a specific type of "arrogance" - terms like stubborn, stolid, "sure of their knowledge", "they know everything better". In other words, in so far as respondents suggested a certain arrogance as characteristic for the Dutch (as 10% could be said to do), they tended to specify it as arrogance in matters of knowledge and opinions. In this respect the Dutch were seen as somewhat similar to the Germans.

Another one-tenth of the respondents ascribed to the Dutch traits which could be connected with "stubbornness", - moralism, idealism, sentiments of social responsibility. About the same number (11%) described them as hard-working, laborious, efficient, busy, active, enterprising. (Here another similarity with the German image is to be noted.) And again 11% of the respondents referred to what is perhaps the most widespread stereotype about the Dutch: that they are frugal, sober, mean, "not very generous", commercial, profit-oriented, "money-conscious".

Several of these traits can be seen as interconnected, thus forming

one complex or cluster which is often denoted with the term Calvinist. (Actually, three respondents to the questionnaire used that term in typifying the Dutch.) Reserve in social interaction, stubbornness, the tendency toward heavy moralism, laboriousness and work-discipline, frugality and soberness - all these traits belong to this complex. They fit in Max Weber's classical account of the Protestant ethic as a stress on the systematisation of daily life and the deferring of immediate gratifications for the sake of the attainment of some long-term goal (Weber 1920). The term "Calvinist" for this complex serves not only descriptive but also explanatory purposes: it suggests that the prevalence of these traits among Dutch people is due to the strong historical influence of the Calvinist creed.

This image of the Dutch as the typical Calvinists is more or less contradicted by another cluster of traits referred to above: their reputed progressivism, their tolerance of all kinds of deviance, their egalitarianism, their high-minded pacifism, liberalism and libertarianism - or, in less friendly terms, their apparent indifference toward basic social values, their lack of social order and discipline.

Both complexes, however contradictory, have been connected to what several historians and sociologists have regarded as one the essential features of Dutch society through the ages: its bourgeois nature, resulting from the economic, political and cultural dominance of the urban bourgeoisie and the corresponding relatively weak position of the landed aristocracy from the beginnings of the Dutch state at the end of the 16th century. It was especially in the province of Holland, by far the richest and most powerful part of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, that the urban bourgeoisie

dominated, and from this class - the upper stratum of which consisted of wealthy merchants and their descendants, who became administrators on local, provincial, and national levels - cultural models permeated to other social classes (see e.g. Goudsblom 1967: 15 ff.). The end result of this process was conceived by the Dutch historian Huizinga in 1934 in these words: "Whether we like it or not, all we Dutch are bourgeois, from the notary public to the poet and from the baron to the common labourer. Our national culture is bourgeois in every sense of the word. The bourgeois conception of what life is all about has been adopted by all the segments or classes of our nation, whether rural or urban, the rich and the poor..." (Huizinga 1934; quoted by Van Heerikhuizen 1982: 107). While this bourgeois culture as a whole is characterized by a certain amount of soberness and moderation, and a corresponding distrust of aristocratic over-refinement, two strains within it can be distinguished: that of religious moderation, tolerance, and humanitarianism on the one hand, and that of religious orthodoxy, strictness and puritanism on the other hand. This tension came to the fore most clearly in the struggles between moderate and orthodox Protestants. Socially, it was connected to the distinction between the administrators and wealthy capital owners of the upper bourgeoisie, who were predominantly moderate, and the middle and lower sections of the bourgeoisie, among whom most orthodox Calvinists could be found. The tension between Dutch "Calvinism" and Dutch "progressivism" - in so far as these images do correspond to social reality - might be connected then to the historical tension between two variants of Dutch bourgeois culture.

It should be added however that the Dutch reputation of progressivism mainly dates back to the sixties, when social turmoils shook the Western world as a whole, life styles changed rapidly and confusingly, and, more particularly, the ranges of socially accepted behaviour were broadened. It was in that decade that Holland and particularly Amsterdam began to attract international attention as a centre of international youth culture, where soft drugs could be consumed freely and sexual liberties were maximized. (Scandinavian countries had a similar reputation somewhat earlier.) At the same time important changes within Dutch society took place, partly corresponding to international - Western - changes in general, but for another part peculiar to that society. Welfare state provisions were extended considerably, thus contributing to a lessening of socioeconomic inequalities. Even more important perhaps were the changes that took place in the sphere of organized religion: whereas the pace of secularisation quickened, the formerly closely knit politico-religious and ideological groups (the Protestant, Roman Catholic, socialist, and liberal "pillars" of society) were broken open - the borderlines between them began to blur; within the Dutch Roman Catholic community, in particular, a vast transformation took place, as it changed from the most reliable and orthodox branch of the Church to the most rebellious one, - thus contributing to the image of the Dutch as being progressive; and among the Protestants too, a process of partial radicalisation and loosening of religious morals could be noted, as is testified by their active participation in the peace movement, which won vast popularity in the Netherlands at the beginning of the eighties. In this complex process of interre-

lated changes a continuation of the Calvinist tradition may be detected: as the impact of orthodox Calvinism and organized religion in general diminished, the Calvinist style of heavy moralizing - exemplified traditionally by the Calvinist ministers, but also observable among the Roman Catholics, who were influenced by Calvinism - was maintained and re-directed toward secular goals (cf. Zahn 1984)(13). Modern progressivism might be interpreted then as a continuation of both the "moderate" version of Dutch bourgeois culture (in so far as it involves the values of tolerance and humanitarianism) and its "Calvinist" version (in so far as it implies a heavily moralistic stance).

It should be repeated that these well-known images of the Dutch were not the ones mentioned most frequently by the respondents of this investigation. As far as I know, "friendliness" or "sociability" has been hardly mentioned in the literature about the Dutch character, and "internationalism" or "cosmopolitanism" has been mentioned mainly by Dutch authors, thereby expressing a peculiar mixture of nationalism and internationalism, of national modesty and national pride. As said before, the ascription of these traits by our respondents is probably related to direct experiences with Dutch people in this international organisation. The ability of the Dutch members of EUI to speak several languages and, as a consequence, their relatively easy contacts with people from different nations have probably contributed to their reputation of not only internationally oriented, but also open, friendly, and sociable. Tourist experiences in the Netherlands may also have played a part in the formation of these images. In informal conversations some EUI members said they found the people in the

Netherlands very friendly when they were there on holidays, and they sometimes contrasted the easy, informal ways of Dutch policemen and ticket controllers with the more formal and authoritarian behaviour of these functionaries in their own countries. As people tell such experiences to each other, they may become the basis for new, more or less stereotypical images.

Comparisons and conclusions

What has been remarked in the introduction of this chapter can be presented now as a conclusion: the images of these five Western European nations are clearly differentiated from each other. We may summarize concisely, though crudely, by listing the six traits mentioned most frequently for each nation and ordering them by frequency:

<u>French</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Germans</u>
nationalistic	reserved	orderly
arrogant, proud	nationalistic	serious
refined	friendly	hard-working
individualistic	arrogant	arrogant
charming	conservative	complex
distant	humorous	philosophical

Italians

lively, spontaneous

egoistic

undisciplined

cheerful

family/group spirit

refined

Dutch

friendly

internationalist, cosmopolitan

serious

progressive

frugal

hard-working

From this simplified summary we can easily see that the pattern for each nation is unique, although several ascribed traits are shared by more than one nation. Thus, the French share some ascribed traits to some extent with the English (nationalism, arrogance, reserve/distance), and other ones with the Italians (refinement, charm/liveliness, individualism/egoism); but the combination is uniquely French. Among the four traits mentioned most frequently about the English three are also ascribed to the French (although partly in other terms with slightly different meanings) and one to the Dutch (friendliness); while the other two traits of the list of six are hardly mentioned for other nations than the English. Some of the traits clearly form pairs of contrasts: thus, Italian liveliness contrasts with English reserve, French distance, and German and Dutch seriousness; English conservatism contrasts with Dutch progressivism; Dutch internationalism with French and English nationalism; and German orderliness with Italian lack of discipline.

This strong differentiation of national images is the more striking since there are reasons not to expect it in this case: the imagined nations are near each other in several respects - geographically,

culturally, politically, economically - and each of them can be regarded as part of a wider, European or Western, society; the differences were generated by an open-ended question, i.e. they were not suggested by fixed answer-alternatives; and the answers were given by respondents who adhere to an internationalist ideology and have learned to be suspicious of crude generalisations, stereotypes and prejudices. Yet even these respondents generalize, and typify. For them, too, nations are not only political entities, but cultural and psychological realities.

Most of the frequently mentioned national characteristics refer to general attitudes, public morality and/or aspects of life style: e.g. "refined", "conservative", "orderly", "undisciplined". Some characteristics are very general personality traits, e.g. "cheerful". Other characteristics are more specific in that they pertain to attitudes to particular collectivities (e.g. "nationalistic"), or a particular sphere of life (e.g. "frugal"). An important category of frequently mentioned characteristics may be called interaction qualities or interpersonal response traits (cf. Krech et.al. 1962: 103 ff.); adjectives like "arrogant", "charming", "distant", "reserved", "friendly", and "lively" belong to that category.

All in all a strong tendency of psychologizing, of defining group characteristics (i.e. national characteristics) in terms of individual personality traits, can be found here (14). Another tendency is that of moralizing, or, more in general, of giving value-judgments. Most of the terms used in the typifications are nonneutral, value-laden, expressive of certain positive and negative attitudes. (However, this

is not always clear: an expression like "perfectly organized" for the Germans may have a positive or a negative meaning; and a term like "nationalistic" is probably meant to be critical in this context, but not necessarily so. On the other hand, some terms were used which did not have any descriptive content and were only expressive of positive or negative sentiments - e.g. "nice", "pleasant", or "a good way of living".) The generalisations about nations found in this questionnaire apparently fulfil a double function for those who make them: of creating cognitive order, making the sociocultural world coherent and understandable; and of giving sense to one's own emotions by defining different attitudes toward different collectivities.

The use of value-laden terms in characterizing a nation does not imply, however, that the over-all judgement of that nation is either positive or negative. Respondents' judgments in this questionnaire were often of a mixed nature. For example, a Belgian respondent stated about the Germans: "serious, boring, well-informed"; and another Belgian about the same people: "nice, always on time, sometimes dull". An Irishman described the English as "racist, chauvinist, self-complacent, but also polite, generous and naive"; and a French woman remarked about the English: "conformist, very formalistic, rather hypocritical/ very tolerant, nice contact/ a bit xenophobic/ no sense of esthetics in everyday life". Over 40% of the descriptions cum evaluations of a given nation could be classified as neutral or mixed, the rest being divided about evenly between positive and negative judgments.

No strong and significant differences in the statements about national

characteristics between respondents from different nations were found. This may be due to the small number of respondents from each nation. Yet the similarities in the responses between members of different nations are striking; no generalisations were typical for the respondents of only one or a few nations, and the frequently mentioned traits were suggested by members of all the nations represented with relatively large numbers among the respondents.

The similarities are even more striking when the answers of respondents about their own nation (self-definitions) are compared with those of other respondents (other-definitions). As it appears, the clearest over-all difference between self-definitions and other-definitions is that the first in general contain more specific statements, in other words are more extensive and complex. All the traits attributed to one of the five nations with a relatively high frequency were also mentioned by some members of that nation, and most of these traits more frequently by them. Thus, one-half of the French respondents described the French as nationalistic, the same number regarded them as arrogant or proud, while for 38% the French were refined, civilized or "cultured". Again one-half of the British respondents shared the view that the English are reserved, closed, formal. And no less than 62% of the German respondents used terms like disciplined and orderly for their own nation. Contrary to what might be expected on the basis of other investigations, self-definitions were on the whole not more favourable than other-definitions. The French, English and German respondents were, on the average, just as critical about their own nation as other respondents were; the Italian and the Dutch respondents held somewhat more positive

attitudes toward their nation than the other respondents, but only to a slight degree. (As far as the Italians are concerned, this corresponds with their relatively high degree of expressed national pride, as noted above. For the Dutch, on the other hand, it seems to contradict with their low level of expressed national pride; we may detect here a discrepancy between openly expressed nationalism and covert, indirectly expressed nationalism, the first being more or less tabooed among Dutch intellectuals.)

This high consensus between nations about national images may be attributed to either 1) specific shared experiences at EUI and the formation of an organizational culture based on those experiences, or 2) the existence of widespread national images which are neither bound to this international organisation nor to any specific nation. The second possibility is suggested by the correspondence, noted above, between many of the frequently mentioned traits, the results of other investigations of national stereotypes, and statements about national character found in both popular and scholarly literature.

In order to test this hypothesis more systematically, a limited investigation was carried out in the first half of 1988. A number of 80 Dutch undergraduate students in the social sciences were given a list of 24 adjectives which referred to the national characteristics frequently mentioned by the participants in the EUI investigation. The respondents were asked to choose among five Western European nations - again, the French, the English, the Germans, the Italians, and the Dutch - a) the one which was characterized most strongly by each of these adjectives, b) the one which followed as "next best" in

this respect, and c) the one which was characterized the least by each of these adjectives. Total scores for each nation-adjective pair were computed by assigning +2 to choice a, +1 to choice b, and -2 to choice c. The results are summarized in the following table:

Table 3 - Total scores of choices of nations by Dutch respondents
(N = 80) related to given characteristics

	French	English	German	Italian	Dutch
nationalistic	71	9	<u>91</u>	17	-89
arrogant	65	0	<u>75</u>	-15	-10
individualistic	16	23	21	-51	<u>89</u>
<u>refined</u>	<u>96</u>	27	-49	33	-13
<u>reserved</u>	22	<u>115</u>	8	-104	40
<u>isolationist</u>	43	<u>64</u>	26	2	-47
<u>conservative</u>	17	<u>106</u>	42	4	-66
<u>humorous</u>	15	<u>86</u>	-56	31	14
<u>orderly</u>	-16	57	<u>79</u>	-77	45
serious	-7	5	<u>62</u>	-75	<u>62</u>
<u>hard working</u>	-7	15	<u>84</u>	-67	79
complex	23	21	1	9	<u>26</u>
philosophical	<u>75</u>	11	26	-15	-21
romantic	74	-25	-33	<u>103</u>	-26
<u>spontaneous</u>	43	-41	-45	<u>124</u>	-31
egoistic	30	7	<u>54</u>	-9	22
<u>undisciplined</u>	34	-13	-53	<u>97</u>	15
<u>cheerful</u>	36	-7	-46	<u>120</u>	-16
<u>theatrical</u>	49	-20	0	<u>109</u>	-45
friendly	-3	<u>65</u>	-50	46	34
<u>cosmopolitan</u>	1	37	-11	2	<u>66</u>
<u>progressive</u>	24	-63	-4	11	<u>106</u>
<u>frugal</u>	-18	31	22	-73	<u>125</u>
<u>moralistic</u>	-2	35	29	-4	<u>51</u>

This table shows a clear differentiation of national images; for almost all the terms, the score differences between the nations are fairly large and outspoken (and statistically significant). When we compare these data with the answers to the EUI questionnaire, a high correspondence can be seen. In 15 of the 24 cases (underlined in the table) the nation which according to EUI respondents is characterized

most strongly by the given trait also received the highest score from the respondents in this second investigation. In one case - the adjective "serious" - the Germans and the Dutch got the same highest score, while according to the EUI respondents this trait is more peculiar to the Germans. In the cases of "nationalistic" and "arrogant" the French are rated second here (after the Germans), while according to the EUI respondents the French are characterized more than any other nation by these traits. As for the adjective "friendly", three nations get a relatively high score: the English, the Italians, and the Dutch (in that order); and these are also the nations to which the same trait is attributed relatively often by the EUI respondents (be it in a different order of frequency). We may conclude then that the images of Western European nations suggested by EUI members are not peculiar to that organisation, but are held by many people in (at least) Western Europe. To a great extent these are popular images not bound to any specific nation or group within a nation.

There are some notable exceptions to this over-all correspondence between the results of the two investigations, however, which ask for a (tentative) explanation. The tendency of the Dutch respondents, in contrast to those of EUI, to regard the Germans as extremely nationalistic, arrogant, and egoistic probably reflects continuing negative attitudes of many Dutch people toward the Germans, which are connected with the experiences of war and German occupation in 1940-1945, and probably also the present strong dependence of Dutch prosperity on the German economy. The frequent self-definition of the Dutch as "individualistic" corresponds to a well-known Dutch self-image, appearing in many writings; it is often

connected to the traditions of tolerance and verzuiling (pillarization), or, more specifically, the "typically Dutch" tendency to form ever new groups based on particular creeds. The slight tendency of the respondents to regard the Dutch as more "complex" than people from the other nations (however, this trait hardly differentiated between the five nations) conforms with the general tendency to perceive more complexity in entities one knows more about. Finally, the very different attribution of "romantic" in the two investigations reflects, to all likelihood, a different interpretation of the word: the EUI members who described the Germans as "romantic" referred to Romanticism as a cultural tradition, while the Dutch respondents followed the more popular meaning of the word and associated it with "romance", i.e. erotic love. The attribution of "romantic" to the Italians, and, to a lesser extent, the French can be connected then with the stereotype of the "Latin lover".

To conclude: the thesis that the descriptions of the five nations given by the EUI respondents reflect popular, widespread, nonspecific images held by many Western Europeans from different nations is largely confirmed, but not completely. Needless to say more research is needed for further confirmation and elaboration of this over-all conclusion.

How to explain the popularity of certain national images? In dealing with specific images some answers to that question have been suggested in this section. These answers implied that two extreme, opposite assumptions should be rejected: on the one hand, that popular national images are true in the sense that they reflect the

observed reality to which they refer, or at least are fairly adequate approximations of that reality; on the other hand, that they have no relation whatsoever to the reality to which they refer, and merely reflect the prejudices, emotions and morals of those who hold these images. The first assumption is contradicted by the normative, value-laden nature of most of the verbal specifications of national images and, more fundamentally, by the empirical untestability of most of them. The second assumption becomes unlikely (though theoretically not impossible) in the light of the widespread consensus about certain traits of a certain nation among members of different nations, and of the plausible links that can be drawn between observed facts with respect to the nation in question (e.g. historical events or current politics) and the traits mentioned. Any explanation of national images should start from the assumption that they are related to the observable reality they refer to, and at the same time represent selections from and interpretations, simplifications, evaluations and even distortions of that reality.

National images are formed on the basis of information: direct experiences (i.e. observation of and interaction with members of the given nation) and indirect experiences. The indirect experiences may take the form of written information, nonwritten verbal communication, or pictures. They may involve personal communication, or mass media messages. These messages may be purposefully fictitious (e.g. novels or films or plays) or pretend to be purely factual (e.g. newspaper reports). They may refer to current events, or to the past. They may or may not explicitly refer to national traits. On the basis of such diverse sources of information

people form national images, which in turn function as a basis for selecting and interpreting new information.

Within the whole range of information the direct experiences are a special category. They are, so to speak, the real basis on which a vast symbolic superstructure is erected. Although not objective in any sense, they are often regarded as the ultimate proof for the truth-value of statements about national character. People who have lived in a country for a longer period, tend to be seen, and to see themselves, as experts - they "know" how these people really are.

For the EUI respondents such direct information was at hand. Through their frequent contacts with people from different Western European nations they were able to compare the behaviour of the members of these nations by their own observations. To a certain extent they might be regarded as experts on national peculiarities, and some veterans in the organisation regarded themselves as such.

Most EUI respondents had the feeling that their experiences in the organisation had modified their ideas about different nations. A majority of 65% declared that their ideas about the cultural and psychological differences between nations had become "clearer" since they had come to EUI (while only 6% declared that these ideas had become "less clear"). For one-third of the respondents these differences had become more marked, while less than one-quarter (23%) declared that these differences had become less marked for them (for 41% the differences had remained the same). The tendency toward the perception of larger differences was stronger as far as subjective preferences were concerned: 44% of the respondents stated that their preferences for certain countries compared to others had

become stronger since they had come to EUI, while only 11% answered to the contrary (37% said their preferences had remained the same). In other words, in so far as the respondents reported a change in their cognitions and feelings on the basis of their contacts with members of different nations, it tended to be in the direction of a perception of clearer and larger differences and more outspoken preferences. In this sense, one might infer, the common ideology of internationalism was undermined by experiences in the organisation itself.

In spite of these self-reported changes on the basis of direct experiences, most statements about the different nations by EUI members conformed to fairly popular, well-known national images. Their ideas about these nations became more complex and more detailed, but hardly deviated from what is found among other Western Europeans and in written sources. This testifies to both the impact and the "validity" of these images. The perceptions of national differences within the organisation by its members were no doubt influenced by their pre-conceived ideas, formed on the basis of earlier (and largely indirect) information; at the same time, certain forms of behaviour of certain members of the organisation were observed which could be interpreted as confirmations of these pre-conceived ideas. To all likelihood, too, direct experiences have activated vague ideas, and sharpened and specified vague notions. (The potential correspondence between pre-conceived images and observations in the organisation is enhanced by the fact that the large majority of EUI members is middle class: popular national images refer much more to the urban upper and middle classes than to workers and farmers.)

The striking similarities between the statements of the EUI members about national characteristics and national images known from other sources may also be due, to some extent, to verbal impotence. As noted before, it was said by some of them that they perceived clear differences between members of different nations, but found it difficult to describe them. When they and others nevertheless took the effort, they did so with the help of conventional concepts and expressions - as is usually the case.

The notion of a European identity

National identities do not exclude the co-existence of other collective identities, which refer to smaller social units, such as regions, or to larger units, such as "Europe". As international links of communication and interdependence become stronger, it is to be expected that identifications with larger-than-national units grow; in particular, it is to be expected that in the course of further European integration the identification with "Europe" as a meaningful sociocultural unit will spread and intensify. This is at least what policy makers of the European Community wish to see and to stimulate; they look for a "European identity" as a ground for cooperation and a source of inspiration. Is this notion of a European identity merely a piece of propaganda, or has it significance for ordinary citizens in the European Community? And if it has significance for them, what kind of significance?

For almost two-thirds (65%) of the respondents of EUI the notion

of a European identity indeed had significance, if this is indicated by their agreement with the statement: "We, Europeans, have a common identity which distinguishes us from people from other parts of the world" (47% of the respondents agreed "to some extent", 18% "strongly"). Only 17% disagreed. No less than 85% of the respondents said they defined themselves as "European" (31% with the stricture "to some extent"), while only 6% declared they did not. When asked what was more important, their self-definition as European or as English, French etc., almost as many respondents chose the first alternative as the second one: 38% against 41%.

According to the Eurobarometer surveys financed by the European Community something like a European consciousness is not absent among the population of the EC-countries at large. Thus, in a survey held in all the EC countries in 1984, 72% of the respondents (weighted proportions) said they were in favour of European integration - 46% with the stricture "to some extent" -, while 10% said they were against it (Euro-Barometer 21: var. 170). In the same survey 55% declared the EC-membership of their country "a good thing", while 11% found it "a bad thing", and 27% "neither good nor bad" (idem: var. 189). These opinions were not spread out evenly over the countries: the people from the Netherlands, Italy, France, and Belgium - in that order - were above average in their favourable attitudes toward the European Community, the people from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Greece were below average. Surveys in other recent years have yielded similar results.

Public opinion in Western Europe is less favourable toward European integration when it apparently contradicts or threatens the

maintenance of national integrity. In a survey of 1984 a majority of respondents in all the EC-countries were against ambassadors for the European Community as a whole in the place of ambassadors for each of the member states, as well as against one European Olympic team. And in a survey of 1978 in the European Community, two-thirds of the respondents agreed with the statement that national autonomy should have priority anyway (Eurobarometer 10: 89). In other words, the majority of the population of the European Community seem to support both European integration and national autonomy; but when a contradiction or tension between the two becomes apparent, they are inclined to give priority to national autonomy.

The respondents in our investigation seem to be less nationalistic and more European-minded than the EC population as a whole, - not surprising for members of a European Community organisation. To all likelihood, both selective recruitment and the influence of the organisation are factors in the relatively high degree of European-mindedness. This organisational influence does not consist in outward propaganda for European integration, but in the stimulation of scholarly attention for European policy, European history, common European problems as well as in the cooperation between Europeans from different countries. (As noted above, this cooperation is not without tensions and may also enhance feelings of national identity.) European-mindedness is related to, though not identical with, the ideology of internationalism; although internationalism in its purest form does not stop at European borders (or at any borders), it implies at least criticism of "narrow" nationalism and the identification

with larger groupings than the nation-state.

Among those respondents who identified with Europe, the terms most often used to define the European identity were culture (20 times) and history (17 times). Europeans, they said, have a "common culture", a "cultural heritage", or distinct "cultural traditions"; which means, as some respondents specified, that they share certain "values", "assumptions about life", or "concepts of rationality", that they have a common religious heritage (Christianity), or participate in distinct artistic and literary traditions. Three respondents used the term "civilisation" in their definition of the European identity. In the specifications of Europe's common history reference was made to cultural traditions as well as shared political experiences (including wars). Some respondents suggested that Europe does not only have a distinct history and culture, but also have more of it than other societies: a particularly long recorded history, which is manifest in the present through old buildings, old art, and old continuing traditions (the "old world"); and a highly developed culture or civilisation, accompanied by "sophistication", or, some said, scepticism, cynicism, self-criticism.

The essence of the European identity, some respondents suggested - thus echoing innumerable writings -, is paradoxically its diversity, pluralism, heterogeneity, the differences of landscape, language and cultural style in a cramped space. Europe's unity lies above all in the common recognition of and respect for this diversity.

This recognized pluralism can be related to political characteristics put forward by some respondents: liberalism, liberal democracy, respect for human rights. A few others referred to common economic

characteristics, indicated by terms like "industrial", "advanced capitalist", or "wealthy".

Reference was also made to common problems as giving substance to Europe's identity. These were specified as socio-economic problems, or as politico-military problems arising from Europe's geopolitical location between the two superpowers. A few respondents linked this to Europe's history, its loss of political power and economic dominance in the course of this century. Europe is defined here as what some authors (like Morin 1987: 165 ff.) have named a Schicksalsgemeinschaft, a communauté de destin, a community of fate.

With all these kinds of definitions the question remains if and to what extent the mentioned characteristics are distinctly European. Do they really distinguish Europe from all other parts of the world? In so far as respondents dealt with this question, they almost always stressed the difference with the United States, or (North) America. They did so, we may presume, not because they found this difference larger and clearer than that with Asian or African societies, but precisely because they could not take it for granted. The distinction with North America was emphasized because it is the most problematical, North American culture being an outgrowth of that of (Western) Europe, and the similarities between both being expressed by their common denominator: "the West". Europe is regarded then as the non-American West, which distinguishes itself from its dominating daughter not by features that both have in common - like industrial capitalism and liberal democracy - but, as some respondents advanced, by the continuity and weight of its traditions and its

regional-linguistic-cultural diversity.

Related to this, and even more basic, is the question of the boundaries of Europe. Does Europe as a meaningful sociocultural entity embrace the whole of the continent - from the Atlantic to the Ural -, or only part of it? And which part then? If Europe is part of the West, what are the boundaries of the West? Our respondents hardly entered into these questions, although many of their answers suggested that Europe for them meant Western Europe in the first place. In this they followed a common Western European usage (exemplified and stimulated by the European Community) to regard the Western part of the continent as the real Europe. Eastern Europe, in this view, does not belong to "Europe" as sociocultural unit, or has a marginal position with respect to it. These same ambiguities are found in the meanings of "the West". As a political concept the West refers - or used to refer, until recently - to a division within geographical Europe between liberal-democratic-capitalist and communist states. But it has also been used to distinguish the non-Russian Soviet-dominated parts of Europe, with some tradition of liberalism and Roman Catholicism, from Russia, with its tradition of despotism and its religious heritage of Eastern Christendom. And in the broadest, cultural sense, the West comprises practically the whole of geographical Europe, including Russia. According to this last definition the boundaries of sociocultural Europe, as part of the West, are more or less identical with the boundaries of geographical Europe.

At the other extreme, Europe as a meaningful unit might be

identified with the European Community. Some (seven) respondents solved the boundary problem in this way. Europe, they suggested, exists as a meaningful category in so far as there is a common organization which strives for further integration. European identity exists as a will to unity, a will to create an identity. A double meaning of the concept of "identity" can be found here: on the one hand, identity is conceived as something given, an undeniable essence rooted in the past; on the other hand, it is something which has to be created or at least enhanced by purposeful action. Both meanings are implicit in public debates about the European identity (Schlesinger 1987). Although one may criticize this duality on logical and empirical grounds, it should be recognized that various social movements have successfully employed it: by stressing the essential, already given unity of the groups they claimed to represent (the workers, for example), these movements also enhanced it. This holds particularly true for nationalistic movements. However distorted their views on the past and present were (they tended to project their ideals on social reality, magnifying, eternalizing, and naturalizing the bonds of national unity), these were often quite effective in terms of their social consequences.

The same might happen to the European movement, - by evoking an already existing common identity it might make this identity into something real. However, compared to the processes of nation formation in the past centuries, this development of collective identity formation on a European scale is hampered by basic problems, even apart from the administrative and technical problems of "integration". First of all, there is the boundary problem, noted above: it is difficult

to identify with a supposed entity the boundaries of which are so unclear. If Europe is confined to the European Community, these boundaries seem arbitrary, as the similarities between e.g. Denmark (part of the EC) and Norway (outside the EC) are much greater than between Denmark and, say, Greece. Moreover, for the European Community the image of a territorial unit - which has been and still is highly important in enhancing feelings of national identity - can be held up only with the greatest difficulty, as its geographical shape is one of confusing irregularity, looking more like a feudal assemblage of lands than one large country.

Another hindrance to the formation of a common "European identity" is, of course, Europe's diversity. This could be overcome in the long run - as it has been overcome to a large extent on the national scale -, if this diversity were not organized politically in strong national states, each with its own administrative centre, its own capital, its own standardized language, its own universities, educational system, and mass media. None of these states dominates the other ones; within Europe, however defined, there is not one centre from which one core culture flows to less powerful and more peripheral groups, as e.g. the Parisian court circles once set the standards for what became the French language and French culture in general.

The drift toward diversity within the European Community (to confine ourselves only to that part of Europe) is enhanced by the strong bonds several of the member states have with other states outside the Community. In Britain there is a strong orientation to the former colonies and, in particular, the rest of the English-

speaking world; Britain may be regarded as part of a wider Anglosaxon culture whose point of gravity has shifted towards the United States. The Danes define themselves as belonging to Scandinavia, the largest part of which is outside the European Community. Among some groups of Germans there is a renewed orientation to Mitteleuropa, Central Europe which not only includes Eastern Germany but also the nations of the former Austrian-Hungarian empire. Spain and Portugal, finally, have strong cultural connections with their former colonies in Latin America.

All these features of present-day Europe make it highly unlikely that ideas and feelings of a common European identity will develop on a scale and with an intensity comparable to the development of ideas and feelings of national identity. Yet it would be too easy to conclude the other extreme: that "European identity" means nothing at all, that it is merely an empty phrase used by Eurobureaucrats for propaganda. This investigation indicates that the idea of a European identity is taken seriously not only by those who have direct professional interests in propagating European integration, but also by people who do not have such interests. With the growing scale of economic competition in the world it is to be expected that powerful European business interests will increasingly seek political as well as cultural allies in the formation of one European market. Interlinking economic, political and cultural elite groups will give meaning to the idea of a European unity and at the same time derive meaning from it.

Concluding remarks

Given the wide range of topics dealt with in this paper, in this concluding section I can do no more than summarize briefly some of the findings of this case-study and add a few remarks on their wider implications.

The case studied here represents a type of social figuration which is becoming more common in the world today: a figuration in which people from different nations, with different nation-bound cultures (including language, behavioural norms, and everyday knowledge), have to cooperate on an more or less permanent basis. With the growth and increasing importance of international organisations - including multinational corporations and huge public bureaucracies like those of the European Community and the United Nations - growing numbers of people are placed in such situations. They may be attracted by material and related status rewards (good salaries and career prospects) but also - as was found in this investigation - by the excitement and learning experiences associated with participation in an international setting.

However, these same people also encounter problems related to their position. As foreigners they have to adapt to the society they have come to live in. When they stay there for a long time, they may become more and more estranged from their country of origin without feeling really at home in their new environment; in other words, they may experience feelings of disorientation and marginalization. Such feelings were indeed reported by some (not all) of the interviewed veteran members of the organisation studied

here.

A second type of problem pertains to the organisation itself: problems of communication, of misunderstanding, of tensions and conflicts between members of the organisation belonging to different nations. These problems can be mitigated by shared cultural traits and a common identity cross-cutting the national differences. Problems of this nature and counter mechanisms could be observed in this case. While there were recurring problems of (mis)communication which had to do with the international character of the organisation, its members also shared cultural traits which were not nation-bound; not only did they come from the same type of Western national societies, most of them also shared more specific orientations as middle-class intellectuals oriented to an academic career; and disciplinary groups among them participated in common scientific and scholarly subcultures (even though these were also characterized by national varieties). Moreover, a norm of internationalism was adhered to, as could be inferred from expressed opinions: the norm that one should be open to foreign cultures, beware of prejudices and parochialism, and get along well with people irrespective of their nationality. Finally, many members of this European organisation (the majority of the respondents) defined themselves as having a shared European identity; they tended to define Europe as part of the West which was distinguished from other parts - in particular the United States of America - by a common culture and history.

Yet in spite of these shared cultural traits, the norm of internationalism and common feelings of identification with Europe, differential national identities appeared to be important in this

organisation, as they were expressed by both people's self-definitions and their definitions of others. Respondents readily acknowledged the distinctiveness of their own nation compared to other ones - in terms of cultural traditions and even personality traits. Moreover, their national consciousness tended to increase through their experiences in the organisation. That is, they tended to develop clearer and stronger ideas about the distinctiveness of their own nation (according to their own self-report) as well as the distinctiveness of other nations. However, this did not always go together with a strong and increasing positive emotional identification with one's country. In matters of national pride and protection of national interests most respondents were not very outspoken.

The importance of national differences was not only shown by verbal statements; it also appeared in patterns of informal interaction. While the norm of internationalism apparently precluded a clear expression of preferences for friendly relations with compatriots, self-reports on actual relations showed that informal interactions with compatriots were relatively frequent. Besides, both respondents' stated preferences and their reports on actual interactions showed a liking for members of specific nations; in particular, people from Southern European (Mediterranean, Latin) countries tended to prefer the company of people from other Southern countries, whereas Northern Europeans showed some more preference for interaction with noncompatriots from their own part of Europe. In other words, the establishment of informal relations and networks was partially determined by nationality, or, more specifically, by degrees of nation-determined cultural similarities and dissimilarities.

Interaction preferences were related, to some extent, to the attribution of different personality traits to different nations. The participants in this international setting perceived cultural and psychological differences not only between their own and other nations, but also between various other nations than their own. Although they often showed a dislike of crude stereotypes, they tended to generalize about nations in psychological and moral terms. In other words, they held certain, more or less well-defined, images of national character. Their descriptions of the characteristics of five Western European nations - France, England, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands - showed many variations and subtle shades of meaning; yet for each nation specific central tendencies in the descriptions were found, which largely conformed to widespread, fairly popular national images. This does not mean that the respondents' descriptions reflected a blind conformity to conventional stereotypes; it rather means that they were inclined to interpret, order, and verbalize their experiences with and information about members of the five nations (particularly their interaction experiences in the organisation) in terms of the concepts and social knowledge they already had. The high degree of correspondence between the respondents' descriptions and popular images may indicate both selective perception (the tendency to see and to stress empirical phenomena that confirm existing ideas) and selective verbalization (i.e. difficulties in verbalizing complex social knowledge in other than conventional terms).

Theoretically, the correspondence between respondents' descriptions and popular images might also be explained as being grounded in the high truth-value of these images. Although this

interpretation would be far too simple, the images are not unrelated to the reality to which they refer; as has been shown here, there are indeed connections between popular images of national character reflected by the respondents' descriptions and distinctive aspects of national histories and cultures. At the same time, these images are at best only crude generalisations, and therefore simplifications, of real national characteristics. Moreover, the images expressed by the respondents reflect tendencies of psychologizing (the interpretation of sociocultural phenomena in psychological terms) and moralizing (the interpretation of these phenomena in terms of good or bad, favourable or unfavourable, desirable or undesirable). Therefore, it is hardly possible to test scientifically the extent to which these sketches of national character are true or false, as they only partially refer to observable behaviour and are highly interpretative and value-laden. This is typical for everyday social knowledge; people in everyday social life are not so much interested in other people's "objective" characteristics as in the ways they may get along with them, - if they are pleasant or not, cooperative or uncooperative, reliable or unreliable, potential friends or potential enemies. The formation of such attributions is not only determined by direct observations but also by hearsay, speculation, and positive and negative emotions. This is a fortiori true with respect to the attribution of traits to collectivities such as nations. The formation of images of national character is comparable, in important respects, to the formation of images of individual character; both are determined by similar processes and rooted in everyday life experiences. The ways people talk and think about individual personality traits are easily transferred

to the level of (national and other) collectivities. On both levels, descriptions do not only reflect qualities of the described, but also emotional attitudes of those who describe.

One motivational source for the formation of images of national character may be nationalism in the widest sense; or, in even broader terms, the need for positive we-feelings, the need for self-respect sustained by identification with a collectivity. To the extent that images of national character are based on nationalism in this broad sense, we may expect that they differentiate between the respondents' own nation and other nations in terms of positive values. While such a differentiation has been found in several surveys on national stereotypes, it was virtually absent among the respondents in this study. Though most of them did not deny having some sentiments of national pride, they tended to express them in very moderate terms; and, correspondingly, their descriptions of the characteristics of their own nation were on the whole not strikingly more favourable than those of other nations. This is, of course, related to the internationalism and the positive identification with the larger unit of "Europe" prevailing in this group. By being internationally oriented and Europe-minded feelings of national pride and antagonism were mitigated.

While this is typical for the group investigated here (their expressed national pride was relatively weak and their identification with Europe relatively strong compared to the populations of the involved European nations at large), it may also be regarded as indicative for a sociocultural trend in Western Europe since the Second World War: a diminishing of antagonistic nationalism, and a

slow and hesitating emergence of feelings of identification with Europe as an economic, political, and cultural unit. We may expect that in this sense the attitudes shown by this group will become more common among the population of Western Europe.

Notes

- 1) The concept of "nation" is by no means the only one which has this self-referential character. Many, if not most concepts referring to social "reality" also refer to the reality definitions of those who constitute that reality.

- 2) The questionnaire was distributed among more than 400 members of the organisation, which means that the non-response was more than 75%. Therefore, the quantitative results cannot be regarded as reflecting the distribution of ideas and opinions among "the" members of the organisation. Non-response was particularly large among members of the administrative staff; this may be related to the fact that many members of the administrative staff were Italian residents and a) did not understand English very well (the questionnaire was in English, though it could be answered in French, German, Italian, or Dutch as well), b) had a marginal position in the organisation. Response was much higher among the students and researchers, who together formed the large majority of the respondents (81%). For the purposes of this investigation these were the most relevant groups. As this is an explorative case-study without a clearly defined "population", the problem of representativeness was not acute. There may be, nevertheless, a selective bias in favour of those who were particularly interested in problems of national identity, which may have influenced in the results. This presumption was not confirmed, however, by the long interviews and informal talks I had with several non-respondents to the questionnaire: they seemed to be just as interested in problems of national identity as respondents seemed to be. As the main reasons for not answering the questionnaire they gave lack of time and the difficulty of answering several of the open-ended questions.

- 3) This is exemplified by the recent Historikerstreit in Western Germany, the public debate among historians and other intellectuals about the uniqueness or non-uniqueness of the Holocaust ("Historikerstreit", 1987).

4) This refers to 1987.

5) Thus, they were defined as relatively immodest and self-confident by the respondents in Peabody (1985). The differences with the definitions of the English and the Germans in these respects were only small, however.

6) See e.g. L'Europe et ses populations (1978): 299-306.

7) Peabody (1985) found that his respondents defined the English as relatively calm and cautious.

8) Gorer (1955) found that many of his respondents (a non-representative sample of English men and women) said that shyness was or had been a problem for them.

9) In Peabody's investigation (1985) the Germans received relatively high scores on items like serious, grim, severe, persistent, inflexible, and hard-working. To give quite another example: in a recent article in Zeit Magazin (28 April 1989) about "the typical German?" the following traits (among other ones) were mentioned as being contained in common ideas: industrious, correct, order-loving (ordentlich), perfectionist.

10) Thus, rechthaberisch (pedantic, convinced of never being wrong) was mentioned in Zeit Magazin as a common idea about the Germans.

11) By Montesquieu, among others; cf. Bourdieu (1980).

12) As documented by Schama (1987) for the seventeenth century.

13) One indication for this moralistic or ethical progressivism is the relative large support among the Dutch population for government-sponsored foreign aid to poor countries. See Inkeles (1988; esp. p. 109, table 4) reporting comparative data on public opinion.

14) We may refer here to what psychologists have called "the fundamental attribution error", i.e. the "tendency to account for others' actions in terms of dispositional rather than situational categories" (Baron & Byrne 1984: 64).

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APPENDIX:

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

N = 100

Answer below

- 1) What is your nationality (according to your passport)?
- 2) To which nation -or nations- do you feel you belong?
(NB: The answer to this question may be the same as to the first, but not necessarily.
NB: If you feel you belong to more than one nation, please indicate which is the most important for you, and answer the following questions accordingly.)
- 3) Can you subscribe to the following statements?

Please put a circle around the corresponding number:

0. not subscribe at all
1. subscribe somewhat
2. subscribe to a large extent
3. fully subscribe

					n.a. total	
- The nation I belong to means a lot to me	0	1	2	3		
	12	33	31	19	5	100
- I am proud to be from (fill in the nation you feel you belong to)	0	1	2	3		
	29	37	10	16	8	100
- My nation is characterized by certain distinct traditions.	0	1	2	3		
	1	19	36	43	1	100
- It is desirable that these traditions be maintained	0	1	2	3		
	13	43	24	9	11	100
- The people of my country have certain personality traits which are, on the whole, different from those of people from other countries.	0	1	2	3		
	7	37	32	22	2	100
- It is desirable that these personality traits be maintained.	0	1	2	3		
	25	50	13	8	4	100
- In general, I feel proud when compatriots of mine achieve something which is recognized internationally as being important	0	1	2	3		
	29	35	20	15	1	100
- In general, I feel ashamed when compatriots do certain things which are frowned upon by foreigners.	0	1	2	3		
	22	33	26	17	2	100
- I feel rather indifferent toward what other people think about people from my country.	0	1	2	3		
	27	41	20	11	1	100

4) Can you say something about the nature of the distinct characteristics (traditions, personality traits) of your nation? Please specify your answer as fully as possible.

5) In the following items you are asked to mention personality of mentality traits which, according to you, can be found more often among the people of a certain country in Western Europe than among the people of other Western European countries. Of course, this is not a test of your knowledge of the different Western European nations; You are merely asked to give your personal impressions. You may mention as many characteristics as you think are significant.

- Compared to the people of other Western European countries, the French are, on the whole,

nationalistic, chauvinistic etc. :
arrogant, proud etc. :
refined etc. :
individualistic, self-centered etc. :
charming, vivacious etc. :
distant, closed, cold etc. :
rational, intelligent etc. :

- Compared to the people of other Western European countries, the English are, on the whole,

reserved, closed, etc. :
nationalistic, isolationist etc. :
friendly etc. :
arrogant, proud etc. :
conservative etc. :
humorous, etc. :

- Compared to the people of other Western European countries, the Italians are, on the whole,

lively, spontaneous, extravert etc. :
egoistic, self-centered etc. :
undisciplined etc. :
cheerful, joyous, optimistic etc. :
family spirit, group spirit etc. :
refined, artistic etc. :
image-conscious, theatrical etc. :

- Compared to the people of Western European countries, the Dutch are, on the whole,

friendly etc. :
internationalist, cosmopolitan etc. :
serious, reserved, boring etc. :
progressive, liberal, tolerant etc. :
frugal, sober, ~~mean~~ etc. :
hard-working, disciplined etc. :
stubborn etc. :
moralistic etc. :

- Compared to the people of other Western European countries, the Germans are, on the whole,

orderly, disciplined, formal etc.	:	44
serious, dull etc.	:	25
hard-working, ambitious etc.	:	19
arrogant etc.	:	17
complex, difficult etc.	:	10
philosophical etc.	:	9
romantic etc.	:	7

- 6) Can you indicate if and in what direction your ideas about the following matters have changed since you have come to the European University Institute?

Please put a circle around the corresponding number

- 2: much less
- 1: somewhat less
- 0: remained the same
+ 1: somewhat more
+ 2: much more

Since I have come to the European University Institute,

- my ideas about the cultural and psychological differences between nations have become less clear/clearer

						n.a. total	
-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
0	6	26	44	21	3	100	

- I have found that these differences are less/more important than I first thought

-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
6	17	41	24	9	3	100	

- The distinctiveness of my own nation seems to me less/more marked now

-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
4	9	41	24	18	4	100	

- My preferences for certain countries compared to others have become less strong/stronger

-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
4	7	37	33	11	8	100	

- My feelings of identification with my own country have become less strong/stronger

-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
5	16	48	18	7	6	100	

- I have become less/more convinced that Europeans have something in common

-2	-1	0	+1	+2			
3	8	35	29	17	8	100	

- 7) Do you agree with the statement: "We, Europeans, have a common identity which distinguishes us from people from other parts of the world" (Put a circle around the corresponding number.)

1. strongly agree	18
2. agree to some extent	47
3. neither agree nor disagree	12
4. disagree to some extent	10
5. strongly disagree	7
n.a.	6
total	100

If you agree with this statement, could you indicate in a few words something about the nature of the European identity?

8) Would you define yourself as "European"?

1. yes, definitely
2. to some extent
3. no
4. don't know/n.a.

If you had to choose, in defining yourself, between "European" and the nation you belong to, what would you choose?

1. European
2. nation I belong to
3. don't know/n.a.

9) In your work at the European University Institute, have you experienced specific problems arising from the fact that people from different countries are working together? (N.B. "work" includes here all the activities that are directly related to your position in the EUI, e.g. administration, teaching, research, studying, following seminars.)

1. yes
2. no
- n.a.

If "yes": Can you say something about the nature of these problems?

10) On the whole, do you like or dislike working with people from other countries than your own?

1. like it
2. neither like nor dislike it
3. dislike it
- n.a.

Could you give one or more reasons for your preference?

11) Considering your informal (non-work) contacts and friendly relations with people related to the Institute, do you have a preference for people from a certain country or countries? (N.B. This may be your own country.)

1. strong preference
2. moderate preference
3. no such preference
- n.a.

If you have such a preference: which country or countries? (If possible, specify your order of preference.)

Can you give one or more reasons for your preference?

- 12) Please mention the nationality and the sex of the five persons related to the EUI with whom you have most contacts outside of your work.

nationality

sex (M or F)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 13) When you consider the last two times you had dinner with persons ~~from~~ your family (or partner), can you mention the nationality and the sex of these persons, and also whether they are related to the EUI? (a maximum of 5 persons.)

nationality

sex (M or F)

related to EUI

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 14) Please give some information about yourself.

Sex: M / F M = 73; F = 26; n.a.

Age: 1	24 or younger	10
2	25-29	36
3	30-39	34
4	40-49	15
5	50 or older	5

function: 1	student-researcher	57
2	research assistant	7
3	Jean Monnet fellow	17
4	professor	5
5	member of administrative staff	13
6	other, namely	0
	n.a.	1

Department:

Since when have you had a position at the EUI?

Year:

month:

Which languages do you speak? Please put a cross according to your self-evaluation.

	Fleuently	Very well	Fairly well
English	59	21	16
French	29	21	22
Italian	29	13	27
German	26	10	20
other, namely	39	2	5
other, namely	2	3	4

15) Finally, do you have any comments on this questionnaire?



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