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Representing the future of the European Union: Consequences on national and European identifications

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Since the creation in Maastricht of the status of citizen of the Union, member States' nationals possess a dual citizenship: they are both citizens of their country and of the European Union. This raises the issue of the relationship between subordinate (nations) and super-ordinate (EU) levels of identification. This paper first investigates the relevance of Social Representations and Social Identity Theories for understanding geopolitical identity building processes. The national model is examined, then its role as a source of social cognitive anchoring in the development of social representations of Europe is outlined. It was predicted that anticipating antagonistic relationships between the nation and the EU would elicit a perception of threat and therefore hinder European identification whereas anticipating a complementary relationship would facilitate it. Results of three correlational studies with French-speaking Belgian psychology students addressing their national and European identifications and their anticipatory representations of the European integration process are presented. They show that participants were generally euro-enthusiastic, but that potential losses of cultural distinctiveness and of national sovereignty were perceived as threatening. Moreover, they confirmed that identification with Europe is facilitated by a representation of Europe and the nation as complementary rather than antagonistic. Results are discussed with respect to their theoretical contribution and to their implications for the pursuit of the European integration project.

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"La souveraineté est à la nation ce que la liberté est à chacun d'entre nous. C'est-à-dire le droit de décider de son sort. De choisir son destin. Pour une femme, pour un homme, c'est le libre choix de son travail, son domicile, son chemin, son conjoint, son avenir.

Et bien il en va de même pour une nation, pour un peuple, et donc pour le peuple français. La souveraineté, c'est le droit de choisir ses lois. De décider de ses impôts. D'avoir son gouvernement, son armée, sa police, sa monnaie et surtout d'avoir sa maison. Avec des portes et des voisins, que l'on invite ou que l'on n'invite pas. Et cette maison, pour une nation, s'appelle le territoire. Comme les portes s'appellent les frontières et les voisins, les Etats frontaliers. Détruire la souveraineté de la nation, c'est détruire tout cela. Ce que précisément, depuis trente ans, la construction fédérale européenne n'a cessé de faire".

Jean-Marie Le Pen (1999)²

European Citizenship and European identity

Since the Maastricht treaty in 1992, European citizenship exists as an official status. But this new status introduces a novelty in the traditional conception of citizenship as European individuals are now both directly linked to their national State and to the European Union: they have a dual – or double - citizenship. European citizenship is a "second layer" citizenship that gives the individual specific rights linked to the integration process (individual mobility, diplomatic protection by other member states, right to elect the European Parliament and to be elected, etc.). Active participation in the democratic processes is also encouraged, but several authors have deplored the fact that this new status had been conceived *a minima*, based solely on nationality whilst active participation is still very limited (Bertossi, 2001; Licata & Klein, 2002; Lochack, 1995; Sanchez-Mazas, Van Humskerken, & Casini, 2003; Withol de Wenden, 1998). The current debate about the future of the Union relates, *inter alia*, to the evolution of this status: should it remain a double citizenship or should it evolve towards a unique "supranational" European citizenship in the framework of a federal Europe?

Formally speaking, the current situation is one of dual categorisation rather than one of shifting from a subordinate - national - to a super-ordinate - European - level of identification (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a). However, lay conceptions do not always reflect formal definitions and these two memberships - national and European - might be represented as conflicting, which would impede the development of a sense of European identity. In particular, the well-established social representation of the nation might serve as an anchor for the construction of social representations of the EU. As a consequence, people might anticipate an antagonistic relationship between their nation and the EU, perceive their national identity is being threatened, and in turn be reluctant to identify with Europe. This paper addresses the

² "Sovereignty is to the nation what freedom is to each of us. That is to say the right to decide of one's fate. To choose one's destiny. For a woman, for a man, it is the free choice of one's job, of one's residence, of one's way, of one's husband or wife, of one's future. Well it goes the same for a nation, for a people, and therefore for the French people. Sovereignty is the right to choose its laws. To decide of its taxes. To have its government, its army, its police, its currency and above all its house. With doors and neighbours, that one invites or that one does not invite. And this house, for a nation, is called a territory. As doors are called borders and neighbours, border States. To destroy the nation's sovereignty is destroying all that. Which is precisely, for thirty years, what the European federal construction has not ceased doing" (Le Pen, 1999).

relevance of an articulation of Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1961/1976) - and more precisely the concept of anticipatory representation (Philogène, 2002) - with Social Identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-categorisation theories (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) for the study of European citizenship. First, through a brief review of the literature on nationalism, we examine how both representational and identity processes impact on the construction of geopolitical entities. Meanwhile, we review the features of the national model, which, as we argue, currently underlies emerging representations of the European Union. Then, we try to explain how and why the development of this super-ordinate entity might be perceived to threaten pre-existing subordinate identities, therefore conditioning people's identification with Europe, as the epigraph of this paper clearly illustrates. Next, results of three interconnected studies are presented and discussed.

European identity as a political project

As an instance of development of a new sentiment of geopolitical identity, the situation of the European Union at the turn of the XXth and XXIst centuries resembles the situation of the Nation-states between the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XXth century (Hobsbawm, 1990; Magnette, 1999). At the birth of modern democracies, States have used numerous strategies in order to warrant their subjects' loyalty even though, in most cases, their populations were culturally, linguistically, and often ethnically heterogeneous (Moreau Defarges, 1994). In a similar way, Stråth (2000b) considers European identity primarily as a political project. This project emerged when economic policies defined at the national level failed to resolve the 1973 oil crisis. Before that crisis, the dominant guiding principle was "integration", understood as the political coordination of national economies, rather than as an identity project. When national economies collapsed, the European discourse about integration lost its potential for mobilisation. It is at that point that the concept of European "identity" took over the concept of European "integration", at a time when feelings of community and identity were lacking. In the 70's and the 80's, when the individual became the centre of new political expectations, this concept took place in the framework of a neo-liberal economic discourse based on the idea of flexibility, in order to support ideas of individuals as European citizens operating in a market without borders. It is not before the 90's that the European identity concept moved from this economic connotation towards the idea of a European civilising mission based on Human Rights. In contrast with authors who posit the existence of European identity as an objective fact, or with some political discourses which attribute - explicitly or implicitly³ - a non-ambiguous content to Europe, Stråth (2000) points to the fact that this idea of a European identity was adopted when such a concept did not yet exist, and that it was promoted in order to influence behaviours.

Notwithstanding the fact that the situations of the nation states in the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries and today's European Union are hardly comparable on most criteria, in both cases, identification has been encouraged for political reasons. In that sense, in the framework of the study of European identity, the national model deserves special attention. On the one hand, as a historical example, studying nationalism may contribute to identifying factors that proved successful in developing national identities. We could then assess the relevance as well as

³ " (...) there exists a European identity, objective, but most of the peoples are not conscious of it" (Strauss, 1999, p. 356). "Turkey is not Europe. It's even the contrary" (Tract of the French National Front, our translation).

highlight the dangers of their application to the European situation. On the other hand, as an ideology (Billig, 1995, 1996), nationalism exerts influence on lay people's representations of their geopolitical identities. This influence of the national model exists at the sub-national level: regionalist, cultural, or ethnic movements often evolve towards separatist claims the ultimate purpose of which is the creation of new Nation-states. But this trend may also express itself at the supra-national level. In the case of the European Union, this would entail a transposition of the national model at the European level (Ferry, 1992).

Nation building as a social representational process

The best-established geopolitical entities, as today are the nations, are to a large extent the products of strategies of influence (Reicher, Hopkins, & Condor, 1997). There exists a relative consensus, among theorists of nationalism, for acknowledging the fact that nations are the outcome of nationalism and States, rather than the opposite (Breuilly, 1982; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). Apart from some rare exceptions, in contrast with their apparent longevity, modern Nation-states only started to emerge from the XVIIIth century onwards (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001b; Thiesse, 1999). And, despite important divergences regarding the origins of nations, most scholars acknowledge the fact that the initiative of a nation's creation generally emanates from small minorities (elites) who frame and diffuse a discourse intended to convince the masses that they belong to a common entity (Brass, 1979; Breuilly, 1982; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1991). As the sociologist Alfonso Pérez-Agote (1999) puts it: "... we have to conceive the nation as a definition of reality, historically produced by its elites, which has reached, through certain mechanisms, an important social diffusion and which maintains itself depending on similar or distinct mechanisms" (p. 23).

In the same way, according to Bourdieu, the geopolitical entity is always the product of a "classification struggle" (*lutte des classements*) the purpose of which is to impose a legitimate definition of the divisions of the social world (Bourdieu, 1982). If successful, this strategy of influence creates meaning and consensus over this meaning, especially over the group's identity and unity, which in fact creates the reality of the group's identity and unity. In that sense, the formation of geopolitical entities is achieved through the transformation of a scientific definition - or rather an allegedly scientific definition - of this entity produced by elites into a socially shared definition i.e., through the construction of a social representation (Moscovici, 1961/1976). This 'scientific' definition of the nation is not always fashioned by politicians. On the contrary, politicians often refer to expert sources, particularly to History and traditional literatures. Politicians rather play the role of mediators in this process of transformation from scientific to lay knowledge. According to Bourdieu (1982) and Pérez-Agote (1999), the transition from the scientific to the social definition of the nation is performative: the success of socially shared definitions of a collective reality may depend on their capacity of engendering the reality they define. "We are talking about a performative process (Austin, 1962) because the diffusion of the belief in the definition equates with the formation of a social aggregate with a conscience of belonging" (Pérez-Agote, 1999). When all the individuals accept the definition, the social group is fully realised. In a similar way, Tajfel (1970) remarked that national stereotypes had 'the magical power' of self-fulfilling prophecies.

The national model is so widespread in modern societies that it is often confused with a natural state (Gellner, 1983). In line with social representations theory (Moscovici, 1961/1976), it must be acknowledged that, when the social representation of the nation is at stake, the objectification process has been particularly successful: people refer to it as if it

were a concrete object, or even a living being. One can further argue that this representation is now so widespread that it should be regarded as a hegemonic representation (Moscovici, 1988) in that it is not only shared by some national groups; it is shared and undisputed among all of them (Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001b; Thiesse, 1999). Therefore, one can expect nations to serve as anchors in the construction of social representations linked with European identity. Together with objectification, anchoring is a major process in the creation of a social representation. It is the social cognitive process through which new elements are incorporated into the network of pre-existing categories (Moscovici, 1961/1976; Palmonari & Doise, 1986). It ensues that people probably use their representation of the nation to make sense of the new level of identification they have to cope with. In addition, this sense of obviousness can also shape experts and decision makers' representations of what Europe should become. It is therefore crucial to identify the main features of this model.

The definition of the nation can take diverse forms depending on the particular context in which it is shaped and diffused, but it generally possesses a few invariant features. Hence, Gellner (1983) proposed two minimal conditions for a nation to exist: Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture (1) and two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognise each other as belonging to the same nation (2). Hence, on the one hand, the imposition through various means - large scale education systems, mass media, administrations (Brass, 1979; Gellner, 1983; Gellner, 1987; Hobsbawm, 1990; Jaffrelot, 1991; Smith, 1991), routine use of national symbols (Billig, 1995), etc. - of common cultural references that are supposed to provide a content to the group's identity leads to a homogenisation of the national cultural space (Smith, 1991). The ultimate goal is a close correspondence between a community of people (the nation), a culture, and a State (Gellner, 1983). On the other hand, people must also be conscious of the fact that they share a common identity. As Bar-Tal pointed out about social groups in general (Bar-Tal, 1990), "there may be an important difference for the group between the situations when a belief is held by one member of the group, or even by all the members, who are not aware of sharing this belief, and the situations when a belief is held by all the members or a portion of them, who are aware of this sharing" (p. 1). These group beliefs are at the origin of a group's formation: groups form on the basis of sets of beliefs that members are aware of sharing (Chryssochoou, 1996, 2000). These group beliefs - which, in the case of nationalism, form a shared culture - serve, among other functions, to mark the group's boundaries; to differentiate the in-group from the out-groups. Those two processes - homogenisation and differentiation - clearly evoke the cognitive process of categorisation. That is the process through which individuals reduce the complexity of the stimuli they get from the physical world by classifying them in a limited number of categories. This process implies both the maximisation of differences between members - objects or people - of different categories (differentiation) and the minimisation of differences among members of the same category (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). Henri Tajfel placed the categorisation process at the heart of social identity theory (SIT), which he meant, *inter alia*, to explain large-scale intergroup relations. In the realm of ethnic or national groups, Tajfel's propositions stand in agreement with anthropological theories regarding the importance of group boundaries in the process of their definition (Barth, 1969). Hence, Armstrong postulates that ethnic groups tend to define themselves, not by referring to their own characteristics, but by exclusion, through the comparison with "strangers" (Armstrong, 1982). So there seems to be an isomorphism between the individual cognitive process of categorisation and macro-social, historical phenomena. However, it is very unlikely that these individual psychological processes, be they universal, could on their own account for the existence of shared beliefs about large-scale groups (Cinnirella, 1996). Social representational processes that depend on mass communication always mediate people's

perceptions of large-scale social categories: nations are "imagined" communities (Anderson, 1983). In other words, intra-individual processes cannot thoroughly explain homogenisation and differentiation at the collective level (Azzi, 1998). We must in fact envision a more complex relation between social categorisation, social identities and social representations in the framework of a study of geopolitical memberships.

Articulating Social Identity Theory and Social Representations Theory

From the 90's onward, there have been several attempts at integrating - both theoretically and empirically - these two theoretical traditions (Breakwell & Lyons, 1996; Breakwell, 1993a, 1993b; Chryssochoou, 1996, 2000; Cinnirella, 1996, 1997; Echebarria, Elejabarrieta, Valencia, & Villareal, 1991-92; Joffe, 1996; Joffe, 1999; Vala, 1990; Vala, 1998; Vala, Garcia-Marques, Gouveia-Pereira, & Lopes, 1998). It should be recalled, also, that Doise and colleagues (Doise, 1988, 1990; Doise, Clémence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1992; Lorenzi-Cioldi & Doise, 1990) had somewhat preceded these trends by proposing an original approach of Social Representations Theory (SRT) explicitly integrating identity concerns in representational processes. But, Doise's approach should rather be viewed as an alternative conceptualisation of social identity processes within SRT than as an integration of SIT's elements into SRT.

According to Breakwell (1993a), both theories would benefit from their integration. On the one hand, SIT "has too narrowly focused on explaining intergroup conflict and differentiation. Articulated with SRT, it could lead to a model of the broader role of identity processes in directing the social construction of what passes for reality" (p. 182). Vala (1998) also points to the interest of SRT as a means of comprehending the genesis of social categories as well as to its capacity for generating hypotheses regarding the organisation of social identities' contents.

On the other hand, according to Breakwell (1993a), SRT has been addressed in a too restrictive manner. Hence it could not explain why a representation takes a certain form rather than another. Integrating SIT could help identifying some of the factors that determine the content and structure of social representations. Furthermore, following Breakwell (1993a), SRT does not provide any precise hypothesis regarding the probability that an individual would accept a certain representation and/or reproduce it (through communication) or not. SIT would allow for envisioning the function of social representations beyond their function of making the new familiar by adding the identity functions they can serve. Another way to frame these arguments is to posit that SIT could contribute to a better understanding of representational processes by adding to their *epistemic* function - i. e.: to provide a simple and meaningful representation of reality - a *narcissistic* one - i. e.: to maintain or enhance one's collective self-esteem (Festinger, 1950, 1954; Klein, 1999; Licata, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In that sense, Breakwell's argument rests on the idea that identity processes are qualitatively distinct - though in close relationship - from representational processes. We also adopt that perspective in this paper.

Generally, scholars who addressed the SIT/SRT articulation issue have emphasised the dialectic nature of this relationship (Brewer, 2001). Obviously, there is not always a causal relationship between these two theoretical constructs but, when such is the case, it is always a reciprocal influence. In our view, this proposition is particularly appropriate for geopolitical memberships (Licata, 2001). Hence, to come back to the issue of geopolitical entity creation, it can be conceived that political discourses manage, through mass communication, educational systems, bureaucracy, etc. to impose a representation of the in-group as homogeneous and clearly differentiated. This representation might then trigger the individual

processes of assimilation and contrast that, according to Social Identity Theory, should increase their tendency to identify with this level of identification. Conversely, those political discourses and ideologies which influence group representations are likely to be shaped in order to fit people's identity needs of differentiation and positive inter-group comparisons. Hence, the study of the relationship between social identities and social representations would certainly be enriched through a more careful investigation of the communicational aspects of such processes (Klein & Licata, *in press*).

European and national identification

Some aspects of the SIT tradition deserve particular attention for the study of super-ordinate groups. According to Self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) - which extended SIT's scope to the explanation of general group phenomena rather than to inter-group relations -, there is a functional antagonism between different levels of categorisation. It means that only one categorisation can be salient at one time. For example, if group categorisation is salient, then the perception of individual differences is inhibited, as is the perception of inter-group similarities. One could apply this principle to the relationship between local subgroups and the nation. In effect, nation building has implied an antagonism between ethnic groups and the super-ordinate national group. Nationalism imposes an exclusive identification with the nation. It promotes a direct relationship between the individual and the State and does not recognise the legitimacy of intermediate entities. This aspect is of course particularly important for European identity as it can be conceived as conflicting with subordinate national identities. However, we should not imply from the existence of this intra-individual mechanism of functional antagonism that the historical antagonism between super-ordinate (national) and subordinate (ethnic or regional) levels of social identification is merely psychological and, therefore, natural. This antagonism may not be due to mechanisms linked to the cognitive categorisation process as much as it may be produced by political ideologies (Azzi, 1998; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a). Political ideologies can amplify these cognitive mechanisms as well as they can inhibit them.

Besides, recent developments in the study of subgroup relationships within common super-ordinate entities emanating from the social identity tradition also tend to question this aspect of Self-categorisation Theory (SCT). Hornsey and Hogg (2000a) point to the following paradox: super-ordinate group identification can bind subgroups together, forming a psychological whole. But it can also pose a threat to the distinctiveness of subgroups that provide people with strong and valuable social identities. This feeling of threat may in turn enhance subgroup members' willingness to positively differentiate their subgroup from outgroups, therefore leading to more intergroup conflict, ingroup bias and outgroup derogation. Consequently, according to these authors, ingroup bias should be highest when a super-ordinate identity is made salient at the expense of a subordinate identity and it should be lowest when both levels of identification are made salient simultaneously (dual categorisation). Empirical results supported these claims (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b). Following these authors, perceived social identity threat entails numerous consequences, among which increased ingroup bias and the inhibition of super-ordinate group identification. This latter hypothesis, unlike the former, has not yet received empirical backing. The studies reported below are aimed at filling this gap.

National anchoring and anticipatory representations

The national model, as it has been briefly described above, allows us to examine the possibility of applying similar 'recipes' to the European integration process in order to develop

a sense of European identity. In a pragmatic perspective, in order to promote a sense of European identification as strong and durable as the sense of national identification that resulted from the nation building process, the EU would have to adopt simultaneously a set of policies aiming at: elaborating a culture that every European would be likely to adopt; diffusing this culture and promoting the integration of pre-existing cultures in order to homogenise the European cultural space; encourage comparisons with out-groups; and assert the superiority and specificity of Europe comparing with other geopolitical entities. There are many reasons for doubting the desirability, let alone the feasibility of this program. Besides, this is not the way that has been chosen by European institutions to implement the European integration process so far (Magnette, 1999). However, if we rest on the assumption that, through a process of anchoring, people derive their vision of European integration from their knowledge of the nation-state model, it follows that, even in the absence of a political determination to homogenise Europe, they could expect this process to lead to a standardisation of the European space.

The temporal dimension is particularly important for the issue at stake: what we argue is that social representations inherited from the past can partly determine people's anticipations of how the European integration process will affect their future. As Philogène (2002) pointed out, predicting the future is a fundamental human preoccupation. By anticipating the future, we turn a threatening unknown into a comforting prediction and therefore acquire the feeling that we have control over the events affecting our lives. According to Philogène, anticipating the future is a fundamentally social activity: "we project the future through the construction of collectively shared anticipations to cope with fear of change and deal with anxiety of uncertainty" (p. 113). In that sense, *anticipatory representations* must bear a crucial weight on people's attitudes towards large-scale geopolitical processes that bring important changes but lay outside of their control as individuals, but also as group members.

Hence, inasmuch as people already identify with other subordinate groups - most of all to their nations -, one can predict that the anticipation of standardisation will be perceived as a threat to national identities, that it will lead to negative evaluations of the European Union, and condition people's identification with Europe (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a; Sanchez-Mazas, 1996). Conversely, one can argue that a representation of a future Europe as complementary to the nation should lead to a stronger European identification. Below, we present three studies designed to explore the relation between social representations of the European integration process and European identification. More precisely, they were designed to test the general hypothesis that European identification is facilitated if this process is represented as respecting national distinctiveness and sovereignty.

We present the results of three studies. Study 1 explores the relationship between national and European levels of identification as well as the way this relationship is represented (positive interdependence, independence, or negative interdependence). Study 2 examines - through open-ended measures - the anticipatory social representations of the European integration process and its links with European identification. Study 3 was carried out to test the trends discovered in study 2 through closed-ended measures, and focused more narrowly on representations of the relationship between the nation and the EU.

Study 1

Method

Sample. 182 undergraduate French-speaking Belgian psychology students at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (79.9 % women and 20.1 % men); aged between 16 and 50 ($M = 18.96$, $SD = 2.58$).

Procedure. Participants filled in a questionnaire during a seminar in social psychology⁴, in February 1999. Students were free to participate. They were debriefed at the end of the last session. The European citizenship issue had not been previously discussed in this seminar.

Variables. *Identification measures.* National and European identifications were measured through 8 items scales⁵ (1 = totally disagree; 11 = totally agree). The identification measures collected through study one will further be used in studies 2 and 3.

Representation of interdependence between subordinate and super-ordinate identifications. Participants had to express their degree of agreement with three items explicitly describing the links between both levels of identification. This link was either described as one of positive interdependence - "The more one feels Belgian, the more one should feel European" -, of negative interdependence - "The more one feels Belgian, the less one should feel European" -, or independence - "Feeling Belgian and feeling European are two independent things".

Results

Identification. Two identification scales were calculated by averaging the 8 items (Cronbach's alphas: nation = .89; Europe = .86). In average, European identification ($M = 5.70$, $SD = 2.04$) tends to be slightly stronger than national identification ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 2.21$), although this difference is only marginally significant ($t(181) = 1.91$; $p = .06$). These variables are positively correlated ($r(182) = .38$; $p < .001$), which suggests that these two levels of identification are generally not conflicting.

Representation of interdependence between subordinate and super-ordinate identifications. Table 1 displays the mean attitude towards each kind of link between the two levels of identification. The positive interdependence item - "The more one feels Belgian, the more one should feel European" - and the independence item - "Feeling Belgian and feeling European are two independent things" - receive comparable positive support, whilst the negative interdependence item - "The more one feels Belgian, the less one should feel European" - is generally rejected ($F(2, 178) = 38.97$; $p < .001$). Participants either see these two levels of identification as positively linked, or they see them as unrelated, but they don't perceive them as being antagonistic. In addition, correlations (see Table 1) show that the more people identify with Belgium, the more they believe this identification is compatible with

⁴ The three studies reported here were carried out during different sessions of the same social psychology seminar. Personal information was collected only for study 1. Questionnaires were paired thanks to anonymous codes. Information about gender and age will only be provided for study 1.

⁵ The scales featured items adapted from existing identification scales (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Smith & Tyler, 1997; Trew & Benson, 1996) as well as original items: I feel attached to the Belgian / European soil; I would miss Belgium if I had to leave it forever; My destiny is linked to every other Belgian's one; I have strong feelings of solidarity with all the other Belgians; I don't have clear feelings about the fact that I am Belgian (rev.); Being Belgian is something I rarely think about (rev.); There is no reason to be proud to be Belgian (rev.); I am proud to tell my friends I am Belgian (1 = totally disagree, 11 = totally agree).

European identification (positive interdependence) and the less they support an independent view of this link. The same trends appear with European identification: it is positively correlated with positive interdependence and negatively linked with independence. The absence of correlations between identification variables and the negative interdependence item comes as a surprise. It is in fact due to the concentration of answers in the negative side of the scale: answers do not vary enough to correlate.

Table 1

Means of the interdependence between subordinate and super-ordinate identifications items (min. = 1; max. = 11) and correlations with the identification variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Pearson's <i>r</i>	
			National identification	European identification
Positive interdependence	5.86 ^a	3.01	.32**	.15*
Negative interdependence	3.34 ^b	2.33	-.03	-.04
Independence	6.10 ^a	3.49	-.18**	-.24**

N = 182; **p* < .05; ***p* < .01. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Discussion

These results show that the two levels of identification are generally not conflicting, as participants who identify to one level often tend to identify with the other. In addition, they further show that they are very seldom seen as negatively interdependent. Moreover, it appears that both national and European identifications are linked with a representation of a relationship of positive interdependence between these two social identities. Therefore, functional antagonism between subordinate and super-ordinate levels of identification seems to be an exception rather than the rule. As argued above, the way the development of the new super-ordinate entity is anticipated should be of crucial importance to understand either instances of perceived compatibility or instances of perceived incompatibility between these two levels. Study 2 was aimed at examining both the contents of these anticipatory representations as well as their main organising principles, and their relationships with European identification.

Study 2

Method

Sample and procedure. 172 undergraduate French-speaking Belgian psychology students at the Université Libre de Bruxelles; 13 incomplete questionnaires were discarded. Data were collected in March 1999 following the same procedure as in study 1.

Variables. *Anticipatory representations of the European integration process.* If we envision European identity as a political project (Stråth, 2000) that people - considered as individuals or as members of subordinate groups - may or may not endorse, then a crucial factor in determining their willingness to identify with Europe should be their representations of the way this project will affect their future (Philogène, 2002). In that view, Europe should be addressed as a process rather than as an object. Participants were asked to freely express their representations of the consequences that the European integration process will have on their personal, regional, and national future ("According to you, what are the changes that European integration will bring on your personal situation / your region / your country ?").

For each of these three levels, five numbered lines were provided. Two 11 points bipolar scales were placed in front of each line: a valence scale (attitudinal dimension of the representation: 1 = very negative; 11 = very positive) and an importance scale (1 = not important at all; 11 = very important). Participants were instructed to "Cite five probable changes and indicate the way you evaluate each change's valence (whether you consider this change as positive or negative) and importance".

Results

159 questionnaires were analysed. Answers were isolated words, expressions, or whole sentences. 1504 answers were gathered, which was more than sufficient to carry out a thematic content analysis. Answers were categorised into thematic categories according to their semantic proximity. The same coding scheme was used for the three levels: representations of the consequences of the European integration process on the personal, regional, and national situation. We first present an analysis of the common representational field (Doise et al., 1992) of the consequences of the European integration process: the contents and relative sizes of the thematic categories are described, then a typology of answers according to judgments of valence and importance is proposed. Finally, we analyse individual positioning towards the future through a typological analysis of the participants according to the importance and valence they attributed to these anticipated changes, and examine their relations with European identification.

Common field. 17 thematic categories were identified: economy (25.3 % of the answers: money, employment, taxes, buying, enterprises, finances, etc.), international relations (20.9 %: mobility, communication, no more borders, international relations, international competition, meeting foreigners), European currency (12 %: Euro, no more change, etc.), solidarity (6.1 %: equality, tolerance, etc.), tourism (3.9 %: travel, tourism, etc.), politics (3.9 %: common policy, political power of Europe), etc.), region (3.9 %: interregional competition, relationships between Wallonia and Flanders, etc.), Belgium (3.9 %: better image, stronger, loss of power, nationalism, etc.), memberships (3.3 %: European identity, union, one nation), standardisation (2 %: cultural standardisation, loss of culture, loss of national identity, etc.), languages (1.8 %: learning languages), education (1.8 %: studying abroad), security (1.6 %: security, more delinquency), foreigners (1.5 %: immigration, refugees, etc.), army (1.3 %: military power, force, etc.), structure (0.9 %: institutions, organisation, management, etc.), social (0.5 %: social, social security, etc.), not classified (6.4 %).

These results show that economy is the dominant theme (25.3 % of answers; 37.3 % if the European currency theme is included). The theme of relations across European borders follows (20.9 %). So the consequences of European integration are foremost apprehended in the economic domain. Globally, these consequences have a positive connotation, but not always: economic development, better economy, but also increased competition or economic crisis; less unemployment, jobs creation, but also increase of unemployment and decrease of allocations; fair prices and less taxes, but also the opposite; better circulation of goods, but also illegal traffics; industrial development, but also delocalisation, etc. The "international relations" theme is overall evoked in its cultural dimension, which is generally positively evaluated: cultural exchanges, opening, cultural meeting, bringing people together, etc. Suppressing borders is a frequently cited change and it is positively valued, as well as international relations. Inter-individual relationships refer most of the time to people of different nationalities within the EU. The "solidarity" theme comprises international solidarity, the diminution of conflicts, mutual helping or increased tolerance.

Each answer was rated according to its valence (positive or negative) and its importance. In average, these changes are positively valued ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 1.72$) and judged as important ($M = 8.65$, $SD = 1.31$). Valence and importance are positively correlated ($r (1477) = .34$; $p < .01$), revealing a rather optimistic representation of the European future among these participants. But in fact, even though a linear model significantly predicts importance as a function of valence ($R^2 = .118$; $F (1462 \text{ d. f.}) = 196.2$; $p < .01$), a quadratic model brings a better result ($R^2 = .228$; $F (1461 \text{ d. f.}) = 216.0$; $p < .01$), which suggests that very positively or very negatively evaluated changes are judged as very important whilst moderately valued ones are judged as less important.

A typology of changes. This last result points to the fact that judgements of valence and judgements of importance should be taken into account simultaneously in order to get a precise idea of the representations of the future that participants expressed. In effect, changes that are judged both as positive and important reveal an optimistic representation of the future. Changes that are judged as unimportant - regardless of their valence - should not bear much weight. On the contrary, changes that are judged as negative and very important indicate a perception of threat inasmuch as the task was to list changes that are likely to happen.

An automatic cluster analysis (quick cluster) was carried out in order to classify answers into 5 clusters as a function of their valence and importance (see Table 2). Initial cluster centres were not specified prior to analysis. Cluster 1 includes changes that are judged as very positive and very important; cluster 2 includes changes judged as moderately positive and important; cluster 3 includes changes judged as rather negative and unimportant; cluster 4 includes changes that are judged as negative but very important; and cluster 5 includes changes judged as positive but moderately important. Answers are unevenly distributed over these five clusters ($X^2 (4) = 801.4$; $p < .001$). Clusters 1 (very positive and important changes) and 2 (moderately positive and important changes) are over represented while the three remaining ones do not gather more than 10 % each. Again, these results unveil a generally optimistic representation of the future.

Table 2

Cluster analysis of the expected changes due to European integration (N = 1464) according to judgements of valence and importance: means and frequencies

	Cluster 1 Very optimistic changes	Cluster 2 Rather optimistic changes	Cluster 3 Negative but unimportant changes	Cluster 4 Threatening changes	Cluster 5 Positive but unimportant changes
Valence	10.08	7.04	4.41	2.43	9.29
Importance	10.08	7.99	4.04	9.38	5.59
Frequencies	641	454	103	146	120
Percentages	43.8 %	31 %	7 %	10 %	8.2 %

Of course, the thematic classes are not independent from this clustering. On the whole, most of the themes are judged as positive and important (clusters 1 and 2), but "solidarity", "relations", "international relations" and "tourism" are over represented in cluster 1 (very positive and important changes) whilst "foreigners", "politics", "standardisation", "loss of national power" and "memberships" are under represented in this cluster. Cluster 2 (moderately positive and important changes) is associated with "European currency", "economy" and "politics" whereas "army" and "loss of national power" are under represented

in this class. Cluster 3 (negative and unimportant changes) is moderately associated with "loss of national power" and "belongings" whereas "employment", "solidarity", "relations", "tourism" and "international relations" are under represented in this cluster. Cluster 4 (negative and very important changes) is of particular interest as it indicates a perception of threat. The themes "loss of national power" and "standardisation" are strongly associated with this cluster. "Economy", "employment", "foreigners" and "politics" are also moderately associated with this cluster. On the contrary, "relations", "tourism", and "memberships" are nearly never categorised in this cluster. Cluster 5 (positive but unimportant changes) is associated with "relations", "tourism", "employment" and "memberships" whereas "economy" and "European currency" are under represented in this cluster. Paradoxically, the theme "memberships" is nearly never (only one exception) perceived as negative and important. Actually, this theme is evoked in a very positive way: participants describe the development of a new membership rather than the loss of pre-existing ones.

Individual positioning: a typology of participants. In order to assess the link between the way participants represent the future and their identifications with Europe, we performed two additional cluster analyses: participants were classified as a function of the mean valence and importance they attributed to the changes they anticipated at the personal and national level. Again, initial cluster centres were not specified prior to analysis. The number of participants being of course lower than the number of answers, classifications in five groups was not possible whereas a three groups solution yielded satisfying results at both levels (personal and national).

Table 3

Typology of participants (optimists - intermediates - pessimists) regarding personal and national changes entailed by European integration: distribution and class centres

		Optimists	Intermediates	Pessimists
		Personal changes		
N	66	31	22	
Class centres	Valence = 9.81 Importance = 9.55	Valence = 7.76 Importance = 6.67	Valence = 6.51 Importance = 9.45	
		National changes		
N	58	44	17	
Class centres	Valence = 9.51 Importance = 9.63	Valence = 7.07 Importance = 7.25	Valence = 4.42 Importance = 8.67	

In both cases (see Table 3), cluster analyses distinguished a large group of participants who tend to judge the changes due to European integration as very positive and very important (Optimists); a smaller group who judge these changes as moderately positive and important (Intermediates); and a small group of participants who judge them as less positive (for the personal situation) or rather negative (for the national situation) and very important (Pessimists).

Group affectations were saved, therefore creating two ordinal variables indicating the positioning of participants (Pessimists - Intermediates - Optimists) towards the anticipated consequences of the European integration process at the personal and national levels. A multiple regression analysis was performed with European identification as the dependent variable and these two variables, as well as their interaction, as predictors. Even though this

model does not account for much of the variance in European identification (Adjusted $R^2 = .054$; $F(3, 112) = 3.14$; $p = .03$), it reveals significant independent contributions from both variables: European identification tends to increase linearly as a function of participant's positioning towards the future: Optimists tend to express stronger identification with Europe than Intermediates and Pessimists. This trend holds true either when the consequences of the integration process are envisioned at the personal (standardized $B = .79$; $T = 2.5$; $p = .02$) or at the national level (standardized $B = .65$; $T = 2.4$; $p = .02$). However, the interaction term also significantly contributes to this model (standardized $B = -1.09$; $T = -2.22$; $p = .03$): participants who expressed pessimistic anticipations at both levels also tended to express the weakest identification with Europe. Participants who were classified as Pessimistic at the personal level but who were classified as Intermediates or Optimistic at the national level expressed rather strong European identification.

Discussion

In a nutshell, these results show that economic development, monetary change, increased intercultural contact and the development of an international solidarity are the most salient anticipated changes in the framework of the European integration process. Changes in the domains of solidarity, interpersonal relations between Europeans, international relations and tourism are often judged very positively and given much importance; the economic and political domains are seen as moderately positive and important, even though some participants judge the passage to Euro rather negatively but don't see it as important; and tourism and interpersonal relations within the EU are sometimes seen as unimportant but positive. But more remarkable for our purpose is the fact that the reasons to worry, though not very frequent, are to be found principally in the prospect of a loss of national power and of cultural standardisation.

Overall, study 2 revealed a generally optimistic representation of that process, and it showed that threat to national identity is not a salient concern. However, analysis of the relationship between individual positioning of participants towards these anticipated representations (typology of participants) and European identification clearly showed that national concerns play a crucial part in determining participant's identification with Europe: people who hold pessimistic representations of their nation's future in the framework of the European integration process and who are also pessimistic regarding their personal future tend to be reluctant to identify with Europe. As the typology of changes revealed, changes that are judged as threatening (negative and likely to happen) are loss of national power and cultural standardisation. Therefore, one could conclude that foreseeing these negative consequences for one's nation is an impediment to European identification.

Study 2 had a very wide range scope. Using open-ended questions, it brought a large quantity of information on participants' anticipations in various domains and yielded valuable information about the relative salience of national concerns. However, the conclusion above needs to be confirmed through more reliable methods. Study 3 was designed to do so.

Study 3

Method

Sample and procedure. 167 undergraduate French-speaking Belgian psychology students at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Data were collected in May 1999 following the same procedure as in studies 1 and 2.

Variables. *Anticipatory representations of the nation/EU relationship.* A list of 12 propositions describing one possible evolution of the European Union was submitted to the participants (see table 3). These propositions addressed possible evolution in the political (sovereignty, power, relation between the State and citizens) or cultural (language, culture, symbols, education) domains. They derived from open-ended answers obtained from study 2. For each proposition, participants had to indicate on two 11 points bipolar scales whether they thought each prediction was probable (1 = very unlikely, 11 = very likely) and to express their attitude towards each particular evolution (1 = very unfavourable, 11 = very favourable).

Results

Table 4
Estimations of probability and attitudes towards possible evolutions of the EU

Probability	Attitude	
	Positive	Negative
<i>Likely</i>	A European hymn will be played in addition to the national hymn on diplomatic or sport events (7.71; 7.88).	Nation-states will lose their power in favour of a European "super-state" (6.26; 5.11).
	Member states will adopt a common school program defined by the EU (6.63; 6.54)	European unification will not lead to a greater respect of European regions' local cultures * (6.01; 3.12).
<i>Unlikely</i>	All EU children will study the same History course (5.17; 6.97).	School programs will not be defined by member states any more * (4.63; 4.84).
		Each country's national hymn will not continue to be played alone * (4.59; 5.14).
		The EU will adopt a European hymn and suppress the use of national hymns (4.20; 4.61).
		The EU will promote the use of a single language in every member state (4.73; 4.82).
		European unification will lead to the standardisation of member state's cultures (4.78; 3.31).
		Nation states will not remain sovereign on their territory * (4.42; 4.42).
		Citizens will not address their claims to national institutions any more * (3.80; 4.34).

164 < N < 167

*Reverted items have been reworded for the sake of clarity.

(mean on the probability scale; mean on the attitude scale)

Table 4 summarises the mean results obtained for each item on these two dimensions (probability and attitude). Despite some apparent inconsistencies regarding the items relating to education, it seems that most possible evolutions in the direction of an increasing uniformity in the European space are both seen as unlikely to happen and judged negatively. In average, participants believe that their nation's symbols are still going to be used in the future, that language and culture will not be standardised and that the Belgian state will preserve its sovereignty, and they generally agree with this evolution. The only thing they believe is unlikely to happen but desirable is the adoption of a common History course. More interesting are the two predictions that are judged both likely to happen and unfavourable as they reveal a perception of threat. These items relate to the loss of national states' power and to the lack of respect for local cultures, which unambiguously confirm results obtained

through the analysis of the more general open-ended questions regarding the consequences of the European integration process.

The relationships between these predictions, their judgements, and European identification were then examined. Table 5 shows that participants who strongly identify with Europe also tend to believe that both European and national hymns will be played on sport or diplomatic events, that Nation-states will remain sovereign on their territory and that school programs will continue to be defined by each country. They tend to express positive attitudes towards these predictions. In addition, whilst they do not believe more than others that the unification process will lead to a cultural standardisation, they tend to hold less negative attitudes towards this prospect.

Table 5

Correlations between European identification and the judgements of probability and valence of predictions.

	Probability	Valence
A European hymn will be played in addition to the national hymn on diplomatic or sportive occasions.	.25**	.35**
All the EU's children will study the same History course.	.12	.24*
European unification will lead to the standardisation of member State's cultures.	.10	.20*
Nation states will not remain sovereign on their territory ^R	-.32**	-.34**
School programs will not be defined by member states any more ^R .	-.21*	-.16

N = 106, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, ^R Inverted scores

Discussion

These results globally confirm the trends discovered in study 2: participants generally hold a very optimistic anticipatory representation of European integration: positive predictions are seen as likely to happen and negative ones are viewed as unlikely to happen. However, as in study 2, the prospects of a loss of national power and of a lack of respect for local cultures are perceived as threatening. In addition, the anticipatory representations of the relationships between the nation and the EU seem to condition participants' identification with Europe: European identification is positively correlated with judgments of probability and attitudes towards representations of a complementary relationship between Europe and the nation in terms of sovereignty, education programs, and national symbols.

Together with results of study 2, these results confirm the fact that a strong European identification is linked to the belief that the unification process will preserve the nation's importance and with a positive attitude towards this preservation. Paradoxically, high European identifiers display less reluctance towards European cultural standardisation. It is possible that the political and cultural domains are being dissociated. In effect, it appears that culture is not represented as a political issue. For instance, in the framework of a word association task with Europe as the inductive term (Licata, 2003), culture was generally associated with positively evaluated terms such as exchange, languages, diversity, meetings, holidays, open mind, communication, etc. In addition, in cultural domains, European identification is seen as promoting personal, regional and national interests (Licata, 2001).

General discussion

The general idea underlying this series of studies was that European identification was linked, on the one hand, to pre-existing identifications – national identification – and, on the other hand, to anticipated social representations of the relations between the EU and subordinate geopolitical entities – the nation. Drawing from the idea that social representations of the EU and of the European integration process are construed, through a process of anchoring, from the well established representations of the national model, it was predicted that identification with Europe would be weak for people anticipating a standardisation of Europe's political and cultural space. On the contrary, in line with Hornsey and Hogg's hypothesis (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a), it should be strong for people who view European integration as a process leading to a complementary relationship between Europe and their nation. In other words, people who foresee a transposition of the national model – homogenisation of the in-group and differentiation from out-groups situated at the same level of abstraction – at the supranational level should be more reluctant to identify with Europe than people who do not anticipate such standardisation.

In general terms, these results tend to confirm this general hypothesis, although they uncover a more euro-enthusiastic picture: They revealed a positive correlation between national and European identifications. Moreover, it appears that these levels of identification are nearly never seen as antagonistic and that European identification is linked to a representation of their relationship in terms of positive interdependence (study 1). In addition, the answers to the open-ended questions (study 2) regarding the changes entailed by European integration generally unveil a very positive view of that process. However, these answers also revealed that the reasons to worry – albeit seldom cited – are to be found in the prospect of a loss of national power and of cultural standardisation, and that participants holding such pessimistic views about the future of their nation in the EU and about their personal situation display the lowest level of European identification. Finally, answers to a series of closed-ended questions addressing the perceived probability and desirability of possible evolutions of the relation between Europe and the nation (study 3) confirmed these trends: European identification was linked with a tendency to anticipate and acknowledge the coexistence of these two levels, and the maintenance of national prerogatives (sovereignty, national symbols, definition of school programs).

These results point to the fact that the functional antagonism between different levels of social categorisation predicted by SCT should not be blindly extrapolated to any instance of nested identities (Azzi, 1996): they show that the way the relationship between subordinate and super-ordinate levels of identification is represented - and in this case, anticipated - plays a central role in determining people's tendency to opt for common identification to both levels or for exclusive identification to one of them. Practically, it suggests that, in order to develop a sense of European identity, European integration should be presented as a process that will maintain national distinctiveness and sovereignty, as the possibility of their disappearance seems to be threatening and therefore hinders European identification.

Of course, the very premises of our hypothesis remain conjectural: these results do not bring unambiguous support for the claim that these trends originate in a process of anchoring of emerging social representations of Europe in a well established hegemonic representation of the national model. However, it must be reminded that, so far, the EU has not adopted policies aiming at homogenising European culture (Magnette, 1999): preserving national sovereignties is a condition sine qua non for member States' involvement in the process. The perceived threat on national identity does probably not derive from an observation of reality; it is more likely to be linked to people's preconceptions of what a geopolitical entity is

supposed to be. In that sense, an articulation between social identity, self-categorisation, and social representations theories sounds relevant for the study of geopolitical identities. First, as outlined in the introduction to this paper, it sheds some light on the historical process of geopolitical entity building: nations are far from being natural entities; they were actively constructed through strategies of influence that succeeded in establishing shared representations of human communities as homogeneous and clearly delimited. Second, it contributes to our understanding of the origins of contemporary reactions to the European integration process: representations of that process as threatening subordinate identities probably originate in pre-existing representations of the nation. In turn, these 'threatening' representations condition the process of identification with the super-ordinate entity.

Whatever subordinate level of inclusion to be taken into account, preserving its existence within Europe certainly limits the extent to which Europe's political and cultural space can be homogenised. Now, if we go back to the nation building example, this would imply that a strong European identity will probably not develop as this historical example suggests that clear differentiation and in-group homogenisation facilitate a sense of group identification. But the fact that cultural homogenisation and inter-group differentiation were used in order to promote national identification during the nation building process does not imply that those are necessary conditions for the development of this sentiment. Hence, recent empirical developments have shown that super-ordinate identification depends on perception of subgroups' similarity only when similarity is presented as a desirable feature of the super-ordinate group (Licata, Klein, Casini, Coscenza, & Azzi, 2003). Regarding the contribution of social psychology to the European identity issue, it should be emphasised that the isomorphism between intra-individual psychological mechanisms and large-scale social groups' phenomena does neither mean that these phenomena derive from psychological mechanisms nor that they are natural and unavoidable. Political actors may take advantage of these mechanisms and endeavour to maximise their effects whilst others may aim to inhibit them, depending on the political project they hold (Klein, 1999; Klein, Azzi, Brito, & Berckmans, 2000; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a). As a consequence, social psychologists should be cautious regarding the information they deliver to the public, as naturalising so called universal psychological processes might be used to legitimise political choices (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a).

The series of studies presented here focused on ingroup's dynamics, leaving intergroup factors aside. As noted in introduction, the intergroup factor might be as crucial for the development of a European identity as it was for creating and maintaining national identities (Stråth, 2000). Relevant outgroups could be found outside the EU, as the United States, the former USSR or Japan, but they could also be found inside the EU's borders. Hence, analysing other data from the same series of studies, Licata and Klein (2002) found that xenophobic attitudes were linked to European identification rather than to national identification, despite the fact that Europe's humanistic and multicultural values were widely acknowledged. Albeit unrepresentative, these results are indicative of the perils that could be encountered when strategies of influence are aimed at creating, enhancing, suppressing or transforming collective identities.

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