

NATION FORMATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

# A ZONE OF MUTUAL TRUST

**THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NATION FORMATION PROCESSES**  
Special Emphasis on the Bologna Process and its Implications for the  
Rise of a European Demos

Supervisor: Dr. R. Richter  
Co-Supervisor: Dr. H. Van der Kaap

Annette Welck B.A. Public Administration  
Matr. 344901 ID: S0182664  
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## Introduction

A system of education would help to “form a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries.”

John Stuart Mill<sup>1</sup>

In the last 50 years, European national political systems have faced the emergence of an overarching European political body known as the European Union. Multiple nation states have surrendered various political powers to central, supranational institutions of the European Union through agreements. They have established a collective market, a single currency, a European rule of law and freedom of movement. At the same time, the legitimacy in democratic terms of these actions is often debated. The acceptance by the people governed is a sensitive, yet not negligible issue at stake.

In theories of democracy, the importance of the support and acceptance of the ruling body by its citizens is usually emphasized. Power always needs some sort of legitimacy in order to be effective. Legitimacy of power has developed from “God-given” in earlier times to election by the people in the Europe of today. After all, democracy means literally “rule by the people”<sup>2</sup>. In the European Union, most people do not feel that they have power over European processes. They can identify with their national political system, but recent studies show that there is varying identification and thus support for governance by the overarching European Union (European Commission, 2001a). The negative European referenda on behalf of a European constitution (France and the Netherlands 2001) or at the Lisbon convention (Ireland 2008) as well as the low turnouts in European parliamentary elections exemplify the dilemma concerning legitimation.

In order to create a “Europeanness” as a backbone to the power imposed on Europeans throughout the Union, sound nation-building and identification processes are of the utmost importance within the European Union. Various books and articles have been written on nation building, identification and the impact of the new overarching European Union. A lot of measures have been taken in order to create a European consciousness among Europeans, such

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Parry, 1994, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> “Kratia” means governance and “demos” means people in Greek, thus the term means literally “rule by the people” (Schultze, 2001, p. 51).

as a European anthem, a common flag and a common currency. These are concrete items which are circulated in most parts of the European Union. They are integrated into everyday life and foster a certain togetherness among the various nationalities. Nevertheless, the people of a nation or, in this case, a larger political union, on whom political power is imposed also need a psychological recognition among each other – a mutual acknowledgment which defines a “we“, an accepted community.

With the help of a conceptual analysis of consciousness and nation-formation processes, this thesis will investigate the necessary identification of people with their democratic governing system. In fact, political and social consciousness is largely stimulated by education. Therefore, this thesis will examine higher education with regard to its contribution to nation-building processes and its potential ability to advance a community of Europeans. The first part will deal with different theories of nation, nation-building and identification processes, the second part will focus on higher education and its contribution to these processes, and the third part will then take a closer look at the Bologna Process and its possible impact on a European “nation”. The question under investigation is: What are the means and measures of European nation-/identity-building and how far is academic education a helpful tool in this process?

# **1. Nation and Nation Building**

## **1.1 Theories – What is a Nation?**

In the first step of the analysis, the concept of “nation” and its use has to be clarified in order to comprehend its meaning and implications. This shall establish a solid conceptual foundation for further considerations. However, the concept of “nation“ actually possesses no specific definition. It is deduced from the Latin term “natio”, which means “birth” or “derivation” (Schulze, 1995, p. 112). Nevertheless, a number of academics have tried to encircle and define the notion more closely with the help of various characteristics and theories.

Nowadays, in habitual language use, “nation” is usually understood as a community of people who share a common historical background and who live together in a country. Thus, the term „nation“ is usually used interchangeably with the term “nation state”. In scientific discussions, though, the concept of “nation“ is more often split into the “state's nation” and “cultural nation”. This differentiation goes back to Friedrich Meinecke, who tried to emphasize the main distinction in the process of nation building with the help of this partition. The political community of a states nation develops at the same time a political state is emerging. In the case of a cultural nation, a culturally connected community develops first, which grows into a political system only at a later date (Alter, 1985, p. 19). State and nation are therefore not identical at all.

In the following, the most important theories of the term “nation” will be introduced. On this basis the question of the benefit of a nation and the shaping a nation by education will be answered with the help of a historical retrospective. Only then will an effective analysis in the case of the European Union be feasible.

### **Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 – 1803)**

Johann Gottfried Herder defined „nation“ along cultural rather than political lines. He emphasized, for example, the existence of a common language as essential to a nation. Furthermore, he saw the nation as a more exclusive rather than an easily accessible community. The cultural community emerges

thereby through the emphasis on cultural differences over and against other nations. Herder derived his position concerning culture as the distinguishing feature of nations from studies of the German nation, which existed only as a cultural but not yet as a political entity in his days (Herder, 1969, pp. 359 – 376).

### **Ernest Renan (1823 – 1892)**

According to the renowned definition of the Frenchman Ernest Renan, a nation is not a political or cultural community, but a mental concept which activates emotions. In his famous speech “Qu'est-ce qu'une *nation*?” (“What is a nation?”), which was held in 1882 at the Sorbonne, he conclusively argued that neither race nor language nor geographical borders constitute a nation. In his analysis, two other elements frame a nation: firstly, a collective memory of history, and secondly, the desire to share a common future. Hence, Renan indicates that the existence of a nation relies solely on the will of the individual. “Nation” is in that case a mental and emotional concept, a community originating in collective beliefs (Renan, 1882).

### **Max Weber (1864 – 1920)**

Max Weber dwelt on the notional community of Ernest Renan and defined it as “a certain group of individuals, in which a particular sense of solidarity over and against others can be expected”<sup>3</sup> (Weber, 1956, p. 528). The term “particular” indicates that certain attributes within a nation trigger and sustain this sense of solidarity. These are, for example, consensus in language, culture, historical awareness, customs, communication, religion, political goals and the like (Alter, 1985, p. 17).

### **William Sumner (1840 – 1910)**

Like Max Weber, the American historian William Sumner based his definition of nation on the concept of Ernest Renan. In his argument he specifies the concept of a community held together by solidarity and explains the emergence of two groups, the in-group and the out-group, which act as counterparts. The in-group illustrates the “we”, which is called the mental

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<sup>3</sup> Own translation, German original: “gewissen Menschengruppe, [der] ein spezifisches Solidaritätsempfinden anderen gegenüber z u z u m u t e n sei”.

principal in Renan's terms and which demarcates itself against the out-group of "the other".

In his study Sumner asserted that there is always a tendency within a nation to recognize members of one's own group as equal, whereas members of the other group are usually perceived as inferior. This viewpoint and demarcation bring a sense of belonging and identity to the people, which is manifested to the outer world with the help of national symbols such as flags and anthems (Schulze, 1995, p. 111).

#### **Hugh Seton-Watson (1916 – 1984)**

The historian Hugh Seton-Watson dedicated himself to the study of the concepts of „nation“ and „nationalism“. He claimed that a nation exists if a sufficient number of people within a community *conceive of* themselves as a nation or at least *behave* as if they were a nation. The members of a nation are thereby linked by a sense of solidarity as well as through a common culture and a national consciousness – or at least their belief in the existence of those features (Alter, 1985, p. 19).

#### **Ernest Gellner (1925 – 1995)**

According to Ernest Gellner, two people belong to the same nation if they fulfill two criteria: when they share a common culture, which is defined as a system of ideas, signs, association, behavior and modes of communication, and when they recognize each other as part of the same nation. The nation is therefore, according to Gellner, an artificial structure made by people which inversely affects and determines the inhabitants at the same time (Gellner, 1983, pp. 6f.). With reference to Gellner, Benedict Anderson characterized the nation as "synthetic" and denominated it as an "imagined community" (Plantholt, 2005).

The amount of theories and definitions concerning the term "nation" displays its complexity. However, one theme recurs again and again: the nation as a group of people who are connected by language and a common history. In addition, these people usually *conceive of* themselves as a unit. A sense of fellowship derives from thoughts that accentuate collective attributes and in comparison clearly separates the group from others. This differentiation is usually justified by means of history or culture thereby emphasizing the

superiority of one's own group over all others. In the following, “nation“ is understood as a mental concept. Its benefits and components are examined below.

## 1.2 The Benefit of a Nation

The abolition of absolutism in Europe dissolved the legitimizing principle of “God-given” power of a king. From then on, political power had to be authorized in a new way. In the aftermath of the French Revolution the idea of “nation” as a unifying bond has been largely used to justify political power in Europe (Thiesse, 2007, pp. 5f.).

When empires started to fall, the “twin sisters” of democracy and nationalism<sup>4</sup> were born in enlightened Europe. Enlightenment<sup>5</sup> was the precondition to a “rule by the people”, as it encouraged people to question traditional practices and to think for themselves. In doing so, people were able to detect what they wanted or what they believed was best for them. The term “democracy“ mainly indicates the will of people to govern themselves. In order to define that will and subsequent goals, a somewhat enlightened and informed citizenry was indispensable (Dahl, 1994, pp. 30f.; 1989 p. 307f.).

'The will of the people' became the new legitimation of political power. 'The will' are political choices which “are derived from the authentic preferences of the members of a community”<sup>6</sup> (Thomassen & Schmitt, 2004, p. 3). Thus, a certain community is needed in order to unite the citizens in the state and extract and express those preferences. The community of “willing people” within a state is called the *demos*. This “demos” group has to be demarcated from other groups inwardly and outwardly with the help of nationalism. Nationalism is the belief in unique features of a certain demos

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<sup>4</sup> “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent” (Gellner, 1983, p.1).

<sup>5</sup> In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, confidence in man's capacity to know himself and his world grew due to the republic of letters. “Enlightenment” refers to the “light” of healthy common sense, which first observes and only then concludes. Ideas which could not be reduced to empirical observations were less and less accepted as “the truth”. “Doubts arose with regard to all claims to authority and power which were not founded on logically reasoned and thus acceptable principles” (Rietbergen, 1998, p. 311).

<sup>6</sup> This definition goes back mainly to Fritz Scharpf, who reflected on input-oriented legitimacy (government by the people, thus choices are legitimate if they reflect the will of the people) and output-oriented legitimacy (government for the people, thus choices are legitimate if they promote the common welfare). This thesis concentrates on input-oriented legitimacy. More on this subject: Scharpf, 1999.



and thus the basis for an internally and externally perceived unit of the demos (Jahn, 2008, p. 23). The concept of demos, community and nation are therefore almost identical (Graf Kielmansegg, 1996, in: Thomassen & Schmitt, 2004, p. 10).

In their belief in belonging together, people recognize the political institutions of the overall system as legitimate and assert their degree of acceptance (Lehnert & Mengele, 1989, p. 15). The concept of democracy animates various groups to form a demos with a popular will which best satisfies their wants. The concept of nation is used as a unifying and mobilizing element to reach that end - and vice versa (Coiplet, 1996, p. 5). Unity is reached because the concept of nation has a "specific code of inclusion". A sociological master-pattern of manifested national values and acknowledged behavior delivers stable reference points for the individuals within the community. In adhering to those values and behaviors, various ethnicities within a population are integrated into the community (Lehnert & Mengele, 1989, p. 15). Unity in the nation thus allows for a social organization of consensus and stability, which serves as a precondition to processes of modernization, progress, prosperity and the like (Nübel, 2004, p. 4; cf. Giesen, 1993, pp. 20f.). The concept of nation therefore allows for durability of politics as well as for social and thus economic strength (Coiplet, 1996, p. 26; cf. Shore, 2000).

Democracy and nation thus share a mutual dependency. In order to establish popular sovereignty, a motivating and legitimating principle is needed. This is found in the idea of the "imagined community". Nation and its specific values and behaviors present a strongly unifying concept. It generates social stability as a precondition for prosperity and modernization. Academics conclude that the concept of nation will remain as long as no other legitimating principle for the political and democratic order is developed and implemented (cf. Jahn, 2008, p. 24; Bauböck, 1992, p. 3; Coiplet, 1996, p. 22). The analysis of the concept of "nation" has shown that a collective consciousness is the linchpin of the supportive nation. In order to understand how a national consciousness can be actively fostered, the following section investigates the nation-formation processes more closely. The focus lies on (national) consciousness and identity development, thus the relevant concepts and implications of consciousness and identity will be clarified.

### 1.3 Nation Formation and Nationalism; Consciousness and Identity

What turns a political space into a nation, are not the territorial borders, but the collective self-demarcation of its citizens.

Bauböck, 1992, p. 14

Nation formation and group formation are, after all, two related processes which lead to a sense of community. Nations are a product of history in which wars play an essential role. Wars do not form nations but they certainly serve as catalysts. The individual European nations emerged through hostility and combat, thus through separation from their neighbors (Schulze, 1995, p. 126).

The nation-formation process is divided into two parts: a process of forming political institutions and a process of consciousness formation (Jahn, 2001, p. 327). The focus of this thesis lies on the consciousness processes. In the following, the “collective self” and its emergence will be introduced before delving into the process of national consciousness formation. Details of consciousness as well as identity formation will be explained, and the overall role of education for these processes will be examined later on.

Nowadays, scholars assume that nationalism, as a group-describing practice, is characteristic for the pursuit of identity and meaning. Classifying the world into groups of nations and recognizing oneself as a member of a well-defined group allows for a better orientation within an environment (Leiß, 2009, p. 102, cf. Jenkins & Sofos, 1996). In order to develop an orientation, individuals as well as groups cultivate stereotypes which reflect their attitude towards their own as well as towards external groups. (Positive) auto-stereotypes unite the members of a group and help to distinguish it from other groups. These out-groups are often characterized by the opposite, that is, negative attributes (Leiß, 2009, pp. 102f.).<sup>7</sup> In order to define one's own group, specific values, norms and a moral order develop from those distinctions. This is reinforced by the use of national symbols which people can relate to and use to further distinguish themselves from others. With reference to nations, this stereotyping, exaltation and demarcation from other nations is called nationalism.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the concept of stereotyping, see McCall & Simmons, 1974, pp. 131ff.

Within the group, **common superior goals** (for example “feeding the group”) lead to positive dependence, cooperation and harmony, which strengthen inner bonds (Leißer, 2009, p.124). The same is true for common obligations, for example, military service, which creates the sensation of a broad national (affliction-)community (Renan, 1882, p. 57). This reinforces the will to render to the national community.

Olaf Leißer defines four specific requirements for the process of group creation. They are related to active in-group and passive out-group measures:

- A) Consciousness of group membership (in-group)
- B) Emotional ties to group (identity) (in-group)
- C) Recognition of group by third parties (out-group)
- D) Homogenizing the group (in-group)

Leißer, 2009, p. 139

This paper focuses mainly on activating in-group processes. Therefore, consciousness creation (1.3.1), identity creation (1.3.2) and homogenizing factors such as the role of a collective memory and education (1.3.3) will be discussed below.

### **1.3.1 Consciousness of Group Membership**

Consciousness is basically the awareness of our environment. It labels items and persons and categorizes them in order to make sense of the world. Without consciousness there would be no orientation and development in life. Yet consciousness is not only a passive, “registering” process. After all, the human brain would be unable to work if it had to handle the whole magnitude of available information. Therefore, the intellect influences its own awareness by selecting the important information out of the environment. Only very little of the data coming from the environment is registered by the individual, and even less is interpreted. The phases of interpretation, in which the individual allots a meaning to the registered information, is usually determined by experiences of the past. Thus consciousness always incorporates a selective awareness (McCall & Simmons, 1974, pp.123 – 127).

People tend to focus their awareness on these (social) objects which seem most relevant to them and to neglect others which seem irrelevant. For

example, a car driver will pay attention to the color of the traffic lights but not to the rustling of the tree tops next to the street, whereas in the jungle the rustling of the leaves would be very important in order to recognize a harmful animal. Upbringing, education and experiences strongly influence the *consciousness, recognition* and *interpretation* of situation and people. People are therefore *trained* to perceive the world in a certain manner (McCall & Simmons, 1974, pp. 126f.).

After perceiving a piece of information, it is individually classified. A certain relevance is ascribed to objects and persons depending on their value for one's own existence. Based on experience and knowledge, the individual categorizes other beings as similar or different, friendly or hostile, beautiful or ugly and the like. These asserted qualities exist in fact only in the head of the observer. Therefore, individuals do not interact with real persons or objects, but rather with their individual conception of them. This explains the concept of a nation as an "imagined" community. As a result, the idea of a group exists because of the conscious recognition of certain group-specific similarities and the subsequent labeling of it as a "certain group" (McCall & Simmons, 1974, pp. 122f.).

Consciousness is thus the selective recognition and interpretation of the environment in order to categorize it. Consciousness, then, depends on the amount of importance that is ascribed to certain perceptions. From this it is inferred that the starting point for influencing consciousness is to influence the ascribed importance. Importance is created by relevance to an individual's personal life and the influence of experience and education. Thereby, consideration of importance is conditioned by identity.

### **1.3.2 Emotional Ties – Creating a Sense of Identity**

Identity is vital for every person in order to understand themselves and other people upon reflection. It is generally the emotional and active expansion of consciousness which interprets the environment (Wellendorf, 1974, pp. 27ff.; cf. Mead, 1968, pp. 182f.). Identity is formed in early adulthood during the emancipation process from one's parents. During this period, young people become acquainted with lifestyles other than the familiar lifestyle. They become cognizant of alternative attitudes and aims in life. The awareness of

these divergent positions results in a discrepancy which necessitates a decision in order to resolve the inherent conflict. This process of critical examination and analysis of the cultural environment does not happen of its own accord. It is largely motivated by the educational system which provides for necessary knowledge and discussion (Oerter, 1997, pp. 35 – 39).

Identity is a concept of self which serves as the basis for choices and action. It is described as, “the knowledge of stable reference points which includes both the private and public spheres.” (Weidenfeld 1984, p. 10, in: Hettlage 1999, p. 245). According to Haller is thus “the precondition for consistent and forceful behaviour.” (Haller in Armingeon, 1999, p. 236). Identity as a concept of self is split into the two spheres of personal identity and social identity; personal identity being self-awareness and self-attribution and social identity being the affiliation to certain social groups. Personal identity is needed to recognize individuality, and social identity is needed to support and stabilize personal identity. It also helps to further categorize the environment. Every individual usually strives for a positive concept of self, and thus for a positive appraisal of personal and social identity. In order to define positive or negative, a standard of comparison is needed – in the case of identity it is the opponent, another individual or another social group. It is substantial for the individual to perceive the self as more often superior than inferior when compared to the standard in order to keep up a positive concept of self (Leißle, 2009, pp. 126f.).

A collective identity is an image that a group constructs for itself, a “we-identity” with which members of a group can identify themselves. It refers to “becoming conscious of a we-feeling of a group” (Pfetsch, 201, p. 114). This social identity is stimulated by group values, norms, communication and a moral order. Stable reference points within a group are needed as orientation and in order to establish one's own personal identity and to receive positive feedback from others. This is also known as in-group formation (Mead, 1968, pp. 174f., 180f.).

Identity is thus a concept of self that is vital to every individual in order to “know” him- or herself. It is developed over and against others and motivates a certain behavior. Identity needs diversity to develop as well as commonalities in order to establish itself. The emotional and the active part of identity make it so valuable for the nation: It bonds emotionally and motivates

a desire to stay together as a group in the future for the sake of a positive concept of self. It motivates ways of behavior that symbolize identity, for example through flags, which again strengthens the community (Wellendorf, 1974, p. 29, Mead, 1968, p. 181). Therefore, group identity is essential to nation-formation processes.

### **1.3.3 Homogenizing the Group: The Collective Memory as a Source of Common Consciousness and Collective Identity**

The precious source of consciousness and identity is the memory, which stores earlier perceptions, experiences and codes of behavior - the so-called "reference points". In order to form a group, common reference points have to be established with which group members can identify. The group is formed through the production of consistent concepts of self. These are derived from social memories which nurture the consciousness of unity and peculiarity. Within a group, an (imagined) collective memory is initiated which directs the common way of thinking. It forms a group identity by evoking commonalities and determining reference points. Individual and collective memory are thereby intertwined with the individual memory transferring the collective memory into personal notions, images and impressions (Leißle, 2009, pp. 103ff.).

The success of the collective formation depends on the success of fixing the thoughts and common reference points as "frames". Members of a group have to be made conscious of their membership. Therefore, symbols, values and norms are used to construct and define a vital community. Specific institutions have to be set up so that the frames are assumed to be unquestionable, unchangeable and just natural (Hettlage, 1999, pp. 254f.).

It is important for society to establish institutions to preserve collective memory through constant repetition and interpretation. Without this memory, it would be impossible for the group to constantly reproduce group identity. This memory is symbolized and passed on through myths, songs, dances, sayings, holy texts, pictures, ornaments, paintings, landscapes and the like (Leißle, 2009, pp. 105 f.; cf. Assmann, 1992, p. 89). Members of the group get in touch with this collective memory through parents, education and their own experiences. For this reason, educational institutions are crucial to the mediation and development of a collectively perceived identity in imparting

language, history and the like. The consciousness, the core of a nation, is modulated by a process of education. Therefore, a closer look at education in nation-formation history serves as the background to modern ambitions of European nation formation.

#### **1.4 The Role of Education in Nation Formation Processes**

Mass education was one of the foremost technologies for inculcating nationalist consciousness among the peoples of the emergent nation states.

Gellner (1983) and Hobsbwan (1990)  
in: Shore, 2000, p. 56

One beneficial tool in homogenizing a society is education. It plays a large role in group and nation formation processes. Educational systems are usually deeply rooted in the social and cultural structure of a nation and provide for a common language, common ideas and social mobility (Edel, 2006, p. 14). National consciousness spreads from the intellectuals, especially academically educated people, to the masses in a top-down process (Kunze, 2005, p. 33; cf. Weber, 1956, p. 530). This results in a decisive consensus of reference points, of social, political, economic and cultural norms.

Basically, public educational systems were the precondition for the emergence of a national standard language. With the enforcement of compulsory schooling in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the pressure in favor of a homogenized language increased against local dialects and other languages spoken within the national territory. National language was usually orientated toward the elaborate code of the elites and hence dispersed through public schooling and administration (Weichlein, 2006). A standardized language gave rise to plays and literature, which in turn not only further dispersed the language, but also common opinions and manners, thus strengthening a common culture (Leersen, 2006, p. 5). Standardized (literary) language allowed for a national communication community and political ties between the educated elite and the masses. Hence, internal cultural deviations were assimilated through the public education system (Bauböck, 1992, p. 7). The public educational system therefore set essential preconditions for a potential common consciousness: It homogenized language and culture, fostered communication and a like-mindedness of opinion and manners.

If general public education laid the overall foundation for a national community, it was academic education which triggered its emergence.. Indeed, universities serve a range of functions in the consciousness process: They create and expand (national) knowledge, communicate their findings to the public and exert significant influence in advising the state and professions. In doing this, they serve as the prime transmitter of historical, social and cultural knowledge (Kelsey, 2000, p. 9). Therefore, higher education determines social development and provides moral orientation (Scharff, 2007, pp. 105f.). These abilities will be further illustrated in the case of German higher education.

### **1.5 Example of German Universities**

The history of German universities shall serve as an example of the role of higher education in nation formation processes. When analyzing the German case, the cultural lead of French culture and class society during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe has to be taken into account. The German courts and upper class followed the French example and took over manners and tastes. In the face of an overwhelming French hegemony, German culture and literature was faint and disparate. The German population at the time existed as a variety of petty states and could only follow foreign, mainly French, taste (Leerssen, 2006, p. 4.). At that time, education, especially academic education, played a large role in cultivating a specific German consciousness then.

This started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the approach of the Enlightenment, when education became more important and accessible to all classes. Education allowed for a certain social mobility and the possibility to overcome one's birth class by entering the "academic estate" (*Gelehrtenstand*). The "academic estate" therefore had the function of equalizing class hierarchy in order to allow for equal opportunity and upward mobility. Already in 1768 universities were praised as being the best location for breaking the bounds of the classes, through the advancement of proficiency. Since every student was subject to academic jurisdiction, everyone, regardless of birth, acquired the same rights, namely as a "burgher" of the university (Euler, 1999, pp. 217f.).



In the aftermath of the French Revolution, class society was gradually abolished in Germany, and without this firm structure of feudal division, people had to find new reference points for their life and identity. A new social order was constructed along the ideals of effort and profitability instead of noble birth. Notably, the social class of the burghers derived their identity from their education and qualification in correspondence to the new ideals. These ideals also affected the educational system, which became open to (almost) everyone and which awarded a matriculation certificate, called "Abitur" in German. The "Abitur" attested qualification and granted university entrance. Education and the "Abitur" became instruments of social equality and mobility. In the year 1834, the matriculation certificates of the different German countries were formally accepted as equal among the states. For the first time, the constitutional principle of equality was introduced to German school certificates (Wolter, 1989, pp. 5f.; pp. 23ff.). This in turn allowed for further social and educational mobility as well as the exchange of thought and ideas within the German realm.

Universities in the aftermath of the Enlightenment aimed at educating human beings who were first virtuous and moral and based on this, responsible citizens (Leitner, 1948, p. 70). Therefore, with the abolishment of the aristocracy, the universities supplied the state with qualified public servants as professional bearers of public authority (Bleek 1972, von Westphalen 1979; in: Wolter, 1989, p. 15).

Universities in the German realm have existed since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but they had no great reputation or importance until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Wilhelm von Humboldt took charge of education and culture in Prussia. Humboldt did not emphasize the pragmatics of education and research. He recognized education as the vehicle to form independently acting human beings by acquainting them with science (Edel, 2006, p. 2). The idea was that science was the medium to educate the individual intellectually and ethically. Universities are, according to Humboldt, the summit at which everything important to the moral culture of the nation accumulates. Education was supposed to serve the individual, who was then to influence the moral culture of a nation in return. This established (moral) reference points within a community (Leitner, 1948, pp. 72ff.).

Wilhelm Humboldt postulated the principle of the unity of research and teaching and in 1810 founded the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. It was the first publicly financed university and became the classic German university, which served as a role model for the universities that followed (Edel, 2006, pp. 2f.) Therefore, universities became stable leading institutions within the German realm which dispersed similar values, opinions and ideas concerning the administration of education to the public.

Another harmonizing and unifying factor was the introduction of state examinations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Examinations became regulated by the state, which guaranteed the sufficient and equal qualification of the graduate for civil services. State examinations were introduced for medicine, pharmacy, food chemistry, law and teaching posts. In 1899, German Emperor William II introduced the new academic degrees of graduate engineer and doctoral engineer for graduates of technical universities in Prussia. The new academic degree was quickly implemented throughout Germany with Austria following the example in 1901 (Edel, 2006, pp. 4f., p. 8). Then, every graduate received a diploma. This provided entrance into a higher social stratum, which was recognized by others as the “upper class” and which also demanded class-specific behavior (Elwein, 1985, p. 227). Thus, a specific educated class with certain ascribed norms and values emerged and served as a role model and unifying factor for the rest of the public.

Besides bringing about social integration, universities also had a political influence on people. This became evident in countless public speeches on the occasions of commemoration or birthdays or through political publications (Elwein, 1985, p. 228). Universities served as a primary place for dispersing new and even revolutionary thoughts. This became visible in the aftermath of the July Revolution<sup>8</sup> (1830) and the Hambach Festival in 1832, in which mainly students were involved. The Hambach Festival was the first political demonstration by the masses, who called for the establishment of a German nation state on the basis of a constitution and the acknowledgment of the

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<sup>8</sup> As consequence of this national uprising in France, the French Bourbon monarch Charles X was overthrown and Louis Philippe became king. What was revolutionary about this was the fact that Louis' power was not “God-given” but received from the French bourgeoisie. He was the first constitutional monarch, and this marked a new “democratic” era in Europe. After the July Revolution, liberal and national movements intensified in Europe. The bourgeoisie became stronger against late absolutism, which was expressed in political demonstrations. (Bahr, 2003, p. 61, p. 72).

sovereignty of the people (Bahr, 2003, p. 73). Universities were then conceived of as sources of agitation. Therefore, draconian measures were ordered within the German states in 1834. For example, student associations were banned and student traveling prohibited (except on holidays). The regulations were introduced in all German states of the German confederation (Wolter, 1989, pp. 24f.). This again shows the actual, strong intellectual influence and mobilization potency of universities as well as the overarching association between the German states through educational issues.

This historical retrospective on German higher education demonstrates the important role of German universities in establishing mutual reference points during the emergence of the German nation. Common educational prospects for all social classes and the opportunity of advancement as well as equal treatment served as harmonizing factors. On the university level, the stratas mingled and associated with the educated class, which served as a moral role model to the society. Common degrees and diplomas among the German states were further reference points in recognizing others as equal. Incipient national thoughts and movements were propagated from people at universities. Those ideas and behavior further fostered a “German” identity throughout the different states.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the overarching influence of the German university system became even more visible in international terms. Universities in Japan, France, the USA and Beijing were modeled on the German system and the German university diploma was introduced in Austria, Spain, South America (economic science) and Asia (social science) (Edel, 2006, p. 7). The German higher education system was recognized by third parties as a German national specialty.

## **1.6 Conclusion to Nation, Nation Building and Education**

The investigation into the concept of “nation“ has demonstrated its imaginative nature and justifying power in political terms. It has become clear that “nation“ is a mental concept that helps people to conceive of themselves as a unit and separates them from other groups. This idea of a common destiny has been used to legitimize and strengthen democratic sovereignty in Europe. In order to establish an imagined community, the consciousness and behavior of the individual have to be concerned with the importance of that community. The group becomes important as it offers advantages to the individual in the form of superiority, orientation, and stability. Consciousness is strongly influenced by education and upbringing. Common reference points, thoughts and memories are implemented within a group through education. This homogenizes individual backgrounds at a common level and creates emotional bonds within the group. The investigation into German higher education has proved that universities became stable institutions within the German realm which dispersed similar values and allowed for social equality, recognition and mobility by means of common degrees. It had a socially integrating effect and reinforced the German will to form a nation.

In the following, the European Union as a rather new political authority and its need for a democratically legitimizing people will be introduced. The question is raised as to how far a European imagined community is beneficial to the concept of the European Union. The process of harmonizing higher education within Europe (“Bologna Process”) will be closely examined as to its potential to stimulate a European awareness.

## 2. European “Nation Building”

### 2.1 The European Union

Nowadays, 27 European states<sup>9</sup> converge in the political system of the European Union. With the help of a multitude of agreements, a European economic and political space has emerged in expansion to national spaces (Fligstein, 2009, p. 132). The predecessor of the European Union was the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)<sup>10</sup> which was constituted in 1951 after the end of the Second World War. In those days, the main aim was to install and establish peace in Europe with the help of trading relationships. The aims of the ECSC were ambitious. A free trade area was to be created and the foundations for a common market for the trade of some basic industrial materials laid down. The enforcement of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty implemented supranational political elements for the first time among European countries. They inherited for example the power to insure the abolition of internal tariff barriers or state subsidies, fix prices or harmonize external commercial policy. Four institutions were created: First, the *High Authority*, which consisted of one representative per Member State and which issued decisions (binding), recommendations (binding in their objectives) and opinions (not binding) to the Member States. The *Council of Ministers* consisted of Ministers of the national governments and was supposed to counterbalance and harmonize the High Authorities actions. The *Common Assembly* had more of an advising function. It consisted of members chosen by national governments and granted a “democratic input” into the decision-making processes. The Court of Justice was created in order to settle conflicts between the Member States and/or between the institutions of the Community (Nugent, 2003, pp.34 – 37).

The Treaty of Rome in 1957 established the European Economic Community (EEC), aiming at a custom union, and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), which created a special market for nuclear

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<sup>9</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom; over 490 million people, 23 official languages (Demossier, 2007, p.1).

<sup>10</sup> France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands were the founding members of this Community (Nugent, 2003, p. 35).

power. The Court and the Assembly assumed responsibility for all three Communities, whereas the High Authority and the Council of Ministers remained separate. In 1967, the ECSC, Euratom and ECC were finally governed by the same institutions and referred to as “The European Community” (EC). Those institutions were the Commission (formerly High Authority), the Council of Ministers, the Assembly, and the Court of Justice (Nugent, 2003, pp. 39 – 42, p. 57).

With the idea of creating a European common market at the core, the European Community grew over the years in member and responsibilities. The EC's policy portfolio had grown as well, triggered by increasing internationalization and competitiveness, as well as by the recognition of the positive effects of cooperation. Positive developments in one policy sphere usually “spilled over” to developments in other spheres (Nugent, 2003, p. 50). Over the years, the common political institutions enhanced and national economies gradually merged, with the result of a common European market and a custom union. In addition, practices distorting or preventing competition between the Member States were prohibited and measures for the free movement of persons, services and capital taken (ibid., pp. 40ff.).

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 relaunched the European Community as the European Union (EU). It created the new three pillar organization of the European Union, which consisted of the European Communities, a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Cooperation in the Fields of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Furthermore, a procedure and timetable moving forward to create the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) with a single currency, the Euro, was defined. Today, the European Union has still four main political bodies. The European Commission all the same serves as the motor of the European Union and initiates many political processes. It consists of 27 Commissioners by now, which are bound to represent European rather than national interests. The principle decision making body is the Council of the European Union, consisting of 27 national ministers, which share its legislative competencies with the European Parliament, but is more powerful than the Parliament. The only directly elected institution of the European Union is the European Parliament (formerly Assembly), which has generally advising and co-deciding functions, while the European Court of Justice (ECJ) watches over the rule of law within the European Union (Nugent, 2003, p. 47).

## 2.2 The Democratic Deficit of the EU

The EU is a confederation of states all of which call themselves democratic<sup>11</sup>. Thus it seems sensible to subject the Union to democratic values, especially since it has taken an ever greater importance to national politics at least since the treaty of Maastricht when Member States surrendered increasing political sovereignty to institutions of the European Union. More and more of the national legislation is induced by EU law today.<sup>12</sup> The citizens of the EU are therefore largely affected by affairs made in Brussels. But the consequences of the European Union are not quite balanced with the “will” of the people. Since the EU government takes binding decisions for its people, it intervenes in their lives. Therefore, people need to have a chance to contribute and have a say (Jachtenfuchs, 1997, p. 7; q.v. Input-oriented legitimacy by Scharpf, p. 7 this thesis). Consequently, the European Union is often criticized for its so called “democratic deficit”<sup>13</sup>. The criticism focuses on the lack of transparency and accountability to a large and democratic public. Most European citizens have little to no profound knowledge concerning the mechanisms, goals and benefits of the EU<sup>14</sup>. This lack of connection and thus support is of great concern. Without an “enlightened understanding”, citizens are not able to judge on decisions which serve a citizen's interest the best (Dahl, 1989, p. 308).

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<sup>11</sup> Democracies in Europe differ in their modalities. The system of democracy, in a modern sense, is broadly defined as “a particular configuration of rights and obligations and of procedures that secure those rights” (Lord, 2004, p. 7). It is closely linked to the values of authorization, representation and accountability. Those principles have to be defined and institutionalized in any democratic society (Lord, 2004, p. 3; Beetham & Lord, 1998, p. 60). An ideal democratic process includes effective participation of the citizens, voting equality, “enlightened understanding” (opportunity to be informed, to understand, than to judge and decide which serves the citizen's interest best) and final control by the people (Dahl, 1989, p. 109 – 114).

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Moravcsik and Annette Elisabeth Töller figured that 34,6% of German law was actually induced by EU directives by 2007, excluding directly applicable regulations and „soft law“ influences. Depending on the policy department, rates range from 81,3 and 75 % (agriculture and environment) to 15,6 and 12,9 % (internal policy and labor law). None of the laws in German social or educational policies were induced by EU directives though (Moravcsik & Töller, 2007, p. 2 f.).

<sup>13</sup> “It [a democratic deficit] exists wherever and whenever the societies and economies within democratic states are subject to significant external influences beyond their control.” (Dahl, 1994, p. 24).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the study “Perception of the European Union” conducted in 2001 by the European Commission: “The lack of knowledge about the institutions and the institutional system is startling. [...] There is relatively less ignorance in the small pro-European EU countries, [...] There is a considerable, sometimes abysmal, lack of knowledge, in the other countries.” (p. 9).

There is a strong demand for the “democratization” of European institutions, which is most forcefully inquired from academics (Fligstein, 2009, p. 132). Democratization necessitates first and foremost the nascent of a European demos. The demos, as demonstrated earlier, requires a European collective consciousness and identity in consequence (q.v. Jahn, 2001, p. 318).

In summary, three main interests can be detected behind European policy integration: Firstly, an economic interest which is concerned with economic growth, enlargement of markets, the improvement of supply and the like. Secondly, a political interest, which directs at lasting peace, enlargement of political action from the local to the European level and an interest in strengthening the European position within the world. Thirdly, a cultural interest in the preservation of the Christian Occident. (Haller, 1999, p. 273). With expanding responsibilities and political power, the question of integrating the citizens arose in the aftermath of the Maastricht Treaty. The European processes finally began to require back up and validation through the creation of a collective identity within the population (Leiß, 2009, p. 99, cf. Demossier, 2007, p. 1). In the following, the benefit of a European demos is examined in greater detail.

### **2.3 The Benefit of a European Demos**

As a basic principle of democracy [...] the democratic process should occur at the same level where decisions are taken [...] if decisions are taken at the European level according to a supranational regime, the *demos* should be defined at the level of the European people.

Thomassen & Schmitt, 2004, p.13

Today's reality of the European Union is a system “sui generis”, in which economic and legal structures are already well integrated into a supranational European system, whereas politics and the society remain largely within the nation states (Jachtenfuchs, 1997, p. 4). At this point, a strongly developed European demos is most crucial to *legitimize* the European political system and to *support* political decision in the future. A united, constructive group of Europeans is absolutely advantageous for democratic considerations (Leiß,



2009, p. 145, cf. Demossier, 2007, p. 1). As proven earlier, the existence of a demos is a precondition for the basic stability of democratic politics as well as for economic and social security as a well implemented political state enjoys large approval from its citizens who engage themselves in political affairs (Haller, 1999, p. 268).

Furthermore, the cosmopolitan Europe unleashed the nation state into the global age. The European Union serves as a motivating and modernizing factor to its Member States. In the days of globalization, economic and social borderlines have undeniably dissolved consistently. National self-sufficiency and seclusion were overcome by a mutual dependency. National interests of safety and prosperity are nowadays met in collective solutions (Beck, 2005, pp. 8f.). Combined pursuance of peace and mutual, especially economic aims, are after all, the impetus of the EU. Those goals are best met with combined human efforts, whereas social and political tensions naturally hinder those achievements (Leißle, 2009, p. 124). Thomassen and Schmitt add, that it is “not heterogeneity as such [that] threatens the stability of a political system, but the extent to which they are cross-cutting rather than mutually reinforcing.” (2004, p. 17).

Therefore, business leaders as well as market analysts claim that the deficit of a European “fellow feeling” within the people is hindering the progress of the single market and harms European competitiveness (Shore, 2000, p. 20). A successful nationalities integrating policy is also essential to the European capacity of handling an (economic) crisis, since history has proven that state formation, in a major crisis, usually separates along ethnic and national dividing lines (Jahn, 2001, p. 339).

A nation with a well developed demos expressing the will of the citizens behaves much more consistently, forcefully and self-sacrificing than one without such an identity (Haberman, 1976, pp. 92ff., quoted in Haller, 1999, p. 286). The main problem of the European Union is not the formal alliance of states, economies and societies, “[...]but rather the voluntary association of democratic nations and ethnic groups with each other, to form a supra nation that is both poly ethnic and multinational”, (Jahn, 2001, p. 327), in order to support the systematic, technical Union of institutions. But European integration does not run by itself, it is rather a project that has to be promoted (Leißle, 2009, pp. 145f.).

It becomes evident that core features of the nation and nationalism, such as a “we-feeling”, are important to the political processes of the European Union for legitimizing, stabilizing and improvement reasons. As concluded earlier, a demos arises with mutual consciousness and identity with the consequential behavior. This means, that European legitimacy will rise with the consciousness and activity of the European people. An integration of the various peoples is needed, and a mutual consciousness is the linchpin. The question is how this “supra-nationalism”, can be advanced within the perception European people, in addition to the common nationalism. Therefore, the next section will focus on the “Europeanization” of the Europeans.

## **2.4 The European *Supra-Nation*?**

The question remains in which form a European “demos” as an imagined community is feasible. Already in 1882, Ernest Renan assumed that the concept of “the nation” is not made for eternity. He thought, that a European confederation would probably supersede the nation (Kunze, 2005, p. 13). As Renan is the “father” of the nation concept, it stands to reason that the European Union (as confederation) *has to* be something different than “just” a common nation.

Apparently, the EU itself is a political organization which, in contrast to “normal” nation states, does not yet levy hard demands on its people. No taxes nor military services or the like are expected from its citizens. Therefore, the EU does not require so much of an emotional attachment as the typical nation does. What is needed from the people is a conscious support of the project, and a solidary behavior, but not a personal sacrifice (Armingeon, 1999, pp. 236f.).

It has to be remembered, that European integration would have been impossible without the earlier nationalization of society. Nationalism evokes feelings of specificity and equality if not superiority to other nations. The formation of groups, which demarcate and identify themselves with the help of stereotypes, enables the individual to arrange and classify a highly complex life (Leißle, 2009, p. 102; cf Jenkins & Sofos, 1996). This fosters identity for the individual and a sense of belonging and safety for the group, for without

this perceived internal safety, the functions of external security and economic development would have never been entrusted to supranational organizations (Jahn, 2008, pp. 21f.). Therefore, Europeanization would have been impossible for the past as well as for the future.

European integration was then a conscious process, with the effort to preserve the own action potential in a globalizing world (Milward, 1992, p. 270) Therefore, it is unlikely and undesirable that the European Union will overcome those core nationalisms, but rather strives for an *additional* European consciousness as a legitimizing pillar. The “European group” would be an additional classification for the personal lifeworld.<sup>15</sup> Spohn expounds, that national identities are transformed, yet not dissolved by a European identity. He claims, that national memories are reconstructed by layers of a transnational European memory in the wake of Europeanization (Spohn, 2005, pp. 3f.) Local nationalism would therefore be *extended* by Europeanization. It is, according to Egbert Jahn, “nationalism at a higher level” (Jahn, 2001, p. 341). It can be imagined as an additional *European* consciousness, that embraces local nationalism, and overarches national borders. Therefore, a “European demos” (not a nation, as it lacks the emotional necessity) would consist of various “sub-nations”. European consciousness would inherit a multinational consciousness, corresponding to the multi-layered statehood in Europe (ibid. pp. 318f; cf. Leißle, 2009, p. 101). This leads to the question of measures required to build such a European consciousness with mutual reference-points.

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<sup>15</sup> The term “Lebenswelt” was established by the philosopher Edmund Husserl and borrowed by Jürgen Habermas. It is therefore internationally translated as “Lifeworld” and refers to “[...] the already pregiven (and generally unreflected) intentional background, or “lifeworld” (cf. *Crisis*), against which my practice of act-ascription and all constitutive achievements based upon that practice make sense in the first place, and in terms of which they get their ultimate justification.” (Beyer, 2007, Edmund Husserl)

## 2.5 Requisites towards a European Consciousness

The main source [...] is the opportunity to positively interact on a regular basis with people from other European countries with whom one has a basis for solidarity.

Fligstein, 2009, .p. 133

It is likely that the process of Europeanization, in which people develop emotional and cultural ties to the European Union in form of memories, will take generations to fully develop. It is a process, that has to be cultivated. Spohn recalls the fact, that each European nation state and each society had undergone an historical course of political, socio-economic and cultural modernization, which all left traces on the national identity. Identities are formed in interaction with other identities and their national course. Therefore, Spohn claims that in the long term of constructing and reconstructing experiences and memories, collective experiences and memories arise. These form a collective European memory, which will then shape the national as well as European consciousness (Spohn, 2004, p. 7, cf. Fligstein, 2009, p. 133). Hence, mutual reference points arise.

In order to form a strong demos, more prerequisites than common memories are needed. In the discussion of a European consciousness and identity, Manuel Castell's concept of "project identity" is frequently applied. This theory claims that individuals are able to actively construct a new identity, if a situation necessitates this, as a "project" on the basis of available cultural material. In order to reach a certain "project goal", mutual reference points are found and a consistent behavior is cultivated. Examples for these "projects" are the single market, European citizenship or the Bologna Process (Leiß, 2009, pp. 143ff.). Only a *commonly perceived goal* gives sense to the creation of a powerful group and to the volition to be a member. This goal can promote stability and cohesion for the common European welfare. But the elementary basis to group strengthening measures and the will to reach a common goal, is a consistent European consciousness. Its precondition is the *awareness* of the importance of the European Union to one's personal life. In order to recognize other Europeans as members of the same group, a *sense of equality* is indispensable. Equality is advanced through equal preconditions and equal treatment. In a third step, *commonalities* have to be detected in

order to strengthen the emotional ties of the group. This can only happen through acquaintance processes. In the following, these prerequisites are examined in more detail.

### **2.5.1 Real-Life-Relevance, Equality, Mutual Acceptance and Commonalities**

In order to raise an European awareness, people have to perceive and experience the European Union in relation to themselves (Shore, 2000, p. 26). Recent studies revealed, that especially practical experiences increase an European awareness significantly (Schildberg, 2008, p. 74). In consequence, it is personal “real-life-relevance” that is important to the development of a European demos. European politics have to be perceptible for the individual to ascribe importance to the process and mark it as a stable reference point in the lifeworld. This facilitates the imagination of a political entity *and* community as well as to perceive oneself as part of it (Shore, 2000, pp. 26f.).

A good example for “real-life-relevance” and thus a greater European awareness is the European (Union) citizenship, introduced on 1 January 1993. With the help of the citizenship, a Finnish citizen who is employed in another EU-country will not be perceived as just a citizen of a different state, but also, and probably primarily, as a European citizen speaking a foreign mother tongue and bearing a foreign ethnicity. In the wake of the growing legal importance of the European citizenship, this perception will certainly flourish on the expense of state citizenship. The abolishment of legal barriers through the European freedom of movement encourages European migration and contributes significantly to the process of de-territorialization of nationality in Europe (Jahn, 2001, pp. 346f.). In addition, through possessing the same citizenship, people manage to recognize similarities to those they previously perceived as “the other”. Olaf Leißer calls this “de-categorization politics”. The central aim is to emphasize similarities and reduce the sense of insuperable differences. This enables the individual to let go of his strong, national demarcation towards other nations and enables him to join the European view. It inherits lessening the “hostile” ties, which were formerly used to create the own (national) identity. In that event, the European-intergroup relationship can increase in that event, and therefore contacts beyond the national borders flourish (Leißer, 2009, pp. 131f.).

“Real-life-relevance” but also financial harmonization measures are instruments to overcome the crusted national consciousness of “we” and “the other”. If people receive financial aid to, for example, develop towards similar economic standards, they do not have to, or are not as capable of, demarcating themselves on an economic basis against each other - they feel equally treated and “the same” (cf. Leißle, 2009, p. 127). The cohesion policy program within the European Union helps to counteract the sense of privileged and underprivileged, included and excluded citizens of the European Union. Disadvantaged regions are bolstered through European structural funds, in order to reach a certain economic and social cohesion and harmonic progress within the European Union. Through agricultural and social structural funds, inequalities within the European Union are adjusted (Huget, 2005, p. 293). Harmonization is a proceeding practice which benefits the market and strengthens mutual trust. With fading differences, demarcation within Europe becomes more irrelevant. “The others” are detected outside of Europe and other Europeans perceived as fellow members with a common destiny.

Robert Hettlage explicates that the transfer of financial resources or a the idea of a shared history is not enough to bring together the people of Europe. According to him, the most important element is the exchange of information, so that a true understanding can grow (Hettlage, 1999, p. 258). Inter cultural communication is necessary to enable people to accept diversity, understand the language and culture of others, and detect commonalities (Demossiers, 2009, p. 11). From this acceptance, personal interests, close relationships, affinity, and a perception of having things in common develop. Hettlage therefore believes that European integration is foremost a learning process on different levels, which forms a basis through information and recognition. This knowledge is essentially stimulated by the educational system (Hettlage, 1999, p. 258).

## 2.5.2 Advancement of a European Consciousness and Identity

Traces of European identity can be found in the past, but it is primarily with the institutional novelty of supra-nationalism that the perspective of a European identity has become a realistic option.

Pfetsch, 2001, p. 116

A progress towards a European consciousness is already visible today. Schildberg postulates the existence of a European identity in addition to national, regional and local identities (2008, p. 73). The findings of the Eurobarometer Study in 2001 though suggested a rather diverse “European identity”. On the one hand, citizens in the “South” of Europe (Member States geographically in the south, center or east of the continent) are strongly aware of a historical European entity with vivid exchange over the centuries, of diverse people but common roots<sup>16</sup>. They set the European model of its distinct people but shared foundations of cultural and humanistic values as opposed to the United States as “the other”. The citizens of those “South” countries express a more or less spontaneous empathy for other Europeans. On the other hand, in northern countries these roots and cultural proximity together with a sense of common historical and cultural ties are of a much lesser awareness.<sup>17</sup> The northern citizens possess an inherent conviction of superiority of their society and values. They express only weak empathy with other Europeans, especially with the South, “whose mentality is seen as very different.” (European Commission, 2001a, p. 5).

So what can be done to raise, and deepen an European mutual feeling more consistently within the European Union? Miroslav Hroch called the first phase for nationalism an academic and individual interest for national questions. Empirical studies have shown, that people with a higher education have already developed that positive European sentiment more consistently within Europe than the general public did (Leißle, 2009, p. 117, cf. Fligstein,

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<sup>16</sup> This applies the most for the Latin countries, Belgium and Luxembourg, and most Central European countries. In comparison, Germans, Irish and Finns assert their “Europeanness” to a somewhat lesser extent (European Commission, 2001a, p. 5)

<sup>17</sup> This applies mainly to the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and the Czech Republic (ibid.).

2009).<sup>18</sup> Their strong approval of the EU implies that they are in favor of a deepened European Community. This attitude is likely to spread “top down” from the “elites” to the people slowly but surely as Kunze and Weber claim (Kunze, 2005, p. 33; cf. Weber, 1956, p. 530) and as the study of the German case indicated earlier.

## **2.6 Conclusion to “European Nation Building”**

The immersion into the system of the European Union displayed its supranational nature and its need for a legitimizing and supporting European demos. The European Union is accused to suffer from a democratic deficit, as it executes power on a largely unilluminated public, which in turn can not exercise enough influence on the powers. The lack of a public support might also lead to hindrances and instability within the European Union. Therefore, a “Europeanization” is needed, which makes the people aware of their European community. The idea is to expand the individual lifeworld with the consciousness of a European group. This requires a common European goal, individual real-life-relevance, a sense of equality within the group, mutual acceptance of the group members and the perception of commonalities. The idea is to provide for a project, which unifies the people of the European Union and accommodates for the stated requirements.

The case of the German nation building illustrated the strong influence of education on awareness and the attribution of importance. Higher education granted for a sense of equality among students and lead to commonalities within the German states. Furthermore, the investigation into identity formation has affirmed that the young adult age is the most important phase of life for establishing one's own identity concept and for integrating new scopes into it. Hence, the effort of Europeanizing higher education for European demos-formation purposes is analyzed in the following section on the basis of the “Bologna” project.

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<sup>18</sup> On the basis of a Eurobarometer poll of 2004, Fligsteins intense analysis revealed, that more educated people with higher incomes, who are owners, managers professionals or white collar workers, are more likely to call themselves as “European” than others (Fligstein, 2009, p.140). Another European documentation, published in 2001, affirmed that 92,2% of the top-decision makers within the Union perceive the European Union as “good”, whereas only 48% of the general public are of that opinion (European Commission, 2001b, p. 50).



### **3. Education and the Bologna Process as Tool for European Demos Formation?**

Within Europe, forms of higher education and accessions, study financing as well as study organization and certification structure has historically developed in every country. In the wake of the European market integration it is only natural that higher education systems were under pressure to conform in order to facilitate trade and employment in the European area (Banscherus, 2007, pp. 77f.). Therefore, the pursuit of comparability and compatibility of the educational systems arose as a common objective (Teichler, 2009, p. 52).

Today, there are around 4,000 higher education institutions, with approximately 19 million students and about 1.5 million staff members (European Commission, 2009, p. 4). In the European context, the Bologna Process is a proceeding, which merges all the diverging national education systems into an consistent international system. The states of the Bologna Process created a special organization, in which the EU, after initial hesitation, has assumed a leading role. Therefore, the Bologna Process creates a basis of comparable premises to European graduates. In the case of the Bologna Process, the European universities have to actively participate, and a multitude of students and staff are directly affected. It is supposed to give an additional rise to the opportunity to interact regularly with other Europeans. In the following, it's benefit to a European demos will be assessed.

#### **3.1 The Bologna Process**

A European dimension in higher education is perceived as a practical economic necessity apart from its desirability on cultural and political grounds.

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In order to understand the reasons and implications of the Bologna Process, a short historical recollection with regard to educational issues on the European level is needed, commencing with the founding documents of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958. The documents constituted vocational education for farmers and employees and the mutual recognition of academic

qualifications among the member states (Art. 41, 118 and 57 EEC). In the course of the events in the 50s and 60s it had become evident that higher education had to be adjusted and internationalized in the European area. But it was difficult to realize a common aim and to realize a consensus regarding the prerequisites for common educational standards. The main obstacle was that at this stage, international educational policy had not been politically or scientifically explored. In order to accumulate knowledge concerning the prevalent education situation within the member states and consecutively encounter the missing perspectives, two education reports were launched by the European Community in 1973 and 1976. Common opinions and problems were asserted in those reports; such as education as a civil right or the request of reflecting the relationship of education and subsequent profession. The written fixation of topics and demands was very important to the ensuing process. In 1973, first calls for the recognition of foreign diplomas were made for guaranteeing the freedom of movement and the right of domicile, as those freedoms were hindered by disavowing foreign diplomas. But the Member States were not yet ready to surrender educational policy to the European system (Walter, 2006, pp. 80 – 91).

This changed eventually during the 80's, when the European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued two decisive court decisions in the regard of higher education. In the case "Forcheri"<sup>19</sup> the ECJ constituted that access to higher education, even though it refers to a policy area under national jurisdiction, falls into the scope of European law as soon as it collides with the non-discrimination rule (Art. 7 ECC, now Art. 12 EC). The term "professional education" (Art. 128 ECC, now split in Art. 149 and 150 EC) was specified in the case "Gravier"<sup>20</sup> in 1985 and "Blaizot"<sup>21</sup> in 1988. The ECJ decided, that higher education is a substantial part of "professional education". Therefore, national higher education was subdued to the European law of equal treatment in regard to conditions of accession and study grants (Günther,

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<sup>19</sup> In the law suit *Forcheri* an Italian women took legal action against tuition fees for a non-university insitute of higher education in Belgium, which charged only foreign students (ECJ, C-152/82).

<sup>20</sup> The French student Françoise Gravier took legal action against considerable tuition fees at Belgian universities, which only applied to foreign students - known as "Minerval" (ECJ, C-293/83).

<sup>21</sup> In the aftermath of the *Gravier* decision, various veterinarian students sued the University of Liege for repayment of their previously charged tuition fees (Minerval) (ECJ, C-24/86).

2007, pp. 114 – 123).

Finally in 1991, the EC issued the first memorandum on Higher Education, which became even more explicit with the Treaty of the European Union. Even though the organization of education has always remained a national policy area, the European Union committed itself to contribute to the quality of education with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Article 126 EC (now 149 EC) states, that the European Union shall encourage cooperation between the Members States “by supporting and supplementing their action.” (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, p. 40). This is underlined by the Lisbon strategy of the year 2000, which states that “by 2010, Europe must become: the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (European Council, 2000). This again stresses the economic background to higher education cohesion.

The Bologna Process is merely the answer to the aims of the Maastricht Treaty and Lisbon Strategy as with the ongoing free movement of people and goods it was only a matter of time that harmonization on the educational level had to follow in order to ease the recognition of diplomas and qualifications for the professional labor market. But, in difference to the European Economic Area (EEA), the Bologna Process is based on the autonomous Bologna Declaration, to which European countries *may* become parties. Therefore today the Bologna Process is an independent, intergovernmental arrangement of forty-six European countries.<sup>22</sup> The Bologna Process was concluded in 1999 but is not integrated in an European legal framework, as education is not an European policy area, even though corresponding ambitions are found in the European statutory framework. The aim of the Bologna Process is to harmonize higher education and to forward mobility and cooperation of universities within the Member countries. The ultimate goal is to create “The European Higher Education Area” (EHEA) until the year 2010 (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, pp. 3 – 9).

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<sup>22</sup> From 1999: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom; from 2001: Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkey; from 2003: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia, Macedonia; from 2005: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine; from 2007: Montenegro.

Without any legally binding force, the process itself relies on the participation of the academic community and student representatives. It is merely based on mutual trust and the pressure to measure up with the other signees in implementation (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, p. 36). In the framework of the Bologna Process, transnational actors set direct objectives, timetables and models of implementation, which lead to pervasive effects. The Bologna Process is not enforced through binding law, but through so called “soft law”<sup>23</sup> – the pressure from the achievements and example of others. Through the integration of the Bologna Process into the Lisbon strategy, force was added by the European Commission, which now binds its financial assistance to the progress of the Bologna implementation. The focus of the Commission lies on quality assurance, recognition of degrees and study periods and the promotion of student mobility (Münch, 2009, pp. 58f.; cf. Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, p. 36).

The Bologna Process is implemented in a “top down” manner. The regular meetings of secretaries of education seems to be its centre, in which agreements and mutual goals are fortified. Yet the implementation happens in a rather unavowed way, through national education systems and the transformation of universities, for example, with the help of benchmarking, universities set their own goals for their study programs. After all, those bearing and implementing the process are the teaching professionals and the students (Tomusk, 2007, p. 15). Accreditation agencies then watch over the compliance of the specified educational standards within the member states (Münch, 2009, p. 77).

The Process has ten defined “Action Lines” which were elaborated and complemented in the Bologna Declaration and in follow-up meetings in Prague and Berlin.

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles<sup>24</sup>
3. Establishment of a system of credits (such as European Credit Transfer System, “ECTS”)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Soft law is defined as “rules of conduct, which, in principle, have no legally binding force but which nevertheless may have practical effects.” (Snyder, 1994, cited in: Serrano-Velarde & Hopbach, 2007, p. 35)

<sup>24</sup> Undergraduate and graduate (Bachelor and Master), PhD as a probable third cycle.

<sup>25</sup> One ECTS equals 28 presence study hours. One year of study is supposed to have a workload of 60 ECTS (Dauven – van Knippbergen, 2007, p. 160).

4. Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles
5. Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance
6. Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education
7. Lifelong learning
8. Involvement of students
9. Promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to other parts of the world
10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA)

Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, p. 9

All these measurements shall contribute to greater transparency in the European education jungle (Teichler, 2005, p. 92). From transparency results an advancement of mobility and close co-operation, for example through joint-study programs. The Bologna Process intends greater compatibility and comparison of higher education in Europe together with an improvement in attractiveness and international competitiveness. The main measurement is the enforcement of a two cycle system, with a first cycle of three years (Bachelor degree) which shall already lead to employability and therefore improve job market relevance. The second cycle is the consequential one or two year Masterstudy. As a consequence, the various systems of higher education within the EHEA have to adjust and comply with the Bachelor- and Master-system. In this context it is argued that the European countries are now establishing an “universitarian mono-culture” in order to survive in the international competition (Edel, 2006, pp.18 – 36; cf. Münch, 2009, p. 29). Thus, the European higher education systems are harmonized through the Bologna measurements.

In the context of the group-formation analysis, the four main goals, strengthening of competition (3.1.1), transparency (3.1.2), mobility (3.1.3) and the enhancement of employability (3.1.4) shall be investigated in greater detail. In addition, the social implications (3.1.5) shall be acknowledged as well. In doing so, their value to the creation of a European demos is analyzed and the practical effects of the Bologna implementation considered.

### 3.1.1 Enforcement of Competition

Competition is usually seen as a dividing rather than an interconnecting factor. But as soon as competition is addressed towards “another”, it is reckoned as a very unifying instrument. It inherits the common aim of being superior. In educational terms, the maintenance of competitiveness against the United States, Japan and South-East Asia is a central motive to the European Community. Michael Daxner, former president of the university of Oldenburg, claims that competition was the principle reason for harmonizing higher education in Europe. Harmonization guaranteed the usability of qualifications in as much countries as possible. It then reduces the cultural and social frictions which hindered European scientific development (Banscherus, 2007, p. 78). Competition, therefore, functions like a motor to the process of a common European Higher Education Area.

Competition amongst the universities is also increasing. With advancing globalization and mobility, universities compete for the best teachers and students internationally. With a similar study system based on the two cycle approach, studies and universities become more comparable. Most European students choose their university based on its quality and reputation (European Commission, 2009, p. 21).<sup>26</sup> Therefore, universities are eager to improve their studies. German universities for example started to define internal strategic goals and motivate the quality of research and teaching through performance – related to funding of their departments. Accomplishments of tasks, performance and innovative abilities are financially rewarded and failures sanctioned by the university directorates. Quality assurance became common practice within the universities. Instruments of quality assessment are internal and external evaluation, student- and alumni surveys, teaching records, accreditation and benchmarking systems. Target agreements proved to be the most effective instrument though (Jaeger, 2005, p. 2; p. 69). Therefore, the enforcement of competition provides for a permanent pursuit of improvement, certain standards and overall better universities within Europe. Based on the

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<sup>26</sup> In Spain (62%), Croatia (63%) and Austria (65%) “agreed that an institution's quality or reputation was at the basis of of a student's choice of where to study.” The ratio mounted up to 95% in UK and 94% in Poland and Latvia (European Commission, 2009, p. 21).

mutual aim to withstand European competition and become the best Higher Education Area in the world.

### **3.1.2 Enhancement of Transparency**

A higher education system is perceived as transparent if sufficient information on the system are available and obtainable. In general, transparency is only guaranteed, if not too many differentiating characteristics exist. The knowledge of the existence of two cycles and two qualifying degrees in all European countries made a lot of complicated handbooks dispensable and advanced transparency immensely (Teichler, 2005, pp. 130f.). A supplementary important tool for transparency are procedures of quality assurance as study content needs to be assessed in order to assure formal and qualitative equivalence of curricula. The assessment is conducted on a national level. But in order to guarantee reliability and comparability of the assessments, mutual rules for organization and methods were developed. In the follow up conference 2005 in Bergen, “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) were adopted. In compliance to the guidelines, universities assure their quality through self-assessment (quality assurance of teachings staff, assessment of students etc.)<sup>27</sup> and an external peer review of quality assurance agencies. Both quality assurance procedures are based on common principles, such as sharing national experiences or implementing European aims at a national level (Serrano-Veralde & Hopbach, 2007, pp. 31 – 35). Within a university for example, representatives of subject communities define Learning Outcomes per subject, which form the basis of benchmarking statements. Educational objectives are defined in a bottom-up approach: Though they are not prescriptive, they do provide models for the study programs of an institution (Davies, 2009, pp. 72f.).

Since the Lisbon convention of 1997, the proceeding of mutually recognizing course achievement and degrees was enforced. By now, course achievements and degrees are recognized on the amount of study time invested, not so much on the basis of study content. The Credit System of ECTS thereby facilitates the recognition of achievements as it accounts for

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<sup>27</sup> See example of German universities, previous page

accomplished study hours (Teichler, 2005, pp.132f.). Through the mutual commitment to quality assurance and common guidelines, an overall standard is guaranteed and trust fostered among the universities. Staff and students are able to obtain more information on systems of other higher education institutions and can study and copy examples. This leads to more consistency in the EHEA and a better mutual understanding. In addition, staff and students as “the general public”<sup>28</sup> are actively involved in quality and recognition processes. As a result, former obstacles to studies abroad and alien systems are declining. People perceive similar systems and standards as comforting and relate to each other (ibid., p. 122). A mutual reference point of an akin higher education system has developed.

### **3.1.3 Enforcement of Mobility**

Ulrich Teichler claims, that intra-European mobility is only achievable if vertical differences are kept within a limit, because only then large “zones of mutual trust” can develop in which students are able to move freely (Teichler, 2009, p. 50). Means of competition and transparency measures have contributed their share to this zone. Through the mutual recognition of study programs and study loads, divergences are additionally reduced. Due to the introduction of similar study cycles, degrees and the standard system of study load measurement, student as well as professional mobility has increased (Dauven – van Knippenberg, 2007, p. 161). Further accomplishments include the “joint study programs” of universities across two or three countries, which often lead to corporate degrees. The close team work in elaborating, adjusting and implementing the joint study program leads to a deep and intensive partnership between the foreign universities. The language in those study programs is usually English, which is not only the recent Lingua franca of science, but also the conversation language across borders of the European Union (Wintermantel, 2007, p. 172).

Besides, the “Bologna degree” is widely considered outside the European continent. In the Unites States, for example, already 82% of the graduate schools accepted the Bologna three years degree in 2007 (Lenzen, 2007, p. 79). This underlines the success in terms of international mobility, but also

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<sup>28</sup> General, but slightly elitist still



serves as an important group formation tool: the recognition and validation as a group from third parties.

In the creation of a “European group” or demos, student mobility obviously plays a major role. Students are able to take classes in other countries and still earn credits for their original studies. This encourages the exchange of students among the countries, which in return results in a greater knowledge of “foreign” culture and language. The walls between the external alien and the internal domestic group members are crumbling. In addition, the mutual “Bologna degree” is accepted by foreign systems, which underlines the overall recognition of a “European (Bologna) Group”.

### 3.1.4 Enforcement of Employability

“Enforcement of employability” is certainly a measure which suits the economic backbone of the European Union. “Employability” though is a term, which is not strictly defined. It implies a certain aim of education and refers to the utility of graduates to the job market. It inherits the relationship of course offers, competencies and occupational activity. Therefore, in the discussion of employability and the Bologna Process, a set of competences was elaborated which is supposed to help students to be professionally qualified for their future employment. Ulrich Teichler elaborated the aspired abilities, based on the graduate surveys CHEERS<sup>29</sup> and REFLEX<sup>30</sup>, as following:

- *expertise* (for example deeper specialization, emphasis on theories and methods, comprehension instead of memorizing, new bundles of subject-matters etc.)

<sup>29</sup> The European Graduate Survey “Careers after Higher Education – a European Research Study” (CHEERS) was conducted in 1999 from the Center of Employment- and Higher-education Research of the university of Kassel (Germany) under the lead of Prof. Dr. Ulrich Teichler. The situation of eleven European countries plus Japan were analyzed by interviewing ca. 3.000 graduates of the cohort 1994/1995 per country, about four years after graduating from university. Emphasis was put on socio-economic backgrounds, studies and study process, employment and employment process, competences and job requirements, relationship of studies and employment, further education and the like (Jahr, Schomburg & Teichler, 2002, p. 325).

<sup>30</sup> The project “The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society New Demands on Higher Education in Europe “ (REFLEX) is “a survey of 70,000 graduates from 16 countries about their qualifications and employment in 2005, five years after leaving higher education. It investigates the skills needed by graduates to function adequately in the modern knowledge society, the role played by higher education institutions in helping them develop these skills, tensions that arise as graduates, institutions and employers strive to meet their objectives - and how to relieve those tensions.” (Marshall, 2008)

- *overall cognitive competences* which can be fostered by scientific studies (general education, theories, methods, comprehension, critical and innovative reasoning, learning how to learn)
- *ways of working* (e.g. completing tasks in limited amount of time, planning, persevering)
- *general job related moral concepts* (e.g. commitment, allegiance, curiosity, orientation towards innovation, skepticism, critical concepts)
- *specific job related moral concepts in career terms* (e.g. business values and business working-styles, public servant values and working-styles, service orientation)
- *transfer qualifications* (e.g. systematical confrontation of scientific and occupational approaches, problem solving abilities, application-oriented qualification)
- *socio-communicative competences* (e.g. leadership, capacity for teamwork, discoursing, persuading, convincing)
- *additional qualifications*: knowledge of other subject matters than the own professional studies (e.g. languages, law and economics, IT)
- *capability to handle the job market* (knowledge of job hunt, successful application behavior etc.)
- *capability of self-organization* (handling of own (vocational) life)
- *international competencies* (e.g. languages, knowledge & understanding of foreign countries, cultures, “field knowledge” concerning other countries (Business in China or similar), comparative thinking and understanding)

Teichler, 2009, pp. 42f.

The investigation into the notion of employability revealed a set of competences, which find large approval on educational level. The question of education is no longer “what shall young academics learn?” but rather “which abilities shall the young academics have at the end of their studies?” (Pinkwart, 2009, p. 13). The focus of the university is then to strengthen those common abilities in order to comply with the guidelines of the Bologna Process and reach the goal of “employability”. It sets the reference frame for the study programs and -content. Education and teaching is more and more oriented towards this mutual merit of utility which influences the consciousness of the students by encouraging abilities, which seem most

relevant to the job market. With inculcating the listed values into the students, something else is cultivated in the whole of Europe: an achievement-oriented society, in which similar values and certain favored behaviors apply.

### **3.1.5 Social Dimension of the Bologna Process**

A constituent part of the EHEA is the social dimension. It is seen as “an overarching or transversal action line.” (Schnitzer, 2005, p. 7). Higher education is supposed to be equally accessible to all students. They shall be able to complete their studies without any obstacles deriving from social or economic backgrounds (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2006, p. 172). Significantly involved in advancing this aim is the Berlin Communiqué of 2003, which states in its Preamble:

Ministers reaffirm the importance of the social dimension of the Bologna Process. The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. They emphasize that in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail.

Berlin Communiqué, 2003, p. 1

“Social cohesion” and reducing inequalities helps to create a student community with similar preconditions to education. Education and educational opportunities provide for equally favorable circumstances in life and further reduce social disparity in the future. They effect income and status notably. Unequal education conditions, on the other hand, deepen disadvantages of groups concerned (Leißle, 2009, p. 148). Richard Münch claims that today provision of knowledge has become the central criterion of social inclusion (Münch, 2009, p. 22). For good reason nowadays society is also called the “knowledge-based society”. Universities are institutions that actively disperse knowledge, also of the European Union. They are therefore an important tool to social inclusion and help to raise awareness and improve the acceptance of the “European idea” (Shore, 2000, p. 26). Therefore, the objective of making higher education easier and more equally accessible is decisive for the

European demonstration, yet the implementation is somewhat faint. Various associations (Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten 2009, Rectors' Conferences and Associations Representing Universities of Applied Sciences 2007 etc.) have called on the Education Ministers to put greater emphasis on the social goal, for example through gradually abolishing tuition fees and addressing study financing for all students, independent of study loans and the like. But since those requests apply to national policies, a common European arrangement is unlikely to develop due to the lack of European legislative authority.

### **3.4 Bologna Effects**

The Bologna Process therefore has several effects on the European community. It provides for common European standards, an overarching system of degrees, mutual recognition, transcultural exchange, safety and the dispersion of the European idea. It creates some sort of equality among the students and has real life relevance to all of them. In addition, it is not only a process "one has heard of" but a process which is actively concerned with the lifeworld of students and professionals.

The Bologna Process introduced convergence and equalization on different areas of the educational system (Anweiler & Mitter, 2002, p. 133). It created mutual standards and eased student exchanges. Common degrees and course achievement systems give a sense of alliance and security to students and employers. Mobility and inter-European exchange is further stimulated. Exchange is a basic experience, binding together otherwise unrelated locations. The limits of one's own mental community are perceived and enhanced (Shore, 2000, p. 32). The Bologna Process helps to overcome the national perspective while improving contacts across narrow national borderlines. This improves the inter-group relatedness. Empirical studies have proven that personal relationships to members of other groups, former "out-group", diminished prejudices and stereotyping, thus distinguishing features. A European network of higher education has been established, which allows for nation-overarching groups, which create a mutual social identity apart from any political institutions (Leißle, 2009, pp. 132f.). According to Chris Shore (2000), the socialization of the Bologna Process creates "a new elite" (p. 32)

or at least, as Münch calls it, an “adapted clientèle” ( 2009, p. 91).

The Bologna Process therefore might be an excellent example for fostering consciousness. It allows for inter-European recognition through harmonization and equal treatment, stimulates the exchange – thus the movement of people - and grants for direct experience. These measures lead to de-categorization and a strengthening of the emergence of a European demos.

### **3.3 State of Affairs**

Nevertheless, the precondition for the strengthening of the European demos through education is its feasibility. Today in Germany, almost 70% of the study programs are adapted to the two-cycle system of Bachelor and Master (Müller, 2009, p. 23). Recent HIS<sup>31</sup> - Surveys of German Bachelor degree holders underlined the thesis, that, compared to former graduates, mobility increased with the introduction of the Bologna Process. Bachelor graduates also stated that the recognition of foreign study loads was surprisingly uncomplicated. The overarching recognition of studies within Europe seems to be already well implemented on this level (Minks & Briedis, 2005, pp. 24 – 27). In addition, no differences could be detected in the relation of studies abroad and the socio - educational background. Mobility seems equally accessible to all German students. A stronger internationalization of Bachelor studies is also visible in the teaching and studying culture, which is increasingly concerned with international topics, held in a foreign language or by a foreign professor (ibid. p. 32). The importance of key competencies has been recognized by the universities and appropriate programs were initiated. Yet the HIS study revealed, that the professional abilities of “employability” are not as incorporated into the study programs as they are supposed to be, even though Bachelor graduates do better in this respect than their fellow students of the former degree (“Diplom-” and “Magister”) studies. More project oriented studies, especially concerning management related abilities, are still desirable (ibid. p. 45, p. 51).

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<sup>31</sup> HIS = Hochschul-Informationen-System (Higher Education Information System), is a company serving the public good in assisting institutions of higher education, in administration as well as the public higher education policies in their tasks (HIS, 2009).

In an overall survey of European students, 53% showed an intention to study abroad. Those who did not show the intention, claimed primarily that they had no funds to do so (61%). Especially students from Romania and Bulgaria claimed that this was a major obstacle to them (83%), whereas only 22% of the Norwegian students had a similar problem. Difficulties in recognition of study periods abroad hindered students in Spain (57%), Poland (53%), Bulgaria (52%) and Romania (50%). Irish, British and Norwegian students on the other hand had the least problems concerning recognition of study periods spent abroad (European Commission, 2009, pp. 26 – 30).

In practice, each member state has its own regulatory framework and consequential implementation procedures in the field of education. Obstacles arise from divergent administrative (law) systems within the Bologna states (Hummer, 2005, p. 35; Badelt & Wintermantel, 2007, pp. 81f.). For the time being, the social distinctions within the EHEA are of particular concern. Some countries offer national study grants to their students, whereas others have no such system and in addition raise study fees. European structure funds for education, which could be used to equilibrate social inequalities, likewise agricultural and social funds, are not in sight yet (Schnitzer, 2005, p. 7). The different systems of study financing, fees and (absent) scholarships hold serious obstacles to European mobility.<sup>32</sup> Students are usually supported by their national study financing system (if existent). This does not change when they go abroad, even if the other university charges higher fees to their students. Additionally, a non-national student is in most cases not entitled to receive benefits from the host-country, even if national students do (Lang, 2005, p. 21; cf. Directive 93/96/ECC<sup>33</sup>, now incorporated in Directive 2004/38/EC). The practical experience of joint study programs, for example in reconciling tuition-fees, exemplifies the real-life necessity to further fine tune national education regulations in the future (cf. Olley, 2006, p. 5; Franconi, 2005, p. 7).

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<sup>32</sup> The “Trend III Report” of 2003 indicated that 80% of the students claim “financial burdens” to be the major obstacle to mobility (Teichert & Tauch 2003, p. 29).

<sup>33</sup> The Directive 93/96/ECC “on the Right of Residence for Students” holds that students are entitled to reside in any Member State they wish, as long as they provide for “sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the social security system of the host Member State. [...] The Directive does not establish any entitlement to the payment of maintenance grants by the host Member State to students benefiting from the right of residence.”

## **Conclusion**

The research question of this thesis was concerned with the means and measures of European nation- and identity building and in how far academic education serves as a helpful tool in this process. The first part of this thesis investigated the concept of nation and nation building. It became clear, that the nation is rather an imagined community with the common will to share the same destiny in the future and a common goal at its core. The analysis revealed, that such a community is essential to the legitimacy of democracy in providing for a “demos” as well as for the stability of subsequent economic and social systems. The study of nation building processes emphasized consciousness as a nation building measure. Consciousness is created through awareness of events and the perception of personal importance of that event. Following, the development of emotional ties and a common identity were examined for nation building processes. These were derived from mutual reference points within the private and public spheres. It became clear that consciousness as well as identity are based on individual experiences and education.

In the history of nations, education has played a large role as a homogenizing instrument. Education provided for a common language, common ideas and social mobility. It gave rise to a consensus of reference points, in the social, political, economic and cultural sphere. Universities were especially beneficial to the nation formation process, as the investigation of German universities acknowledged. They dispersed knowledge and moral orientation, trained an “academic estate” and allowed for equal opportunities and upward mobility. This elite served as a role model to the rest of the German societies. Through the exchange of academic thoughts, the mutual recognition of common degrees and the establishment of an educated class, “German” reference points were constituted for the individuals, which advanced the common German awareness.

In regard to the European Union of today, a democratic deficit and overall lack of a European “demos” was asserted. The political system of the European Union merges 27 democratic states into a common European market with binding rules and common institutions of powers which inherit

considerable amounts of political sovereignty. Yet, there is a substantial lack of transparency and accountability to the citizens of the European Union. An overall European collective consciousness and identity is missing, which means a threat to the legitimacy and support of the European system and its political decisions in the future. Tensions and frictions within the people hinder economic and political progress.

A certain “Europeanness” could exist in addition to the core nationalism as an supplementary reference point in the 'lifeworld' of the European citizens. A European consciousness would be a multinational consciousness, but it has to be fostered in a process. Interaction, the formation of a collective European memory, commonly perceived goals and an awareness of the importance of the European Union to the personal life are indispensable in this development. A sense of equality has to be nurtured and commonalities detected through acquaintance and European communication. Only then is it possible that the Europeans can imagine themselves as a political entity and community.

The Bologna Process is a project, which helps to imagine such a European community as it has the common aim of a European Higher Education Area at the core which allows for comparability and compatibility of educational systems within Europe. It brings together diverging educational systems in harmonizing degrees and study courses. Through direct competition and quality assurances, certain European standards are guaranteed. This increases transparency which in return allows for greater mobility between the European universities. Teichler's “zone of mutual trust” arises, in which divergences are reduced and joint study programs established. Through increased co-operation, assessing study contents and collecting study points all over Europe, students and staff are directly affected by the Bologna Process and have the enhanced opportunity to interact with other Europeans. The overall knowledge of foreign culture and languages is encouraged. In addition, the goal of “employability” inculcates similar values and ability into European students which again allows for greater recognition as a common group. A sense of alliance and security emerges binding together otherwise unrelated locations. Prejudices are diminished and a mutual social “Bologna” identity created.

After all, there is a good basis for harmonization on an academic level and the emergence of a 'we-feeling' among European students. From those



students, the future elite, the European consciousness and enthusiasm can spread. However, major obstacles to the commonly imagined Bologna – community arise from the fact that the Bologna Process is not legally binding to the member states. National social systems or regulations did not change to comply with Bologna goals, so that study financing is still an issue of the nation states, which hinders student mobility. The final goal of the European Higher Education Area can only be met if the member states provide for a sufficiently flexible legal framework. But as social and overall educational policy is not even a policy area of the European Union, this is rather unlikely to happen in the near future. Therefore, a European Higher Education fund, similar to the European structural funds, might be of value.

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