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WE ARE EUROPEAN CITIZENS, ARE WE NOT? KEYS TO A REAL CITIZENSHIP

Serge Dufoulon*

ABSTRACT

For the European Union (EU), increasingly questioned by its inhabitants, the issue of citizenship is becoming more and more prominent. Citizenship is what united the inhabitants of a city in antiquity or what continues to unite them in a modern nation today by defining rights and duties of citizens. In this particularly delicate situation of re-emergence of populism in the EU, should we not finally try to understand whether the notion of citizenship does not cover other cultural, territorial and socio-economic dimensions than those commonly accepted? In this sense, since Europe precedes the EU, this article proposes to revisit Europe in the light of its history, its common cultural heritage and its modes of consumption in order to explore other ways of European unification apparently abandoned by European elites, thus it providing the keys to effective citizenship.

Key words: Europe, European Union, Patrimony, Citizenship, Cultures

Introduction

The Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 introduces European citizenship, which it inscribes in Article 8 of the Treaty (Treaty on European Union, 1992): “1. *Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. 2. Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights conferred by this Treaty and shall be subject to the duties imposed thereby.*” European citizenship is thus conditioned by the national citizenship of one of the Member States. This condition of “national filter”, to borrow this expression from **E. Pataut** (2009), poses many questions. This new citizenship, as said by this author, gives rights to EU citizens: “*Very concretely, Community citizens are granted four specific rights: freedom of movement within Europe (Article 18); the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections in the Member State of residence (Article 19);*

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the right to enjoy the diplomatic protection of any Member State (Article 20); the right to petition the European Parliament (Article 21).” (Pataut, 2009). That we will not discuss in this paper because what we are trying to do is focus on what the issue of citizenship is about but not said. D. Schnapper (2000) analyses through her research how understanding citizenship might be so complex and demonstrate the necessary historical and cultural dimensions.

Whatever the interest of acquiring a European citizenship as a supplement to national citizenship, the British voted for an exit of the European Union on June 23, 2016, to 51.9% of the voters. More than ever, the European construction seems to waver with the loss of confidence of Europeans in their institutions¹. Additionally, the scandal initiated by José Manuel Barroso, the former president of the European Commission (Barroso était déjà... 2016) and Neelie Kroes, former European Commissioner for Competition (Vaudano, 2016), will not help to raise the confidence of Europeans in their institutions and arouse a desire for European citizenship. It seems increasingly difficult in these conditions to refer to a European citizen identity or citizenship, as national spaces are now perceived as safe areas: eurosceptic feeling is increasing throughout the EU. However, the EU is not Europe and a large part of the people in Europe – including most eurosceptics – call themselves Europeans. This aspect emerges, moreover, from a study carried out among groups of different European students, as we shall see². Of course, the disappointments of some EU executives, policies and regulations sometimes inappropriate to national situations, criticism of new European elites, poor management of refugees and borders, lack of social dynamics and harmonisation taxation, etc., all this and more contributes to the emergence of anti-EU feeling and the rise of populism. It seems increasingly unlikely to address the issue of European citizenship in these circumstances. In this presentation, based on interviews with a panel of European students in the frame of the European project, one will see that the EU is not Europe and that the contradictory feelings, a priori,

¹ Regarding the trust in the European institutions, cf. the Standard Eurobarometer Report 83, spring 2015, public opinion in the European Union, in which one can observe the distrust of the Europeans in their institutions especially those of the Eurozone. This situation has certainly not improved in 2015-2016 with regard to the problems raised by the refugees, the Brexit, the agricultural crisis, etc. on <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=STANDARD>.

² Jean Monnet Research Network “European Identity, Culture, Exchanges and Multilingualism”, EUROMECS, 2014-2017.

among Europeans correspond to differentiated representations between the political institution EU and “the thing” Europe as a wider and richer geographical, cultural and historical space. One of the difficulties rarely discussed for understanding the rejection of the EU, consequently, can be observed in this case through three axes of reflection on European citizenship: Europe of culture, territories and consumption.

1 The Development of this Contribution

“What gives sociology its scientific character is, among other things, respect for the rules of reasoning which, starting from a more or less legitimate theoretical corpus, will apply to experimental verification (or better, In vitro experimentation is practically impossible in sociology: experiential) hypotheses formulated with care and after lengthy epistemological and methodological debates. The theoretical corpus from which we start will be a consequence of a paradigm, of which it is not necessary to make a normative model, but to recognise the implications in the choice of methods and techniques. [...] It follows that an investigation should, in principle, only be carried out when this paradigm is recognised and accepted” (Javeau, 1990, p. 15-16).

We need to say a few words about the theories and the methodology used as the basis for this article. I do not favour one theoretical approach over another; it is in most cases the object and the problem that will guide the choices of sociologists from the works and recommendations of the classical authors in sociology and anthropology. Of the founder of French sociology, **E. Durkheim** (1895) to **M. Weber** (1917-1919), **E. Hughes** (1997) or **P. Bourdieu** (1979), **M. Mauss** (1991) and **C. Geertz** (1973), etc., sociological literature has constantly laid down the rules and methods to practise these disciplines with the required scientific honesty. In every case, the sociologists work on representations and social practices, objects and institutions. In this way, anthropology and sociology are perfectly successful to study and to analyse the formation of the European Union, its symbols, its rules of functioning and the possible construction of an identity European citizen that is questioned in this article.

That said, one of the essential contributions of sociology and anthropology seems to lie in their ability to grasp and analyse the symbolic dimension of social action and collective cultural identities. The advantage of a symbolic reading of social practices is that it authorises a certain transversality in the

observation and analysis of an object by looking for what **O. Schwartz** (2011) demonstrates as a mode of synthetic relationship to the world. From the many signifying aspects of the practices that present themselves to him, it is for the socio-anthropologist to organise order where disorder apparently prevailed. The symbolic economy of the peculiar worlds that we observe allows a “total approach”, in the sense of **M. Mauss** (1950), of a social practice, in that it is a matter of exploring the totality of meaning that individuals confer on an object, here European citizenship.

Again, the socio-anthropologist's position is to be culturally at the centre of the various domains that are spoken to him by the actors: the economy, the sacred, the domestic, the techniques, the modes of exchange, the territory, etc., and to make them his in order to find the vital thread of a practice, which would not suffer the amputation of one of its essential aspects in the understanding of its totality. As **C. Geertz** (1973)³ said: *“The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical.”* (1973, p. 5)

Associated with other methodological inputs, the symbolic reading of groups and social facts can help us to understand the representations that actors make: of their history, of their identities, their territory and boundaries in relation to these identities, the beliefs that cross them, and so on. It is all that constitutes the construction of a semantic space relevant to the actors in the elaboration of their identities, or how to construct a network of meaning from structuring elements by connecting them. However, it remains an obstacle and not of the least: how to analyse data and fieldwork that in anthropology are not an immediate given. In this sense, we were widely inspired by the work of **M. Mauss** (1950) and the “interpretative method” dear to **C. Geertz** (1973).

In the same way, I do not oppose qualitative and quantitative methods; they say different things about the same objects. I have used quantitative methods in the past to study the objects and populations that we observe, such as those of the French navy (Dufoulon, 1998). These quantitative applications were always

³ One could mainly read the Chapter 11 Thick Description: “Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”, pp. 3-33.

preceded by strong qualitative studies carried out with the methods of anthropology and sociology based on observations, interviews of actors alone or in groups, historical readings, etc. This is the approach that I prefer in most of my researches. However, as my colleague and friend, the sociologist J. Saglio, used to say to me as I was reluctant to recourse to quantitative surveys and mainly about our studies on the national navy (Dufoulon, 1998): *“When one obtained by the qualitative methods the social practices, representations and beliefs of the actors, one can pull some big tendencies of it and weigh them by quantitative methods. It’s just getting an idea of how many people do or think about it, you’ll see it is not so difficult”*. That is what we did! As for this paper on Europe and citizenship, the research team brought together several groups of European master students in the form of focus groups and used the Q-sort methodology based on factor analysis. We have to say that we found the results of this method quite restrictive with regard to the supplied work: the sequences of words and propositions discussed could in not reflect the cultural complexity of Europe and the beliefs of individuals concerning European citizenship or still quite simply the complexity of this last term. Therefore, the following analyses are based on the Q-sort survey⁴ but also on past studies on student cultures in Europe or on the various European issues that interrogate the possible constitution of a European citizenship. It should be added that in sociology and anthropology the work on Europe is much dispersed and very eclectic, as said **S. Saurugger** (2008). The area of research for socio-anthropologist remains open in the exploration of the cultures of the EU and Europe and it is in these separate contexts, although linked by history, that we must explore the possibilities of a European citizenship.

“Culture, this acted document, thus is public, like a burlesqued wink or amock sheep raid. Though ideational, it does not exist in someone’s head; though unphysical, it is not an occult entity. The interminable, because interminable, debate within anthropology as to whether culture is ‘subjective’ or ‘objective’, together with the mutual exchange of intellectual insults (‘idealist!’ – ‘materialist!’; ‘mentalist!’ – ‘behaviourist!’; ‘impressionist!’ – ‘positivist!’) which accompanies it is wholly misconceived. Once human behaviour is seen as

⁴ “The Q-method offers an alternative to traditional methodological approaches. It presents similarities with the qualitative methods while guaranteeing the statistical analysis of the data”, cf. <<http://www.em-consulte.com/article/814548/la-methode-q-une-approche-innovante-pour-la-recher>>, on that project see as well Radosveta Drakeva, (2017).

(most of the time ; there are true twitches) symbolic action-action which, like phonation in speech, pigment in painting, line in writing, or sonance in music, signifies-the question as to whether culture is patterned conduct or a frame of mind, or even the two somehow mixed together, loses sense” (Geertz, 1973, p.10).

2 A Common European Heritage

Although the first frontiers are linked to the birth of the Roman Empire, the limes, the reality of ^[L]_{SEP} Nation States in Europe is relatively recent, since this mutation takes place slowly after the Renaissance (Blois, 2016). Even though Europe does not yet have a name and unity, cultural, religious and economic exchanges and the mixing of populations linked to invasions and mobility have never ceased in the European area since then the neolithic and then the Antiquity. These assertions confirmed by historians may seem obvious, but what is less so is that a singular cultural and symbolic space has been built up, a heir to the peoples of antiquity and to the many cultural exchanges and borrowings: The Greeks, the Romans, the northern and eastern peoples of Europe, the Celts, the Goths, the Visigoths, the Alans, the Vikings, the Angles, the Burgundians, the Huns, the Vandals, the Moors, and so on. Our relatives are so varied and numerous at the foundation of Europe, and in this way, as reported Platon, Socrates said he is neither an Athenian nor a Greek, but a citizen of the world.

The Crusades saw millions of people from all countries of Christendom on the European roads of 1095-1291. Human movements throughout Europe have been very numerous from antiquity to the present day. Europe has for playgrounds and communication the Mediterranean and, as the illustrious historian **F. Braudel**: “*The Mediterranean Sea is land and sea roads, linked together, roads, cities, modest, medium and large all standing by the hand*” (Braudel, 1985, p. 76). For the people of the Middle East and Africa as well, this sea is a place of circulation and passage that connects them to Europe. It is from this melting pot of peoples that the cultural and symbolic base of the future Europe will be established.

Indo-European languages and toponyms, dances and songs, legends and myths are crossed by the borrowings of one or the other culture. Many of the great Mediterranean European travellers and authors from various countries, such as the French **M. Montaigne** (1533-1592) or the Tunisian **I. Khaldoun**

(1332-1406), to name but two references for the social sciences in one way or another, who described the different cultures of Europe during their peregrinations. They carefully noted as ethnographers their observations on the customs and customs of the countries crossed: *“Travelling seems to me a profitable exercise. The mind has a continual activity to observe unknown and new things, and I know of no better school to form life than to constantly put before our eyes the diversity of so many other lives, opinions and customs.”* (Michel de Montaigne, 2017). With the movements of people and goods, myths, ideas and arts are diffused: that is Europe and EU seems so little compare to it, of course, before this incredibly rich cultural heritage that has shaped Western societies European then the new worlds! How many writers, philosophers, musicians and composers, artists, scientists, political leaders, progressive ideas have Europe generated? Well, clever who could say it! The historian **J-P Blois** (2016) also insists on the Christian background of Europe, which survives the collapse of feudalism. As he noted, *“above the feudal fragmentation, however, there existed a sense of belonging to a sort of great common cultural space, successively that of the West, the territorial heritage of the Roman Empire, then that of Christendom, the spiritual heritage of many generations of untiringly active bishops and monks, and always present when the Empire disappeared. In spite of the infinite diversity of languages, mostly Latin, Germanic, or Slavic roots, in spite of the infinite diversity of customs, which are generally under Roman law as soon as they are written, this sense of unity prevails all the populations rooted in a very circumscribed boundaries of territories, and abolishes the consciousness of the borders. The Europe of the ‘battle of Roncevaux pass’, the high place of the Carolingian and Christian gesture, has no more borders than the Europe of Saint Benedict and the pilgrims of Compostela, the Europe of quarrelsome vassals, the Europe of the first merchants and that of the obscure, uncultivated and superstitious peasants, timid and hungry »* (Blois, 2016: 13). It is also the common European foundation on which Europe could have been built and not just on a bureaucratic structure whose ambition is a simple fiscal policy! Of course, this latter aspect is somehow reductive but it must make it possible to understand that European cultures admit places and objects of meeting to all Europeans from our metis history in all fields.

It is for this reason that for years we see in the speeches of most of the students and professors that we encounter in our teachings and beyond that it is a real difficulty to talk about the EU and to perceive themselves more as

Europeans. Our surveys show that students, whether they have studied in Europe through Erasmus-type courses or travelled privately, felt that they were able to meet relatives and friends from other countries; or other European students as well. These journeys have often enabled them to understand their own history and the ties that connect them, not to Nations-States or the EU, but to themselves, to their own family history, to their cultural and social history through other Europeans.

We should rethink European history in terms of resources or cultural and symbolic capital, allowing for the construction of a common space inhabited by those who recognise themselves in the varied riches of people, peoples, places and cultures such as rivers traversing various European countries, which do not belong to any state but to all those they cross, such as the Mediterranean that comes to caress various shores without, however, being able to limit it to a beach, or to a nation. Maybe we should consider pulling European heritage...

3 One Land but So Many Territories

At this stage, it is not enough to criticise and comment on the construction of the EU, which is an easy exercise if any, to understand the unease it causes among Europeans and the difficulty of creating a European citizenship or at least an interest in designating itself as European. The space of this European historical construction as we have mentioned above is a vast land fragmented in so many various territories from Ireland to the Urals and Scandinavian countries to the coasts of Africa. *“As an observed reality, territory is a social entity inscribed in space; This applies whatever the criteria adopted for observing its existence at any given time in any part of the world; We then distinguish different levels; Thus, we speak as much of local territory as of national or European territory and even of world territory”* (Billaudot, 2005: 83). The notion of territory appears in the case of Europe more performative than that of Nation States or a vague administrative space subject to bureaucratic rules applied by technocrats ignorant of the peculiarities of the peoples composing it. Indeed, traditionally, one characterises the territory by a certain proximity (Blois): That of the inscription and the symbolic marking of individuals, of an ethnic or a culture in a space in which they recognise and that they have appropriated. Thus, the organisation of the territory in ethnography is based on various factors such as: the sex-based division of labour (hunting/gathering); social stratification (caste, clans, etc.); modalities of ethnic coexistence; relationships of kinship and

alliances without forgetting relations with “beings of the supernatural” (Condominas, 1980) and to the deceased as well to the sacred places (Guidieri, 1980), etc. The territory establishes a link between actors and a space recognised symbolically and semantically by the actors, there is no separation but the familiar.

“For G. Sautter, there exists, in fact, between men and their landscapes a secret connivance whose ‘rational, scientific, decorticating and classifying discourse’ cannot account for.” (Bonnemaison, 1981: 251) When it comes to economic exchanges in order to take up an anthropological approach, it must be said that in traditional societies what is at the foundation of the political bond is exchange that manifests itself in the ideal of the gift. Indeed, exchange networks determine networks of alliances and routes of exchange, thus forms of symbolic territoriality that do not know borders. “The primitive analogy of the social contract is not the State, is the Gift” reminds us of **M. Sahlins** (1976). Historians assert that Europe is a land of exchanges since the very first time in neolithic.

European culture thus constitutes for the men of this world a set of referent elements that draw real and symbolic itineraries known from childhood to manhood and beyond: Myths (Greeks, Romans, Germanic, etc.), tales and legends (of **J. W. Grimm** or **C. Perrault**, etc.), fables, monuments, artists, statesmen, places of holiday, work or conflict, etc. All the moments of European history are therefore, in education and human experience, the dimensions of the histories and individual consciousness of the Europeans, if not in their flesh in respect of certain world conflicts.

“The idea of culture, translated in terms of space, cannot be separated from that of territory. It is indeed through the existence of a culture that a territory is created, and it is by territory that the symbolic relationship between culture and space is strengthened and expressed.” (Bonnemaison, 1981) The territory, therefore, carries identity more than an administrative structure or a legal text because it implements “a sacred geography” (Bonnemaison, 1981). In this sense, there is no contradiction in the fact that the students questioned about their relation to Europe seem to be mainly concerned with local and inter-individual ties and are at best indifferent to the EU and at worst to the contrary. They accept symbolic, semantic and emotional itineraries across Europe, regardless of frontiers and treaties: it would be interesting to draw for each European a map of the family ties and friendship relations in Europe we would certainly discover many cultural, historical, family and spatial networks or

itineraries. These individuals belong to several countries of Europe and indeed feel themselves deeply affected by each patch of exoticism, which partly constitutes their identity and their sensitivity to otherness: Who does not have a foreign relative in his family history? Who does not have a close relative born outside the borders of his/her original Nation? Who has not dreamed and loved elsewhere? It is through culture, consumption, studies, travel, social and environmental struggles and communication that students unconsciously build Europe.

Based on what has just been presented, it can be understood that the EU would have essentially structured itself, as **B. Billaudot** pointed out, "*The two orders which distinguish themselves within modern society are therefore those which correspond one side to the language of money, the other to the language of citizenship. It is the economic (or monetary, if one prefers) order and the political order (or citizens, if one prefers), 'none of which' constitutes a society*" (2005, p. 97).

This approach by the European historical and cultural heritage and by the territory would not be complete without asking the question: Why do men would travel? More precisely, why European students, at least those questioned through our project, wish to travel within Europe?

4 Student Tourism in Europe

In this part of our paper, we wish to add to the construction of Europe today, rethinking the axis of tourism consumption: places, products and cultural inheritance to echo the two previous parts concerning Europe as cultural construction, heritage and memory as well as territory. The question here is to understand, about consumption, how the multiple exchanges in Europe take part in the construction of common identity dimensions. We will not enter into the multiple and complex aspects of what is known as the Consumer Culture Theory, even though the dimensions of identity are also present in the works of researchers who claim to be this current (Cordelier, 2010). By taking up the premises of consumption analysis, this notion derived from the Latin "consumer", which gave "consumer" and "consumption", would refer to the destruction of production goods, one of the slopes of the capitalist mode of production, but also to desire as develops **D. Greaber** (2014). **A. Caillé** (2014) explains that consumption has "strange links" with the political and religious domains and in this sense it is possible to draw a parallel between the analyses

on the gift and the symbolic aspects related to consumption: psychoanalytic, poetic, identity, etc. *“One consume what one needs and that is considered useful. The second invokes desire, in its different modalities: distinction, ostentation, assertion of a social status, submission to a symbolic, systemic logic, etc. (One thinks here of Veblen, Goblot, Bourdieu or Baudrillard)”* (Caillé et al., 2014, p.7).

Coming back to the students who contributed to our reflections, when they speak about Europe⁵ they do not show, as in the heroic literature of the journey, movements in the space and time as an initiatory time of maturation in the contact of the other cultures. Put oneself in the test in the contact of the Otherness dear to the anthropologists to reach the knowledge, what **O. Schwartz** (2011) calls up “the mystic of the field”. In fact, very few our students are eager to put their conditions of production of themselves and their mental and intellectual categories in question. However, many students wishing to study or to travel in the different regions of Europe. To visit Venice, Berlin, London, Sofia, Amsterdam, etc., means to discover cities and territories to which one belongs and which say to us something about us. It may be allegories of a found domestic history or still European myths crossed in new, of the Roman she-wolf to the lovers of Venice, Hans and Gretel to the hell of Dante when it is the pursuit of a Shakespearean person in Vienna gilded before walking on the ardent earth of the Balkans. Journeys, discoveries and relations in Europe by the social networks also before taking the plane for some European destination, by returning home to understand or not what was lived and to take up or without leaving just to dream.⁶ The Nation becomes then the ultimate place of refuge to reach when fatigue and boredom of the journey show themselves or when danger roams whereas Europe is the suburb of the places of life of every European, small or big. Space of games and new rides, meetings, the same (students, workers, employees, middle-class person, etc.) in cultural differentiation, they discover an already spoken Europe, a little like a Parisian would discover his past in a region put off with the hexagon the inhabitants of which would express themselves with a strong French

⁵ In the framework of the Jean Monnet Research Network EUROMECC, 2014-2017.

⁶ *“Finally, on the destination side, Europeans mostly choose accommodation next to the sea. This choice is influenced by a film for 53% of the English, 49% of Spaniards or 45% of Italians, and a book or magazine for 41% the French”* in <<http://www.leparisien.fr/laparisienne/voyages/les-francais-champions-du-nombre-de-vacances-en-europe-12-10-2015-5181355.php#xtref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.fr%2F>>.

incomprehensible accent for those that did not live there: it still exists there. These “travelling consumers” (Monnet, Staszak, 2008) travel to Europe for a weekend, for a drink, a dish, a festival as they used to go to the local coffee shop. They will meet there maybe in the next year sometime, knowing that with the access of a large number to intra-European mobility, if they wish, they will not lose sight of regardless of the countries of the EU. Consumption is also this, exchanging goods, news, people or signs as **J. Baudrillard** (1986) would say, but the trip is not initiatory and adventures anymore, something is lost there.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, the European citizenship is may be emerging slowly step-by-step from, for instance, everyday decisions from European Court as mention **E. Pataut**: *“The ‘European citizenship’ is built up at the European Court of Justice. Judgement after judgment, decision after decision, the Court confers rights on European nationals, and a little more substance to political Europe. [...] However, by progressively giving legal content to citizenship, the Court is in the process of giving an existence which is not symbolised to a new holder of own rights: the European citizen”* (2009).

We sketched from this tryptique: Patrimony (report), (cognitive) Territory, Consumption (put in production of one and the desire), the outlines of Europe which is familiar to the inhabitants of this continent (without sometimes they do not know in what) whereas they are massively hostile to the EU. The various factors, which participate in the building of countries and inhabitants, have been forged in the history of the old Europe whose occupants are Europeans before being citizens of the EU. Any formalisation of the European Union should remember that States, as **J-P Blois** (2016) shows, were built from territories and fiefs feudal lords in a nearness, which authorised transition. The French of the South of France will do their market on Saturday in Ventimiglia, in Italy, or in Barcelona, while those of the north will regularly go shopping in Belgium or in Germany; movements, which find their equivalent in all the countries of Europe or good neighbourly relations are perpetuated since the dawn of time, each one having a reason to move and to share some time during the condition of its neighbours by mixing habits and customs.

At the very least, it is paradoxical that all Europeans agree on what the EU should be, but that politicians seeking a “captive citizenship” cannot accept the idea that the space of the old continent is producing of metis identities

transcending national citizenship and interests. There are no tensions between the local level and the global level when heritage and European culture are brought into perspective, only categorical interests that hinder the exchanges already carried out by Europeans. Then yes, it is necessary maybe to escape the vision of EU as have just made the British to find the road back to Europe and reach the common bottom of those countries where somewhere, in the heart of ourselves, we know all before having walked on their ground. Our unconscious is more generous in terms of belonging and borders than the new European institutions.

The policy embodied, in particular, in States must be territorialism in order to distinguish, with **M. Abelès** (1990), the categories of space of political representation (homogeneous) and the space of political action (heterogeneous): In this sense one can say that borders are places of tension where express themselves these two aspects of States. The nation-state remains a frame of reference, but it no longer appears as the only means of social cohesion in a given territory. Other forms of belonging and communities are in motion, either in the context of transnational, polyethnic and multicultural spaces, or as a result of fragmentation and internal deconstruction.

Hence, frontiers can "blur the representation of the limits of an ancestral ordering" (Abelès, 1990). The greatness of Europe so demanded by our elected representatives cannot materialise in the "skin of grief" of that little EU because societies would feel increasingly threatened and would constantly guard against alienation and inequality, notably towards the false appeal of the populism. The Europeans think that they refuse this kind of disincarnated construction producing more inequalities and hierarchies, between social groups and states. Europe, is it? Where is the dividing line between water and sand? Perpetual exchange...

"If anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens, then to divorce it from what happens from what, in this time or that place, specific people say, what they do, what is done to them, from the whole vast business of the world is to divorce it from its applications and render it vacant. A good interpretation of anything—a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society—takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation. When it does not do that, but leads us instead somewhere else into an admiration of its own elegance, of its author's cleverness, or of the beauties of Euclidean order—it may have its intrinsic charms; but it is something other than what the task at hand—figuring out what all that rigmarole with the sheep is about calls for." (Geertz, 1973: 18)

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