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BEYOND THE KOSOVO STATUS QUESTION: THE LIMITS TO EUROPE'S STATE-BUILDING EFFORTS.

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Abstract

This article seeks to analyse the scope of the EU's involvement in Kosovo. The main argument presented is that the Union's role in Kosovo is a rather problematic one, characterised by a general lack of vision and a tendency to put European rather than local interests first. This could ultimately lead to a decrease in the perceived legitimacy of the EU as a benevolent actor in the former Serbian province, and could potentially undermine local political processes. This paper makes use of the conceptual framework of international post-conflict state-building exercise and discourse. It holds that the EU's policy is in line with similar state-building efforts in various other regions of the world, and suffers from many of the same structural problems.

INTRODUCTION

The text put forward in this paper was first used as an integral part of a group project conducted at Aalborg University, in collaboration with Sebastian Boll, Ingvar Örn Ingvarsson, Anders Purup and Chris Sturrock. Since then, and in line with widely held expectations, Kosovo has unilaterally declared independence from Serbia. Some 38 countries thus far have recognised the breakaway region, of which 18 are EU states (kosovothanksyou.com, 2008). On June 15th 2008, the new Kosovo constitution, which has been drafted along the conditions presented in the Ahtisaari plan, will enter into force. Meanwhile, the European mission (EULEX) that is to supplant the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has started moving in, even though its deployment deadline has been postponed and the withdrawal of the UN is currently being rethought, resulting in what was euphemistically termed a confusing situation on the ground (BBC, 2008). As the author inadvertently gathered from a conversation between EU diplomats at Pristina airport some months ago, even the EU is currently uncertain about how things should now further develop in Kosovo, let alone how this can be reconciled with what the UN and local political actors are doing. It does not seem unlikely that, only a few months after its declaration of independence, Kosovo will yet experience the

pleasure of sharing its newborn sovereignty with the EU and the UN simultaneously. Although the political situation on the ground has changed since last December, when this paper's first incarnation was presented, it maintains that the arguments put forward at that time are still valid now. The settlement of Kosovo's final status did not drastically change the strategy of the EU or any other of the other international actors involved, and one could even argue, referring to the point made earlier, that it contributed to a general sense of uncertainty about how to progress from here on.

This paper aims to analyse the actual and potential role of the EU's involvement in Kosovo, thereby making use of the state-building framework. In order to do this, the text has been divided into two major parts. In the first, the dynamics behind contemporary state-building will be outlined, as well as the reasons commonly given to legitimise the far-reaching international interference typifying state-building. A brief history of its evolution in recent years will be presented, in order to demonstrate the increasing importance of the concept as well as the growing tendency of the international community to resort to state-building. In the second part of this paper, some of the key problems inherent in recent state-building practices will be put forward and it will be argued that the EU's role in Kosovo falls within this framework, and is therefore suffering from the same problems. In conclusion, this essay will advocate that, for the EU's various objectives in Kosovo to be successful, it will have to alter its tactics considerably.

STATE-BUILDING: DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

The concept of state-building has no clear definition and can therefore contain a number of different ideas and actions, depending on the academic sources employed. It is often seen as a synonym for nation-building or peace-building, although, as Chesterman (2004) points out, the focus of proclaimed attempts at nation-building have in the past most often been institutions of governance rather than the actual people, making the term 'state-building' the more feasible one. According to Chandler (2006), the objectives of state-building may most generally be defined as "constructing or reconstructing institutions of governance capable of providing citizens with physical and economic security" (p. 1). Of key importance, though, is that this always entails external involvement of one kind or another, that, in general, it is applicable to post-conflict societies, and, finally, that there seem to be clear ideas of what the outcome of contemporary attempts at state-

building should look like. In the discourse of state-builders, the consolidation of peace is closely linked to the promotion of democracy, of human rights and the rule of law (UN General Assembly, 2005).

The idea that states can (and should) be built or reconstructed by the international community may be viewed both as the product of the post-Cold War era and as a reaction against the perceived threats that globalisation and modernity are posing to the autonomy of the state. This is not to deny the clear instances in the more distant past, in which certain regions and countries were governed by the international community or representatives thereof. Post-Second World War Germany and Japan are clear examples here, as is the administration of Danzig (1920-1937), of Tangier (1923-1957), and that of Trieste (1950-1954) by the League of Nations and, in the latter case, the UN (Korhonen, 2001, p. 503). It is just to suggest that the content of the state-building discourse in the last two decades is of a different nature altogether, and that its very existence is closely linked to the unique challenges of a globalised world (Robinson, 2007, p. 3). One look at the ambitions of contemporary state-building practitioners is sufficient to realize that what the UN is calling *extended peace-keeping* is, in effect, an attempt to drastically reshape post-conflict societies. Korhonen (2001) sums up some of the tasks which the UN has taken upon itself: "organisation of democratic elections, guarantee of security, organisation of transitional governments, constitutional reform, development of civil society, humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, rebuilding infrastructure, reactivating agriculture, (…) in other words 'international social engineering'" (p. 496).

The most prominent actor in the state-building field has undoubtedly been the UN. Ever since the 1990s, however, a clear shift in the nature of UN-controlled peacekeeping operations has been evident, towards more complex missions that aim at assisting and providing in the accomplishment of the above-mentioned objectives. Chesterman (2004) defines the 1989 UN mission in Namibia and the 1993 UNTAC mission in Cambodia as the UN's first attempts at state-building. Their focus was mainly on the supervision and organisation of elections, and on general assistance to the civilian authority, with the final aim of changing the political structure of the states in question (p. 2). During most of the 90s, however, UN humanitarianism was seeking to circumvent the state rather than strengthen it. Academics have often pointed to the Liberal Peace Thesis in an attempt to explain this: this theory maintains that stability and peace can only be assured through market liberalisation, democratisation, integration into the global economy, the

reduction of state power and a heavy reliance on privatisation. It was not until the end of the decade, and until 2001 in terms of US foreign policy, that the main actors changed their approach to a seemingly more engaged form of external intervention (Chesterman, 2004). Bearing in mind the Washington Consensus-inspired (neo-) liberal politics of the 90s, this renewed emphasis for strong states may indeed come as a surprise. Yet, as Cunliffe (2007) points out, the difference is only meaningful on a superficial level. The current rationale is in effect a continuation of that of the nineties, which implies that contemporary policies equally fail to address the issues commonly put forward by critics of the Liberal Peace Thesis. This assumption shows that international intervention still suffers from the same political reluctance that was so indicative of the humanitarianism of the late 1990s (Williams, 2005, p. 173).

UNMIK (since 1999) and the UN Transitional Administration for East-Timor (UNTAET, 1999–2002) make up two of the UN's more recent, and arguably most ambitious state-building endeavours (Korhonen, 2001, p. 497), both of which have been authorised by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, giving the missions a much broader mandate than many of the UN's humanitarian missions of the 1990s (UNSC, 1999a; 1999b; UN 1945). In the case of Kosovo, the UN aims to provide "transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions" (UNSC, 1999b, para. 10). It has the power to dissolve the Kosovar assembly, to remove or appoint officials, to withhold budget approval, to call for new elections, etc. It is thus effectively exercising the powers of a sovereign government (Hehir, 2007a, p. 127). In present times, this amount of direct authority over post-conflict societies by international actors has largely become accepted as a legitimate way of addressing issues of so-called global interest, whereas, for example, regarding the UN administration of the city of Trieste, it was exactly this form of direct control over domestic affairs that was highly contested by a considerable number of states (Chesterman, 2004, p. 55).

To explain the current focus on state-building within contemporary international relations, Robinson (2007) points to the characteristics of the post-Cold War world; he identifies the emergence of the problem of the *weak state* as one of the key elements behind the state-building discourse. He also argues that, ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and even more so in post-9/11 times of pre-emptive warfare and the global *war on terrorism*, so-called *failed*, *failing* and *weak states* have increasingly come to be seen as a global security problem (if not

the main one) by the international community (p. 2). Although an ambiguous term, a weak state may be described as not "hav[ing] the capacities to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways" (Migdal, 1988, p. 4). This kind of state is certainly not a new phenomenon. Yet, in the past, it was for various reasons simply not seen as a worrisome element by the dominant international powers, if otherwise not seen as an opportunity for expanding one's influence in the context of the Cold War.

This changed with the post-Second World War de-colonisation movement and with the breakdown of the bipolar world order, as well as the concomitant exponential increase in the number of sovereign states. Yet, the mere rise in the number of states is obviously not a sufficient explanation for the importance of the current state-building debate. Robinson (2007) identifies the effects of globalisation as being of key significance. Globalisation, he argues, has caused a crisis of the state, and this has most clearly been felt in those states that already had little capacity to provide for security and welfare. The consequences have been the destabilisation and exclusion of whole societies, with all its implications, including food insecurity, political instability, an increase in inequality, large migration flows, etc. (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 175). State-building, then, is seen as a reaction against these challenges, as an attempt at constructing states that are "able to deal with globalization, namely [states] that [are] flexible and able to draw on social resources to cope with change" (Robinson, 2007, p. 11). In other words, the existence of weak states is seen as constituting a threat, in the broad meaning of the word, to international peace and security. Javier Solana (2004), for example, has suggested: "Whereas the security threats of the past century came from strong states, those of the 21st century come from weak and failing ones"; or as Duffield (2001) puts it, in relation to the emergence of so-called new, i.e. recent, phenomenon of intra-state war:

Conventional views on the causes of the new wars usually hinge upon their arising from a developmental malaise of poverty, resource competition and weak or predatory institutions. The links between these wars and international crime and terrorism are also increasingly drawn. […] [I]t reflects a new security framework within which the modalities of underdevelopment have become dangerous. (Duffield, 2001, p. 15)

Chandler (2007) links the rise of the state-building discourse to what he has described as the *ethical turn in international theorising* (p. 79). With the

emergence of the human rights regime, the focus of international law has shifted to the individual. This has effectively meant that local political interests have had to make place for moral and ethical values, for the rights of the individual over those of the state. These principles are viewed as both natural and universal, leading to the belief that it is the duty of the world's powerful to guarantee that they are respected everywhere. The classical meaning of state sovereignty, being "supremacy at home and [the] freedom from interference in external affairs" (Fowler & Bunck, 1995, p. 11), is no longer valid in this context. As a consequence of the ascendancy of human rights as the dominant legal framework in international relations, sovereignty is no longer a right taken for granted. Rather, it is increasingly perceived as having the conditionality of good governance attached to it, meaning a respect for human rights and obedience to democratic values. This inclination towards democratic forms of governance is often associated with the Democratic Peace Thesis, which holds that conflicts between two or more democratic regimes are highly improbable (Chesterman, 2004, p. 9).

The shift in focus has led academics to believe that the content of the term 'sovereignty' has changed dramatically, to a notion of *asymmetrical sovereign equality* (Hehir, 2007b, p. 187). Or as Fowler and Bunck (1995) put it, "to claim sovereignty is a declaration of political responsibility for governing, defending and promoting the welfare of a human community" (p. 13). Sovereignty has thus become a right granted to states that fulfil certain criteria, namely those of the more *intellectually mature* states in the system (Hehir, 2007(b), p. 188). This tendency is identified by Hehir and Bain as a hierarchical re-conceptualisation of sovereignty, meaning that some states in the international system have come to be seen as having achieved a higher degree of statehood than those that have not been able to live up to the standards of good governance and democratic legitimacy (Bain, 2003, p. 66). Building states, in Hehir's view, can therefore be described as a way of spreading the governmental system of higher states to lesser ones, resulting from the belief that this is the best way to prevent future conflicts (Hehir, 2007(b), p. 188). At the same time, the objective of state-building seems to be not the construction of states in the classical sense, with the result being "self-governing, independent and autonomous political subjects" (Chandler, 2006, p. 31). Instead, the goal is the creation of political entities accountable to the international community, and in line with dominant economic and social policies. From this point of view, Chandler (2007) goes on to argue that the world is experiencing a new international hierarchy; states are no longer equal players, and

"political legitimacy, sovereign equality and the rights of non-intervention are the preserve of the enlightened post-modern states" (p. 81).

This evolution has been particularly noticeable, for example, in the international debate about the *Responsibility to Protect* (ICISS, 2001, p. 11 e.a.), where it is held that governments have the responsibility to protect their citizens. If they fail to do so, supporters argue, the international community should hold the right to intervene, thus putting aside former notions of sovereign inviolability. The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, officially legitimised by concerns about global security (respectively the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the harbouring of terrorist networks) as well as the promise to construct democratic regimes, are other clear examples of this way of reasoning. The perceived threat of these states has given birth to an environment in which external intervention and transformation of whole societies has come to be seen not only as preferable, but as an absolute necessity owing to the self-declared moral duty of the dominant powers to individuals everywhere in the world. Especially the EU and US are regarded (not in the least by themselves) as acting upon the promotion of democracy and justice, in so doing downplaying the possibility of other, more selfish factors playing a role as well (Chandler, 2007, p. 80).

Some academics go as far as to draw comparisons between the authority exercised by contemporary state builders, and the usurpation of power by colonial administrations. Although recognizing that these are serious accusations, Wilde (2007) maintains that there are certain parallels to be drawn, and that it is useful to take up the analogy, especially in reference to issues such as the lack of accountability, local consent and regional ownership (p. 32). Bickerton (2005) on the other hand, points out that comparing state-building (and EU enlargement) to imperialism misinterprets the major differences in the nature of these practices, particularly concerning the existence of a clear underlying idea; he claims that both state-building and EU enlargement are in essence *ad hoc* processes, often reduced to a mere technical issue, and therefore lacking any form of vision whatsoever. Indeed the international community has not seldomly displayed a clear lack of political willingness to engage itself in long-term projects, and has often most of all been concerned with exit strategies and the construction of excuses for not having to intervene.

KOSOVO AND THE LIMITS OF EUROPEAN POLICY

Kosovo is certainly not the only instance of EU state-building activity in the South East European (SEE) region, and it is useful to examine the outcomes of similar EU-driven processes in order to understand and analyse the dynamics of Europe's activities within Kosovo. Particularly the Union's role in policy-making in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) is one frequently referred to by academics concerned with state-building issues. It is therefore worth exploring here, before subsequently turning to Kosovo. Clearly, differences between BiH and Kosovo abound, particularly regarding the political and legal status of both entities. And the as yet unclear legal position of Kosovo within the international community, together with the apparent inability of the EU to come to a consensus regarding the issue, admittedly makes it very hard if not impossible to design a clear roadmap for the province. Yet the relevance of comparing BiH with Kosovo resides in the belief that significant similarities exist between the EU's administration of BiH and its approach towards Kosovo, the problems of which are far greater than the mere question of legal status. The case of BiH is particularly interesting here, considering that the country was widely considered a test ground for new approaches to international administration and novel forms of foreign assistance, which were then carried out elsewhere (Chandler, 2006b, p. 1). One of the main arguments of this section builds exactly on this idea: some of the problems the EU is being faced with in its attempt to move Kosovo closer to EU integration are inherent to the way it is carrying out the construction of state institutions in Kosovo, and indeed, for that matter, inherent to the way state-building is being conducted by other actors (UN, US, etc.) in Kosovo and elsewhere. It will be argued that one of the main trends visible in the practices of the EU is the separation of state-building from politics, which may in the long run result in the weakening of those institutions the international community has pledged to strengthen. International regulation, in the words of Champagne (2005), "can represent paradoxically an obstacle to the creation of a responsible state, able to guarantee political autonomy and communal support" (p. 7).

BiH has in effect been administered by the EU since the reform of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in 2002 and the subsequent transfer of more authority to the Directorate of European Integration (DEI), in effect establishing it as the most important executive body of the Bosnian government. This, together with the DEI's direct funding by the European Commission, has led Chandler (2006a) to state that Bosnia should actually be considered as the "first genuine EU

state where sovereignty has (…) been transferred to Brussels" (p. 44). He goes on to argue that the legacy of over a decade of state-building in Bosnia has created a complete division between power and accountability, and that, although BiH is formally an independent state, the country has no "independent or autonomous existence outside of the EU partnership" (Chandler, 2006a, p. 45). In this sense, the exercise of state-building in BiH has created a so-called *phantom state*, in which domestic politics are basically redundant, policy making is formed by external experts, and local politicians are more accountable to the international community than to the population they are supposed to represent. Furthermore, there are considerable concerns over the lack of mechanisms for overseeing the activities of the international administrators, especially since most of the OHR personnel benefits from a certain degree of immunity and can in many cases avoid prosecution for any missteps taken (Caplan, 2007, p. 113).

Given the extent of the power exercised by the OHR and the DEI, many a researcher have expressed concerns over the democratic deficit institutions such as these seem to entail, and it inspired someone like Ignatieff to put the label *Empire Lite* on the international community's administration of BiH (Ignatieff, 2003). Although this may appear to be a controversial statement, the EU itself has recognised that its approach towards the country has been marked by significant shortcomings. A resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for example, has stated that "the Assembly considers it irreconcilable with democratic principles that the High Representative should be able to take enforceable decisions without being accountable for them or obliged to justify their validity", after which the Assembly called for an assessment of the "efficiency and rationality of the present constitutional and legal arrangements" in BiH (CoEPA, 2004, art. 13). Alessandro Rotta, political advisor to the SP, in a personal interview, also referred to this issue noting that, if the EU wants to be serious about assisting SEE, it will need to be serious about building local capacity. This is a problem, he argues, that is yet to be addressed successfully by the EU, especially in terms of Bosnia, where he sees an obvious contradiction between the Union's role as a promoter of further European integration, and its persistency in treating Bosnia as a protectorate incapable of effectively carrying out state responsibilities (Rotta, 2007). The outcome of this contradiction is hard to contest. The direct result of international state-building in BiH has been that "the powers and the authority of the state have been subsumed by external actors and this process has prevented any real policy-making power being devolved to elected bodies" (Chandler, 2006a, p. 142). From this perspective, the international

community can hardly be said to have successfully fulfilled its initial goal of reconstructing and strengthening BiH's institutions. It is feared that the EU's approach towards Kosovo offers little hope of being fundamentally different, and that the driving forces behind the state-building practices in Kosovo suffer from much the same illness as in the case of BiH.

Firstly, as in the case of the rest of SEE, the EU's relationship with Kosovo is based on what is eagerly called an equal or contractual partnership, meaning that the involvement of the EU is subject to the consent of local politicians. This is reflected mainly in the Stabilisation and Association Process Tracking Mechanism (STM) and the Stability Pact (SP), arguably two of the EU's most important state-building and integration mechanisms, and, for Kosovo, also in the activities of the Union under Pillar IV of UNMIK, from which it derives its legal basis. In all of these initiatives, it has often been stressed that leadership over the different processes remains in the hands of local Kosovar politicians (see for example *EC*, 2001, p. 7). Yet the alleged equal partnership the EU is flaunting has been the subject of much dispute. Chandler (2006a), for example, maintains that it should be clear that real ownership over policy-making is *de facto* in the hands of the European Commission, and that there is no such thing as real equality in this process, given the obvious fact that the EU possesses considerable amounts of leverage over Kosovo, and SEE in general (p. 104). The reason for this is the proverbial carrot and stick the EC is yielding, namely future accession and the expected progress the province should make towards this, the recognition of the province's independence and the threat of withdrawing financial contributions when policies are not in line with Europe's expectations. Given the large economic, political and social appeal of the EU, it is indeed not serious to claim that a European partnership with a region as small and economically underdeveloped as Kosovo can be anything close to equal. Furthermore, as Chesterman (2004) points out in reference to the UNMIK mission, it is simply misleading to claim that any sort of international administration whatsoever is "in any meaningful way [dependent] on local consent or 'ownership'" (p. 152), seeing that the legitimisation for its existence is ultimately based on military presence.

Also, in relation to the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), Chandler (2006a) argues that the partnership between the EU and Kosovo is one between uneven partners, "with only one party being the judge of whether the conditions of the contract are met and in a position to coerce the other" (p. 106). The EU's deliberate focus on equity in the partnership discourse therefore masks the large

power disparities that are actually present, which is reflected in an ambiguous integration framework and much uncertainty over potential accession. In doing this, the EU has successfully decoupled its regulatory mechanisms over Kosovo from any clear promises concerning further integration. While the newborn country is under sizeable pressure to subordinate itself to the conditionality agreed upon under the STM, there is little or no pressure on the EU to live up to its own promises (Chandler, 2006a, p. 110). The lack of a clear timeframe for future accession means that the Union can delay the execution of its promises as it deems opportune, without according any importance to objections raised by Kosovar politicians. The EU seems to recognize this problem to some extent when stating that "the [SA] process needs to be tailored to the needs and specific conditions of the individual countries and (…) the proper balance needs to be struck between stabilisation and association" (*EC*, 2002, p. 8). So far though, it has failed to put this into practice, showing a remarkable lack of vision in its approach towards the region as a whole. Its strategy, as Klasnja (2007) argues, "is plagued with inconsistencies and half-baked measures [which] is in stark contrast with the pervasive expectations in both the international community and the region itself that the EU is the key international actor" in the region (p. 16). Sergi and Qerimi (2005) also make a case for a more straightforward commitment towards SEE, and believe that the EU should provide all states in the region with a *roadmap for accession*, and Bickerton identifies the EU's *ad hoc* policies, and its significant lack of an underlying strategy in both its enlargement and state-building activities as central to an understanding of the minimal progress made thus far. Europe, he claims, is essentially afraid of its own power (Bickerton, 2005, para, 29).

The outcome of this ambiguous framework has been a decreased perception of the legitimacy of the EU's presence in the region. Its regulatory activities as outlined above under UNMIK, the STM and the SP, are increasingly being questioned in the face of the absence of any real commitments. "Economic and social sacrifices, which might make sense in the context of certainty about EU integration, have less appeal when it seems that policy is externally imposed with little promise of improvement" (Chandler, 2006a, p. 110). Legitimacy is also affected by the failure of the EU and UNMIK to provide a degree of social and economic security in the region (Welch, 2006, p. 222). Rotta for example, recognises the fact that Kosovo is still an economic *black hole* in the region, and that, in terms of economic development, it is certainly not on the same level as the rest of the Western Balkans (Rotta, 2007). This should be seen as highly problematic because, as pointed out in the first section of this paper, state-building is legitimated by the

assumption that some states, or in this case the EU, are able to export the exercise of good governance to those that are held to be incapable of accomplishing this themselves. As Zaum (2006) puts it, in the absence of democratic consent, the authority exercised by the different international stakeholders in Kosovo is based on "their expertise and their effectiveness in addressing governance problems" (p. 468). When the policies of the international community then turn out to be mostly ineffective in addressing such key issues as economic reconstruction, this undermines both the credibility of the international administration's aims and the legitimacy of the power it is exercising. Many commentators go even further and insist that external financial support has shaped an environment of dependency and inefficiency. Illustrating this, Welch (2006) quotes the World Bank on its statement that "the influx of funds (…) has distorted domestic spending patterns, resulting in an actual threat to the economic stability of the province" (p. 225).

Kosovo is not only dependent on the EU for financial support, it has also increasingly come to rely on Europe for the creation of its government policies. As Rotta acknowledged in our interview, the policy agenda for Kosovo is mainly set by the European Commission (Rotta, 2007). Here as well a key characteristic of the current state-building rationale can be discerned. In the discourse of state-builders, policy-making is generally taken to be the task of specialists and foreign experts rather than the outcome of a political process based on popular consensus, thus leaving little or no room for domestic input. State-building, in this sense, is believed to be nothing more than a mere technical and administrative process (Chandler, 2006a, p. 106). The danger this entails is that externally drafted policies do not reflect the needs of the society they are implemented in. Indeed one of the major criticisms of the EU's regulatory involvement in Kosovo through the STM and the SP is that the policies thus promoted and imposed are more indicative of the concerns of the EU than anything else. This is clearly visible in the objectives of both the Stability Pact and the SAP, which focus mainly on stabilising the region through the creation of democratic processes, of multinational and multiethnic diversity and the return of refugees (Welch, 2006, p. 223). Although, of course, one could hardly claim this not to be in the interest of the majority of the local population, it should be noted that the stress on multiethnic diversity and the return of refugees reflects the priorities of the EU rather than those of the people of Kosovo. Chandler (2006a) aptly argues that, for example, the issue of multiethnic diversity is one even some of the richest EU member states are having problems dealing with, making it rather unfair to expect a province as poor as Kosovo to spend considerable amounts of its budget on achieving exactly this,

while the local population may indeed have totally different ideas of what its urgent needs are. In his words:

> *These externally reliant policy forums have little awareness of the social and economic limitations to their ideal solutions and those involved in policy processes have little relationship to broader social concerns (Chandler, 2006a, p. 118).*

The governmental programs thus created, Rule notes, are shaped by the requirements and recommendations of the international donors, and therefore devoid of any real domestic political content (Rule, 2003, p. 152). The end result of all this might very well amount to the loss of not only the international community's legitimacy in the eyes of the population, but even that of the local political elite. With the international administration holding the power to dismiss whoever they believe unnecessary and in effect dictating the content of the policy agenda, it now seems that elected officials are more accountable to the international community than to their own population (Hehir, 2007, p. 138).

This brings us to the one of the major sources of concern in the debate about external intervention. The way the EU has been regulating policy-making, and taking on governmental tasks through UNMIK, has tended to be ignorant of all conventional notions of democratic authority, largely due to the fact that there are almost no existing mechanisms to hold either the EU or UNMIK as a whole accountable for its actions (Caplan, 2007, p. 115). Much as the OHR in BiH was criticized by the Council of Europe for not having to justify its actions, many an academic has put a question mark on the almost authoritarian nature of both the UNMIK administration and the regulatory mechanisms of the EU. It is true that in the case of Kosovo an ombudsperson handling complaints relating to UNMIK has been put into place, but this mandate is severely restricted and its findings remain merely advisory. Zaum (2006) quotes the ombudsperson for Kosovo as saying that "the people are deprived of protection of their basic rights and freedoms (…) by the very entity set up to guarantee them" (p. 470).

The EU is arguably suffering from the same problem as UNMIK. Zaum (2006) describes this in the light of accountability's key importance in legitimating authority. The exercise of democratic power, he notes, needs to be held accountable for it to be justified, and the perversion of just this process is all the

more ironic given that the main objective of the EU in Kosovo, and the main objective of the international community in pursuing state-building in general, is the promotion of democratic principles (p. 469). Yet the EU has no need to legitimize its power over Kosovo. Precisely because it is talking up the promotion of local ownership and equal partnership, Europe is able to deny its power over the province, and indeed that over any political entity in the region that has signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). The stress on local ownership puts the burden of responsibility in the hands of local politicians, who, once again, have little or no impact on actual policy making. In this way it is extremely easy for the EU to take credit for any successes, while putting the blame for the shortcomings of its policies on the incapability of local politicians (Chandler, 2006a, p. 108). The Kosovar political elite, meanwhile, is not finding any problems pointing the finger to the international administration to justify the lack of progress made, thereby avoiding their own responsibility (Welch, 2006, p. 225). This blaming game was illustrated nicely in one of the interviews conducted for this research, when a former staff member of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions for Self-Government (PISG) indicated the poor quality of the UNMIK personnel as a key problem; this opinion being recorded immediately after hearing exactly the opposite accusation in an interview with a Brussels official (Anonymous, 2007).

For many commentators, the lack of political accountability in the international community's presence in Kosovo is a consequence of what has been described in an earlier section as the ethical turn in international relations. "Political responsibility", according to Cunliffe (2007), "was downplayed in the presence of the more pure moral responsibility of defending human rights" (p. 59). As argued earlier, the fulfilment of this self-proclaimed moral duty has been seen as a pure technical and administrative matter, and not a political one. Just as any other international stakeholder currently involved in state-building, the EU has attempted, and largely succeeded in keeping politics out of the discourse. Cunliffe (2007) has termed this the exercise of *power without responsibility* (p. 50), and his assertion is that this is a continuation of the politics of the '90s in the sense that it "aims at containing and managing symptoms rather than removing causes" (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 181). It is feared that, through time, this has worked disruptively on domestic political processes, in the end undermining the main aims of the international community (Robinson, 2007, p. 10). Or to quote Chandler (2006a):

[The mechanisms of external regulation] separate the policy process from mechanisms of local accountability and consensus-building, which may result in a policy that fails to understand local problems or adjust to changing local circumstances (p. 112).

It is interesting to analyse the status settlement debate from the perspective of *peace without politics* (Chandler, 2006b, p. 1). Up to the drafting of the Ahtisaari plan, the EU had not been overtly willing to make the issue of Kosovo's final status into one of its priorities, this of course also being complicated by heavy opposition from especially Russia (Klasnja, 2007, p. 23). Only most recently has it shown some indications of willingness to commit itself in supporting Kosovo's calls for full independence, although member states have remained divided on this point, preventing the EU from taking a unified position. Rotta defends the EU's past efforts at avoiding this issue by claiming that this has been necessary in order to move forward with the implementation of more practical processes. The EU has attempted, he states, to develop parallel mechanisms, for it to progress on the status question and on more practical questions simultaneously (Rotta, 2007). This clearly reflects the general European approach as outlined above, namely the separation of pure technical, regulatory mechanisms from more political ones. Rotta (2007) himself readily admits that it is an illusion to think that politics can be left out of even the most practical discussions, and that the unresolved problem of Kosovo's final status eclipses talks about everything else. The fact that the EU has in the past been unwilling to acknowledge this may very well partly be because independence for Kosovo was simply not one of its own concerns. This backs up the point made earlier, that "the SAP and the SP place more faith in stability coming through EU conditionality than through the strengthening of domestic state institutions through democratic processes" (Chandler, 2006a, p. 119), for which, debatably, in the case of Kosovo, independence is an important precondition. In this view, also, the more recent willingness of the EU (together with the US) to move forward, even without backup from the Security Council, can be ascribed to an increasing belief that the status quo may in the long run have resulted in augmented instability, not just in Kosovo, but in the region as such (Rehn, 2007, par. 11; Welch, 2006, p. 230). Considering that Europe's main objective in SEE is the prevention of exactly this, it is not altogether that surprising that the status settlement was eventually moved to the top of the agenda.

Finally it should be noted that the SP is scheduled to be replaced by a Regional Cooperation Council, which clearly fits in with the EU's proclaimed aim of increasing local and regional ownership (Rotta, 2007). Although this sounds promising, it remains to be seen whether or not this will actually decrease the dependency of Kosovo on external policy making. In the context of our above outlined analysis, the restructuring of the SP would actually fit in perfectly with the EU's tendency to deny its power over Kosovo, as it puts more responsibility in the hands of the region. The promotion of regional cooperation should by no means be interpreted as a drastic restructuring of the EU's toolbox. It is of course far too early to judge the successor of the Stability Pact, but Rotta (2007), at least, expressed some hope that with a more central role for Europe, a greater feeling of responsibility will also come. It should perhaps be hoped that this may then result in a greater feeling of what the EU can, and cannot achieve through its mechanisms of external regulation.

As Welch (2006) puts it, "The EU needs to allow the new Kosovo, whatever its final status, to find its own way, make its own mistakes and grow as a society and political entity" (p.234). Three months after Kosovo's official declaration of independence, neither the UN nor the EU seem to know when they will be moving out of Kosovo. With the stress clearly on notions of supervised independence and shared sovereignty, real independence and local ownership are not likely to come soon for Kosovo.

CONCLUSION

This essay has sought to analyse the EU's policies and in Kosovo. To do this, we treated the EU as an actor engaged in state-building activities. It was argued that the underlying problems the EU are facing in its approach towards Kosovo are reminiscent of those it has faced in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that a number of these challenges are inherent to the state-building discourse of not only the EU, but of any other international actor in the region as well. The analysis was mainly conducted through the perspective of what we identified as one of the main characteristics of contemporary state-building practices, namely the tendency of the international community, and in this case specifically the EU, to leave politics out of the debate, and address state-building as a purely technical and administrative process. It was held that this resulted mainly from an increased importance being attached to the human rights regime, and the tendency to put

moral concerns above traditional political ones, the dynamics of which were outlined in relation to the question of sovereignty in the first part of this essay.

Furthermore it was maintained that the partnership between the EU and Kosovo is fundamentally an unequal one, and that the EU's attempts to stress the equality of its partnership, as well as its pertinent focus on local ownership, amounts to the denial of the power the EU is exercising over the province. In relation to enlargement, it was argued that this inequality of power has resulted in a separation of the integration agenda and the EU's regulatory mechanisms. A clear roadmap for integrating the SEE region into the EU is lacking, and this has negatively affected the credibility of the EU in the eyes of the local population. Considering that the legitimacy of the EU's activities is largely based on the prospect of future membership, it was argued that its authority is increasingly being questioned. The lack of progress made in terms of social, political and economic development has further shown to be undermining the legitimacy of the EU's authority.

Through the mechanisms of the STM and the SP, the EU was found to set the policy agenda of Kosovo without either substantial input from local policy makers, or respect for Kosovar views on their own policy priorities. In this way the agenda for Kosovo has come to be more indicative of the concerns of the EU, those mainly being for the stability of the region, than of those of Kosovo, potentially threatening the credibility of the domestic political process. This discrepancy is further aggravated by the democratic deficit of the international administration in Kosovo. Neither UNMIK nor the EU can in any real way be held accountable for the failures of their policies, and indeed the talking up of local ownership has created an environment in which the EU can easily downplay its power over Kosovo, and avoid the responsibilities that come with it.

Overall, involvement in Kosovo has been marked by the EU's lack of a clear vision in its state-building practices. Its approach thus far has been an *ad hoc* one, reflecting the EU's concerns in stabilising the region rather than the needs of the SEE region itself. Therefore it is argued in this paper that the EU, if it wants to be successful in stabilising the region, and if it wants to succeed in building strong democratic institutions in Kosovo, will need to develop a firm and straightforward strategy for the region. It will have to clarify its vague promises to integrate SEE into the EU in order to rectify the negative results of the current ambiguity. This is all the more true for Kosovo considering its symbolic and political importance as a

test case for the EU as an international security actor. The credibility of the EU can only be increased if the causes of the Kosovar's negative perception of it are ameliorated, and this requires visible progress in developing political, economic and social security. Europe, thus, has to reaffirm its commitment to the province, and this will involve a reassessment of its regulatory mechanisms through the STM and the SP. Real ownership for, and partnership with Kosovo can only come when the province is given the time and space to develop on its own terms, rather than on those of the EU. Although this essay recognises the crucial role the EU has to play in Kosovo, it also argues that Europe should support the domestic political process. This means putting politics back into the state-building and enlargement discourse, aiming at constructing viable political solutions rather than conflict management, and tackling the questions of democratic deficiency and accountability that are currently inherent to the processes of external regulation. The policy agenda for Kosovo should therefore, to a large extent, be set by Kosovar politicians, so as to properly support the strengthening of its governmental institutions and the development of real, accountable democratic processes. If the EU fails to do so, it might very well undermine its own efforts and weaken Kosovo's institutions, potentially resulting in renewed instability.

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DIASPORA NETWORKS AND IDENTITY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

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Abstract

The countries in the Horn of Africa have a common history of endemic conflicts and poverty. Since the 1990s, the diaspora generated by these conflicts is believed to be actively participating in efforts toward conflict recovery and long-term development. By means of interviews and qualitative analysis, we examine the identity forming in the diaspora networks linked to the region. We evaluate whether the ideals emerging in these de-territorialised spaces could be promoted as an overarching regional identity in the places of origin to sustain peace and stability. Both the local and the transnational dimensions of such networks are taken into account in order to appreciate the social, cultural, political and economic relations they generate. Findings include evidence of new normative ideals of tolerance, peace, democracy and plurality that are slowly emerging in the young diaspora. While ethnic, clan, gender and religious affiliations continue influencing identity and hinder cohesion, the new ideas that diaspora might bring to the fore support cultural and political integration by problematizing and giving a vocabulary to the discourse of regional identity.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the potential of African diasporic networks linked to the Horn of Africa to articulate a common identity on the basis of values shared in the spaces in which diaspora operates, and transmit these reshaped values in the territories of origin. A common identity would encompass and transcend the traditional ethnic lines and clan divisions that characterise Somalia, Ethiopia and the wider Horn, and could contribute to conflict resolution in the region.

Diaspora networks have been the object of study by social science, African and development studies. Scholars agree that African emigrants and intellectuals living abroad generate new forms of social relationships among themselves and involving their homeland. These relations are very real and can have economic, cultural and political repercussions on the diaspora itself and on the population back home. Africans worldwide want to be part of the political debate and make their voices heard in their countries of origin. They respond to the will of some Africans to promote long-term conflict resolution and peacekeeping within a regional framework. Diaspora networks, which flourish in the globalisation context, enshrine a common experience, a specific identity that has often been used to define them, even though such common attributes hide very different experiences and legacies.

We investigate how diasporic networks are developing their de-territorialised identities, which encompass the new world diaspora lives in, as well as a greater African identity.We have individuated the variables that are relevant to our analysis: the consequences of displacements; the opportunities aroused in the globalisation era such as increased communication possibilities and the facilitation of financial and human mobility; local circumstances, ethnic identity and new identities forming in the receiving countries; the formation of networks stretching traditional boundaries (transnational networks); and the articulation of new issues

and agendas and their role in governance (towards a regional framework for conflict resolution). Some Africans are trying to generate the impetus for the creation of a new narrative of an imagined community in the Horn of Africa. Whether this is mere utopia or the beginning of the construction of a peaceful Horn of Africa, we would like to give an infinitesimal contribution to its understanding.

Our investigation starts with the situation in Somalia. Although focusing on the Somali case, we also aim at assessing the region of the Horn of Africa as a whole, since conflicts are interlinked. A collapsed state caught in a deep crisis since 1991, Somalia is viewed by other countries in the Horn as a deviant society, which is disrupting the whole region. This is because of the territorial claims it has made since independence over the neighbouring territories inhabited by the Somali people (Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti). Moreover, Somali people are often identified with an old world of tribalism and clans, synonomous with continuous conflicts. On the ground in Somalia, clans and political power clashes make the emergence of a common identity appear as a remote occurrence (Toggia et al. 2000:127).

We analyse the value of a regional approach based on a common identity. Our investigation is based on a case study of three "displaced" people based in Aalborg and Århus, Denmark. One is a Somali, one is an Ethiopian and one is "an African," by her own definition, and a woman. They are representative of different diaspora networks. The Ethiopian professor and the Somali PhD candidate, John and Idris - belong to what we would like to define as a 'cultural diaspora,' insofar as their agency as participants in cultural and political debates, as well as their participation in transnational networks, is 'intellectual' in nature. They want to bring to the fore and to research ideas and issues related to the conflicts back home, and possibly to diffuse values and norms to support peace and stability. They mainly do so through networks that primarily group intellectuals and university teachers but also within the Somali community in Denmark. Mary Jane

the third informant, is a Tanzanian woman, settled in Denmark for over 15 years, and asserting a strong African identity. A master student of political science, she is the president of a non-governmental organization based in Aalborg, in the north of Denmark. Her 'African Network' draws together African immigrants from different countries, including the Horn of Africa. The organisation seeks to promote integration into Danish society, and to give humanitarian support to Africans in society and, to a lesser extent, in Africa. We would like to call this organisation an 'issue network' as people have come together to tackle specific issues.[1] These informants, and the data gathered by means of open-ended interviews, will allow us to explore both the transnational dimension of the diaspora and its anchorage in the local community, two aspects that we believe are crucial for the articulation and promotion of new values and identity.

The main questions we would like to answer are: to what extent can diaspora networks contribute to the creation of a regional identity which would constitute an alternative to antagonist identities that have been fuelling the conflicts in the region? What values do such networks endorse? Do they depart from the traditional divisions on the ground? Is the notion of identity a viable way to address conflict resolution? Are these networks empowered by globalisation?

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Our research has two main focuses: diaspora networks and identity. We present the variables that are relevant to evaluate the ability of networks to consolidate an overarching identity able to constitute an alternative to identity clashes in the Horn of Africa. Because the subject of our investigation is 'diaspora networks,' all concepts are presented as functional to our understanding of the interplay of diaspora networks and identity.

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[1] The names of the informants here are fictitious

Defining Diaspora

No clear consensus exists on the definition and conceptualisation of the diaspora. Diaspora exists in a tangible reality, but also possesses a symbolic substance: "*Diasporas are an imagined community*" (Mohan 2002:5).
The understanding of the 'Victim Diaspora,' which strongly stresses the "*search for an authentic homeland*" (Mohan 2002:5), is placing the home identity and idealised homeland at the core of the diasporic aspirations. Their idea of homeland is linked to its "*physical location, history, and achievements*" (Safran in Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2001: 7). Since the process of extradition from the original homeland is a forced one, these diasporic waves experience a certain nostalgia connected to their desire to return to their 'authentic' land. Members of the 'Victim Diaspora' are characterised by a lost sense of belonging, and they situate their nation of origin within a certain framework where home is romanticised and understood as a vision.

Diaspora in a contemporary sense could mean "*the voluntary and proactive movements of people and the connections between them*" (Mohan 2005:5). This understanding of diaspora "*challenges the conceptual limits imposed by national and ethnic/racial boundaries*" (Mohan 2005:6). Diaspora's conceptualisation is no longer a limited, negative, one-sided notion. It is more than the mere description of exiles looking to return 'home', there is a "*need to think about multiple sites of exiles and, crucially, the connections between them*" (ibid). It has acquired a richer and more complex dimension, and cannot be analysed in binary terms of exile and return.

Another preoccupation of diaspora members and their interlocutors is to negotiate decisional power. The question is about who can legitimately expect to influence the political agenda of the homeland. Some argue that diaspora members should first succeed in integrating in their new home country, develop some sort of economic activity (John's interview) and lead their communities into sharing a common memory and identity. These communities should be shaped by the

political situation in the original home country, and their actions should be driven by their deep interest in influencing its state affairs (Matsuoka & Sorenson 2001:8).

Diaspora might appear as relatively unified compared to their homeland, at least in theory. Most of diaspora leaders preach a unity of action, and as such might advocate in favour of a more comprehensive identity through the creation of inclusive networks transcending ethnic or regional divisions, as well as promoting collaboration between networks. However in practice, such bridging does not occur as often as it is claimed (Kent 2005:7).

Globalisation and Displacement

The dramatic transformations in information and communication technology, in transport, financial and people mobility, and the economic restructuring reducing the significance of state borders, are some of the core aspects that are generally referred to as globalisation. The cumulative effect of these changes has been to *de-territorialise* some of the activities and processes that influence our life in contemporary states.

Robinson (2002) uses the term "displacement" as the point of departure for new opportunities of development in the global context. While forced displacement of people is viewed as disruptive and traumatic in a world system organized in nation-states, Robinson proposes a positive connotation to the term. Flows of people, information and resources can disrupt the current forms of social organisation and *therefore* create innovation. 'Dis-placed,' in the common discourse, implies that a person is closely linked to a place but is no longer there. This concept of place is not neutral of political meaning: it hints at the sense of belonging, the place where one is settled. The lack of it is therefore pictured as problematic, especially when it comes to refugees, who, according to the dominant worldview, are 'out of place.' Her argument is that the experience of displacement

offers an opportunity to redefine an alternative foundation for belonging beyond the nation-state, beyond ethnic and national identity (Robinson 2002). As she suggests, politically there still exists little basis for opposing the nation-state system, but the experiences of displaced people are increasingly becoming new normative forms of belonging. This is particularly evident in diasporic communities.

Globalisation has allowed diaspora communities to flourish, partly due to the increased ease of communication brought about by new technologies, the facilitation of financial flows, which allow the resources of diaspora to be efficiently channelled, but also because of the reconfiguration of the world geographical space with a change of values and the emergence of a heterogeneous social fabric in most countries. In this global context, it becomes reasonable to expect actors who are not located within the national frontiers to act upon home issues.

Diaspora Networks and Transnationalisation

We have underlined a fundamental feature of diaspora: their link with the homeland. On this line, diaspora networks are defined by Kent (2005) as *"national or transnational civil society groupings whose role is autonomous but carries considerable potential to assist reconstruction of the war-torn homeland"*. His approach is based on social network analysis, which, in the specific case of diaspora networks, focuses on the dynamics that underlie the functioning of networks and the impact of their political and economic activities upon contemporary social processes. Remittances play a major role.[2] These are both individual transfers of money to assist households, and collective ones. In several cases, we need to add, money has gone to finance and thereby prolong the

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[2] World Bank studies have evidenced the fact that remittances are mainly used to assist the individual household and as such they are instrumental to alleviate poverty in the community, in fact, in times of conflict or post-conflict, remittances increase. However it is becoming a great concern of policy-makers to design policies that will encourage the use of remittances towards macro-economic development for long term development.

conflicts back home (Mohamoud 2006). In general, positive contributions to homeland reconstruction are empirically tangible. For instance, in the case of Somalia, remittances exceed the total development and humanitarian aid (Gundel 2002 in Kent 2005). It is their community-building capability, coupled with the diaspora's influence in the territories of origin, that enshrine the possibility of creating these common values, which are crucial for forging the common identity. Solidarity is needed to move towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts on the ground.

Diaspora networks are more than just diaspora groups. Their existence is not always proved empirically; rather it becomes evident because of crosscutting memberships of individual diasporic members in multiple social circles entwining to knit social systems. These systems are structured social relationships, whose values and potentials are far greater than those of single members. The structured social relations that underlie diaspora networks constitute both opportunities and constraints for members to take on several activities and operate towards specific goals (Kent 2005). Network analysis distinguishes between organised and social networks, but we agree with Kent (2005) in arguing that this distinction is somewhat inappropriate, as social relations often overlap with, or develop into more structured diasporic organisations. However, *"consciously motivated organisation can be more effective"* in influencing conflict resolution and stability in the territories of origin (Kent 2005).

Transnational networks are defined by Robinson (2002:207) as non-state actors, focused on a specific issue and articulated around shared values and shared political objectives. Their level of cohesion and organisational structure varies. They operate in a transnational environment in more than one country; members are not restricted by location, allowing them to have a flexible political approach, which could possibly help them to influence political matters.
Diaspora networks, *"weaving together social system"* (Wellman in Kent 2005:3), are a specific kind of transnational network.

Cohen (2002) points to the community-building effect of the transnationalised diaspora activity. Diaspora networks are, in his view, transnational communities that display the same political activism of transnational social movements. In our view, their shared experience, political participation, shared information and a forged common outlook create a sense of community possibly more cohesive than social movements as members often also share cultural traits.

Empowered by technology and by connecting forces, diaspora networks are crucial in internationalising and in giving a transnational dimension to conflicts in their homelands. Their political activities have often been evident: they can lobby in the host country against the government in the homeland of which they disapprove. They can also lobby for specific interests or for collective ends on a regional level (for instance for debt cancellation or trade concessions) (Mohamoud 2006).[3] The abstract space created by diaspora transnational networks, unbounded from a particular geographical area, is a new political space where networks assert their political identity through a process of translocality,[4] which gives birth to a form of de-territorialised governance.[5]

The state of displacement and the appropriation of transnational space by diaspora networks promote alternative forms of governance. We should bear in mind that in this work we are not looking specifically at the political agency of diaspora, rather we are interested in the ideological contribution of diaspora networks that, through the forging of a common identity, could provide an alternative to political solutions to conflict resolution and peace building. Diaspora networks are renewing and recreating their own identity through the transnational relations they sustain with their homelands and to one another.

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[3] Whether these demands will be met depend on their economic and political status and strength.

[4] Translocality represents this abstract political space that emerges between individuals and groups: a space characterised by a multitude of non-linear connections, which are occurring simultaneously in space and time (Robinson 2002: 209). Translocal activity takes place across borders. Individuals and networks assert a political identity, which is not defined on the basis of geographic location and that transcends borders.

[5] Governance refers to the process by which institutions and networks shape political agendas, by which issues are defined (Rosenau in Robinson 2002:215).

Identity

The role of diaspora groupings in conflict resolution, as evidenced, becomes relevant because of the political, economic and cultural interconnections they generate. In this work, identity is the primary dimension that we take into consideration and identity explains the way in which we look at diaspora. The focus is not only on the theoretical articulation of a different, inclusive 'African identity' informed by post-modern conceptions of identity, but also on the social spaces which enable the articulations of such identity - or not: diaspora networks. An attempt is made to evaluate the post-modern view of identity as articulated by scholars of social studies such as Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha and to see to what extent the post-modern conceptions of identity fit the networks that we are analyzing.

The very term 'identity' is a complex and multifaceted one that we intend here to use to include a number of allegiances that do not correspond to contemporary state or nation-states, to collapsed states in Somalia, Ethiopia, in the wider Horn or in diaspora populations. Such allegiances find origin in much more complex historical and spatial dimensions. 'Identity' here includes ethnicity, clan identity, cultural affiliations, language and religion, loyalties to the host countries and the incorporation of new norms and values. All this is entangled, overlapping and reshaping away from those territories of origin, emerging into a new local context and projected across borders.

The common identity is important because it affects the level of group cohesion, the ability to trust co-members and to get together to support the well-being of a real or imagined home. In our case, *home* could be the nation-state of origin or a wider conception of *home* that could correspond to the Horn of Africa (Robinson 2000). Several factors influence the *"in-between"* status that produces complex identities of diaspora groupings (Robinson 2000). One factor includes the local circumstances, such as the inability to feel at home in the host country and the hostility of the locals; another factor is diaspora's common past, the forced

dispersal, the common destiny and history of forced migration fleeing from a war-torn country; a third aspect is the sense of solidarity among groups' members, which include strong feelings for the conflict-torn homeland, the need to help next of kin back home, but also a strong common desire to have peace and stability in the territories of origin (Cohen 2002). Particularly important is their ongoing relations with their homeland - being economic, through remittances or business - or social, through advocacy and political debates. These may all be factors that forge diasporic identity and support cohesion of a very pluralistic, distinctive community, taking form in the diaspora networks.

The local community is where such networks emerge; it is where friends, relatives, intellectuals and political activists interact with one another and articulate issues and preoccupations that motivate them to form networks. How they get together and possibly produce social change - whether it is according to ethnic lines or beyond that - is the interest of this work. Summarising, whilst 'identity' includes strong affiliations that emigrants carry from their place of origin, most specifically the term will be used to define that "*hybrid*" or salient identity that characterises African diaspora.

'Hybrid identity' is the term used by one of our informants, John, to define his own identity. He advocates for an inclusive African identity while asserting a strong Ethiopian identity. Stuart Hall and other post-modernists use the term hybridity to refer to the evolution of new, dynamic, mixed cultures (Hall in Cohen 2002: 131 and Bhabha in Ahluwalia, Zegeye 2002). Hybridity challenges the essentialisation of identity and has become a powerful metaphor to express the fluidity of the post-modern world. Hall, though, highlights another aspect of such hybridity, that being the two opposing characters of globalisation: the push towards homogenisation and, in contrast to it, the emergence of the reassertion of localism in the form of ethnicity, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism (Cohen 2002:131). Hall (Cohen, op cit.) defines such processes as "*cultures of*

hybridity" and associates them with the most recent diaspora populations.[6] Cohen (2002) explains the post-modern views of diaspora as emphasising the fluidities of the contemporary world. Citing Bhabha, he refers to the need to depart from nation-state's divisions, but also to be aware of the multiple subject positions, that is, the multiple identities that form *"the building blocks of identity in the post-modern world"* (Cohen 2002:129).

Cohen (2002) uses the term "cultural diaspora" to describe the distinct characteristics of diaspora in the post-modern world. Such a term is well suited to this work as our interest lies in the articulation of malleable identities that take shape in the social and cultural relations embedded in the diaspora networks. Such identities emerge as they become relevant; they emerge not only around issues - political, cultural or humanitarian – but, as a result of local circumstances, hereunder the African diaspora in Aalborg and Århus, more specifically. Likewise they emerge because of the increased tempo of modern communications. Networks through the Internet can communicate transnationally and mobilise knowledge and produce information. Basically they are able to use diaspora's intellectual resources or social capital[7] most efficiently. They create bonds with other dispersed groups and with the homeland.

The social spaces occupied by diaspora include therefore both the transnational areas, with the proliferation of political, social and economic activities empowered by globalisation, and also the local community. Their solidarity and integration becomes evident in relation to the local population - both natives and other immigrants - in the host country in which they live.

Our understanding of diaspora is of a community of people originating from a single space and scattered over several locations. Members of this community are

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[6] The new diasporas include the Africans that have fled their countries in the 1990s, rather than the African Americans or the Jews.

[7] Social capital is the human capital embodied in human beings, their knowledge and skills. Part of this is their ability to associate, which in turn comes from shared values. (See Robinson 2000:16)

willingly part of it and retain a strong connection to their homeland on various levels, from emotional to economic. This community might possess what could be called a specific diasporic identity that could allow them to be conscious of their status as diaspora and of their possible power when defined within this group identity. This identity could be more than the sum of the parts, and hence the construction of such identity encompasses the home identity - *"I am a Somali",* as our informant Idris uttered - and the values acquired through the contact to the host country: *"but I do have Danish values even though I don't like to admit it".* Diasporic identity refers to a common identity, although all aspects of this identity vary to different degrees, depending on the individual: *"some sense of common identity defines a diaspora yet much of what some groups deem to be diasporic actually lacks such commonality"* (Mohan 2002:2).

CONFLICTS IN HISTORY

In order to understand the conflicts in Somalia and the wider region, we give here a short overview of historical conflicts and their causes.

History of Conflicts in Somalia

Somalia has been involved for many decades in continuous conflicts, either civil war or regional wars with other states. Although in Somalia, unlike most other states of the Horn, the population is vastly homogenous in terms of ethnicity, language and religion, a civil war is currently destroying the country (2007) [8] and there has been no functioning state since 1991. *"In the case of Somalia, the problem has historically been one of building a homogeneous nation into a viable state"* (Keller 2004:19).

In 1991, the twenty-year dictatorship of Siad Barre came to an end, the Somali state collapsed and no centralised authority has since been able to govern the country (Toggia et al. 2000: 127). As a consequence of the lack of a state-centric

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[8] "Christmas War" opposing the UIC to the TFG and Ethiopian troops, since November 2006.

political system, political decisions have been reclaimed by the most powerful traditional Somali clans. Since the state's collapse, Somalis have emigrated en masse (Kusow 2007:3), forming worldwide diaspora networks.

The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), supported by a large part of the Somali diaspora, emerged as a possible peace-leading actor, aiming at rebuilding the state through *"a combination of religion, grass roots mobilisation and business support"* (Farah et al. 2007: viii). In the context of the global War on Terror, an Islamic-based actor was strongly disapproved and consequently, the UIC was fought by the Transitional Government of Somalia, assisted by Ethiopian troops. The Ethiopian involvement was not well-received by the majority, who remembered the Ethiopian desire for expansion, as witnessed in the Ogaden War, for instance.

Keller argues that social conflicts in Somalia are *"based upon clan interests and clan identities… Somalia's descent into chaos can largely be attributed (…) to conflicts which range from the sub-clan level up to the clan family level"* (Keller 2004:30). Somali family clans are fighting over power and resources; the main clans are in opposition to each other, but contestation also exists within the clans themselves, as they are further divided into rivalling sub-clans. So far, there has been no viable way to govern Somalia that takes into account the clan system, and all efforts to overcome tribalism (notably by president Barre) in creating a political system have failed. After the Somali state collapsed as a result of a civil war involving the different clan factions, the current situation as of 2007 is still of a non-functioning Somali state, along with two self-established, but not internationally recognised Somali states: Puntland and Somaliland.

Clan Identity and Conflicts

Since ethnicity or religious-conflicting elements cannot explain the existing tension in Somalia, clan divisions and interests have been pointed out as one of the causes. At this stage it is relevant to investigate to what extent such conflicts are identity-based (clan identities) or are externally caused. Some analysts, for

instance Osman Farah, point to the external factors. There has been competition between countries within the region of the Horn and also between external actors to gain power over resources and control over the Red Sea coast, an essential strategic area, due to the importance of the Suez Canal (Lata 2004:87).

It could be argued that, although initiated by external causes, the identity aspect is paramount. Farah et al. discuss that the unique situation of the Somali stems from *"clan-related political fragmentation, armed conflicts, lawlessness and statelessness, and the impact of the worldwide dispersal of Somali who fled"* (2007: xi). During colonial times in the Horn of Africa, it was not deemed necessary to establish a cultural or political identity or loyalty to connect the state to its citizens. After the Second World War, this created problems when attempting to articulate a needed common idea for the community (Lata 2004:104). When fighting for independence from colonial rule, some leaders, including the Somali Youth League, understood the necessity to negotiate the formation of a Somali identity, beyond the clan divisions (Aweis 2007). In practise, the ideal of a united Somali identity embraced by all Somalis was never implemented.

Saggiomo argues that the Somali clan identity has for a long time been understood as a fixed concept, with rigid divisions, and that other social transformations, particularly colonialism, that have affected this Somali clan identity have not been taken into account (Saggiomo 2007:264). The clan identities at first appear static and impenetrable, and they have been accused of being largely responsible for Somalia disunion, either by themselves or associated with the *"negative impact of foreign aid"* (Mansur in Saggiomo 2007:265).

Yet the examples of the two self-proclaimed independent territories of Puntland and Somaliland can lead us to rethink the role of the clan and how it can use its specific identity for the general development of a country. Saggiomo contests the idea of a rigid clan identity; she claims that *"the fluidity that characterises Somali*

identity (…) is a changing phenomenon where alliances and divisions are determined by a number of factors and where economic considerations are often stronger than blood relationships" (Saggiomo, Op.cit :265).

Although the clans have proved in these two cases their ability to implement peace, although in a specifically delimited geographical space, the future of Somali's peace should possibly not be devised within the patriarchal clan system, as it is exclusive and fragmented, rejecting women's rights to political representation and not working towards the greater good of the Somali nation as a whole, as it concentrates power in multiples sources. The issue with the clan system is that *"the political allegiances are not based on ideology but on group identity,"* which devaluates ideas in themselves to emphasize the power sharing process (ibid).

There is, however, no easy way to categorise clans; they are as much part of the problem as part of the solution; their very existence seems an anachronistic occurrence, yet the methods of the traditional power structure are endogenous and to a certain extent legitimate: they have brought stability to some parts of the country and have constituted an alternative security net where the state has failed.
It could be argued that Somalis, through the process of identification, need not only conceptualize themselves into discrete clan segments, but also into a united Somalia, which would include an overarching Somali identity encompassing the clan's divisions, in order to induce peace and stability in the whole country. If Somalia is united and at peace, it could possibly impact on the whole region of the Horn of Africa, where conflicts would be less likely to occur between stable local nations. This possibility leads to the consideration of different political options for a solution. One of them is nation-state building, the other is the exploration of a regional solution.

A Regional Solution

Political changes in one country influence all other countries in the Horn. In an interconnected region, stable countries will also be negatively affected by conflicts

and political struggles (Lata 2004:2). Neighbouring countries are disturbed by Somalia's state of disruption. It could be argued that it is in the interest of all regional actors to maintain peace and stability in Somalia. The question may be asked *"is there a regional interest that is more than the sum of the countries constituting what is known as the Horn of Africa?"* (Farah & Muchie 2007:326). Such a regional interest will need to be based on common values, whether it is religion, democracy or nationalism. Farah and Muchie believe that for a regional project to be implemented, it needs to be inclusive; state issues need to be addressed and common values established (ibid.:328). By acknowledging that identity issues are one of the defining characteristics of the type of conflict currently taking place in Somalia, it can be argued that prevention should include a profound identity rethinking as part of the solution for long-term peace.

Keller explores a different angle for a regional solution: *"Regional and Subregional organisations have a significant role to play in conflict prevention"* (Keller 2004:3). Keller argues that the future success of peace talks for the Horn of Africa requires implementation through regional organisations (e.g. AU), and subregional ones (e.g. IGAD) (Keller 2004:49). So far there has been no political or economic union created in the Horn of Africa. Regional institutions can address the issues associated with conflicts at different levels, including the political and economic ones. John introduces the concept of 'security community.' To bring about peace and stability, conflicts have to be stopped; the establishment of a regional security community might be one of the ways to bring peace: *"The concept of a security community implies stability of expectations by the region's actors of being willing and capable of engaging in a non-war settlement of conflicts, regardless of how difficult the conflict. It suggests the willingness to bring about sufficient collective identity to make peaceful adjustments to conflicts"*.[9] Muchie and Farah emphasize the role of the diaspora in this respect. The diaspora is believed to be able to intervene in such a regional process: it *"can*

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[9] Mammo Muchie's lecture, 1st October 2007. Round table: "Millennium Hopes for Creating a Security Community from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea".

play a catalytic role and can engage constructively or destructively" (Muchie & Farah 2007b:328). A positive contribution from the diaspora needs to involve sharing its expertise and knowledge. This will be further explained in later pages.

Somali Diaspora Networks and the Peace Process

The Somali diaspora, not bound to the state, appears as a flexible political actor, which can influence the conflicts in many forms, either by prolonging them or by promoting solutions. This boundlessness is interesting in the Somali case where no state is functioning and it raises some issue about the very necessity of a central Somali state. *"Diaspora groups assert major influence in improving the socio-political and economic situation of the Somalis"* (Farah et al. 2007: xi). The Somali diaspora is functioning in a transnational framework, bypassing the missing Somali state. If the diaspora can exert a positive influence in the absence of the state, this could possibly mean that the state is not a necessity. The *"potentials of the Somali stateless society"* (Farah et al. 2007: xv) are also highlighted, as well as the possibility to create a regional economic network in the Horn of Africa as an alternative to political failures.

The Somali conflict has never remained local, for instance, with the 2006 involvement of Ethiopia in the 'Christmas War.'[10] The conflict is regionalised, even internationalised due to the *"economic, political, social and security interdependencies of the contemporary world"* (Farah 2007:174). Since the conflicts in one part of the region of the Horn rarely remain within the country's borders and very often become regional, solving one country's conflict will only be a temporary victory if that peace is threatened by greater regional instability.

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[10] In July 2006 the Government of Ethiopia initiated the armed invasin of Somalia. The ongoing conflict involves Ethiopian and Somali Transitional Federal Governments versus the Somali Islamic Union Courts (IUCs). The conflict takes the name of Christmas War because on December 24th 2006 Ethiopia officially stated that it would actively combat the IUCs, on the grounds that Ethiopia was facing threats to its own border and was therefore defending sovereignty.

Therefore, it could be argued that peace has to be conceptualised and devised in a regional structure, not merely state by state.

Some scholars assert the importance of creating a regional framework in the Horn of Africa and to *"approach the issues of state formation from a regional perspective (and) investigate the processes that may result from the formation of political authorities or states, even if they are regional"* (Farah et al. 2007: xii). To accompany this political/regional framework, a regional identity could be formed, similar to the European identity for instance. And while the international community is largely uninterested in the Somalia peace-building effort (Farah 2007:173), it may be that only regional actors can make a difference, as it is primarily them having deep interests in the region. Most seem to believe that the diaspora can contribute to state-building in Somalia (Farah, Muchie, Robinson). This leads to the question whether this state could be constructed on a Somali unified identity beyond clan divisions to bring peace and stability, not only in Somalia but also in the wider Horn.

TOWARDS A COMMON IDENTITY: ISSUES AND VALUES

In the previous pages we have looked closely at the several conflicts taking place in the region of the Horn of Africa. We have touched upon the different factors that cause the permanent status of crisis in the Horn and have emphasized the identity dimension, both as one of the causes but also as a possible solution; a strong regional identity would enable the population in the region to stand up to external causes and actors and, theoretically, to find a regional solution, sensitive to cultural, traditional and customary concerns. We have also looked into African diaspora, an actor whose agency has gained momentum, especially since the 1990s, as a distinct community with a distinct identity, whose voice and action can be transnational.

As mentioned, the theoretical framework we have used for interpreting our data includes notions of identity, networks, globalisation and transnationalisation.
We have interviewed the informants about the situation in Somalia, but we also have tried to illuminate how Somalis and Africans negotiate their identity in Denmark. We have looked at the three interviewees' ability to articulate a post-modern fluid identity - or not - through their involvement in diasporic networks. Specifically we have looked at their understanding of 'identity' as being the key - or not - to influence stability in the Horn through the narratives of their experiences.

Our data have been considered in relation to the variables we have identified. Qualitative analysis is chosen here as opposed to social observation and critique, and its relation to pre-existing theoretical frameworks, for several reasons. First, identity is here appreciated as an alternative avenue for conflict resolution, which the mainstream development approaches have yet, we believe, to consider as a viable option. Second, identity is contextual, local, multiple and historically relevant and therefore needs to be investigated qualitatively, incorporating the views and the meaning of the people involved. Our hope is to disclose patterns and trends that we believe could illuminate dynamics in several African diasporic networks linked to the Horn of Africa.

The three interviewees tackle different issues, which all shed light onto our original problem: the potential of diasporic networks to propose shared values that could transcend the ethnic and clan identities that have been fuelling the conflict in the wider Horn before and after colonization. We have tried to cluster them into themes, as we are going to discuss in the following.

The formation of an overarching identity for the Horn of Africa to share common values is a very complex process in itself. Making these values exceed any other factor involved in the several conflicts in the region is an even greater enterprise. Through our theoretical framework, we understand diaspora as a potentially

powerful actor. Our literature states that diaspora is able to form new values and relate them to their homeland. Our ambition, as mentioned in our introduction, is to give an infinitesimal understanding to such a *process* and look at what the factors are that could make the formation of a common identity a reality.

The word 'process' suggests several dimensions: a phenomenon marked by gradual changes that lead toward a particular result, but also actions conducting toward an end. We have defined such a process as social transformation.
Through our literature and our interviews, we look closely at diasporic networks as the actors behind social transformation and consider the different dimensions where this is unfolding. It is not created in a vacuum but is the result of a dialectic process, which juxtaposes spatial and temporal dimensions.

The spatial dimension includes the host country, where diaspora members confront themselves to the hostility of the locals and to new values. Here there is the necessity to create a space in a new society, an ethnic community in the host country, where culture is perpetuated or adapted, where social interaction takes place, where networks start forming. The spatial dimension includes the territories of origin where conflicts take place, where family has been left behind, and which represents 'homeland,' moreso a place to restore than a place to go back to. Lastly it includes the de-territorialized space for debate inhabited by transnational networks where new ideas and issues are brought to the fore.

The temporal dimension includes the legacy of history in a region that has not experienced peace and stability in centuries, a history of conflict that seems very hard to overturn; it includes the current era of globalisation that has enabled the emergence of networks and that can enable the African social capital to be shared and put to the disposal of greater portions of African and diasporic population. This dimension includes the time that passes for the diaspora member in the host-land and her/his growth (as Idris mentions) in the host society, where she/he takes time to appropriate and negotiate new values. Lastly it includes the time needed

for actions and ideas to meet in the networks and new values to be projected into different dimensions.

Our interviewees strongly believe that diaspora networks can play a major role in establishing peace in the Horn of Africa. According to them, both the intellectual and economic aspects are essential features of the diaspora's ability to influence their homeland. During the interviews we asked whether the diaspora was empirically able to influence factors on the ground and to make their voice heard. Both John and Idris told us that this phenomenon was occurring to a certain extent; they take the example of the Somali and Ethiopian diaspora in the USA, and their ability to influence political matters. They confirm the gains diaspora networks have been able to secure for themselves and their home communities. They also speak of a very important communication networks with media, television and radio all playing a major role in showing the growing material means of the diaspora networks. The conceptual shift of 'diaspora as victim' to perceiving the diaspora as a multi-level, empowered actor is very important.

In this respect we realise that several studies point to the detrimental effect of long-established diaspora, like the Ethiopian and Somali in the USA, onto the places of origin. Paul Collier (2006:15), in a recent empirical study, states that if a country that has recently ended a conflict has a large diaspora, the risk that the conflict will resume is sharply increased. Diasporas sometimes harbour rather romanticized attachments to their group of origin, he states, and may nurture grievances as a form of asserting their belonging. He defines economically-strong diaspora as a ready market for rebel groups wanting revenge. Not living in the country, and therefore not having to face the awful consequences of a renewed conflict, diasporas are a source of finance for such conflicts. Stephanie Bjork studied the transmission and durability of the clan identity amongst Somali of the diaspora community in Finland. In her case study, she asserts that the emergence of the Somali diaspora's networks was organized along the lines of the clan divisions on the ground in Somalia; furthermore, these networks exist not only in

Finland but are connected to other networks through transnational links, and continue the clan divisions across multiple countries (Bjork 2007:102). Whilst trying to understand the importance of clan groupings for the Somali diaspora, she also found that the clan identity has become *stronger* once the subject has moved away from his or her region of origin (ibid:104). Yet, quite paradoxically, the prominence of the clan identity is often downplayed or denied by the respondents to her survey (ibid:112). Somehow, the memory of the clan identity and the imagined representation of it have become more salient away from the clan system. *"The signs Somalis use to tell clan are based on stereotypes, a mixture of myth and reality"* (Bjork 2007:106). This would suggest that the clan identity is somehow artificially constructed, an idea rather than a reality. Regarding our original problem, if we accept the fact that identity can be recreated and modified - in this case, towards an intensification of the clan identity amongst Somali diaspora - we could also assume that such a process could be reversed. If clan identity is one of the main inhibitors to the peace process, the diaspora could very well intervene in this issue, either to further compartmentalize their community with the application of exclusive clan identities, or to articulate a more inclusive and fluid identity.

With these premises, we develop our discussion on the basis of the data gathered from our informants (wary of the possible contradiction between their aspirations and the empirical evidence they provide to us), who belong to a diaspora established in a nordic country in a relatively recent period, the 1990s, and benefiting from a welfare system which makes the clan safety-net redundant. With their complex personalities and life experience, the informants articulate issues that converge upon the conceptualisation of a democratic and peaceful reality imagined for their places of origin. We understand that such principles are part of diaspora's set of values, which have been shaped by the unique position they inhabit between traditional home values and the influence of their host community. Tolerance and dialogue beyond clan and ethnic divisions is actively sought with the belief that it is possible to have a political conflict without fighting

and that regional interests, like the implementation of common economic goals, could be the key to peace. The interviewees point out that those diaspora networks are influenced by such values. A transformation of diasporic identity seems to be taking place, but we would like to discuss whether such changes are relayed to the individuals in the region of origin by exploring the interplay of spatial and temporal dimensions.

The diaspora in the host society seems willing to concentrate on its own diasporic needs and aspirations, also concerning its visions about its specific territories of origin. One urgent matter that diaspora seems to prioritise in the host society is integration, intended as mutual acceptance and understanding of both the receiving host and the African culture. This has become apparent in at least two of our interviews (Idris and Mary Jane). There is talk of an 'African identity' that becomes salient as it stands in contrast to the identity of the host-country locals and manages to unify all ethnic groups coming from the African continent: *"…Most of us Africans have this attitude to say that we are Africans"(Mary Jane).*

Mary Jane clearly points to some values that determine what can or cannot be incorporated in diaspora networks' dialogue in terms of diversity. These include respect for cultural difference, the rejection of ethnic divisions, and respect for women. The confrontation with the host society emerges as one of the strongest common traits that can bring about cohesion within a diaspora; it makes individuals conscious of their status and it can be the common thread in an otherwise very heterogeneous grouping.

Conversely, we still see a struggle when it comes to merging local interests of the several communities forming the diaspora to the larger interests of restoration of the homeland, be it Somalia or the greater Horn. Ethnicity, gender and religion are part of the identity of individual belonging to the networks, and these can negatively affect group cohesion as in the case of the African Network bringing together several nationalities.

At the transnational level of networks, the conflicts on the ground still manage to create divisions. John reveals how the 'Christmas War' has made Somali and Ethiopian intellectuals display hostile attitudes even in those forums they created for discussing issues of peace based on shared values of dialogue and understanding. John qualifies the meetings with members from Ethiopian and Somali Diaspora networks working on general issues of Africa, as having suffered a *"step backwards"* in the cooperation, since the Somalis *"are upset because of the war"* and are *"hostile to Ethiopians,"* even intellectuals from the United States. From this experience he concludes that *"in a way it is hard to say that we have achieved a unifying idea, to come together."*

Diaspora members' building-blocks of identity seems to be the clan or ethnic identity and individuals are reluctant to renounce these. This does not mean that their identity is not renegotiated and the values of the Western host society are not being incorporated. What we notice, however, is that the division of diaspora along clan, nationality and educational lines is taking place and is a disrupting element for the cohesion of the diaspora members.

On the other hand, the relations between networks based on the clan system also demonstrated some positive achievements. The collaboration between clans in the Diaspora seems possible and in some cases, peace-building through this collaboration seems to be successful. Idris refers to a peace agreement signed in London between two major rivalling clans in Somalia to support this theory.
Idris adds that in some instances, members of the Diaspora community can build and demonstrate a heavy influence, partly due to their economic power, and in this respect they can positively influence the actions between clans at home.

The Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean Diaspora face difficulties collaborating because of the conflicts at home, yet they still agree on the importance of the economic factor and of open borders for economic cooperation, which would in turn help to implement cultural harmony across borders. According to Idris, an

economic partnership would be a relatively neutral factor upon which to build unity and it would respect local cultural, ethnic, clan and religious affiliations. From an increased economic cooperation, a regional identity borne on the premises of peace and not on the seeds of destruction could slowly emerge, following the model of the European identity for instance.

While anchorage in the host country is crucial for the articulation of innovative concepts of identity, it is in these territorialised communities that clan and ethnic divisions are reproduced, constrained by the need to negotiate a position within the host society. But, as Cohen (2002) suggests, situations of personal crisis such as the that of being in-between two identities, bear potential for change and innovation. Being distant from home can possibly alienate diaspora members and exacerbate group interests. On the other hand, individuals exposed to the new environment can benefit from stable conditions, gather new experiences and rethink the values of the host country in a way that might be crucial to find stability at home.

From the analysis of our interviews, it appears that strong bonds to the homeland are still prominent and that the will to participate in its development is present to a great extent. One example would be providing information and participating in the political discourse. In their interviews, Idris and John both referred to the vital role of globalisation in reinforcing the power of African diaspora networks operating in a global context. The greater possibilities arising from advances in technology and communication have expanded the means by which diasporic communities can voice their concerns and opinions, particularly in their homelands. Although formed in a local geographical reality, a number of these networks have developed an increasingly global economic activity.

The liberalisation of markets in the global context has made the transfer of capital and financial flows easier, and money transactions can occur rapidly. Compared with their homeland brethren, diaspora networks are more powerful in the Western

countries, and they can effectively mobilise financial resources for providing humanitarian aid to the refugees fleeing from their war-torn nations.This economic power, in turn, has allowed them to develop a more influential political approach regarding issues of crucial importance for their countries of origin.

In our study, it emerged that diaspora has a strong economical and political influence and members of the diaspora enjoy the respect of their clans at home. It seems probable that this trend will continue and, owing to globalisation, society will open up and identity will not remain static but be unbolted for change. The diasporic individual thus becomes a mediator between two worlds, the home identity and the diasporic identity. However, this generally positive framework offered by the globalisation process is not without ambiguities. Although they are offered the possibility to organise and structure their transnational relations, the diasporic networks somehow still fail to substantially influence the political agenda of their war-torn nations. Diaspora networks can fuel the conflicts or passively fail to actually turn their attention to the core of the problems that feed the present conflicts occurring in Somalia. It became clear to us through our discussion with Idris that clan divisions follow Somalis even when they settle in countries far away from Africa. Members who belong to the same clan and operate according to its interests then shape many diaspora networks. Even empowered by globalisation and influenced by other values, it remains questionable whether networks act favorably to the general interest of Somalia or if they amplify the already existing divisions. The power diaspora members have gained in the past few years could be employed to reinforce the hegemony of political groups that are responsible for the current political instability occurring now in the Horn of Africa. Support of this kind could lead to *"extreme nationalism and war"* (Blitz in Kent 2005: 13). When Idris talks about the dissemination of information, he mentions that in the South of Somalia this process only occurs *"from mouth to mouth"*. It is obvious that the ease of communication associated with globalisation is not benefiting all concerned actors.

From our interviews with John and Idris, we deduced that values such as dialogue and exchange of experiences and knowledge are crucial for the formation of a common strategy promoting peace and stability. Although globalisation could actually help diasporic networks to move towards this direction by bringing diaspora members together through advanced means of communication, distances cannot be completely annihilated. The use of media helps to spread the voices of diaspora members when speaking out against repressive regimes in Africa or supporting peace procedures. However, the geographical distance cannot be bridged completely and existing conditions in Somalia or Ethiopia cannot easily be changed. Diaspora networks build their influence from a distance, and they might be unable to convey their transformations to the grass root level in the home country, confronting, among other barriers, the obstruction of governments that do not encourage intellectual influence in political affairs from outside the country.

It should be questioned whether the diaspora networks, as a non-state actor, are able to exert influence in their country of origin. In the host country, it is often the case that economic and political stability predominates, including recognised democratic institutions. In this configuration the diaspora seems to be successful. One could argue that a stable environment is necessary to achieve a notable influence on social developments in the country. It seems that non-state actors need a functioning (and stable) state before being given the chance to exert a positive influence on the conflict situation at home.

Notwithstanding the several divisions and contrasting elements we have highlighted, new narratives are being articulated in those transnational spaces occupied by political activists and especially by intellectuals. John and Idris reveal fascinating visions: the project of a Regional Security Community or a Regional Economic Partnership stressing the values of a unifying cause under which to gather.

Such projects and the process of peace-building seem to be generated externally; yet it could be argued that the process of peace-building needs to start in the homeland and take the local customs into consideration, e.g. the customary Somali laws. There are success stories of good governance, as is the case of Somaliland and Puntland, as well as Ethiopia. Such success stories could be amplified and create an impetus for pressure and opposition from within the nation-states and the region.

While in the spatial dimension divisions are still strong, there is a real potential for diaspora networks to develop de-territorialised spaces for debate based on common values of inclusiveness to strengthen the role of ideas and complete the process of social transformation in a temporal dimension that offers the opportunities for changing the historical legacy of wars and instability.

CONCLUSION

The potential of diaspora networks to contribute to conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa by articulating a regional unifying identity is a difficult factor to measure. We highlighted that such a process is highly ambiguous and dependent on several aspects. We also established that the local dimension was paramount, as it is the place where changes in ideas originate and mature before being conveyed through transnational channels of information.

The advances brought by globalisation cannot yet be capitalised upon, as it seems difficult to link de-territorialised ideas to the homeland. The articulation of a common identity is a process that has first to be initiated amongst the diaspora communities, before it can be transmitted to the grass roots in the home country. The Horn of Africa diaspora settled in the north of Europe is a young phenomenon; their organisation into networks and their contribution in political, economic and social terms has started only recently. As we have highlighted, although they do possess an interesting potential, it is not yet possible to

accurately and fairly assess their involvement in the development and peace process in the Horn. It remains a question whether they are incorporating an inclusive identity supported by local circumstances in the host land, or whether they are mimicking cooperation but are bound to maintain divisions in the long run.

Diaspora networks as Mohan (2002) defines them, are an imagined community, a community based on ideas and issues, but also acting towards specific goals. The analysis at a micro-level of society, through the interview of Mary Jane is quite revealing. She is struggling to find common values to create cohesion under an imagined African identity. We say it is imagined, because it is not quite emergent; the values underlining it need to be constructed and supported. The conscious will to forge a unifying identity, we believe, is crucial to its success. Likewise, diaspora networks, thanks to their deliberate search for common grounds to promote peace and stability, enshrine the possibility to succeed, but their actions and the dissemination of those innovative common values have to be continued in a collective and united effort. Once again, it is a process that is still unfolding and that will require time and targeted actions to become pervasive.

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COUNTING HEADS:
ISRAEL'S DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

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Abstract
Israel is a country uniquely affected by demography, insofar as the state is bound by an explicitly Jewish nature. This balance has forced Israel to combat external demographic threats from before 1948 up until the present. The implementation of policies including the endorsement of "transfer"—a euphemism for the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, the razing of Palestinian villages, discriminatory legislation and the creation of facts on the ground—are a logical extension of the Zionist ideology. The construction of the West Bank Barrier (WBB) is the current manifestation of Israeli demographic fears and the Zionist desire to further curb non-Jewish elements.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Israeli domestic policy has been directed in large part by demographic concerns and a fixation on the occupied Palestinian population growth. This preoccupation with issues of demography is not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, the state of Israel was born out of a desire to establish "a publicly and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people"—the Zionist prime objective (Morris 1987: 1). However much the "land without a people for a people without a land" stoked the nationalist sentiments of post-war European Jewry, there *were* people living in Palestine, and in substantive numbers. Thus, from the very roots of Zionist thought, beginning with the "prophetic-

programmatic" writings of Moses Hess, Judah Alkalai, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and Theodor Herzl, it was acknowledged that for a Jewish state to emerge in Palestine, the resident Arab population would have to become a minority or be removed altogether (Morris 1987: 4). This article examines the political importance of demography to Zionist ideology and the imperative to protect Israel's Jewish nature. To do so, I will first review Israel's necessary regulation of demography towards achieving Zionist goals by briefly summarizing the importance of transfer to Zionist political thought.[1] Armed with this knowledge, I then address Israel's practice of establishing "facts on the ground," the modern continuation of which is the *fait accompli* existence of the West Bank Barrier (WBB). Finally, by reviewing Israel's constant evasion of seriously addressing the demographic question, I intend to draw a logical parallel between past actions designed to establish a Jewish majority and the physical reality of the WBB aimed at keeping it. Though Israel has consistently denied political motives, this article attempts to map the WBB's *actual* political implications within a historical framework.[2]

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[1] Those familiar with issues of Israel/Palestine are well acquainted with the top scholars in the field, not least of which include Benny Morris, Nur Masalha, Ilan Pappe among others. These scholars belong to what has since been called the "new historian" movement, instigated by the declassification of Israeli military archives in the 1980s, and their work has since helped to dispel a great deal of confusion and pseudo-academic posturing as to the events of 1948. Unless otherwise cited, all historical documentation in this article relies on the work of these historians and, to a lesser extent, my own time working in the Gaza Strip.

[2] This article does not discuss the implications of Hamas' rise to power in 2006, the 2007 U.S.-backed coup attempt, the unfolding economic crisis in Gaza, or the ongoing Israeli siege of the territory. These are all critical aspects of the situation in the Palestinian

DEMOGRAPHY AND THE ZIONIST IMPERATIVE

To understand the importance of demography to mainstream Zionist worldview, we must review the four basic tenets of the cause.[3] The first principle of pre-1948 Zionism was the desire to establish a "*territorial concentration* of the Jewish people in Palestine" (Gorny 1987: 2). This principle assumed a Jewish majority, for Zionism itself was at least partly born in response to the vulnerability of the European Jewry to anti-Semitism during the 20th century. Naturally, the second principle sought to create a Jewish majority in Palestine, without which "Zionism would [have forfeited] its meaning" by (once again) existing as a minority in a land governed by an alien power (Gorny 1987: 2). The third principle dealt with Jewish labor and the strongly nationalist fantasies of Jews tilling Jewish land; it was believed that the practice of employing exclusively Jewish labor would aid Zionist economic independence. The fourth principle, driven by fears of cultural assimilation during the Diaspora, sought to promote a rebirth of Hebrew culture, which was very effectively executed later on. The first of these causes is entirely dependent upon demography (i.e. a Jewish majority) and the third and forth, though not dependent upon, are more feasible with such a majority. Thus, demography is the single unifying

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territories, but are not (in my opinion), of immediate relevance to the Zionist demographic imperative.

[3] It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the historical/political emergence of Zionism and I take it for granted that my readers are familiar with this topic. If not, there is an abundance of material on the matter including many of the sources I cite in this article.

factor under which Zionism has flourished. It is for this reason that demographic issues have taken precedence above other Zionist goals, often limiting Israel's ability to universally guarantee citizens' rights as members of a liberal democracy.[4]

As the supreme goal of Zionism, the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine necessitated a solitary outcome: the erstwhile Arab majority needed to become a minority—as small a minority as possible. In this way, the notion of transfer was married to Zionist thought almost from its inception (Masalha, 1992; Morris 2004; Pappe 2006). Not merely a cause relegated to the far right Revisionists, transfer policies were endorsed by all echelons of the Zionist political sphere prior to 1948. As David Ben-Gurion wrote in a letter to his son, "We must expel [the] Arabs and take their places…to guarantee our own right to settle in those places…" (David Ben-Gurion cited in Teveth, 1985: 189). The demographic imperatives of Zionism *necessitated* the removal of Palestinian Arabs from the future Jewish state and any right-minded proponent of the cause could not have desired a lesser alternative. Any debate at all was reserved merely for the practicalities of implementation and the possibility of voluntary, as opposed to forcible, transfer of Palestine's Arab population (see Masalha, 1992;

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[4] For example, Israel has adopted many laws aimed at controlling demography, most notably the Law of Return and various marriage laws to restrict the rights of Israeli's married to non-Jews. Numerous studies have also found Israel's Arab population to be effectively marginalized with difficult access to public services, decent schools, and higher rates of criminal incarceration.

Pappe, 2006).[5] According to Rabbi Meir, a member of the Yishuv National Council, "The basis of Zionism is that the land of Israel is ours and not the land of the Arabs, and not because they have large territories, and we have but little. We demand Palestine because it is our country" (Meir cited in Gorny, 1987: 86). More recently, Ariel Sharon stated, "…there is no Zionism, colonialization, or Jewish State without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands" (Al Jazeera, 2006). The question of demography is of central importance to Zionism and I submit that it is possible to trace this importance from the realization of Zionist goals and policy through the 20th century up to the construction of the WBB.

"TRANSFER" PRIOR TO 1948

In 1948, three-quarters of a million people suddenly became the Palestinian refugee problem, most having left their homes after a combination of psychological "whispering" campaigns and direct military assault by Jewish forces long before Israel's declaration of independence and the subsequent invasion of Arab armies (Morris, 1987; Masalha, 1992; Pappe 2006). Despite decades of official denial on behalf of successive Israeli governments, it is no longer disputed that the 1948 refugees were largely a product of Israeli eviction by

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[5] Even Moshe Sharett (Shertok), a prominent member of the Yishuv at the time, and by all accounts the most sympathetic to Palestinian rights, expressed support for the *voluntary* transfer of Palestine's Arab population to neighboring Transjordan. Indeed, the option of coexistence was never discussed as a serious option by any among the Zionist leadership.

conquest and that transfer policies were long endorsed by Israel's proto-Zionist founders (See Masalha, 1992 and Morris, 2002).

It is not clear precisely how these events were endorsed by policy and the debate over intentional or incidental Palestinian expulsion continues.[6] The classic Zionist narrative argues that the result of 1948 was a "miraculous clearing of the land", which happened to be organized by the Palestinian leadership. Such an explanation would seem to absolve Israel of responsibility and "leave intact [Israel's] untarnished image as the haven of a much persecuted people, a body politic more just, moral and deserving of the West's sympathy and help than the surrounding sea of reactionary, semi-feudal, dictatorial Arab societies" (Morris, 1987: 1). While many Israelis may be willing to accept that transfer policies were widely endorsed in theory by the Yishuv, it is more difficult for them to imagine these beliefs translating into the 1948 exodus as a premeditated and intentional expulsion.[7] This is precisely where Nur Masalha diverges from Benny Morris. Morris famously concluded, "the Palestine refugee problem was born of war and not by design" (Morris, 1987: 286), yet Masalha found the same evidence to suggest deliberate dispossession. Both historians work

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[6] Most of this debate is relegated to simple disputes over the number of Palestinian expelled by force as opposed to the number having fled the region as refugees. As we now know, "Plan Dalet", enforced by Jewish forces as early as late 1947, called for the total destruction of Palestinian villages and the expulsion of residents beyond the borders of the future state.

[7] It is telling that the key figures in this ongoing debate are two of the very scholars I cite in this article: Benny Morris and Ilan Pappe.

from the same factual basis, but there are still disputes over the Yishuv's depth of practical commitment to removing hundreds of thousands of Arabs from Palestine. Whether premeditated or coincidental, most contemporary Zionists tend to agree that Israel benefited greatly from the sudden absence of Palestinian Arabs in 1948; indeed, the almost total realization of Zionism's demographic goals had ensured Israel's very existence.[8]

Before 1930, the Zionist leadership had kept its aspirations for transfer relatively quiet, due to the understandable alarm it roused in the Palestinian population. Despite the necessity of transfer to Zionist goals, it was virtually taboo for the leadership to discuss such plans publicly. The early 1930s witnessed a surge in Zionist confidence, however, as Jewish immigration increased from 17.8% to 29.5% (Khalidi, 1991: 86). Thus, plans advocating the transfer of Palestinian Arabs surfaced more frequently than before. Menahem Ussishkin, then-President of the Jewish National Fund, remarked at a meeting with the Jewish Agency Executive:

> *"What we can demand today is that all Transjordan be included within the Land of Israel … on condition that Transjordan would either be made available for Jewish colonization or for the resettlement of those Arabs, whose lands [in Palestine] we would purchase … I will fight for this. I will make sure that we will be the*

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[8] Benny Morris for example, has argued that Israel would have been able to avoid much of the violence that has plagued its existence over the years if the Yishuv had managed to expel all of Palestine's Arab population in 1947/48.

> *landlords of this land … because my country belongs to us and not to them...”* (Ussishkin cited in Masalha, 1992: 51)

Ussishkin was not alone. Many members of the Zionist leadership assumed that if the Palestinian Arabs refused to relocate to Iraq, Transjordan would be the natural compromise so long as the possibility for Jewish settlement remained an option. The plan rested on the naïve assumption that Palestinian land-attachment was superficial and relocation to Transjordan would have been unobjectionable—a strange logic that was adopted principally as an apology for population transfer plans at the time.[9] By stressing the belief that Palestinian Arabs looked upon Transjordan with equal favor as they did Palestine, the Yishuv was able to rationalize a (somewhat) morally defensible case for dispossession and expulsion. Certainly, transfer would have solved the "Arab problem". As it became clear that only military force would compel the Palestinians to resettle in Iraq, most accepted Transjordan as the eventual destination for Arab transferees, though many still pushed for Iraq.[10]

In 1937, the partition of Palestine offered by the Royal Peel Commission would have effectively barred Jewish settlers from Transjordan and too much reflected the stark Arab majority in the

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[9] It should be noted that all references to transfer were decidedly euphemistic during this period.

[10] Iraq as a transfer destination, though abandoned by the Mapai party and other mainstream Zionists, continued to be pushed by the far right and those who feared the unnecessary hindrance of future Jewish settlement in the region.

region. "Thus, the notion of transfer was a natural concomitant to the partition idea" (Masalha, 1992: 55). Also, though Arab nationalism was slow to emerge as a unified force, most Palestinians were *individually* loath to cede any of what they considered to be their land. Thus, when the Royal Peel Commission issued its proposal for a two-state partition, neither the Zionists *nor* the Palestinians could have unconditionally offered their support. Indeed, the recommendations, which ultimately offered the Yishuv about one-third of Palestine (including the most fertile regions) were rejected by the Palestinians and only intensified the ongoing Arab rebellion. The Yishuv accepted the Peel recommendations only after much hesitation—primarily because the commission endorsed compulsory transfer for the Arab population. Not all were pleased, however. Denouncing the Peel recommendations, Menahem Ussishkin declared, "We demand that our inheritance, Palestine, be returned to us and if there is no room for Arabs, they have the opportunity of going to Iraq" (Ussishkin, 1937: 3). It was clear that, despite the Yishuv's acceptance of partition, land negotiation—including Transjordan—would continue; Zionism required it.

By 1947, when the United Nations general assembly voted in favor of partition, the Zionists had been able to negotiate a Jewish state up to approximately half of Palestine. Jewish land-ownership surpassed 50% in only a handful of these regions however, so plans for Arab transfer had never fallen from popular approval. The subsequent "whispering" propaganda campaign and the direct military assault upon Palestinian

Arabs in 1948 has been excruciatingly well documented and I will avoid reviewing the chronology of various military operations. With the flight or expulsion of approximately 700,000 Palestinians, it is certain that Zionism's goals were fulfilled to an extent unimaginable by many at the time. Chaim Weizmann declared the Palestinian exodus to be "miraculous," and though such sensationalism was not entirely warranted,[11] it did set the groundwork for an eventual Jewish majority. After 1948, the new Israeli government encouraged mass immigration from across the globe and by 1951, there was a Jewish majority. In this period, Israel was confronted with even greater demographic challenges than before; the task was no longer *how* to create a Jewish majority, but how to *keep* it.

Keeping Israel Jewish

Creating Facts on the Ground

Before 1967, it was possible for Israel to simply avoid dealing with the refugee situation it had created. The West Bank and Gaza were separately administered by Jordan and Egypt, respectively, and the thousands of Palestinian refugees posed no immediate demographic threat to Israel. Israel was unwilling to cede any of the land it had seized during the 1948 war and accorded Palestinian refugees

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[11] Weizmann had been one of the most rigorous promoters of Arab transfer immediately prior to 1948, canvassing support across Europe and the United States (See Masalha, 1992: 127).

indeterminate status until peace was secured with the surrounding Arab states. To ensure Israeli hegemony over newly captured land, Jewish settlements immediately began to spring up across the Negev. The idea was to discourage U.N. insistence of a return to the 1947 partition borders by creating *fait accompli* "facts on the ground." Immediately following the Palestinian exodus, Ezra Danin, a member of the Yishuv's Committee for Abandoned Arab Property stated, "if we do not seek to encourage the return of the Arabs … then they must be confronted with *fait accomplis*" (Danin cited in Morris, 1987: 135). Such plans, according to Danin, included the destruction of Arab houses, the expedient resettling of Jews on the evacuated land and the expropriation of Arab property (Morris, 1987: 135). Though Danin resigned from the Committee for Abandoned Arab Property for his inability to curb Jewish looting, he formed a self-appointed "Transfer Committee" with Yosef Weitz, the director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Department. Together they issued a short memorandum, intended for Ben-Gurion's approval, entitled "Retroactive Transfer: A Scheme For the Solution of the Arab Question in the State of Israel" (Morris, 1990: 104). The scheme acknowledged that a post-war "Israel must be inhabited largely by Jews, so that there will be in it very few non-Jews" and that "the uprooting of the Arabs should be seen as the solution to the Arab question" (Morris, 1990: 104).

Although the temporary "Transfer Committee" was not permitted to operate officially as a branch of government, Ben-Gurion approved to

the plan (Morris, 1990: 107). The Yishuv began to carry out systematic village destruction followed by prompt Jewish settlement—a strategy complimented by an intense propaganda campaign against Arab hopes of return. Indeed, Jewish forces destroyed hundreds of Arab villages between 1948-1949 and the Yishuv actively encouraged Jewish settlement, in most cases literally on top of Palestinian ruins. Such tactics proved extremely useful at discouraging Palestinian hopes for return. Because the retroactive transfer policies began in June 1948, after the majority of refugees had already fled or been expelled, the purely political motives were well known (Morris, 1990: 107). This realization sparked some minor opposition from the Israeli left, but Ben Gurion's complicity in the demolitions was not well known and the policies were passively accepted as the natural fulfilment of Zionist demographic goals. When village destruction eventually became politically untenable, Yosef Weitz turned to purchasing land from Arab tenants. Interestingly, he consulted with Moshe Shertok, expressing his concern that some of the money paid to Arab farmers might be used to finance the Arab war-effort. Shertok's response was clear, "The reasons for buying [Arab land] outweigh [the reasons against]" (Shertok cited in Morris, 1990: 123). Such a statement merely underscores the importance of demography as a higher priority even than Israel's immediate security concerns.

The Arabs remaining in Israel after 1948 (about 170,000 in 1950) were "regarded as potential fifth columnists" and were "subject to Israel's

perceived security requirements and the needs of its incoming settlers" (Smith, 2004: 220). Despite the unsure status of the refugees and notwithstanding the rights of Israeli Arabs, Israel began to classify much Arab land as "absentee"—a condition under which the Israeli government was able to seize property even if the owner had merely left town for a single day on or after November 29, 1947. This practice served to provide housing for the massive influx of immigrants Israel experienced during the late 1940s and further discouraged Arab hopes for return. Israel was also able to avoid confronting the demographic problem by offering several lukewarm peace proposals, with provisions known to be unacceptable to Arab leaders, but which afforded Israel a positive image. Such proposals were made at the behest of the international community, however, and none were seriously pursued. It was essential to maintain this "no-peace, no-war" relationship with Israel's Arab neighbors as any serious peace deal would inevitably have required Israel to address the refugees' status. Such a tentative, inherently temporary, situation remained in effect until the six-day war of 1967.

The Occupation Begins

Historians recognize the embarrassing Arab defeat of 1967 as an event of central importance for the region, leading to the codification of Palestinian national identity among other indirect implications. Perhaps of equal or greater importance for the region, the war's aftermath ended

with Israeli control of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Israeli occupation began in full force and demography suddenly arrived at the forefront of Israeli politics. Indeed, the demography of the newly occupied territories was tantamount to a Zionist nightmare; for Israel to have simply absorbed the Palestinian Arab population as Israeli citizens would have effectively reversed the Jewish majority. Many were concerned about Yasser Arafat's description of a "biological time-bomb which threatens to blow up Israel from within … [The Israelis] fear our children and the Palestinian women who give birth to another child every 10 months" (Arafat cited in Ben-Meir, 1993). Thus, when Israel immediately declared the 1949 armistice borders to be invalid and assumed control of the territories, Israeli citizenship was denied to West Bank residents (Smith, 2004: 293). Within weeks of the war, Israeli citizens began to settle in the West Bank, Gaza and even southern Syria "to 'create facts' to establish a Jewish presence that would become inalienable, thereby negating future calls for a compromise" (Smith, 2004: 295). This pattern of settlement has been repeated throughout Israeli history, a policy linked with the uncertain knowledge that Israel might one day have to relinquish control over some of the conquered land. The sheer longevity of the conflict has secured a significant foothold for the settlements, making withdrawal all the more difficult. Even when one considers the ramifications of Israel's 2005 unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip, most of the settlers uprooted there were simply offered land in the West Bank and financial compensation as

recompense. Moreover, late into U.S. President Bill Clinton began to refer to East Jerusalem as "disputed"—an almost complete reversal of previous U.S. discourse—after considering the now decades-old Israeli settlements around the city (Smith, 2004: 442). Even United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, addressing a crowd in East Jerusalem recently, angered Palestinians by expressing his joy at being in "Israel".

Since 1967, Jewish settlements in the West Bank have cut to the very heart of Zionist thought, fulfilling both the demographic and Greater Israel principles. In direct contradiction of international law, the Israeli interior ministry officially recognizes and supports the settlements, granting settlers full Israeli rights, including military protection.[12] According to B'Tselem, "Israel forbids Palestinians to enter and use these lands [occupied by settlers], and uses the settlements to justify numerous violations of Palestinian rights, such as the right to housing, to gain a living, and freedom of movement" (B'Tselem, 2006a). Because of this, Israel's policy of establishing "facts on the ground" has proven to be the most effective way to discourage the return of Palestinian refugees and to avoid addressing the final status of the occupied territories.[13] Furthermore, Israel views all Palestinian

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[12] As of January 2008, there were 122 Jewish settlements in the West Bank, an increase of more than 20 new settlements in the decade after the 1993 Oslo Accords. 48 of these settlements are on the Palestinian side of the WBB (Aronson, 2008: 168).

[13] One should also note that settlement expansion often occurs at strategic moments during Israel-Palestinian negotiations. During the 2007 Annapolis Summit and in the months following, Israel announced the construction of hundreds of new settlement housing units.

residents of the West Bank as potential terrorists and has established a dual system of laws, which are applied according to ethnic and religious background. Because Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank are ineligible for Israeli citizenship, Israel has established a veritable "separation cum discrimination regime" replete with "Israeli-only" roads and other segregated public utilities (B'Tselem, 2006a). Such a hierarchical distinction between West Bank Palestinians and Israeli settlers has naturally served to benefit those of superior legal status, e.g. Palestinian attacks against settlers are harshly rebuked by the IDF, often resulting in military strikes and mass detentions. Conversely, it is normal for attacks against Palestinians to either be ignored or result in only light punishment for the perpetrators. Until February 2005, the IDF practiced a policy of collective punishment in demolishing Palestinian houses, despite the internal and international outcry. The IDF justified such destruction as punishment for houses built without a construction permit yet "Israeli officials enforce the rules in a discriminatory manner, strictly denying construction permits for Palestinian homes while allowing the construction of Israeli settlements to proceed" (United Nations, 2003: 158). I conjecture that the massive military, financial, and civic burden of the settlements has been measured against the ideology of Zionism, its expansionist principles, and the resulting demographic benefits of settlement. Similar to the purchasing of Arab land following the 1948 war, it seems demography supersedes security. The ongoing encouragement of settlement by the

Israeli government against international (including American[14]) protestation stresses this point. Since 1967, Israel has continued to create *fait accomplis* aimed at preventing withdrawal and avoiding demographic compromise.

THE INTIFADA

For two decades after 1967, Israel was able to maintain the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza without any major difficulties. By all accounts, economic growth in the territories was not seriously affected before Menachem Begin brought Likud to power in the late 1970s; thus, Palestinian life under occupation began without widespread discontent. Israel's policies toward the demographic problem changed after the Yom Kippur war in 1973. Still refusing to absorb the occupied Palestinian population as citizens, more emphasis was placed upon Israeli settlement in the occupied territories. Likud oversaw an explosion of Israeli settlement—800 individuals annually increased to over 6,000—and the settlements themselves began to be tactically established in close proximity to Arab villages.

In 1987, the ephemeral nature of this situation became clear as tensions boiled over and Israel witnessed the angry emergence of a Palestinian generation born and raised under Israeli dominance. The disastrous "break their bones" response to the stone-throwing tactics of the first

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[14] See the Roadmap to Peace and the stipulations regarding Israeli settlements in the West Bank (United States, 2003).

Intifada brought about a need for Israel to maintain control militarily, while allowing a degree of Palestinian autonomy. In May 1989, Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir moved to grant "free and democratic elections" (Shamir cited in Smith, 2004: 412) to the Palestinian Arabs of the occupied territories. The plan was transparent in its intentions to maintain Israeli control of the occupied territories and was summarily rejected by the PLO. Likewise, conservative Israelis viewed the plan as an obvious precursor to a Palestinian state and also rejected it. The familiar themes of geography and demography continued to overshadow events until the peace process, beginning with the Madrid Talks, commenced (see Smith, 2004).

The diplomatic successes of the Madrid Talks (October 1991 – Summer 1993) were limited as the parties faced a stalemate in negotiations. Shamir's plan, as he self-admittedly stated upon leaving office in 1992, "was to drag out the talks on Palestinian self-rule for 10 years while attempting to settle hundreds of thousands of Jews in the occupied territories" (Hoffman, 1992). In this way, the peace process began by serving three immediate needs for Israel: it stalled the Intifada, changed Israel's international image from occupying power to peacemaker and "gave the appearance of accommodation while working to ensure Israeli retention of the territories" (Smith, 2004: 419).

When Yitzhak Rabin became Prime Minister in 1992, Israeli settlement of the West Bank continued, albeit less intensely, while much attention shifted to so-called "land for peace" deals. During the signing of the Oslo Accords, the principle of "land for peace" was resurrected which, although having been around for a while,[15] became a practical option. However, the provisions in Oslo I enabled a system similar to Yitzhak Shamir's 1989 proposal: Palestinian autonomy under Israeli control and without a final status in sight. The A and B Zones of Oslo II called for limited Palestinian autonomy, while the C Zone (comprising Israeli settlements, military installations and border areas) was reserved for total Israeli control until the eventual final status negotiations. This "enabled Israel 'not to freeze building and natural growth' in the settlements, meaning existing settlements could be expanded to absorb more land" (Smith, 2004: 450). Thus, the very structure of Oslo I and II was unstable. It is clear that Rabin was concerned primarily with Oslo's prospects for ridding Israel of 90% of the West Bank's Arab population, while only ceding 30% of the land. In this way, it seemed possible to diffuse the demographic "bomb" without having to pay much for it. Thus, Rabin's land for peace was framed around demographic concerns and constitutes yet another example of demography eclipsing security.

An economic agreement was also signed as part of Oslo II—the Paris Protocol—which stipulated Israeli control of import taxes on goods

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[15] See UN Security Council Resolution 242

entering the Palestinian Authority's domain and brought the occupied territories under the domain of the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). Palestinian economic independence was not an outcome Israel could accept, as it would have "creat[ed] a binding precedent on the eve of the final status stage" by giving the "flavor of sovereignty" (B'Tselem, 2006b). Incidentally, the continued employment of Palestinian laborers in Israel was made conditional upon the Palestinian Authority's acceptance of the Paris Protocol.[16] Yet, the Oslo negotiations came to a stalemate. In 1994, Rabin, who had anticipated such an outcome, remarked that Israel would "have to decide on separation as a philosophy" (Rabin cited in Makovsky, 2004: 52), implying a physical barrier. Before his 1995 assassination, Rabin oversaw the construction of the Gaza Strip Barrier. Any similar plans to physically separate the West Bank (if considered at all) were postponed until after Benjamin Netanyahu came to power, froze the peace process and solidified Israeli control of Zone C.

THE WBB

When the 2000 Summit at Camp David ended in failure and Palestinian frustration exploded into the second Intifada, Rabin's idea of separation was revived and quickly led to the WBB. By far the boldest (and most expensive) operation ever undertaken by Israel in its quest to create "facts on the ground," the barrier is the modern manifestation of

[16] The economic integration of the West Bank has never been a source of major controversy, when compared to the political integration of West Bank individuals.

Zionism's demographic imperative. It has caused the direct displacement of thousands of Palestinian Arabs and led thousands more to abandon their lands. Those caught between the Green Line and the WBB have been stripped of their property, further preparing sections of the West Bank for Israeli settlement.[17] The WBB has effectively annexed approximately 10% of the West Bank, including some of the most fertile areas and because the barrier has been built on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, it has caused untold hardship to thousands of Palestinian Arabs (Chomsky, 2006; Pappe, 2006). In some cases, the High Court of Israel has ordered some sections of the Barrier's path to be rebuilt in a less intrusive manner, but considering the finances Israel has spent in its effort to include as many Israeli settlements as possible on the Israeli side of the Green Line, it seems the Barrier is intended for long term use. Before his invasion of Lebanon during the summer of 2006, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert spoke often of his "convergence plan" to unilaterally draw Israel's permanent borders along the WBB, permanently annexing large portions of Palestine to Israel and confirming Palestinian fears from the beginning (Heller, 2006). Demography was the chief concern governing the WBB's construction, a suggestion more easy understood when understanding the importance of demography to Zionism.

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[17] It is interesting to consider the thousands of Palestinians caught along the seam-line between Israel and the WBB; there are no plans to absorb them as Israeli citizens despite the recent talk of drawing Israel's permanent borders along the WBB. The future legal status of these people is unclear.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to convey the importance of demography to Zionist thought. As a nationalist ideology, Zionism has adopted inevitable paradoxes. For example, although Zionism required the removal of Palestine's native population to establish a Jewish majority, it needed to simultaneously forget such an unpleasant version of that history. Likewise, Israeli policies of village destruction, crop poisoning, and Jewish settlement on top of abandoned Arab villages were sugarcoated as "miraculous." Moreover, from 1967 until today, the presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories has served to undermine the possibility of withdrawal. The occupation and the lengthy, limited benefits of the peace talks have further suspended discussion of refugee status; the pattern of avoidance continues today with the WBB, though in more serious terms. The most extreme aspects of the occupation have culminated in a physical barrier separating two peoples. Though also a potential deterrent to Palestinian militancy, the long-term implications of the WBB have primarily served to protect and expand Israel's Jewish majority, fulfilling the principles of Zionism by maximizing Jewish control over as much of Palestine as possible.

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Unified in Diversity:
Europe's Search for a Collective Identity

Sebastian Boll

Abstract

Despite the ongoing European integration process, with ever more legislative powers being transferred to the European level, EU citizens do not seem to have responded with a simultaneous, increased affiliation towards the Union. Especially since the rejection of the Constitution for Europe, the notion of European identity has been given particular attention. This paper examines the existence and prospect of a wider European identity in times of continuing strong national affiliations. It will be seen that human beings can have multiple identities, without them necessarily contradicting each other. Besides, identities are not fixed, but dynamic and thus subject to permanent change. Based on that, it will be shown that the creation of a collective European identity has already started and will be further fostered in the future.

Introduction

Since the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, the now so-called European Union (EU) has increasingly been enlarged and integrated. From initially six, the number of Member States (MS) has been extended to 27, with further enlargements yet to come. At the same time, the set of institutions and responsibilities has similarly amplified, from an organisation dealing with the integration of only two of the MS's industries to a complex network of authorities, interconnected with various committees, agencies and national governments, while competences have come to include economic, social, environmental, foreign and security policies as well as justice and home affairs. Yet, although the EU is increasingly influencing the life of its people, the latter have not responded with a simultaneous, increased affiliation towards the Union. This phenomenon has been indicated on various occasions: the voter turnout in European parliamentary elections, for example, has steadily dropped from 63% in 1979 to 45,6% in 2004;[1] moreover, in June 2005, the citizens of France and The Netherlands, two founding members of the EU, rejected in referendums the proposed *Constitution for Europe*. Keith Cameron, in his book *National Identity*,

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[1] *Elections2004.eu.int*. Secretariat of the European Parliament. 12 July 2006 <http://www.elections20 04.eu.int/ep-election/sites/en/results1306/turnout_ep/graphical.html>.

concludes the following reason for this development: "As the European Union becomes more unified through its legislation and interstatal trade and movement, there is a centrifugal movement in a number of Member States as individuals begin to feel threatened and to think that they are losing their national identity".[2]

Thus, following the rejection of the Constitution, the subject of European identity has been given particular attention, although this does not constitute an entirely new phenomenon. In a speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on March 8th 1994, Vaclav Havel, then President of the Czech Republic, already pointed out:

> *Many people might be left with the understandable impression that the European Union (…) is no more than endless arguments over how many carrots can be exported from somewhere, who sets the amount, who checks it and who eventually punishes the delinquents who contravene the regulations. That is why it seems to me that perhaps the most important task facing the European Union is coming up with a new and genuinely clear reflection on what might be called European identity.[3]*

This paper, therefore, examines the existence and prospect of a wider European identity in a time of continuing strong national affiliations. It first seeks to establish a general definition of identity, also considering to what extent multiple identities may exist, and whether new identities can be created without challenging existing ones. The paper then looks at the EU; it analyses why the creation of an overarching European identity should be aspired to; it attempts to determine to what degree this is already existent and, additionally, explores what its prospects are for the future. It will be seen that human beings can have multiple identities, without them necessarily contradicting each other. Besides, they are not fixed, but dynamic and thus subject to permanent change. Based on that, it will be shown that the creation of a collective European identity has already started and will further be fostered in the future.[4]

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[2] Cameron, Keith. *National Identity*. Exeter: Intellect Books, 1999.

[3] Havel, Václav. "About European Identity." *A Charta of European Identity*. 1997. Europa-Union Deutschland. 24 July 2006 <http://www.europa-web.de/europa/02wwswww/203chart/chart_gb.htm>.

[4] It needs to be noted that, in this paper, the term 'Europe' will be used as representing the EU and not in its geographic meaning.

Collective Identity: A Process with Multiple Layers

First, this paper will seek to define the term identity; 'seek' used here because identity "commands as many definitions as there are academic principles which study it, and which only tends to command attention when it is in crisis."[5] David Snow, in his paper *Collective Identity and Expressive Forms*, established the following definition:

> *There are at least three conceptually distinct types of identity: personal, social, and collective. (…) Personal identities are the attributes and meanings attributed to oneself by the actor; they are self-designation and self-attributions regarded as personally distinctive. (…) Social identities are the identities attributed or imputed to others in an attempt to situate them in social space. They are grounded typically in established social roles, such as 'teacher'.[6]*

With regard to the concept of collective identity, a definition seems a bit more difficult; Snow continues:

> *Although there is no consensual definition of collective identity, discussions of the concept invariably suggest that its essence resides in a shared sense of 'one-ness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of 'other'.[7]*

Consequently, with regard to the theme of this essay, the collective concept is best applicable, as only here is identity defined by what individuals have in common. Nevertheless, for such a collectivity to be established, a reference point is needed to distinguish the *in-group* from the *out-group*; that is to say that the definition of *the other* is the prerequisite for defining *we-ness*. The same article also states that "collective identity is, at its core, a process rather than a property of social actors".[8] This indicates the dynamic nature of identities, that they are influenced

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[5] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.
[6] Snow, David. "Collective Identity and Expressive Forms." *eScholarship Repository* July 2001. 24 July 2006
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=csd>.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

and thus created by various internal and external factors. Dr. Walkenhorst, from the University of Essex, confirms this interpretation by writing "collective identities that did not develop historically, like religious, ethnic or linguistic identities, can be 'produced' in order to legitimise power, [as it] occurred in the developing stage of national states in the 18th and 19th century".[9] Moreover, identities are multi-dimensional, reflecting their composition of different aspects of identification, such as gender, region or religion. This is emphasised by Carole B. Burgoyne and David A. Routh: "It is well-established in psychology that individual self-categorisation can be many-layered, including personal, social, national and supra-national sources of identity, with the salience of these identities depending upon the social context".[10]

Top-Down and Bottom-Up: The Nation as a Construction

By now, it has been established that collective identity is the concept applying best to the theme of this work, with *out-groups* needed as points of reference to establish collectivity. Moreover, identities are considered to be a process, indicating their flexible nature, including continuous shifts as to their content and the prospect of actually producing them. Finally, they have been described as being composed of different layers, each attributing meaning to their overall character. Derived from this definition, this paper continues to investigate how identities can be created, using the example of the nation-building and state-formation process in the 18th and 19th century in Europe, as was suggested by Dr. Walkenhorst above.

In France, a political structure with well-established frontiers was existent by the time the French Revolution, with the introduction of the concept of citizenship, laid the foundation for the development of the French nation; thus the state provided the basis for the creation of a sense of French nationality. In other cases, e.g. Germany and Italy, a national identity had to be created first for any state-formation process to begin. Regardless of whether it was the emergence of the nation or that of the state that first functioned as the impetus for the other to develop, both examples indicate that "nations, on whatever principle they are

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[9] Walkenhorst, Heiko. "'The Construction of European Identity and the Role of National Educational Systems': A Case Study on Germany." *University of Essex*. May 2004. 19 July 2006 <http://www. essex.ac.uk/government/Essex_Papers/Number_160.pdf>.

[10] Burgoyne, Carole B. and David A. Routh. "National Identity, European Identity and the Euro", in Keith Cameron, *National Identity*. Exeter: Intellect Books, 1999.

conceived, are indeed 'imagined communities', social, cultural and political artefacts."[11]

In the context of state-formation and nation-building, two mutually reinforcing concepts are of fundamental importance: *top-down* initiatives and *bottom-up* movements. *Top-down* initiatives are conceived of as the tools used by the authorities to form a state and encourage as well as foster the nation-building process among the people. According to Professor Wintle from the University of Amsterdam, these comprise:

> *Constitutional definitions of the state by both internal and external authorities, the centralization or unification of the state carried out after the imposition of a generalized unitary constitutional order, and the introduction of a national political system, with gradually increasing participation on a uniform basis across the country.[12]*

In a different paper, Wintle extends this set to include "the standardization and unification of the coinage and currency, of language and linguistic usage, weights and measures, time, legal procedures of all sorts, and taxation; the centralization of armies, the police, and education; economic integration, and the copious use of national flags, anthems, monuments and the like."[13] On the other hand, *bottom-up* movements include a diverse number of initiatives driven by the masses, whose goal does not necessarily have to be the establishment of a collective identity, but by following their shared interests often automatically create such *we-ness*. In this context, for example, the various pan-European social and cultural movements obtain particular importance, in which people commit themselves to a common good, while often unconsciously generating an enduring connectedness amongst each other.

European-ness: The Indispensable *Something*

In the subsequent section, the above concepts will be applied to the EU, investigating to what extent a collective European identity already exists and how its prospects for the future may be regarded. First, however, it will be briefly

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[11] Jenkins, Brian and Spyros A. Sofos. "Nation and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe: A Theoretical Perspective", in *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
[12] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.
[13] Wintle, Michael. "European Identity: A Threat to the Nation?" *EJOP* 1 May 2005. 20 July 2006 <http://www.ejop.org/archives/2005/05/european_identi.html>.

examined why such an overarching sense of *we-ness* should be desirable. In 1762, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his book *The Social Contract: Or Principles of Political Right,*[14] coined the term *the common good*, a principle which demanded from each individual to put their personal desires under the interests of the society as a whole. Interpreted from another perspective, the principle requires politicians to take decisions in the name of the society without considering the interests of particular segments only. Now, for such ideals to be accepted by the citizens, they must think of themselves as part of an overarching collective. Therefore, the need for the existence of a European identity seems significant, as the legislative powers of the European institutions are steadily increasing. Dr. Walkenhorst has described the need for this identity with the following words:

> *Legitimization of politics largely depends on the existence of collective national or political identities, following Habermas' notion: 'A legitimacy crisis is at the same time an identity crisis'. (…) Owing to the fact that in democracies the system must be legitimized by the citizens, it is comprehensible that a democratic government is interested in maintaining and strengthening national identity.*[15]

Now that the importance of a European *we-ness* required for further integration in the European Union has been outlined, it is relevant to examine whether some kind of collectivity already exists among Europeans; and, if so, what it is based on. In a Eurobarometer survey,[16] conducted in 1999 among the then 15 MS, an average of 52% expressed having a broad European identity. Although the figures varied substantially among countries, with 30% of Britons thinking of themselves as European compared to 71% of Italians, they at least indicated that already at that time more than half of the EU citizens confirmed the existence of some kind of wider sense of *European-ness*. Moreover, it is to be noted that this vague feeling does not necessarily conflict with the national identities of the citizens, as in none of the states did less than 67% (Germany) consider themselves to be at least fairly proud of their country, indicating rather strong identifications on the

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[14] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "The Social Contract: Or Principles of Political Right." Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

[15] Walkenhorst, Heiko. "'The Construction of European Identity and the Role of National Educational Systems': A Case Study on Germany." *University of Essex*. May 2004. 19 July 2006 <http://www. essex.ac.uk/government/Essex_Papers/Number_160.pdf>.

[16] Risse, Thomas. "Nationalism and Collective Identities: Europe versus the Nation-State?", in Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes (eds), Developments in West European Politics. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002.

national side. This confirms that different levels of identity can exist side-by-side and do not inevitably exclude each other.

Yet, the above figures say little about what this broad European identity is composed of. Indeed, the question of what contributes to a specific *European-ness* seems justified, as many identifications of such an alleged *we-ness* are at least applicable to the whole of Western civilisation, including the nations of the Americas and Oceania founded by Europeans; examples are concepts such as liberal democracy, rule of law, but also individualism and rationalism. Even scientists are facing difficulties concerning a specific definition. "And yet, (t)here is *something*, recognized by many commentators, past and present, idealistic and sceptical, which brings Europeans together, even if only partially."[17] In an essay, Jacques Delores the former President of the European Commission, seeks to establish certain key terms with regard to this European *we-ness* and takes into consideration the importance of *the other* as a point of reference for the definition of identity:

> *The European identity has taken shape in opposition to other entities like the former Soviet Union, the Islamic world and the USA. Europe is characterised by the widespread separation between state and church, the abolishment of death penalty, the restrictions on the possession of firearms, specific social welfare systems, more solidarity with Third World countries through more development aid, the emphasis on multilateralism in the UN framework, the ratification of the Kyoto protocol and the respect for Human Rights.[18]*

The above characteristics may be collectively described as a political identity, as they refer to principles underlying political systems and policies in the European context. Nevertheless, as they have been influenced and shaped by the people with their specific historical experiences, they do indeed reflect certain attributes of a shared identity. The emphasis on a European political *we-ness* is also indicated by Jan Fuhse from the University of Stuttgart: "The European unification process can (…) be viewed as the establishment of a supranational political identity which vies

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[17] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.

[18] Delors, Jacques. "European Identity : 'Aidez-nous á donner un peu plus d'âme, plus de cœur à l'Europa'." *European Movement*. 16 July 2006 <http://www.europeanmovement.org/myeurope /downloads_a/philippe_adriaenssens.doc>.

for control in a complex network structured by pre-existing national identities."[19] Moreover, it seems important to note that the above aspects do not stand for an exclusive concept of collectivity, as they avoid references to any specific religion, ethnicity, etc., thereby providing it with a rather voluntary, inclusive approach. This model of collectivity may be partly derived from the experience with *National Socialism* on the European continent and could thus also be considered as essentially European. "We should indeed be reminded that Europe was, after all, not an altogether untarnished term, and that a European cultural identity was hardly worth the candle by the time the Nazis and other pogrom-leaders had finished with it."[20] Considering this European historical experience, any exclusive approach to the concept of identity, including references to ethnicity, race, etc., seems inconceivable for the EU project, although voices suggesting the contrary continue to be detected occasionally.

The EU and its People: The Beginnings of Confluence

As the existence of a broad collective identity has been proved, it will now be examined to what extent *top-down* and *bottom-up* initiatives have been witnessed across the EU that might further foster the feeling of *we-ness* among Europeans in the future. First, the so-called constitutional definitions, the unification of the state and the political system will be analysed. Before, however, it needs to be noted that the EU does not constitute a state as such, thus making it difficult to apply the above terms one-by-one to the case study. Nevertheless, over its 55 years of evolution, the unique European project has given itself fairly clear constitutional definitions, based on a number of ratified treaties, specifying the Union's composition, including the division of tasks and powers among its institutions, the MS and its citizens. Especially the introduction of citizenship by the Maastricht treaty, giving specific rights and obligations to the people, is of fundamental importance concerning the creation of a shared identity, as "union citizenship carries an undisputed political symbolism, which may entail far-reaching implications for the development of a common European civicness and the embodiment of a stronger *Gemeinschaft*[21] element among the constituent publics."[22]

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[19] Fuhse, Jan. "Constructing a European 'Demos': A Struggling Identity with Fuzzy Boundaries." *EpsNet Kiosk Plus* June 2005. 14 July 2006 <http://elib.uni-stuttgart.de/opus/volltexte/2005/2365/pdf/EuropeIdEpsnetKiosk_.pdf>.

[20] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.

[21] 'community'

[22] Chryssochoou, Dimitris N. *Theorizing European Integration.* London: Sage Publications, 2001.

Besides, since 1979 the citizens of the EU have had the opportunity to vote for their representatives in the European Parliament, an institution with increasing legislative rights, giving the people the chance to actively shape the development of their Union. Moreover, symbols such as the official European flag introduced in 1984, a European anthem (the 9th Symphony of Beethoven as of 1986), the celebration of Europe Day on May 9th, as well as the official slogan *Unified in Diversity* have become conduits for the unity of the EU. This also applies to the Euro, introduced as a common currency in 13 MS so far, which, apart from its economic importance, can certainly be considered as a sign of unity and strength. Concerning education, the teaching of the history and functioning of the EU has been integrated into the national syllabi of the MS, while, at university-level, student exchange programmes such as Erasmus and Socrates have substantially helped to bring young European scholars together and to lessen the language barrier in the multilingual academic setting. These advances are also considered by Professor Wintle: "Education standards and syllabi are creeping slowly towards convergence, and the EU higher education policies have been an outstanding success in creating a European consciousness."[23]

With regard to *bottom-up* movements, it appears to be somewhat difficult to quote specific data proving the existence of strong initiatives driven by the masses; yet again Professor Wintle, in his essay *European Identity: A Threat to the Nation?*, concludes:

> *As for the 'bottom-up' activities aimed at the realization of a European identity, or grass-roots co-operation, there has again been considerable activity at European level (…) A great many people are involved in all the pan-European sporting and cultural activities which take place, and in the education exchange programmes: these are all driven by active participation from below (…) These are the beginnings of a European 'civil society'.[24]*

Based on the above evidence, it can be concluded that a lot has already been achieved with regard to the creation and fostering of some kind of collective European identity. However, this is not to deny that many inefficiencies have remained, some of which may never disappear. Concerning language, for example,

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[23] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.
[24] Wintle, Michael. "European Identity: A Threat to the Nation?" *EJOP* 1 May 2005. 20 July 2006
<http://www.ejop.org/archives/2005/05/european_identi.html>.

Europe is unlikely to ever be a homogenous place, as, at this point, 23 different official languages are already recognised by the EU, although communication problems have lessened substantially due to increasing language education. Apart from that, the constitutional definitions and the political system lack essential features for an identity to develop faster and more strongly. Especially clear-cut borders seem to be of particular importance, as they help distinguish between *in- and out-group* and thus lead to increased identification within the territory. "To draw a symbolic boundary around nodes and relations means also to claim similarity and unity within."[25] The European Union, however, has purposely not established exclusive boundaries around itself and, although the voices in this direction have become louder, is not expected to do so in the near future. This may have slowed down the development of a feeling of *we-ness*, as the question of what *we* means has become more difficult to answer.

With regard to the political system, deficiencies remain evident, particularly in the case of the complex division of power among the Union's institutions. The Parliament, as the EU's only directly elected body, continues to be restricted in its power to influence the decision-making process. The proposed *Constitution for Europe* would have enhanced its role substantially, but was refused by the citizens of France and The Netherlands, while the recent *Treaty of Lisbon*, partly addressing itself to aspects contained in the Constitution, is still undergoing the ratification process. However, increased democratic features seem inevitable, as they provide a system with legitimacy and would thus potentially lead to an enhanced identification with the EU, since citizens begin to consider themselves as part of the Union and having the power to shape it. This list could be extended further, but based on the above evidences it remains certain that a broad collective European identity is already existent and will further be fostered by both *top-down* and *bottom-up* initiatives. Considering the age of the EU, it appears justified to conclude that a lot has been achieved. This is also suggested by Professor Wintle: "How can we dismiss European cultural identity in the 20th century when the EU has only been in existence since 1957?"[26]

Summary

This essay sought to set up a broad definition of the term 'identity.' It has been seen that the collective concept with its reference to *in- and out-group* suits best

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[25] Fuchs, Stephan. "Against Essentialism: A Theory of Culture and Society." Cambridge/ Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001.
[26] Wintle, Michael. "Cultural identity in Europe: Shared experience." *European Culture*: 105-113.

with regard to the theme of this paper. Moreover, although a clear definition of collective identity appears difficult to establish, certain key features have been identified: first, collective identity is not a fixed, pre-determined feeling of *we-ness*, but changes over time and space due to various internal and external factors. Secondly, the term has been defined as multi-layered, meaning that it is composed of a multitude of different identifications, ranging from basic aspects, such as gender, to possible supra-national affiliations. Based on the above definitions, the prospects of further developments towards a collective European identity can be regarded as positive, as this would not necessarily conflict with still very strong national or regional affections, and can be fostered by authorities, seeking to establish a stronger feeling of *European-ness*.

Furthermore, it was seen that, because of the need to legitimize political decisions in democratic states, a strong collective identity is required in a Union with increasing legislative powers, affecting the life of its citizens. Yet, it seems evident that a broad feeling of *we-ness* is already existent, even if difficult to pinpoint. With 'specific welfare system', 'tendency to multilateralism' and 'solidarity with Third World countries', certain political aspects of this identity have been defined, partly in opposition to other western countries, such as the US. This inclusive, political identity may also be considered as essentially European, as it is based on specific experiences with *National Socialism* and its exclusive approach to collectivity, featuring notions of race and ethnicity.

Besides, it has been proved that various *bottom-up* and *top-down* initiatives, which already played an important role in the nation-building process of 18th and 19th Century Europe, have been established, ranging from the creation of symbols to extensive academic exchange programs among students across the EU. Although insufficiencies remain, such as the lack of democratic features in the political system, the above aspects leave hope for an increasing collective identity, based primarily on political, inclusive identifications. Its undoubted existence is probably best described by Kathinka Dittrich van Weringh, Chair of the European Cultural Foundation, whose words will conclude this paper:

> *Individually and collectively we are all on the move in Europe crossing physical and mental borders. The traditional rather rigid concept of identity has become less static, more open, more comprehensive and much more demanding on our capacity to judge, to evaluate, to choose, to acknowledge our many identities, to accept that identity building is a process,*

consisting of many and not only predetermined elements, to become aware that we already share and live this Europe of ours, this unfinished (maybe unfinishable) cultural project.[27]

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[27] Kathinka Dittrich van Weringh. "Is there a European Identity?" *EJOP* 1 February 2005. 20 July 2006 <http://www.ejop.org/archives/2005/02/is_there_a_euro.html>.

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MARGINALIZATION OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE OF US SOCIETY

Linde Riphagen

Abstract
This article deals with the marginalization of African-Americans in the social sphere of US society. It will discuss some general social implications of persisting racial inequalities within the society, as well as specific institutions such as the prison system and residential segregation. Those systems, directly and indirectly uphold the marginal position of African-Americans in US society. The reality continues to persist that the US remains a highly unequal society for its different races, and this article is concerned with investigating why this is so.

INTRODUCTION

"No race can grow fat… that feeds on the crumbs that fall from the tables of others" (Mitchell 2004: 241).

One fourth of African-Americans fall below the poverty line and continue to live in poverty in the US today (Mauk and Oakland 2005: 239). More than half of African-American children in the United States are living in poverty (Jennings 1997: 6). One apparent question that arises from merely looking at these figures is the following: How is this depressing picture of the poverty of a single race possible in a developed, wealthy and 'superpower' nation as the United States?

This article will discuss the marginalization of African-Americans in US society in the social sphere. The article will mostly focus on the continuation of marginalization rather than its historical origins, as those factors only give a limited explanation for its persistence in the present day. However, a short overview of some of the main occurrences in terms of historical foundations are necessary for an increased understanding of racial relations in the US.

In contemporary US society, one of the main problems continues to be the unequal social standing of racial minorities as compared to the white inhabitants. Although a wealthy and prosperous nation, it is unfortunately the whites who enjoy an disproportional share of privileges. The United States even has the highest inequality of income and wealth of any 'rich' nation (Brown 2005: 42). One of the main oppressed groups, while composing a large percentage of the country's population, and being one of its historically oldest minority groups, are African-Americans. Yet, African-Americans have yet to enjoy full social, economic and political equality in comparison to white citizens of the country.

Although other minority groups, such as Latinos, also continue to suffer from discrimination, African-American communities tend to bear a more severe burden in terms of absolute numbers and proportions of families affected in any given community (Jennings 1997: 2). The proportions of poverty amongst African-Americans are extremely high and poverty still is a harsh reality for many African-Americans today. The 'American Dream' can therefore be argued to have bypassed a great majority of the African-American population. However, neoconservatives have portrayed 'other others' such as Asian-Americans and some Latinos, as 'model minorities,' achieving values distinguishing them from the African-American underclass (Winant 2004: 59).

As white citizens become more satisfied in being able to achieve the American Dream and believe in its transference to African-Americans, the latter become more doubtful whether the dream is realizable for them (Brown 2005: 37). This is, in the first instance, a consequence of an unequal starting position and furthermore prevailing American values that play an important role in difficulties facing African-Americans. These American values continue to portray and believe that despite someone's race, place of residence and economic status, hard work will enable a person to move up the social ladder and establish a better life (Barnes 2004: 40). However, the validity of this assertion has to be questioned and in a lot of instances seems to be used to blame African-Americans living in poverty as exhibiting a lack of motivation and being lazy.

African-Americans have become more visible and have gained increasing opportunities in economic, political and social spheres in the last few decades. From a situation in which the lack of civil rights legislation left African-Americans relatively segregated and excluded from the dominant society, currently the same rights apply to all people, no matter what race or gender. Although this sounds very promising, it is however not as positive and inclusive as it might appear. The same conditions and rights might apply and transcend races, but without the conditions, investments, and inclusion to support this upward mobility, it seems a rather impossible task to achieve. However, although increasing opportunities and inclusion indicates a positive move forward in terms of opportunities, it has unfortunately had its negative consequences as well. As a consequence of the increasing visibility of African-Americans on the national scene and the wave of political unrest that took place in the sixties, significant negative attention and more negative perceptions of African-Americans have arisen (Pulido 2006: 45). As people became more resentful towards and afraid of African-Americans, other people of colour got the benefit of the doubt, as resentment towards those groups was decreasing (Pulido 2006: 45).

White supremacy, although denied by many to even exist or persist in the twenty first century, can still be found as one of the causal factors of African-American oppression in an era in which opportunities, in real terms, are increasing for the African-American population. Large numbers of white Americans continue to, directly or indirectly, act on principles of white supremacy. Ishmael Reed, a well known and respected scholar in African-American studies, continues to argue that the culture of aggression towards African-Americans has remained much the same in recent years (Reed: 2003). Although his argument of the similarities between the defences of slavery and today's arguments to justify African-American inferiority are quite radical, it gives an important reason for discussing and investigating the position and treatment of African-Americans in current American society. Other scholars mention that racism is definitely alive in the United States, although more subtle and in more indirect forms portrayed than in the past (Brown 2005: 17).

Because of the limited scope of this article, the focus will be on the social sphere of society. However, the author very well realizes this is not a complete portrayal

of the marginalization of African-Americans. However, this article will attempt to give an insight into some institutions and perceptions in society that ensure the maintenance of exclusion and marginalization of African-Americans. The complete thesis this article is extracted from however does provide a more complete overview of historical factors and economic and political spheres, due to the extensive nature of this work. Therefore, for a more complete picture it is advisable to read the thesis as a complement to this article.

The main research question guiding this article will be:
- Why do African-Americans continue to be marginalized (and excluded) in the social sphere, in the specific case of US society?

The article will draw upon Foucault, as this scholar is investigating power relations within society, its invisibility from time to time and the development of power becoming more effective in its ingrained nature in structures rendering a solely top-down and authoritative form of power no longer necessary.

The article will be outlined as following: first of all, a short historical overview will be given, followed by empirical data on the marginalization of African-Americans. The subsequent part will be an analysis, critically investigating the implications and understandings of the data investigated. The last part will be a short conclusion to the article.

Short historical overview for an increased understanding of the foundations of racial relations in the US

Slavery

One of the most important events underlying a conceptual understanding of racial oppression in the US is that of slavery. Slavery of African-Americans led to greater freedom for poor whites, though maintaining an economic structure that would continue to keep the latter poor. Therefore, from the very start of race-relations history in the US, white society has needed African-Americans in terms of performing undesirable employment for the benefit of whites. Slavery was such a engrained element in early American society that it was codified in law by the

1750s and even some of the earliest presidents such as Washington and Jefferson owned slaves themselves. From as early as this time, and onwards, African-Americans have always been fighting for freedom as a collective, while 'whiteness' was perceived in this context as some sort of exclusive, individual property (Marable 2002: 3).

The Civil War (1861-1865)

Race lay so deeply as a core cause of the American Civil War and acted as such a divisionary issue that it served as a deterrent for reconciliation. However, the Civil War has been romanticized as a type of demarcation point for emergent American nationalism, in which devotees to this principle, no matter the race, united in solidarity. It was in reality however, as argued by some, a tragedy in US history (Blight 2001: 18). It was the war that ended slavery, with a large measure of racial issues at its forefront; therefore, the romanticized image of the war seems rather inappropriate. In the years and decades after the war, the lines of racial division became extremely clear once again (Blight 2001: 4). On the 50th anniversary of the Civil War, the exclusion of African-American veterans from attending the celebrations was a clear sign of the real state of race relations (Blight 2001:9).

Civil Rights Legislation and Onwards

Civil rights legislation, from the 1970's onwards, did not make any substantial effort for wealth redistribution along racial lines, or to foster widespread cultural reorientation addressing race and racism (Winant 2004: 21). Racial injustice, from that time onwards, was mainly seen as attributable solely to prejudiced attitudes (Winant 2004: 41). Prejudice can, however, be seen as an almost unavoidable outcome of social patterns and social relations. Therefore, acknowledging prejudice as the major force behind racial injustices reflects the intransigence of entrenched attitudes. In the same vein, it is argued that discrimination is a structural element of US society (Winant 2004: 42). Furthermore, with formal equality being achieved, many politicians argued the struggle for civil rights to be irrelevant.

The policy outcome was that integration was the proper way to tackle racial injustice. This focus on integration downplayed addressing race issues directly; the

suppression of white supremacist notions and rejection of race consciousness amongst African-Americans was a consequence. The majority of whites had little or no sense of the unique race consciousness of African-Americans; race consciousness amongst whites was only present amongst white supremacists, and, in this manifestation, it was denounced as an evil. Wherever the militant forms of Black Nationalism emerged, this caused great anxiety and turmoil amongst whites, and only confirmed the beliefs decrying (radical) nationalism as an evil (Crenshaw et al. 1995: 149). Thus integration is argued to have indirectly and directly led to the neglect and lack of commitment to the vitality of African-American communities.

Data on the marginalization of African-Americans within social spheres and aspects of society

This section will discuss the social factors, data and issues involved in the oppression of African-Americans in contemporary US society. This discussion will be mainly limited to the timeframe from the early 1990s until the present, although since the deterioration of racial relations has accelerated since the era of the civil rights movement, this article will also encompass a more general overview than strictly keeping to the timeframe mentioned above. First of all, a general overview of differences in perceptions and persistent prejudices will be given. Thereafter, some specific institutions and structures highly integrated in the oppression of African-Americans, such as housing, health care and the prison system, will be discussed in brief. The significance of those sectors and their treatment of African-Americans is considerable, and therefore will be discussed at length to provide a fuller scope investigating the marginalization of African-Americans.

General social implications

Differences In Perception Between African-Americans And Whites In Terms Of Life Quality And Opportunity In The United States

Polls show the scepticism of white Americans to the claim that racism is the cause that holds African-Americans back from upward mobility. Almost two-thirds of whites are satisfied with the treatment of African-Americans in society. However, on the other hand, almost two-thirds of African-Americans are dissatisfied with the treatment of society in general and whites specifically towards African-Americans (Brown 2004: 1491). To continue in the same manner, African-Americans were four times more likely to be dissatisfied with treatment in the workplace, neighbourhood shops and other similar places (Brown 2004: 1491). 47% of African-Americans believe themselves to have received an unfair treatment in one out of five situations over the last month (Brown 2004: 1492). These grand differences between the perceptions of the respective treatment members of these two racial groups receive leads one to conclude that the two are

living on different planets. Similar results can be observed when investigating perceptions of treatment on a neighbourhood scale: 64% of whites argued that African-Americans are treated the same in the community as whites are treated, whereas only 44% of African-Americans concurred (Benjamin 2005: 18).

Prejudice And Passivity Persisting

Unfortunately, prejudice towards African-Americans is only increasing, accompanied by a stagnating picture of the development of African-Americans and their communities in terms of educational achievement, job availability and housing (Jennings 1997: 4). Whereas most white Americans claim to show good will towards African-American people, a recent study still showed there existed major prejudices concerning the character of African-Americans: 34% agreed in interviews that 'most blacks' were lazy and 52% thought that 'most blacks' are aggressive and violent (Brown 2005: 41). Without a doubt, this continuing stigmatization of an entire race based on stereotypes of group attributes highly impairs African-Americans to develop their talents and makes it extremely difficult to be successful in the eyes of mainstream white Americans.

The passive attitude of white suburbanites can be shown when comparing figures of those agreeing that more should be done to help inner-city people living in poverty, on which three-quarters of the interviewed agreed. However, on the other hand, almost three-quarters disagreed that their suburb should work harder to become racially integrated (Brown 2005: 41). Therefore, it can be argued that white Americans are much more enthusiastic about the idea of racial equality than the policies that are meant to bring it about (Kinder& Sanders 1996: 7).

A prejudice also persists whereby observations gleaned from extensively concentrating on the unemployed and poor African-American underclass are generalized as indicative of the broad sweep of African-Americans across American society. However, inherent in concentrating on the underclass is the possibility to avoid having to acknowledge discriminatory and racist practices and policies (Fainstein& Campbell 2002: 172). This unconscious and conscious system of upholding privileges for whites can be identified in the following statement about white citizens (in the US): "Privilege, to us, is like water to the

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fish: invisible precisely because we can not imagine life without it" (Hartman 2006: 4).

Social implications caused by specific institutions and systems

Prison System

The prison system in the United States is locking up more people yearly than that of any other nation in the world, ahead of countries such as China. A further fact of US prisons is their disproportionate African-American population. African-Americans are indeed the largest group incarcerated in US prisons, constituting 46.5% of the male inmates (Million& Free 2003: 44). Some observers interpret these figures to argue that race is the focal point in policies concerning the prison system (Middlemass 2006: 1). This extremely grim picture has been investigated by many scholars to determine whether the American penal system constitutes a legitimized control system over minority people or whether, in fact, African-Americans commit more crimes. However, the conclusion is that there are major proportional discrepancies between the severity of the crimes committed by African-Americans and the extreme burden of the prison sentences by which they are punished. Policies tailored towards putting more African-American people, and especially males, in prison are seen by some to be a grand scenario to control and limit African-American communities in terms of activities and development (Jennings 1997: 5).

During the Clinton era alone, the prison population grew by 700.000, resulting in a total figure in recent years of 1.7 million African-Americans who, due to their incarceration, lost the right to vote (Marable 2002: 5). However, more and more it is argued that the essential role of the criminal justice system in recent years is to manage redundant labour and minority groups (Marable 2000: xxxvii). The reality is that some small-town villages in rural areas exploit free or low paid prison labour to accelerate the economy. Prisons are therefore nowadays seen as one of the most profitable growth industries.

Selective policies especially targeted at crimes committed in greater proportion amongst the African-American population, have resulted in harsher and longer sentences for African-Americans. Crack cocaine, more often used by African-Americans, is punished approximately 100 times as severely in terms of length of sentencing than the powdered form, preferred by white Americans. African-

Americans only constitute 14% of all drug users, but as a result of those selective policies, make up 55% of all drug convictions and 75% of prison admissions amongst the category of drugs felonies (Marable 2002: 4). Little is however done in terms of treatment or prevention, leaving it rather obvious that the true agenda is that of controlling the problem than tackling the problem as such. To compound matters, the image of high rates of crime amongst African-Americans drives businesses away from African-American neighbourhoods, having severe implications on the economic as well as social conditions of all African-Americans in turn.

Prisons are furthermore usually situated in rural areas, far away from the cities of residence of the majority of African-American men. Statistics show that 98% of prison cells are located in white-dominated rural areas (Hartman 2006: 26). This results in further alienation from the family, and an increased feeling of failure in terms of involvement in the lives of their families. Political participation of African-Americans is highly diminished as well, as most states ban prisoners from voting (Hartman 2006: 26). The long-term result of this continuing trend of disproportionate imprisonment of African-American males will be hundreds of malfunctioning and poisoned communities (Middlemass 2006: 2). A highly disturbing fact is that more African-American men are in prison than are enrolled in higher education (Million& Free 2003: v). Furthermore, an African-American man has a one in four chance to be imprisoned during his lifetime, this compared to a figure of 1 in 23 for white males in the US (Million& Free 2003: 39).

Housing segregation

Housing segregation, together with educational segregation, is one of the most severe systems of segregation in US society. "No group in the history of the United States has ever experienced a sustained high level of residential segregation that has been imposed on blacks in large American cities for the past fifty years" (Jennings 1997: 6). A poor, recently-immigrated Latino in Los Angeles, for example, is less segregated than some of the most affluent African-Americans (Brown 2005: 39). Housing segregation is therefore not limited to

African-Americans of the low socio-economic strata, but is argued to be the norm for those of all socio-economic classes in the US (Anderson 2004: 16).

Housing segregation reinforces inequalities, and even increases them. African-Americans' property, because of the highly segregated nature of separated neighbourhoods, has suffered devaluation by virtue of its lessened desirability, resulting in a decreased value compared to a similar housing structure in a predominantly white neighbourhood (Pulido 2006: 23). Already at a threshold of about 10 to 20% of African-American residents in a neighbourhood, whites' demand for the area will fall and, in the long term, prices will start stagnating and subsequently fall (Oliver and Shapiro 1995: 40). A further consequence is that uncertainty surrounding racial integration and falling prices compels many of the white population to move out of the neighbourhood. Housing segregation is furthermore kept intact by discrimination amongst real estate agents, in terms of only showing African-Americans a small proportion of available housing, and steering white Americans away from communities with significant amounts of people of colour. Mortgage agencies, furthermore, lend less to people of colour (Orfield 2005: 1754).

> *Because of racial segregation, a significant share of African-American America is condemned to experience a social environment where poverty and joblessness are the norm, where a majority of children are born out of wedlock, where most families are on welfare, where educational failure prevails, and where social and physical deterioration abound (Massey& Denton 1993: 2).*

Education

Education remains highly segregated. Earlier attempts at bussing African-American children into white neighbourhoods have significantly diminished due to resistance and inefficiency and a lack of showing the expected result. Since segregated schools have, under certain circumstances, been permitted since the mid 90s, the situation has only been deteriorating (Orfield et al. 1997: 5). American schools are, at present, argued to be more segregated than 30 years ago

(Brown 2005: 17). This can be seen mainly as a lack of commitment to integration from mainstream society and politics. More than 80% of schools in which the students are predominantly African-American face concentrated poverty (Orfield et al. 1997: 5). The constraints continue as the US educational system is one of the most unequal of the industrialized world, basing its allocation of funding on the economic prosperity of a certain district. It is thereby a fact that the wealthiest 10% of school districts spend nearly ten times more than the poorest 10% in recent times. The argument of educational segregation being inherently unequal is therefore still surprisingly valid up to today.

Yet racial integration alone will not lead to increased education for all if prejudice and unequal treatment continues. Teachers whose policy is to have lower expectations of African-American children (in some instances), and who propogate notions of good academic results being associated with 'acting white,' produce major constraints on the results of African-American children as a consequence.

Analysis Of The Social Circumstances And Explanations For The Continuation Of African-American Marginalization

The following discussion will, first of all, analyze the more general social implications of race and racism within American society pertaining to the treatment of African-American citizens. It will be based on the data presented above, and theoretical elements that can, because of limited space, not be included in this article. However, the author hopes the analysis and explanation are sufficient to fully comprehend the implications and arguments without necessarily reading the entire thesis. It will address the discrepancies in the perception of white and African-American citizens on the treatment of African-Americans and the explanations for those differences. The analysis will continue by investigating the more specific societal spheres and aspects of African-American marginalization as discussed in the empirical data: the criminal justice system, education and housing in US society.

General Social Implications For African-Americans In The US

African-Americans in the US have historically and continue to be consciously and unconsciously treated as *others* in US society, with all the resulting negative consequences. As adherents of critical race theory (CRT) have argued, this exclusion of an entire racial group has made it almost impossible for African-Americans to deny sharing a common reality and therefore strive towards a much more communal outlook than is the case among white American individuals (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 164). It is argued that African-Americans have enabled the development and upwards mobility of white Americans and the former's marginalization continues to uplift society in periods of economic despair. However, this perception is threatening to white interests, and therefore attributes such as a faltering competitiveness in the economy and flagging interest in academic results are projected upon African-Americans to implicate them as themselves responsible for their dismal circumstances.

The dominant norms set forth as the societal standard are defined by those in power and might therefore not apply to people of different cultures, backgrounds and races. 'Different' is in most cases interpreted as 'deviant' and sometimes as 'inferior.' Historically, white Americans were made to believe that African-Americans were inferior, and although today it is less obviously presented as such, persists; that politicians have used African-Americans as scapegoats, that false images surrounding African-Americans have not been dispelled, continue to leave African-Americans outside mainstream society. It can clearly be seen that this perceived *truth* is perpetuated precisely because of its development and promotion by the white, dominant, mainstream spheres of society. Truth is what those in power portray it to be and what benefits the dominant group within a society, as in this case the white Americans (Cuff 2006: 273). The use of African-Americans for less desirable jobs and as a buffer in economic recession shows the continuous exploitation of African-Americans for the benefit of white US society. Therefore, an African-American is very well accepted as a clerk, but less so as a critic of the current status quo. The explanation is that the former is not very likely to question the US power structure, based on white interest, while the latter is. It can therefore be concluded that the clerk is more accepted as (s)he is more likely to stay within the boundaries of society in which white privilege can persist, while the critic is

ascends too far up the social ladder and might challenge the unjust practices and systems of society as a whole.

Upward mobility for most other ethnicities and races can be explained by the fact that these were all, more or less, over time, integrated into the mainstream American society. As CRT scholars relate to this discussion, perceptions and relationships between and amongst different races have more to do with the interest of the white majority than idealistic goals as such (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 13). In this context, Asians have been far better integrated and perceived exactly because of their similarities with whites in terms of high performance in education and seemingly better assimilation in society (disregarding for the moment that their better starting position in society played a role). Furthermore, historically, African-Americans can be seen as one of the racial groups at the ultimate bottom of the social ladder, this still having implications today in terms of persisting stigmatization, to the benefit of other more recently immigrated ethnic and racial groups. A lack of solidarity amongst different minority groups ensures the maintenance of white privileges. Furthermore, the continuous social stigmatization ensures that the white population will not to strive together with minority groups for increased social justice by tackling the accumulation of wealth at the top of the socio-economic heap. The continuous stigmatization of African-Americans ensures popular distraction from wealth inequalities as the rich get richer while companies cut employee benefits. This inequality has been historically created: the diversion of attention from wealthy landowners to the ever-to-blame slave is maintained even today. Therefore, it can be argued that Foucault's ideas of creating and maintaining *others* in society, as a social body left in total darkness, are surprisingly applicable in the 21st century (Bertani& Fontana 1997: 70).

The scepticism of white Americans towards the idea that racism continues to be the cause for upward mobility is an obvious example of the truth being formed by what people choose to believe and what benefits them. This argument is identified in the discussion of CRT scholars of the normalized nature of racism, as seen to be a natural process, which makes it extremely difficult to address (Crenshaw et al. 1995: 133). The inherent nature of racism is not only in society, but also within individuals. The blind eye turned towards the details and negative impacts of

racism on the daily lives of African-Americans, the lack of interaction of whites with African-Americans (resulting in the lack of a clear picture of the circumstances of African-Americans in the US), are just two examples of the power of the mainstream and its continuously biased truth. The discrepancies in figures on the perception of treatment of African-Americans, as shown in the previous section, clearly show the failure among whites to consider racism to be alive and ingrained within society as a whole. The extreme discrepancy regarding the perception of having been unjustly treated within the last month is an indicator, as mentioned above, that African-Americans and white Americans indeed seem to live on two different planets. Although the author does not take the figures as mentioned in the empirical overview of differences in perceptions as absolute truth, it does indicate that white Americans in this instance believe what they want to believe in order to avoid the reality of a persistently unequal social situation for African-Americans.

Rather, society (and individual attitudes) continues to believe and convince itself that the attitude and lack of upward mobility is somehow inherent in African-Americans themselves. As CRT scholars would argue, whites continue to believe that their better-off position in society must be attributable to something other than the mere social power and racial domination that most people of colour believe it to be (Crenshaw et al. 1995: 133). Stigmatizing African-Americans as a group seems to be an adequate example of this belief in a society that most whites argue to be free of racism and indeed colour blind. A recent study indicated that more than a third of whites continue to believe most African-Americans to be lazy and over half continue to believe most African-Americans to be violent and aggressive (Brown 2005: 41). As a consequence, the bias persists that somehow poverty is a result of the African-American lifestyle. This bias is very well explained, seen through the lens of Foucault's theories, in that discourses, perceptions and structures are creating negative images of African-Americans, precisely because they are not part of the white, mainstream, western standard (Cuff 2006: 265). It is surprising to see such stigmatization of the entire African-American race in a society that so highly values individual freedom, engages in positive discrimination, as through affirmative action, and yet is inherently unfair precisely for the same reason. It is therefore legitimate to use group attributes to negatively affect African-Americans, as this still to a large extent continues to benefit the

majority of the white population. However, group attributes underlying affirmative action to benefit people of colour and African-Americans is not legitimized, exactly because it is believed to disadvantage the majority of whites. From this discussion it can be seen that a society that is argued to be based on individualism is visibly neglecting elements of individual treatment when entire strategies or systems are advantaging white Americans, or disadvantaging African-Americans. Although some argue the most overt forms of racism to have vanished, figures as the ones mentioned above clearly show the prejudice and racism that does continue to persist. However, as those forms are frowned upon when expressed in public, when asked, the large majority of Americans would argue to be in favour of racial integration and integrated neighbourhoods. However, most white Americans are not so enthusiastic any longer when it would be their own neighbourhood or school targeted for grand scale projects of integration and upward mobility for African-Americans.

However, even the embracement of racial stigmatized images of African-Americans themselves, such as loose girls and violent guys, as rapped about by African-Americans and others, have only deteriorated the situation of African-American youth. The dire situations in which some grow up, of poverty, disrupted families and violent neighbourhoods, make hope and achievement difficult terms to grasp and strive towards. Some now seemed to have embraced the widespread biases, as a justification for ill-performance and violence, while others use it as a defence-mechanism, divorcing themselves from any high hopes for what life may bring.

From the previous discussion, racism can clearly be seen to be a social construction. Such negative images and large discrepancies in equality of results are something very different than a result of biological traits, which some authors argue racism to be. Claims and beliefs of mainstream society that continue to persist, such as the lazy nature of African-Americans have nothing to do with biological traits but have, however, been defined as such by the dominant group in US society. Therefore, those arguing racism merely to be the exclusion of some based on biological traits, fail to understand the implications of racism as much more than that.

decision, and others surrounding African-Americans, are really made out of the consideration for the best interests and development of African-Americans and their communities, or rather to counter resistance and maintain privileges for white citizens.

As the historical transformations in the treatment of African-Americans indicate, changes have indeed taken place in terms of treatment. However, as can be argued, changes in the treatment of African-Americans do not necessarily mean an

improvement, but rather a continuation of the deterioration of the situation (Cuff 2006: 260). Changes have been from the overt to a certain level of acceptance, that is however in most instances not nearly close to equal treatment or striving for it from the white Americans' point of view. Because of the less obvious nature of the discrimination and domination that is ingrained in perceptions and structures, it is more difficult to challenge and therefore the situation can only stagnate or deteriorate.

SPECIFIC INSTITUTIONS ROLE IN RACIAL OPPRESSION

The Criminal Justice System: America's Prisons

The American criminal justice system is one of the best and most obvious examples of America's unequal treatment of people of colour and especially African-Americans. In reference to Foucault's discussion, it is a system created to keep those *others* (read: African-Americans) in place through surveillance and regulation (Cuff 2006: 265). This type of regulation does not directly mean forcefully suppressing or rejecting the advancement of people, but rather inventing systems and structures that ensure those others in society, seen as deviants, to be kept in place. Interpreting Foucault in this specific situation means the American prison system is trying to regulate the otherness of African-Americans, not necessarily and directly because these have to be excluded. However, the system that has been established and the way it is maintained ensures that a large percentage of the African-Americans likely to form a threat to society, in terms of resistance and perceived danger, are regulated through locking them up in prisons. About 45% of the prison population are African-Americans, which is not a consequence of them excessively engaging in violence and crime as an entire racial group. The design of the system however, has ensured the result of locking up huge amounts of African-American males to be maintained. As the empirical evidence clearly shows, given the crimes and drug forms African-Americans are more likely to commit and possess, they are sentenced to a larger extent with sentences as much as 100 times longer than a had a white committed a comparable crime. This interwoven nature of power, categorized by Foucault as 'disciplinary power' is very effective, subtle and ingrained, and therefore, in general, extremely

difficult to challenge (cf Cuff 2006: 266). However, as also discussed by CRT scholars, when objectively considering crime, crimes more often committed by whites, such as bribery and consumer fraud, are in real numbers causing more deaths and therefore a more significant threat (Delgado & Stefancic 2001: 114). This example shows the subjective nature of truth, as related to the power of the dominant to define it as the truth. The truth created by the disproportionate locking up of African-American men, that has even been increasing since the 1990s, however reinforces negative images such as African-American men being more violent, to be acceptable by the mainstream, and to be a justifiable argument for negative images surrounding African-Americans, exactly because society and politics make people believe it to be the truth, rather than a system invented to marginalize African-Americans for the benefit of white US society.

However, the prison system is another form of African-American exploitation as prisoners are used for cheap and free labour and therein majorly boosting the economy. This clearly indicates the continuous use and abuse of African-Americans for the advantages of whites. As discussed, the location of the prisons in white rural areas implies the alienation of the prisoners from the families and communities, and as a consequence further disrupts entire families and communities and ensures ensnarement in misery and poverty not only for the men but their entire communities.

The further increasing numbers of African-American men in jail between the 1980s and 1990s show that there is little to be joyous about in terms of racial equality. Therein, society is restricting rather than loosening its systems of control and surveillance to keep African-Americans in place and exclude them from many crucial parts of society such as economic, political and social participation. Therefore, an increasingly deteriorating situation in the African-American underclass and in real opportunities is a rather natural result of those systems and recent decisions which only further have limited and constrained upward mobility for African-Americans. Therefore, the prison system seems to create and directly and indirectly result in the further deterioration of African-Americans' circumstances.

Housing And Educational Segregation

African-Americans are the only group as severely segregated in housing of any ethnic or racial group in the US. This clearly shows the initial binary consideration of race as related to good and bad, in terms of black and white. Segregation however transcends socio-economic positions and therefore gains in income or status will be reversed by the negative implications of housing and educational segregation. As segregation is argued to even increase inequalities, it becomes clear why segregation is one of the most effective tools in ensuring the continuous constraints on upward mobility for African-Americans, in terms of education as well as housing segregation. However, the ingrained nature of segregation, and its lesser visibility in terms of power structures make it difficult to challenge and drastically change. Housing segregation is however not just a phenomenon that accidentally evolved or is randomly maintained. Therefore, it is first of all important to analyze the origins, continuation and implications of housing segregation.

As can be argued, segregated housing is just another technique of controlling and keeping others in place, here utilizing Foucault's terminology. Interpreting Foucault's words, the housing segregation of African-Americans in highly neglected ghettos and poverty struck areas has led to regulation of those deviants being concentrated and them being restricted from entering white neighbourhoods and even white society, in terms of the job market as an example. As elimination of the entire group of African-Americans would not be feasible and negatively affect the benefits white society currently gains from African-Americans, and neither be morally acceptable in today's society, society developed another tool to separate the races to a large extent. Although some would argue segregation and formal separation to be elements of an historic past in the era of Jim Crow, segregation numbers in housing as well as education imply something quite different and a rather depressing picture continuing in the 21st century.

However, residential as well as educational segregation in American society has become normal phenomena, demonstrating the argument of CRT scholars of the normalized nature of racism in American society (Crenshaw et al. 1995: 133). This normal portrayal however has extremely dangerous consequences, as entire generations grow up to believe that there is nothing wrong with segregation (in most cases still implying inherently unequal) and that it must somehow be because of some interior elements or traits of African-Americans. Furthermore, many African-American children grow up in neighbourhoods where poverty and joblessness is the norm, obviously largely negatively affecting the self-images of those children and their hopes, dreams and beliefs. Residential segregation and the creation of ghettos has furthermore been an effective tool maintaining itself and deteriorating the conditions of African-Americans in those concentrated areas of increasing poverty, by the lack of public and private investments, moving away of employment and public services in the inner cities and the like. It appears to be again that upward mobility of African-Americans is not on the top of the agenda of mainstream white America.

In terms of educational segregation, it is questionable if racial integration was really in the best interest of African-Americans. Integrated schools even in recent years do not provide equal opportunities, attention and quality education to its white and African-American students. The educational system, in terms of assignment of teachers and funding, is evidently continuing the oppression of African-Americans and justifying the weaker performance of African-Americans not on identifiable facts as unequal opportunities, but blaming it on the disinterest and capability of studying of the African-American students. However, in a system like this children are inevitably learning little, even when making an effort and showing interest. Furthermore, the statements implying white students' presence as improving the quality of education for African-American children clearly shows the white supremacist ideology in action. As argued, the focus was rather on racial balance than the more important aim of quality education for African-Americans. It can furthermore rather be seen when investigated, that calls for educational integration seem rather to be a political strategy to hush African-American resistance and violence than intended to lead to meaningful and transformative adjustments and eventually equal opportunity and result for African-Americans in US society. The rising inequalities between African-

Americans and white Americans in society as a whole only deteriorates education as a whole, as is the case when the funding system of education in the US is allocated according to economic prosperity.

Today, a shocking reality to hear is that schools are more segregated than 30 years ago, with more than 80% of African-American schools facing concentrated levels of poverty (Orfield 1997: 5). When understanding the US system of school funding depending on the economic prosperity of the district, it is sufficient to say that African-American schools are not only segregated but continue to be highly unequal. It is therefore not surprising that with limited resources and poor quality teaching, the students are performing in general below standards. However, lower educational quality and achievement will directly and indirectly again keep African-Americans in place, as those being able to only achieve lesser levels of education and find less prestigious jobs will, as a consequence, perpetuate for whites and unfortunately some African-Americans the biases and negative images surrounding African-American people. Furthermore, the draw back of affirmative action and the allowance of segregated and therefore unequal schools for African-Americans are clear indicators of the deteriorating situation for the African-American underclass and an increasingly difficult situation for middle class African-Americans, as society and its sociological structures seems in direct and indirect terms to further and further limit their opportunities and upward mobility.

CONCLUSION

The article leads to the conclusion that racism's embedded nature in social structures, as well as attitudes and beliefs, continues to put African-Americans back in place. Racism in this ingrained nature has however become extremely difficult to tackle, as it is portrayed in a subtle and anonymous way, making it almost impossible to blame particular individuals. However, as Foucault argues, power is within everything, and as the power of the dominant, white and mainstream continues and will continue to overrule African-Americans, true equality is miles away. Significant change is needed in terms of tackling underlying causes of African-Americans' continuous bottom position in society,

such as housing segregation and the criminal justice system. However, since the current Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama very well realizes this embedded nature and has been talking about tackling such institutions as the criminal justice system in direct terms, hope is on the horizon that he would become the President.

For a more complete overview and deeper understanding of African-American marginalization in the 21st century, the author advises the reader to read the thesis, which will go into depth in theoretical implications, political and economic issues, as well as will shortly discuss the possible implications of Barack Obama possibly becoming the next US President.

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