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Young Europeans' Geo-Political Identities: A Poststructural Analysis

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Abstract: This study analyses the way young Europeans, aged between 10 and 20, construct their sense of identity with geo-political entities such as the nation, the state and the European Union; how these are expressed; and how young people manage the potential multiplicity of identities. It re-analyses earlier data, some 224 transcripts of young Europeans discussing their identities and sense of attachment to the geo-political entities of the state and the nation. This study looks specifically at how they discuss affiliations to a country or nation and does so within the historical context of the development of European nations in the 19th and 20th centuries and the 'strict definition' of nationality, as based on either birthplace or parentage. The young people's discussions identify a wide range of reasons for attachment (or not) to one or more states: these include parentage, birthplace, passports, culture, language, residence, etc., many of which are incompatible with each other. Their response to this is often to profess multiple identities, switching to use that is most appropriate to a particular context or contingency. How does this behaviour meet the various models of identity formation, such as the psychosocial, the socio-cultural, and the poststructuralist? These young people also offer a range of qualities or values that they expect a state to uphold and deliver and are sometimes critical of states' behaviour in this area. The combination of these attributes and qualities leads to a range of attitudes towards a polity or polities, ranging from acceptance of their status to indifference. The explanations suggested in this paper are that globalisation and migration have led to the realisation that the 'strict definitions' of nationality are no longer appropriate, and there are new potential attributes for identity, and secondly, that the development of supranational codification and the implementation of human rights are weakening the sovereignty of states. Together, these two factors reduce the perception of the requirement to develop a single overriding national identity. This combination of multiple identities and recognising the importance of human rights values is most commonly found amongst young people who have grown up in multicultural societies, often urban, and the corollary of this is that combination is least likely to be found among the older population in more rural, monocultural settlements.

Keywords: young people; Europe; nation; state construction; political identity poststructuralism

1. Introduction

The political scientist William Mackenzie made what appears to be a definitive statement on political identity:

> Those who share a place share an identity. *Prima facie* this is a fair statement, whether 'the place' is taken to be 'space-ship earth'; or a beloved land; or a desolate slum or public housing scheme. Indeed, it is (like the concept of 'shared interest') rhetorically powerful because it appeals to solid sense . . .' [1] (p. 30).

He then pointed out the realities and fallacies of nations defined by borders. This tension between the idea of the singularity of a sense of place and the difficulty in defining a 'place' has long antecedents. The very concept of an individual having a specific and constant locational identity has proved difficult to sustain, perhaps particularly in the

case of 'national' or 'state' geo-political identities. This paper will examine the changing conceptions of such identities over several generations within a framework of different conceptualisations of identity and use this to explore how many young people in twenty-first-century Europe are able to operate with multiple geo-political identities.

Over the past three decades, there have been many suggested metaphors for the concept of an individual having several identities. Intersectional identities were suggested in 1991 by Crenshaw [2] with respect to gender and ethnicity (see [3], Collins), and her conceptualisation is now more widely used in many other intersections of other characteristics of the oppressed: class, sexuality, and physical ability. Bauman described them as liquid identities [4], as well as Blűhdorn and Butzlaff [5], in their constructions of contemporary society. There have been many others: multiple identities [6,7], palimpsest [8,9], unsettled, Kaleidoscopic [10,11], Liminal [12], and fluid or bricolage [13].

This paper first outlines some common models of how identities, in general, are formed, and then moves on to consider the development of the concept of the nation and national attachment, particularly over the past two centuries. A particular model of ascribing nationality, using either an individual's birthplace or their parentage, became codified in the 1920s as what was known as the 'strict definition'. But when we analyse the ways that young Europeans, aged between 10 and 20, are now constructing their sense of identity with geo-political entities such as the nation, the state, and the European Union, it becomes apparent that the strict definition no longer can apply (if it ever did).

This paper goes on to ask at what age geo-political identities develop and to examine how young people navigate the potential multiplicity of such identities. Most appear confident in negotiating these structures, that their sense of attachment to each of them is both contingent and contextual, and that they generally expect to see these political entities behave in a 'fair' way, adhering to agreed values, with the understanding that values may conflict and need to reflect societal and other changes.

2. Identities: Contestations and Intersections

Identity has been described as now necessitating 'being managed' [14] (p. 121),

as part of the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieu in which they live their lives [14] (p. 129).

Fisher et al. [15] suggest that the three different theoretical perspectives of identity can be seen as having certain core features in common. The pyschosocial concept of identity formation, particularly associated with the work of Erikson [16], combines the psychological focus on the interior self with the sociological emphasis on environmental factors [17]. Erikson differentiated the self—an inner psychological entity at the crux of one's experience—from identity, constructed by the self, the outcome of contingent and contextual pressures. While one might have a range of different identities, these are incorporated into a consistent core that interprets previous experiences and selves with the present.

Socio-cultural identity theory also combines the individual and the social, but such analysis is predicated much more on the individual's social, cultural, and historical context. Fisher et al. observe that identity must be seen as situational—they observe that such identities can be 'framed in terms of individual participation of individual participations in communities of practice' [18] (p. 451). Socio-cultural identities are thus multiple and provisional: there is no core identity, a keystone of the psycho-cultural identity. Poststructuralists extend this notion of the singular core identity by denying the very possibility of a fixed self. Zemybylas [19] (and also [20]) sees identities as always incomplete, 'constantly becoming' (p. 221). Structuralism gives agency to the individual to create identities that are particularly defined by the situation and the contingent. The characteristic of such identity/identities involves only the individual and the social—not the psychosocial—

and can thus be variously described (as in the previous section) as liquid, multiple, a palimpsest, etc.

The relationship between these three conceptualisations has been shown by Fisher et al. and is featured in Figure 1.
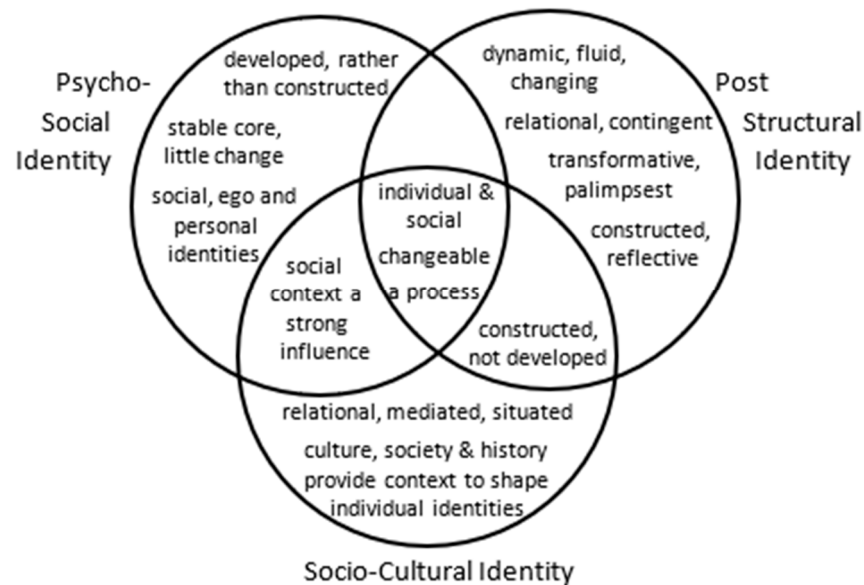

Figure 1. The relationship between three conceptualisations of identity (after Fisher et al. [17] p. 455).

I will argue here that contemporary geo-political identities of many of the younger generation in Europe are largely socially constructed in a post-structural manner, and how individuals, or groups of individuals construct them, will be different. These various creations—of nation, state, language group, ethnicity, etc.—have changed, often considerably, over time, and the current populations of European states will have a variety of conceptions of how their identities relate to their forebears, birthplace, language, culture, current residence and more. Moreover, others in their own society, and other societies around them and elsewhere, will be building the same terms of nation, state, ethnicity etc., and using these to categorising them in terms and ways that they possibly would not wish. And above all this, the state in which they reside will be applying classificatory grids of census records, vital records, passports, identification documents, church records . . . medical research data . . . sex and age . . .citizenship, nationality, lineage, religion, ancestry, health, language, ethnicity and race' [21] (p. 5).

Race has been a particular issue in European classification, particularly since the early 1940s. In Europe—and this article specifically focusses on Europe—'race' has become rarely used in academic, professional or media circles. Not only is it seen as a classification having no scientific value, but the consequences of the 'race laws' in the Third Reich were perceived with such horror that 'race' became a discarded concept. The terms 'racist' and 'racism' persist, largely as terms of distaste, about those minorities who continue to employ the terminology of 'race'. This is very different to the use of the term in the USA, and some other parts of the world. The term ethnicity is more widely used, but this should not be seen as either a euphemism, or a synonym, for race: it is more subtle and specific than simple distinctions of skin colouration, including culture, language and kinship.

The 'classificatory grids' that Decimo and Gribaldo challenge (above [21]) are now in perceptible and openly disputed flux. All but two of them—gender and race—are now, in many societies, in contention as not being fixed and immutable terms. Academics have been urged to hold a space for real intellectual curiosity, for investigations that deepen our understanding of how identity claims and processes function, rather than rushing to offer well-formed opinions based on what we already think that we know [22].

As Mackenzie observed above [1], this was not always so. Through the increasingly globalised and mobile nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two different constructions of nationality developed, both claiming to offer a singular 'national'/state identity: *jus solis* (nationality by birthplace) or *jus sanguinis* (literally nationality 'by blood': by one's parents' nationality). That individuals should have a singular nationality was formally established through the Hague Convention of 1930 [23]. This sought to eliminate instances of dual nationality arising from events such as inter-state migration.

The common practice in the 19th and early 20th centuries was for a woman who married a man who was not of her own nationality to automatically lose her original nationality in favour of that of their husband: children were thus less likely to be born to parents of different nationalities. Many individuals were nonetheless born with dual nationality at the intersection of *soli* and *sanguinis* nationality rules. States addressed this birthright dual-nationality phenomenon with rules of election, under which a child born with two nationalities was required to elect one at majority [24] (para 7). Dual nationality could, it was thought, be eliminated by harmonising individual state's nationality practices. The preamble to the 1930 Hague Conference's *Convention on Certain Questions* sought to achieve 'the ideal . . . [of] the abolition of all cases of statelessness and of double nationality.' [23] (p. 89). It was this that became known as 'the strict definition' of national identity.

Spiro [24] describes this period as having 'a strong discursive disfavour attached to dual nationality as a status. So strong was this disfavour that dual nationality was cast as immoral. This opprobrium was uncontested' [24] (para 12), and Kimminich [25] (p. 238) writes that the view of dual nationality 'as a damaging evil . . . seems to have been undisputed'. Dual nationality was thought to cause damaging psychological difficulties for the individual [26] (p. 257).

3. Historical Origins of a Singular Nationality

The use of the word 'nation', in the sense of an entity which members would be prepared to physically defend, was claimed by the German writer Goethe to have first been used in the French Revolutionary Wars. After the battle of Valmy on the 20th of September 1792 and the French Army's unexpected victory over the Prussians, he noted that the French had advanced to shouts of '*vive la Nation*' [27] (p. 108). Goethe (a military observer at the battle) asserted this to be the first time that soldiers had declared that they were fighting for their nation rather than a leader or a monarch [28] (p. 1, fn. 1). He addressed the Prussian survivors: 'From here and today begins a new epoch of world history, and you can say that you witnessed it' [27] (p. 355). On the same day, the Revolutionary Government in Paris had pronounced France as an *état civil*, a civil state: 'from that moment on an individual could only exist as a citizen once his or her identity had been registered by the municipal authorities, according to regulations that were the same throughout the national territory' [29] (p. xvii). This did not, however, make France a nation-state: many of those living in the territory considered themselves to be Alsatian, Basque, or Breton, for example. And though the official and sole language of the Republic was French, Abbé Grégoire's 1794 survey of the languages of France found only 11% of the population could speak 'pure' French, 22% could neither speak nor understand French, and 22% could only conduct a rudimentary conversation in French [30] (p. 27). He wrote, 'in liberty we are in the advanced guard of nations . . . in languages, we are still at the Tower of Babel' [30] (p. 71).

Clark, in a recent and seminal analysis of the European *Revolutionary Spring* [31] of 1848—when there were simultaneous and loosely linked uprisings against the conservative and despotic hereditary regimes of most of Europe—points to 'the fundamental problem [of] . . . the mismatch between the patterns of ethnic settlement on the continent of Europe and the lines on the political map' (p. 521). Many people chose to define themselves through their attachment to an ethnic group or culture that was at odds with their formal political and legal status. Some of this mismatch continues into the twenty-first century—for example, in the Magyarkodo movement for a 'Greater Hungary'.

By 1848, Clark estimated that in continental Europe, feelings of national feeling were 'quite mutable and localized, as one feeling among many', but that 'over the century and a half that followed, the historians and memory-makers of the European nations absorbed them into specific national narratives' [31] (p. 521). There have been several collections of papers that identify the invention of historical narratives that endow a story of national unity on the states that sought to identify themselves as antique creations, notably Hobson and Ranger's collection on *The Invention of Tradition* in Western Europe and globally [32], and in Eastern Europe by Hoskin and Schöpflin [33]. Axel Körner writes of the 1848 revolutions as 'experiences as pan-European upheavals, that . . . [was] nationalised in retrospect' [34] (p. ix). In the mid-nineteenth century, 'it was not always clear who belonged to which nation', according to Clark [31] (p. 522), citing an example from the area that is now coastal Croatia and South Slovenia, then variously Dalmatia and Illyria. 'We are Slavs by nature, and Italians by culture', wrote a Dalmatian lawyer and writer of poetry in Croatian, Stjepan Ivičević (cited [31] p. 103).

However, the mid-nineteenth century was a period of turbulent and rapidly changing constructions of nationality: some minority ethnic groups were becoming vilified as having insufficient 'historical personalities' to form a nation of their own [35] (p. 103). As Clark puts it, 'the word "nation" underwent a dramatic process of semantic inflation' [31] (p. 524): it was used 'with an almost universal confidence in its legitimizing power' [31] (p. 201). Clark observes that there were many mixed families or those who defined themselves by social status, rather than culture, or aligned themselves with an ethnically mixed area: 'I am neither a Czech nor a German, but a Bohemian', declared Count Joseph Thun in 1846 [31] (p. 184).

In the 70 years after 1848, national identities consolidated across Europe. Nationalism became largely seen as singular, defined and irrevocable: for example, European migrants to the United States found that, should they return to visit their European families, they were seen as liable for military service in the states that they had left [32]. But these nations remained ethnically and linguistically diverse despite their efforts to standardise a national language or to reclassify their ethnic minorities as sub-groups of the dominant group. In Hungary, for example, minority rights were constitutionally enshrined, but as a way of suppressing nationalist demands; Hungarian became the only language in official records, and minorities were encouraged to adopt Hungarian names. These examples challenge the construction of geo-political identities as being singular and clear-cut, despite efforts to retrospectively reify nationalities as social or cultural entities independent of any construction of 'self'.

After World War I, the various peace settlements (Versailles, Trianon, etc.) divided up the Austo-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, following, for the most part, US President Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' [36]: five of these specifically referred to national self-determination in the settlement of new states—seen as nation-states—with fresh and mutually agreed frontiers—for Italy 'along clearly recognizable lines of nationality' {point 9}; for the people of Austria–Hungary to acquire autonomous development {point 10}; Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro to have occupied territories restored and Serbia to have free access to the sea; the relations of the Balkan states to be determined 'along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality' {point 11}; Türkiye to be secure, but 'other nationalities under Ottoman rule to have autonomous development' {point 12}; and an independent Polish state to include 'the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations' {point 13}. The objectives of establishing state boundaries were partially achieved, but with some difficulty: commissions roamed over Central Europe trying to establish what were 'agreed nationalities'—it is said that many peasant communities could not do this, insisting their status and allegiance was to their village, not to any particular proto-state.

There were estimates of about 10 million people who were displaced in Europe by the 1914–18 war and by the creation of new boundaries [37] (p. 344), also [38]). Some of this was ethnic cleansing, particularly of Jewish populations from what was by then Soviet

Russia and from the new Polish state: other movements were economic, as industrialised states sought to replace workers who had been killed in the war.

Migration within Europe now increased with the creation of these new states, and in marked contrast to before 1914, this migration was highly controlled. Kaya [39] observes that, in contrast to the period before the First World War, migration was now subject to serious restrictions:

> border checks and compulsory passports for travelers were the chief means used to control it. These new political entities generated new ethnic minorities—some of them refused recognition, or even oppressed, by the states to which they belonged. The nation states [sic] also acquired sole authority to regulate all matters with a bearing on migration—freedom to travel, passports, visas, border controls [39] (p. 10).

This classificatory regime of assigning individuals to discrete and singular groups, noted by Anderson and others [35,40,41], was also adopted by the colonial powers towards the populations under their control. There was an assumption that the inhabitants would have similar political organisations: peoples would belong to specific and known 'tribes', who would have hereditary chiefs ruling through councils of elders with recognised and accepted processes and rituals. Colonial administration would operate a system of Indirect Rule to govern through such structures [42]. This was a major misconception: cohorts of anthropologists were recruited and sent out to 'find the chiefs' and establish structures for local government, but they reported back on both finding acephalous groups and often on a reluctance to identify with any particular recognisable ethnic group or 'tribe'. But the practice spread and helped codify the spread of the concept of socio-cultural identity as being singular, though not always successfully.

The consequences of the Second World War included further confusion in identities. Firstly, borders were further redrawn. The eastern frontier of pre-war Germany moved 200 km to the west, as did the Polish–Belarus border: 10 million German refugees moved as a result. Millions more Germans left the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia. It is estimated that there were perhaps as many as 60 million refugees [38] (pp. 19–59). 'States in East-Central Europe became ethnically more homogeneous in a way that was totally new' [38] (p. 34).

Yugoslavia created six regions that followed presumed ethnic settlement patterns: individuals were Yugoslav citizens, with one of the 'nationalities' of the regions, following the Soviet Union's rather similar policy in the post-revolutionary period (see Brubaker's detailed analysis of Yugoslavia's situation [43] and of the USSR [44]).

These attempts to create European 'nation states' were widely seen as ubiquitous and significant political units in international affairs in the 1970s and 1980s. The term was often used by leading political scientists up to at least the 1960s and 1970s: Halle, for example, claimed that 'a prime fact about the world is that it largely composed of nation-states' [45] (p. 10), and Rustow wrote of a world of '130 nations' [46] (p. 282), including the nation-states of the USSR [sic] and the United Kingdom [sic].

But states—and nations—need to define their membership. Identity as a citizen is therefore necessarily an ascribed description, a given, incapable of being negotiated or qualified. Anderson, writing of contemporary Indonesia, wrote of the nation as an *Imagined Community* in which the following was true:

> members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them. . . . Imagined as a *community*, because . . . the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship; . . . imagined as *limited* . . . [with] finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations; . . . Imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age . . . that was destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm . . . Finally, it is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality

and exploitation that may occur in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship [35] (pp. 6–7).

Anderson goes on to point to the need modern states have to distinguish between 'peoples, regions, religions, languages' in order to impose a 'totalizing classificatory grid' [35] (p. 184). This Foucauldian notion of state surveillance [47] is also used by Kertzer and Arel to explain how 'the use of identity categories . . . creates a particular vision of social reality. All people are assigned to a single category and are hence conceptualised as sharing, with a certain number of others, a common collective identity' [40] (p. 5). As noted above by Decimo and Gribaldi [21], the modern state *needs* to categorise its inhabitants. This enumeration and assignation of body counts creates homogeneity:

> because number, by its nature, flattens idiosyncrasies and creates boundaries . . . [which] performatively limits their extent . . . Statistics are to bodies and social types what maps are to territories: they flatten and enclose [48] (p. 133).

The assumption that everyone will easily fit into such groups became increasingly unlikely as migration patterns in Europe created new diversities [49]. Attitudes towards the necessity for a singular identity, based on the strict definition, were beginning to change: in the 1990s the European Union developed the concept of a European citizenship that paralleled citizenship of the individual member-state [50]. This was not unchallenged: Dahbour [51] and others mounted strongly argued defences of the status quo, as will be seen below. Identities began, for some, to be seen as more flexible and fluid. State practices concerning multiple nationality increasingly accept this status. Whereas young people with dual heritage were once expected to select one when they reached the age of majority, they are generally no longer expected to do so: this, and increasing global mobility, had led to many more dual nationals from birth. 'In terms of both legislation and policy, multiple nationality is essentially accepted as a reality' [52] (p. 274).

The 1997 European Convention on Nationality reflected this new attitude to multiple nationality: its preamble states that

'in matters concerning nationality, account should be taken both of the legitimate interests of States and those of individuals . . .. [it is desirable to find] appropriate solutions to consequences of multiple nationality and in particular as regards the rights and duties of multiple nationals' [50].

Spiro suggests that whereas once a singular nationality had been central to one's identity, 'dual citizenship can be framed as a matter of individual autonomy, in other words, as a matter of rights' [25] (para 16).

This discussion on the developing constructions of identities—national, ethnic, state, community—demonstrates the many different ways in which identities can be formulated, with the increasing likelihood of multiple forms of geo-political identities. Determining how young people—or people of any age—are doing this 'identity work' might appear to be particularly confusing: how do individuals begin to describe their flexibility in using identities?

4. When Are Political Identities Formed?

Young people are not infrequently seen as impressionable or even tractable. Some writers perceive them as open to indoctrination and susceptible to having ideas foisted on them. But there is also substantial literature that shows that they are able to manage and discuss political ideas and concepts (for instance, [53–58]). Instead of characterising young people as *impressionable*, it can be proposed that they are undergoing a significant *formative* period of development. There is evidence that young people seek to engage in discussions about contemporary events and current values [59,60].

Young people are also sometimes described as uninterested in politics: some studies report that they are reluctant to vote or participate in 'civic culture' ([61–63]). Some academics suggest that such a lack of commitment to democratic values threatens democracies,

in a process described by Foa and Mounk as 'democratic deconsolidation': in some parts of Europe where young people are exposed to discrimination, 'apathy has become active antipathy' [63] (p. 16). Against this, Fernández et al. proposed that 'concerns about young citizens lacking support for or even being opposed to liberal democracy's institutions, values and system functioning must be tempered' [64] (p. 4). Inglehart [65] suggests that Foa and Monk overstate their case and that, rather than rejecting liberal democracy, young people feel insecure. Norris [66] suggests they are sceptical, rather than oppositional, to democracy. Studies such as those by Pickard [58] describe young people as generally more satisfied with democracy than older people, and Pontes et al. [67] describe them as having 'do it ourselves' political behaviours. This is very different from the traditional description of a political culture made by Almond and Verba [68] in 1965: a docile society in which most citizens intermittently vote, accept the political status quo, and in which only a small minority actively participate.

Cammaerts et al. [69] describe 'a strong desire among many young Europeans to participate in democratic life, but this desire is not met by existing democratic institutions and discourses': examples would include Occupy movements against global capitalism, Just Stop Oil, Black Lives Matter, and Friday Strikes.

Manning [70] identifies talk of apathetic young people drawing on 'quantitative methodologies and orthodox hegemonic notions of politics' (p. 2), which Henn et al. had described as 'conventional political science' [71] (p. 170), suggesting that if one also included alternative political participation research, it would show greater evidence of activity in young people's political participation. Kudrnáč [72] points out that the teacher's role is vital as it is 'the teacher that decides if and how often discussions take place that he or she consequently moderates...sets up the topic . . . [and determines] how much time these discussions take from school hours' (p. 224).

Such studies suggest that political ideas are being formed at a much earlier age—perhaps from ten. The historian George Young wrote in 1949 that 'Whenever I am thinking of a character in public life . . . I always ask "What was happening in the world when [they were] twenty?"' [73] (p. 57). A young person of any age, from two to twenty-two, has a necessarily limited timeframe of experience. To a (say) fourteen-year-old, what happened three or four years earlier is historic. It happened when they now see themselves as being a very much younger person. Their focus is understandably on the present: the current experiences they are having. This may be limiting for the educator—there will be important ethical and moral issues of values that are simply not current *this* month, *this* year—but over the range of their formal education, nearly all values will become (temporary) current areas of concern. The implication of this is that educators must be highly flexible and pragmatic in latching on to what young people's concerns are *at the current moment*—and also that values learning needs to be continuous over these young people's years in formal education: it will never be complete, or finally achieved [74].

Lutz et al. [75] used Eurobarometer data from 1996 to 2004 to argue that cohorts of younger people were more likely to express multiple identities, including that of becoming European. Younger people constitute a cohort that maintains European aspects of identity as they age. Lutz and his colleagues claim that such 'long-term tectonic shifts in identity are likely to have major and enduring consequences' [75] (p. 425).

Fulbrook [76], using extensive German narrative data, suggests that young people born since the early 1990s will not simply reproduce their parents' constructions as they grow older: they are an example of what she calls a collective identity based on 'generationally defined common experiences' (p. 11). Generation is here employed by Fulbrook to characterise 'the differential impact of the times people live through and the significance of the "social age" at times of particular historical contexts and developments' [76] (p. 9). She argues that there are significant differences in the manner that identities have been construed by successive generations in Germany, based on their experiencing political dissonance in national society at critical moments in their youth—she suggests that such

transitions in Germany, such as those in 1933, 1945 and 1989, are a significant elucidating cause of their shift in political expression.

5. The Research Data: Deliberative Discussion and the Methodologies to Analyse Them

This article suggests a cohort effect in many of the generations of Europeans born between 1990 and 2010 in their narratives about the geo-political entities with which they identify. The analysis is based on a re-examination of data generated in an earlier study made of young Europeans aged mostly between 12 and 18 in the 2010–2016 period. This new study particularly examines the participants' multiple descriptions of identity and affiliation (or the reverse) associated with political units such as the state or the nation.

The original study, by the present author, began in 2010 with the intention of analysing the range of ways that young Europeans approached their characterisation of attachment to the twelve states that joined the European Union (EU) in 2004–7 and the three candidate states at that time. Of the states that had joined, nine had been either members of what had been known as the Eastern bloc, dominated, to various degrees, by the USSR or by Yugoslavia. The collapse of Soviet hegemony in the 1989–1991 period led to fundamental changes: the emergence of a market economy, the reconstitution of some of these states as liberal democracies, and their eventual acceptance into the EU. Three of these states were former republics of the USSR, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which had been independent between the two world wars. Four were members of what became called the Visegrád group: Poland, Hungary, and the new Czech and Slovakian republics: these, together with East Germany, had been forcibly incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence and economy. Romania and Bulgaria were also Communist states, somewhat less integrated into the Soviet sphere, but also members of the Warsaw Pact. Slovenia and Croatia were formerly part of Yugoslavia (Croatia was a candidate state in the study period, joining the EU in 2013). These counties had all been through a dramatic realignment, perhaps comparable to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century events in Germany that Fulbrook had judged to be significant factors in the politicisation of different generations in Germany. The question asked in 2010 was whether the emerging generation of 10- to 20-year-olds in these states, all born into the new political configurations, constructed identities that differentiated them from their parents and grandparents. To this list, three other states were added that were, in 2010, in negotiations to join the EU: Croatia and North Macedonia, Iceland, and Türkiye.

As this phase of fieldwork ended in 2013, it was decided to follow it with a second phase, starting in 2014, that added fourteen more countries, the longer-established members of the EU or EFTA (the UK and the Republic of Ireland were to have been included in this, but the Brexit debate, referendum decision, and its consequences made research in the UK impossible to include, and the Republic was judged to be feasible only if the UK was surveyed in parallel).

Through the researcher's use of an extensive set of European contacts and networks, social science colleagues in each of these states assisted in selecting a range of possible locations (from large cities to small towns) distributed in various parts of each state, where deliberative discussions might be arranged in schools and other educational establishments. There were 104 separate locations across the 29 states, and 182 schools agreed to participate, producing a total of 324 groups and 1998 young people in small groups.

Table 1 shows some of the demographic characteristics of the sample. Given it could not be a random sample (it was first opportunistic, following contacts of local social scientists/teacher educators; second, it was composed of a group selected from the same class or set of young people in a school, who—critically—knew each other and were at ease talking to each other), it was representative in the sense that it was drawn from 69% of the mainland Level 2 NUTS regions in the countries concerned. When two schools were drawn from the same locality, there was an attempt to have one drawn from a more middle-class locality and the other from a working-class area: in terms of the father's occupational groups, 27% were drawn from professional groups; 25% from intermediate groups; and

35% skilled, semiskilled, or unskilled. The balance was unemployed, unknown, or absent. The number of young people who were (wholly or partially) of foreign descent across the whole sample (25%) was very similar to the estimate made using Eurostat data by Agafiţei and Ivan in 2016, where a little more than a fifth of all households in the EU included at least one person who was of migrant origin [77].

Table 1. Countries and numbers in sample groupings of attributes.

Country	Country Population (millions)	No. of Locations Visited	No. of Groups	No. of Participants	Females	Males	No. Born in Different State	No. of Partial/Other Decent
Austria	8.61	3	12	66	43	23	1	25
Belgium	11.26	4	9	64	32	32	3	20
Bulgaria	7.20	3	11	72	34	30	0	1
Croatia	4.23	3	11	68	35	33	2	5
Cyprus (N and S)	1.10	4	8	55	41	14	16	23
Czechia	10.54	2	8	47	32	15	1	6
Denmark	5.61	5	9	55	28	27	6	21
Estonia	1.32	4	8	44	24	20	1	16
Finland	5.48	3	11	67	42	25	5	18
France	67.00	7	16	93	61	32	14	56
Germany	82.90	6	19	125	65	59	8	57
Hungary	9.84	3	10	64	39	25	2	8
Iceland	0.33	3	10	58	34	24	2	8
Italy	60.96	5	20	137	68	69	9	11
Latvia	1.98	3	8	50	30	20	0	25
Lithuania	2.91	3	6	40	29	11	0	10
Luxembourg	0.57	1	4	27	11	16	4	12
N Macedonia	2.07	3	11	72	39	33	5	25
Netherlands	17.00	4	8	52	26	26	3	10
Norway	5.19	2	8	43	20	23	9	11
Poland	38.49	4	16	66	53	43	0	1
Portugal	10.31	2	11	64	28	36	8	11
Romania	19.82	4	16	105	63	42	1	10
Slovakia	5.43	2	7	42	24	18	0	2
Slovenia	2.07	5	13	76	43	33	8	20
Spain	46.42	6	20	122	69	53	5	7
Sweden	9.86	3	12	72	38	34	8	15
Switzerland	8.26	3	6	37	22	15	3	19
Türkiye	79.82	4	16	65	44	41	0	0
Totals		104	324	1198	1118	880	124	453

Conversations were either in English (60%) or simultaneously translated by the accompanying social scientist who had arranged the school visit. They were transcribed, and pseudonyms were given in all cases. The initial analyses were not coded but analysed thematically and reported [10,78].

Subsequently, late in 2020, the European Commission tasked a Jean Monnet Erasmus Network group with a project reporting on young people's understanding of 'European Values' 2020. Given the prevalence of COVID-19, schools were not in a position to help with any fieldwork, and it was decided to use the set of transcripts described above as the basis for the study. They constituted a set of unprompted conversations that referred to political and social values but did so in an entirely unprompted manner: values were raised in the discussions (sometimes tangentially, sometimes more directly, and this spontaneity made them more valuable than material derived from prompting or direct questioning about values.

A group of twelve researchers from nine countries took on the task of identifying all references to values (using those defined in the *Council of Europe's Convention for the*

Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms [79] and the European Union's *Charter of Fundamental Rights* [80] as a basis.

Each transcript was coded by a researcher from a country other than the country of the discussion and then checked by another of the team, and disputes were resolved by discussion, sometimes with a third person. There were some 5167 references to these values made by 83% of the total number of participants. A full account of this study is available, pending publication by the European Commission [81].

This Study: Attributes of, Attitudes towards, and the Qualities of Nationality

The new study described in this paper was a re-analysis of that data, focusing particularly on how the participants described the nature of their engagement with the geographically determined political units of the state or nation. How did they manage and engage (or not) with the potential multiplicity of possible identities? How confidently did they negotiate these structures?

There are two aspects that must be considered here: the methodology of how the data were gathered. The manner in which any conversational data, however gathered, necessarily has inherent characteristics that govern its subsequent analysis.

The particular type of deliberative discussion used to collect the data was predicated on the attempt to introduce categorical terms. The use of open questions that avoided such classificatory terms aimed to avoid the 'perils' that Kertzer [41] discusses of 'the reification process of identity categories create[ing] neat boundaries between mutually exclusive groups'.

So, neutral terms were used—avoiding nation and state (unless these were introduced by one of the participants, at which point it was possible to ask questions such as 'what do you mean by the terms {state/nation]'—or to simply let the other group members pick up the term and allow them to discuss it, gently prompting if necessary. The researcher's methodology of not introducing descriptive categories meant that when—for example—a French 24-year-old described themselves as 'sort of Algerian', then others in the group would also variously self-identify in 'state' categories, enabling the researcher to ask the question 'why are you Algerian, or French? What makes you that?' Such questions are unexpected and (as will be seen below) generate genuinely informative discussion for the participants as much as the researcher [10].

Thus, the data-generating methodology managed, generally, to avoid 'the strain of categorization and the proliferation of boundaries' [21] (p. 5). This, however, generated the next methodological hurdle: how can our analysis cater to such seemingly amorphous material? The method adopted was to follow the contextual nature of the discussion, instead of trying to classify different uses of a word such as, for example, 'nation', which would be little more than substituting, dictionary-style, a set of categories of defi to look at the purposes the word was used with. In what context was it used? With what intent? [82]

Careful re-reading of the transcriptions showed that these 'geo-locational' terms (following Mackenzie's focus on 'place' [1]) were used in three different ways, with particular kinds of intent. The coded data described above were then re-examined to identify instances where the particular state in which a discussion was held was characterised (focusing on either the 'nation' by its name or by being designated as a 'nation).

Some 403 instances of attributing some kind of generalisation about the nature of the geo-location of the country or nation were identified. Of these, 186 referred to a specified attribute that was held (wholly or in part) to define (wholly or partially) one's nationality (such as birthplace, descent, language, or culture). There were 155 references to attitudes or feelings about having a nationality (ranging from intense patriotism to indifference). And there were 64 examples of the particular qualities that were thought to be found in a nationality.

These 403 instances were made by 297 individuals, some 90 of these (30%) making more than 1 generalisation (Table 2). A total of 74 individuals offered 2 generalisations, and 16 offered 3.

Table 2. Multiple responses in identifying attributes: numbers of individuals and numbers of statements.

	Making a Single Statement		Making Two Statements		Making Three Statements		Totals	
	Individ's	Statem's	*Individ's*	Statem's	*Individ's*	Statem's	*Individ's*	Statem's
Attributes of a nation	*30*	30	*60*	120	*12*	36	*102*	186
Attitudes towards nationality	*155*	155	*0*	0	*0*	0	*155*	155
Qualities expected in a nation	*22*	22	*14*	28	*4*	12	*42*	64
totals:	*207*	207	*74*	148	*16*	48	*297*	403

Table 3 sets out these various attributes, with responses grouped by the country in which the discussion was held.

Table 3. Groupings of attributes (note: many participants offered more than one attribute).

	Instances of Different Attributes of the State/Nation								
Region (Number of Participants)	Documented Citizenship	Birthplace	Parentage/Blood/Descent	Residence/Location	Culture	History	Language	Religion	Other
Western Europe (464)	6	8	7	8	4	3	6	3	2
Nordic states (295)	2	4	6	3	3	0	2	1	0
Visegrád states (249)	2	1	6	3	8	5	5	1	7
Baltic states (134)	1	0	0	1	2	0	5	1	0
Southern Europe (463)	2	1	1	1	4	5	1	1	1
South East Europe (177)	6	1	5	6	6	5	4	3	0
Western Balkans (216)	0	4	4	0	4	0	2	0	2
Total (1998)	19	19	29	25	31	18	26	10	12

Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland; **Nordic states**: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden; **Visegrád states**: Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia; **Baltic states**: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; **Southern Europe**: Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye; **South East Europe**: Bulgaria, Romania; **Western Balkans**: Croatia, North Macedonia, Slovenia.

This grouping of states was used in the earlier EC study and was based initially on a combination of established self-established groupings (Nordic, Baltic, and Visegrád), partly on recent political history (dividing the Balkans into former Yugoslav states—the Western Balkans and the other South East European states), and partly on recent economic history (Western and Southern Europe), all listed at the foot of Table 2.

The numbers are small but show some potential trends in the grouping of countries. Many of the 70 people offering more than 1 attribute were found in Western and Nordic Europe, for example, and there was a relatively larger number referring to the culture of history in the Visegrád states. Having a distinct language was a defining characteristic in the Baltic states.

The distribution of attitudes towards having a nationality was very different (Table 4). All of these were unique to each individual—there were no double responses. The seven attitudes shown can be seen as representing a continuum (shown in the Table as a horizontal double-headed arrow), from an ascribed and fixed certainty of place—perhaps the psychosocial sense of identity shown in Figure 1—to the complete indifference to a geo-political identity, a poststructural identity. Geographically, there were much looser senses of attachment seen in Western Europe, Southern Europe, and the Nordic states than in those states that were formerly part of the USSR or Yugoslavia. This appears to echo Brubaker's 1996 analyses [43,44].

Table 4. Groupings of attitudes.

| Region | Instances of Different Attitudes Towards the State/Nation Sense of Attachment Sense of Indifference | | | | | | | |
	Fixed, a Matter of Pride	This State Is Exceptional	General Love of the Land	Unconsidered Uncontested	Not a Matter of Concern	Attitude Is Shifting/ Has Shifted	Could Consider Changing Nationality	Other
Western Europe	4	3	0	3	13	3	0	1
Nordic states	5	3	3	4	10	7	3	1
Visegrád states	15	1	0	7	1	4	4	4
Baltic states	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Europe	2	6	1	0	11	2	1	1
South East Europe	5	0	2	1	2	0	0	0
Western Balkans	6	1	0	0	5	4	2	0
Total	41	14	6	15	42	20	10	7

Finally, a smaller number of responses concerned what can be seen as the qualities sought after in a nation (Table 5). Like the attributes in Table 2, there were many examples of individuals identifying more than one quality (a number of these respondents were also included, making comments about the attributes of nationality, as shown in Table 3. This is too complex to analyse here, but none of those who described attitudes (Table 4) made reference to attributes or qualities).

Table 5. Groupings of qualities.

| Region | Nation/State Defined in Terms of Possessing Particular Qualities | | | | | | | | |
	Solidarity	Democracy	Rights	Inequalities	Welfare	Education	Other Social Needs	*(Subtotal of Qualities)*	Being Stereotyped
Western Europe	3	6	5	0	1	1	2	*18*	1
Nordic states	5	3	4	5	0	0	3	*20*	2
Visegrád states	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	*5*	4
Baltic states	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	0
Southern Europe	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	*5*	2
South East Europe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	0
Western Balkans	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	*8*	0
Total	15	9	15	8	1	0	7	*56*	9

What is striking in these qualities is how they are represented—particularly those around social values (shown in the italicised penultimate column)—in Nordic and Western Europe. These are, in one sense, the older (pre-1933) states of Europe: one might argue that these values are more deeply embedded than in the southern states that were totalitarian for much of the twentieth century or the eastern states that were part of the Soviet hegemony.

These findings are now analysed in a more qualitative fashion, where the dialogues and discussions, as well as the individual interjections, present a level of complexity that is lost in wholly quantitative analysis.

6. Geo-Locational Identities

The patterns of ways in which these young people describe and discuss these identifications are complex, and they reflect the following aspects:

- The contexts in which they live (politically, socially, and economically);
- The contingencies of their current circumstances (contemporary and immediate public discussions and concerns, both in their more immediate locality and much wider). Reflecting both of these issues, they also indicate the following:
- They set their analyses and discussions within a relatively narrow timescale of often half a dozen years or less, confirming the observations noted in some of the literature cited above, particularly Fulbrook's observation of a cohort being politicised by the events that occur in the 'social age' between the mid-teenage years and the early twenties ([74,76]).

These patterns thus offer, in many cases, a synthesis of the three models of identity described in Section 2 above: the psychosocial, the socio-cultural, and the poststructural, a synthesis that operates dynamically and transformatively.

The country or state was generally one of the areas early discussed by the groups. Asked what they felt they held in common, it was frequently the case that they agreed that they were (for example) Swedish, or that some were Swedish, and others were Afghans, or of Afghan origin, or that they were of multiple origins. They were then asked what 'being Swedish' or 'Swedish and Afghan' meant: what made them say this? Why were they these categories? Such open-ended questions were demanding for many of them.

In a group of seven sixteen-year-olds in Stockholm, for example, Margareta (F, 16) (all names are pseudonyms. Each time a person is first introduced, their gender (M/F) and age are given) opened the discussion by asserting that it was 'nothing more than my passport says that I'm Swedish', though she conceded that she and her parents were born in Sweden, which was not a necessary definition: 'I might move and become a citizen of elsewhere, and then I will be—something else'. Tor (M, 16) said he didn't really feel Swedish: he had no knowledge, he claimed, of Swedish norms, as he had lived abroad in Guatemala and Zambia with his parents, who worked for a development agency: 'I just feel . . . I don't belong to any country'. Petrus (M, 16) concurred: he only defined himself as Swedish—'because I'm born here, I am a citizen of Sweden. But I don't really feel a Swedish identity'. Agnes (F, 16) was unsure that either birth or parentage was critical: both her parents were originally Norwegian, but the fact that that 'I have Norwegian blood' was irrelevant: 'the blood in your body doesn't take account of what country you belong to. If you live in say Egypt, or in Brazil, you still have the same blood, because we're all human'. At this point, Saga (F, 16) offered a different conception: while countries had cultures and prejudices, this was independent of one's identity: 'Swedes are always quiet on the subways, but that doesn't have anything to do with your identity: I don't feel Swedish in any way, I am Swedish'. Christin (F, 16) agreed: aspects of a country's culture might be more easily identified by a foreigner, 'but that affects our behaviour, but not so much our personality'. Thinking of oneself as Swedish was not an everyday activity, or a marker of identity: 'I don't think it matters as much to us as the world may think'. Albertina (F, 15) concurred with Christin: she '[didn't]' care if I'm Swedish, Norwegian or Guatemalan [with nods to Agnes and Tor]—but to me, Stockholm means a lot'. It was her territory, unlike other parts of Sweden: 'I care about Stockholm, the area where I've lived my entire life'. Saga agreed, with some excitement, describing her feelings about walking around the city. Christin argued that this was proximity, 'not so much as appreciating a nation'. Petrus, on the other hand, had only lived in the city for a year, and because his home was outside what he called his 'home town', so 'the only place on earth I have a real connection with has been my home—beyond that, I don't really have a relationship to any place on earth'. Tor

had only lived in Stockholm for four years—'I don't feel a connection'. His first language might be related to identity—but though this was Swedish, he now spoke English better than Swedish. Consequently, he felt not just 'not Swedish' but not part of any country: 'if there was an international citizenship, I'd probably opt for that'.

At this point, the researcher intervened, for the first time in in about ten minutes of their conversation. While they all agreed they were not Swedes in any patriotic sense, they had earlier all said they were Swedish and had then offered many different ways of defining 'being Swedish'—passports, language, location, parentage, culture, values, behaviour, outsiders' stereotypes of Swedes. Were these, the researcher asked, 'competing explanations of what it is "to be Swedish"?'

Petrus was first to respond: the reason their answers ranged so widely was that there 'isn't any good answer to it: there isn't a real identity of a Swede in that way'. There may have been in the past, but 'we have become much more international—we are so influenced by other cultures that our culture melds together with the English-speaking culture and the cultures close to us'.

There then followed a further ten-minute discussion on their desire not to appear to be 'nationalistic', referring to the then rising popularity of the right-wing nationalist *Sverigedemokratern* party. Saga described their members as racists, who were 'defining who's Swedish and who's not Swedish. I think if you think one year you are Swedish, [because] you had the papers for living here, you were Swedish then—and I know people that don't have them, and would say that they're Swedish anyway—it's so vague'. Margareta expanded on this:

> when I was a kid, I thought, "yes, I am proud of Sweden", because there are no wars here, people are nice to each other, it's the most equal country in the world, I'm proud to live here—but it's become something different—sometimes I feel I don't recognise the Sweden I grew up in . . . it's become important to *not* identify myself with where I live, or where other people are from.

This twenty-five-minute part of a longer discussion was not atypical of the very varied range of deliberations in this study: it was somewhat more intense and focused than most. The researcher's contributions, apart from the intervention with the summary, were generally short prompts: everyone else contributed at much greater length, in all but four times in response to each other, rather than to the researcher. This conversation illuminates their reflexivity in challenging everyday categorisations of identities, places, nations, and nationalities and their sense of resistance to this. It also shows an awareness of social transformations, not just of their social milieux, but of themselves and their relationship to this.

Attempts to define geo-political identities can involve an increasing range of potential **attributes** (birthplace, parentage, language, 'race' (more accurately, skin colour), religion, residence, etc.), and ethnicity, as shown above, but also by a range of desirable/expected **values or qualities** (rights, equalities, social provision, solidarity, and democracy). Responses to such geo-political identities constitute a range of **attitudes** towards these entities (from a sense of exceptionalism and pride through shifting patterns of change from ambivalence to rejection or resignation). All these are subject to the **contingent** and **contextual** settings of time and place. Many of these were referred to in the relatively brief conversation in Stockholm. And, *apropos* the use of the term 'race' in Europe and the USA, referred to above in Section 2, the defining characteristics of dispute and division in Europe between the 17th and early 20th centuries (and in some groups, now in the twenty-first century) centred on the context of religious belief (Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox—and above all and continuing, Islam), rather than race.

The other discussions in this study illuminate these various attributes, qualities, and attitudes, both in the case of young people who identify with a single country and those who identify, to some degree, with more than one country. Agafiței and Ivan [70] estimated in 2016 that just over a fifth of all households in the European Union had at least one member from a different country: in this study, 23% of the participants fell into this category (though

only 6% had been born outside the state in which the discussion took place: Table 1). In the process of examining each of these characteristics of attributes, qualities, and attitudes, attention will be given to how such 'multi-identity' individuals responded. There will also be consideration of other geo-political identities that were offered—from the city localities (such as Albertina and Saga) to larger regional groupings (such as Nordic), or Europe (whether the European Union or more broadly defined) and global (as with Tor).

These issues of definitional attributes are of particular significance in the debate on what constitutes a nation. Darbour [51] (p. 20–21) argues for what he calls 'the strict definition' of nationalism', following Connor's definition of this as a 'self-aware ethnic group' [83] (p. 94) or of 'a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related' [84] (p. xi). This needs to be considered in the following section, where narratives of ambiguity—but not usually of confusion—dominate many young people's explanations of their 'national' identity, as we have already seen in the Stockholmers' accounts above. We have already seen, in the examples reported here, that too many individuals are reporting themselves to be of mixed origins, of multiple 'nationalities', for this definition continues to be tenable. Darbour points to the origins of this 'strict definition' in Max Weber's works: he noted that nationalism and ethnicity both derived from the same 'vague connotation that whatever is felt to be distinctively common must derive from common descent' [85] (p. 395), and that 'the nation cannot be stated in terms of empirical qualities common to those who count as members . . . the concept belongs in the sphere of values' [86] (p. 922). Of more utility is to consider Anderson's construct of the nation as 'an imagined community' [35] and to allow multiple and simultaneous imagined nations that wax and wane as circumstances and contexts change.

6.1. The Attributes of Geo-Locational Identities

As described earlier (Section 2), 'nationality' and citizenship had, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, been largely described in one of two ways, both of which were ascribed characteristics, either by one's birthplace (*jus solis*: by the right of the soil/birthplace) or by one's parentage (*jus sanguinis*: by the right of blood/parentage). These two definitions were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, Joppke [87] identified the strange illogicality of this:

> Contrary to the Enlightenment idea of the modern state as based on a contract, the state is *not* a voluntary association. This makes the state structurally different from, if not 'paramount' to, all other forms of human association. Joppke [87] (p. 16).

The growing scale of migration and globalisation has made this supposed dichotomy increasingly tenuous, and most young people in the discussions implicitly accepted this: either or neither condition could be adequate, and choices could be made that were contingent on a particular situation.

Discussions in the Netherlands in 2015 were when the government still identified various categories of people as *allochtoons*: having a foreign-born parent or having oneself being born in a foreign country with at least one parent also born in a foreign country (with an additional distinction between 'western' and 'non-western' *allochthoons*). In popular speech, '*allochthoon*' was used to mean black or brown skin colour. Kawthar (F, 16) in Amsterdam explained her situation with a Netherlander mother who was '*autochthoon*' and a father from Sierra Leone. Kwathar recognised that she was an *allochthoon*, as would be all of her children: 'it's weird: it makes it harder to find employment, and then we're expected to work harder'. In a small settlement in the north, Hendrick (M, 17) said that after the fourth generation, one could call oneself an *authochthon*: when the researcher observed that his own great-grandfather was not British-born, Hendrick responded that most Netherlanders would categorise him as an immigrant (but then offered the reassurance that in practice 'people don't really care . . . it's more if you look different, like an Arab'. (The categorisation of *allocthoon* was abandoned by the Netherlands in 2016 [88]).

On the other hand, 'race' was often explicitly rejected as an attribute of national identity. In a small town in Belgian Wallonia, Leila (F, 17) described how her six-year-old nephew, whom she described as *métis*, was distraught at being called 'too Black' by another child at school: 'we had to explain to him that he was Belgian, he was born in Belgium, he had the Belgian nationality, and that *métis* can be Belgian—we showed him football players who are Belgian and who are also *métis* or black—it really disturbed him, and really shocked me'.

Discussions about the competing claims of birthplace and parentage as a possible criterion for nationality were common. This was particularly so in Croatia and North Macedonia, where the twentieth-century history of movements of populations and boundaries created many instances of competing claims. People who described themselves as Albanian, for example, came from families long settled in what had, post-1919, become parts of Macedonia and Kosovo and resented having to describe themselves as being 'from' those states, rather than as being Albanian. Other young people, whose families had been caught up in the conflicts and wars in the Balkans as Yugoslavia fragmented, saw their parents as having much greater national affiliation to their original homelands than they did: 'my parents have very strong national feelings about this country [Croatia], because they went through the war' (Blaženka, F, 15). Direct experience of engagement in war was not common among the sample, but parental experience (and that of grandparents) was frequently seen as an explanation why they were more nationalist: in another part of Croatia, Zorka (F, 16) explained that 'my father shares my opinion, of not being really proud of my country, but my mother is kind of a nationalist: she was raised by her father, who was in the war, and he probably taught her to always be proud of her nationality, of being Croatian'. Parentage was sometimes described as being in terms of 'blood' (see Saga, in Stockholm, above). Predrag (M, 14), in Malmo (Sweden), had been born in Denmark, but his parents were from Serbia: 'So I'm not saying I'm a Danish or a Swedish person . . . I'm still of Serbian blood. My parents speak Serbian at home . . . I feel I am Serbian, I have Serbian blood, and I speak Serbian'.

Culture was another attribute of nationality that sometimes was referred to as of particular significance. The divided loyalties of Greek Cypriots were mentioned by Valeria (F, 15): 'our parents are Cypriots, [but] we can't be considered as Cypriot Greeks, because we don't have any roots there [in Greece]. Just because we have the same culture—not exactly the same, some parts are the same—doesn't mean that we are Greeks, we are different'. In Lyon, France, Alix (F, 11) declared herself French but clearly identified with the Comoros culture of his parents: 'there is a different rhythm there . . . many more things are homemade there than in France—so, sometimes a Comoronian identity, sometimes a French identity. I feel more Comoronian when members of my family are coming over, because we speak less French and more Comoroniam'.

Certain countries had a more particular sense of their history, ranging beyond the memories of older family members. In Bulgaria, for example, the period of Ottoman rule was often raised as an element in the foundational story of Bulgarian unity: 'five centuries under the Turkish yoke' was a familiar trope in several different groups: 'It was very tough for our nation and our great grandparents' (Sergei, M, 16); 'we were under the influence of Turkey for about five hundred years, and we managed to keep our culture and folklore' (Nikolai, M, 15); 'under the Turkish yoke a lot of our culture, language and nationality got put down—and I think we can't just get over it' (Pavlina, 15); 'we have a very rich history, and I have that national spirit in me' (Valentin, M, 16).

A variety of periods in Italian history were used by a group in Matera to explain the significance of contemporary Italian nationality: while 'Mussolini thought that Roman history was the most important part' (Lando, M, 17)), Maud (F, 16) spoke of the Middle Ages, and explained how the North–South tensions in contemporary Italy originated in 'the middle ages—Italy was divided in that period—in the north were *comuni*, and in the south foreign kings and rulers . . . and the church in the middle—we lived separately for a long time'. Melissa (F, 17) referred to 'the Renaissance, because art spread all over Italy

and the world,' and Lando spoke of the contribution of enlightenment ideas, Melissa to the 1860 reunification, and others to the creation of the 1945 constitution.

Poland was another country where history was sometimes seen as core to the nation: Sobiesław (M, 16), in the northern city of Olstyn, said 'I am proud of my history, and I believe that no other country has undergone such a brutal history—we disappeared for a hundred years, and then during the second world war we disappeared again, and then we reappeared again, like a Phoenix from the ashes, so we have patriotism in our blood'. This was disputed by Jaromir (M, 16): 'I cannot agree with this! This is very egotistical! Poles always think that they have suffered more than anyone else—a special nation that has to endure in order to be reborn'. Others were also critical of the patriotic slogan *Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna* (God, Honour, and the Fatherland) as nationalistic. In Warszawa, Grzesiek (M, 16) spoke of the 'false patriotism in Poland'. His friends 'were not concerned' about national identity.

> In Olsztyn, Aleksandra (F, 16) and Toamsz (M, 17) discussed Polish national identity:
>
> Aleksandra Poles: " . . . for the most part they are not concerned about it, and probably for the most part they are not aware that they are Poles unless they are reminded of it. . ."
>
> Tomasz: "After the changes [the end of Communist rule] the local patriotism was not very common or widespread, and now, after we joined the European Union it's even less so, because to all the concepts of patriotism we already had, we added one more, the European, which I think dilutes the concept even more."

The predominant attitude appeared to be that if individuals established a sense of national identity, it was as part of a process of construction, as illustrated in the following extract from a discussion in Jūrmala, a small town just outside Riga in Latvia. Monta (F, 15) had a Belorussian mother, Reines's (M. 14) mother was Latvian, and Agnes (F, 16) and Nellija (F, 14) were wholly Latvian.

> Monta: "I don't think I'm Russian, but I also don't count myself Latvian. I don't know why, I couldn't say. . ."
>
> Reines: "I'm not a total Latvian, I'm only partial. On my mother's side, everyone was Latvian, but on my father's side there is a very mixed line: there are Russians, Belarussians, even from Polish descent. I kind of respect both—I am a patriot of more countries than just one."
>
> Nellija: "It's not the blood that makes your nationality. If you have a Russian mother and a Russian father, and you were born in Latvia and you learn the Latvian language, and you do everything as a Latvian would do—it doesn't make a difference."
>
> Monta: "it's more what's in your head."
>
> Agnese: "and what you see every day. If you are Russian, but you live in Latvia, you don't know how the Russians live in Russia, so—so you become Latvian. It's really not a lot!"
>
> Monta: "Also friends do some stuff to you. If you are Russian, but your friends are Latvians, it's possible that you'll go more Latvian than Russian—because you'll speak Latvian all the time, and the jokes, and all that stuff. . ."
>
> Agnese: ". . . The way you think is different. . ."
>
> Reines: "It depends on what society you grow up in, what part of the country, even in what part of the town."

A Belgian Walloon group of 17-year olds, with several young people of mixed origins, also discussed their cultural roots: Mariette (F, 17) felt 'not really Belgian—my heart is in Madagascar—my mum used to speak Malagasy when she was angry with me [laughter],

the food was different at home—I feel both Belgian and Malagasy'. Patrice (M, 17, with both of his parents Italian) said, 'we speak French, but we behave like a Mediterranean family [more laughter]—yes, we speak with our hands, we talk very loud'. Leila (F, 17) said, 'I don't feel Belgian . . . in my family we have five or six different nationalities, so I always live in a different culture, different languages, different minds—but the thing about Belgium I am really proud of is the fact that we live in a democracy'.

It has been argued that there are, or should be, strict definitions for what attributes constitute nationality. Dahbour [51] (pp. 24–26) argues that the national needs to be strictly defined: if nationalism is (or becomes) a self-constructed identity—as has been shown as happening in some of the examples cited in this section—then the definition of the nation will inevitably be construed in a variety of mutually incompatible ways. But these young people are doing exactly that: each individual has a particular repertoire of attributes that they find acceptable—and those that they will not consider. Although most young people would either admit jus solis or jus sanguinis as one of their attributes, there were significant minorities who, for a variety of reasons, felt that neither of these was appropriate. And within each individual's inventory of acceptable signifiers, the particular circumstance of being required to produce them could produce different responses: who was asking, where, and why could all narrow the bounds of tolerability. Too many individuals are reporting themselves to be of mixed origins, of multiple 'nationalities', for the 'strict definition' to be tenable. Max Weber's observation that 'the concept [of nation] belongs in the sphere of values' [84] (p. 922) suggests that it is more useful to consider Anderson's construct of the nation as 'an imagined community' [35] and to allow multiple and simultaneous imagined nations that wax and wane as circumstances and contexts change.

Leila described in the previous paragraph that geo-political identities were constructed not simply by defining attributes; they were also about values and qualities. We now turn to consider this other aspect of identity.

6.2. The Qualities of Geo-Locational Identities

States and nations were also referred to in terms of the values that they were held to represent or ought to represent. Most of these young people—some 80%—at some point referred to the values that they recognised in a nation or state or the values that they thought the state should be upholding but were in some ways failing to meet expectations.

There were fairly frequent references to the democratic nature of the various countries, often coupled with criticism of political actors (as self-serving, complacent, and corrupt).

This example of a discussion between two young Berliners, Annmarie (F, 17, a German-Australian) and Wilfred (M, 16, German-British), shows the general expectation of EU states to have democratic cultures:

> Annemarie: Generally all countries that are part of the EU share the same values, like democracy and equality, stuff like that—and . . . though cultures are very different in different places, it has kind of evolved, not just in each country, it has evolved all over Europe, and things have spread all over Europe—so they share the same culture to a certain extent, and have had the same influences. . . . you have to be a democratic country to become part of the European Union—but of course, there are other democratic countries—so it's not just associated with the European Union

> Wilfried: I think that the values of the European Union shares are of course like the democratic principle, but also it's important to look at the civil rights—things that you have to have in order to join the European Union—I don't think there are traditions or culture that are very similar—but the political systems . . . I think there's a lot of similarities [in] the values that we share. . . . Our political values are also shared by the United States in a way . . . [which is] a special case, because they have a government that is democratic, but it's also incredibly influenced by religion—when it comes to Europe, we don't combine religion and government like they do. Religion and the Christian principles have a much greater role,

and nationalistic views and their governments share—they have a democratic constitution, and all of these things, that are similar to us, but there are also a lot of differences when it comes to political culture. The people there are way more nationalistic than here.

Annemarie: Yes, well democracy isn't just in Europe—it's definitely in other countries—but I think that because in Europe we are so closely connected to other countries . . . they are so linked, in such a small space, you're confronted with those other cultures more often—you learn foreign languages, from quite a young age, and things like that—there's this tolerance of other nations that maybe is more common in Europe

Wilfried: Yes—in America there's . . . more focus on different things than Europe . . . America is more on the terror stuff, that's everything they're doing, most of the time—'the war against terror' . . . they have fierce nationalism, combined with their religion, that they- like 9/11 they just go wham—. . .it's the most important thing to them, and that has an impact on their tolerance to other cultures and stuff. Here it's not that extreme.

Such detailed conversations were not very common, but there were many references to democratic processes. In Gavle, Sweden, Måns (M, 12) said, 'we still, most of us, follow all the rules, and we do things correctly . . . like laws, and things like that'. He went on to talk of Swedes being 'pretty welcoming to people. They're not afraid of people who don't do things like they do—I think we're one of the only countries that actually allow the most people to come here, that are not Swedish'. His colleague Adolf (M, 12) pointed to Sweden as having 'done many things for other countries . . . compared to other countries, we're pretty peaceful'. In Stockholm, Alfhilde (F, 14) observed that 'everybody follows the same rule. . . It's the same for everyone. Everyone gets the same punishment if they do the same crimes—it's fair'. There was usually little detail about what constituted 'democracy': elections and voting were commonly mentioned, but little more. Contrasts were made with dictatorships (particularly in Russia, sometimes in Belarus), and in Spain, several young people recounted their grandparents' experiences under the Falangist regime of Franco.

There was a much more focused discussion found with some 17- and 18-year-olds in Austria: there had been local elections in Wein and the surrounding province of Niederöster-reich the day before this discussion took place. Sieglinde (F, 16) and Lulu (F, 17) had voted for the first time and explained how they had looked at political parties' literature and seen television discussions: they were excited by the possibilities. Amelie (F, 17) was more dismissive: she was not interested in politics yet—'maybe in two or three years—it's too soon for 16-year olds'.

Margot (F, 18) responded: 'it's important to vote at a young age, [so] we are heard'. In another group, Cordula (F, 19) was a member of a political party (as were her parents) and was aware of the importance her vote might have in a village with just 300 electors (she lived out of town). And she also participated in other forms of political activity, joining street demonstrations against right-wing meetings: 'you can make much more change than through voting if you go on the street and demonstrate'.

Other discussions of a state's values were communal solidarity and the expectation that states had responsibilities to ensure that education and health care were available to all: this was often linked to criticisms of the lack of these in the USA. Kane (F, 18) in Bergen, Norway, spoke of 'the fact that we have national health insurance, and that we are quite a developed country, and equality—gender equality in particular—you're more respected as a woman in Norway'.

Cæcilia (F, 17), in the Danish city of Odense, spoke of feeling both Danish and European 'because we have some fair rules and stuff that unites us, even though we have very different cultures in the different countries of Europe'.

These expectations of the state or nation to uphold broad values of rights, equality, democracy, and the rule of law were not merely described: there was often a strong element

of criticism when values were not being applied, whether by the state or more generally. For example, Nils (M, 13), also in Odense, described discrimination against the Arab community: 'pretty much the whole of Denmark looks at them as not really Danish people, and I think that's not fair . . . they should be able to become Danish people'. In Hannover, Christiane (F,14) described press reports of the 2015 migrants: while some papers were fair, 'some are not fair—like *Biltzeitung*. The local newspaper wrote that sometimes immigrants are bad'. Others, like Gosia (F, 17) in Bialystok, Poland (just 40 km from the Belarus border, defined her sense of freedom as follows: 'being in the European Union is to feel free. I feel free in Poland, and in Belarus, they [will] have to change something in the country, because it isn't fair'. The EU itself was structurally unfair, argued Fatmagül (F, 14) in Lefkoşa (in the unrecognised state of Northern Cyprus): the EU was 'formed on the basis of excluding other countries, and it's not really a fair situation. [They] look at us differently . . . [with] double standards'.

Tolerance and the acceptance of other cultures as national characteristics were mentioned frequently in 2015 (the year of the Syrian refugee migration) in Western Europe (in France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Norway, and Denmark, where discussions were being held as the news unfolded). A Norwegian group in Bergen was scathing about what they saw of the reactions of older people: they didn't want to accept many refugees. Maybrit (F, 18) said—with clear sarcasm in her voice—'because they're all terrorists—Norwegians don't want to share'. Agnar (F, 18) joined her: 'people are more scared about what will happen to the money than what happens to the refugees'. Oddbjørg (F, 18) joined with further irony: the migrants would '"steal our jobs"; they are going to "suck all our money"'.

Inequalities were also criticised. In Bologna, Huguette (F, 13) complained about the great difference between the poor and the rich in Italy, and Allegrino (M, 13) suggested that the government should support those in need with work, food, and housing

A discussion in Lille, France, came to focus on the underpinning nature of rights in contemporary Europe. Laurence (F, 16) began by describing the European Union sharing an economic policy, rather than a social one, and she didn't feel European because of the social laws. Pascaline (F, 15) observed that despite not everyone having the same origins, 'we can share an identity as Europeans, it's not a culture, but we share values that are so normal to us that we don't really see them'. When the researcher asked her what these values were, Pascaline visibly gulped: she couldn't answer. Laurence observed, 'I don't think that we share any'. Blaise (M, 15) pointed out the great diversity in Europe: ' some countries led by far-right parties, and others with far-left leaders—it's difficult to find values that are shared by everybody, with so many different cultures, pasts and leaders'. Pascaline found her voice: 'we can say that we share democracy, and that's a strong value'. Blaise immediately just said one word: 'Russia?' Pascaline pointed out that Russia is not in the European Union, and the researcher asked if it would be possible to join the EU if it sought to. There was a unanimous chorus of dissent. Marie-Paule (F, 16) said that firstly, they wouldn't ask to join, and then that it would be dangerous for Europe to ally with Russia: 'I'm frightened of their power and of what they are able to do'. Blaise observed that Russia wanted to restore its former power: they couldn't join because of the Ukrainian crisis fifteen months earlier (in February 2014) 'and all the Chechen massacres in the past few years'. Nuwwar (F, 16) added that in order 'to join the European Union they would have to be judged for that by a European court. And democracy is also an important criteria'. The researcher observed that when he asked earlier about what European countries had in common, they had difficulty in saying anything, but now they were talking about democracy, human rights, and courts. At this point, Laurence referred to Orban's attempt to reintroduce the death sentence: 'because of Europe he couldn't—he just abandoned the project that's a nice aspect of Europe,' and Blaise pointed to the Austrian leader in the 2000s, Jorg Haider, trying to take away some rights of homosexuals and unmarried couples: 'the European Union was there to restrain him—it's like a dog leash'. Pascaline was now able to summarise all of this: 'for a country like France, one of the first members of the European Union, these are values that are so deep that have always been in our lives—so we don't really recognise

the similarities—human rights, liberties, democracy—these are the foundations of our democracy and our society, The first countries in Europe shared those values of human rights, democracy and liberty, equality—yes, but the newer the countries are, the less these values are really shared—but I think it's a good job that Europe has a reason, it still works, that Europe has the power to bring these values to other countries'.

Politicians were often described as self-serving and sometimes as corrupt, but all such comments were made with the understanding that this was wrong; democracy was not meant to work this way. In Frascati, just outside Roma, Lamberto (M,16) argued, 'we can change the world, because government is what we are ... It isn't just a problem of government; it is *our* problem'. In a discussion in an agricultural college near Bologna, older people were held to have some responsibility for this: they were too trusting of parties, and while younger people were better at evaluating their policies (Damaso, M, 16), they were ill-informed (Sonia, F, 17), and they repeatedly voted 'because they were told to vote like that' (Gaudenzio, M, 16). Such frustration with their elders was common across most countries. In Denmark, there were complaints about parents making racist jokes, almost unwittingly; in Czechia for a lack of direct action on deforestation; in Budapest for demonstrations in support of press freedom; and in Switzerland for creating groups of young people to 'show the government ... [that] we have weight for our ideas' (Abel, M, 17).

Geo-political entities around which elements of identity were being constructed were expected to be based on value systems and commanded loyalty based on their ability to demonstrate this. The parameters of nationality are shifting: the concept of human rights not only constrains the concept of state sovereignty but also, as Henrard observes, are reflected in the citizens of a state, requiring the state to uphold particular values if the state is to retain its citizens' sense of identification with it [88] (p. 285). The valuing of democratic behaviour; of the equality before the law of political leaders; of fundamental human rights; and of social solidarity, freedoms, and rights—all these were the qualities of state or national entities that were now being suggested as necessary if these young people were going to identify with them.

6.3. Attitudes towards Geo-Locational Identities

The two previous sections have suggested underlying tensions. Many young people construct their identification with states or nations in ways that are not easily compatible with simplistic categorisations of parentage or birthplace: the exigencies of globalism [87], superdiversity [49], and attempts to define and uphold fundamental human rights and values [88,89] all combine to show the futility of attempting to define a clear definition of which of these attributes constitute nationality. The development and continuing extension of our understanding of global human rights has strained the regard for national identity as an overriding loyalty, as examples have shown in the previous section. As a consequence of this, attitudes towards such identities have, for many young Europeans, become awkward and tenuous in varying ways, often to the point of inappropriateness. This was articulated by many groups, though there was also a residual default to accepting a geo-political identity as a 'national, as a citizen, or 'what's on one's passport'. As this was not a direct question in the original investigation (the methodology precluded such direct interrogation [77–79]), this is not easily quantifiable, but this section surveys a range of the attitudes shown towards the idea of holding an identity linked to a specific nation or nations.

The most common attitude was one of matter-of-fact acceptance. This was made often without enthusiasm, sometimes with confusion, even embarrassment: Katerina (F, 14) in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital, was typical: 'I don't see why a person would have reasons not to be proud of what they are—why wouldn't you be. It's not that—well, you're proud of being Slovenian, because you are you, you are here, in Slovenia ... Nationality isn't actually very important—it's who you are as a person—so I don't know why people would be proud to be in this country, when it doesn't really have any effect on who you are as a person. I don't know why a person wouldn't be proud'. Sanna (F, 17) in Stockholm was almost mystified by this: 'I identify myself as Swedish because this is the only thing I

know—I've only lived here, I know the system, where to go. But I think that if I moved to another city . . . [or] country [the question is left hanging] . . . I identify myself as Swedish, but maybe in the Swedish way that I see in Stockholm'.

Occasionally, this was more emphatic than simply being taken for granted. In Çanakkale in Türkiye—near the Gallipoli peninsular and the site of the successful Turkish resistance to the Allied forces in World War 1—there was a more distinct acceptance of a national role as a matter of destiny: Bugra (M, 14) said 'I identify myself as a Turk, and there's no other identity that I have for myself. When I think about being a Turk, the first thing that comes to my mind is Mustafa Kemal Attaturk [the Turkish military leader in 1916, and subsequent President]. . . the Turkish man is the person who can sacrifice their life for their country, and the woman is the supporter of her man'. Such a concept of national exceptionalism was extreme, but there were other expressions of uniqueness: for example, Edvard (M, 19) in Turku: 'I think that Finland has an almost exceptional sense of national community, in the sense that if . . . any Finnish person succeeds well, then all of Finland knows about it, it's on every main news, it's a really big thing'.

Less exceptional were simple expressions of simple affection for the country: in Amsterdam, Abeltje (M, 16) could say, 'all over the Netherlands we are a nationality of the free, but in Amsterdam we are more free—it's the best of all—people look up to you, or look differently at you, because you come from the big city'. One's nationality was uncontested—in a Walloon town in Belgium, Constance (F, 15) could simply say, 'when people ask "what's your nationality?" I say "Belgian"'; in Vilnius, Vaiva (F, 17) said, 'I'm Lithuanian, and I'm different from other people because of my language, my culture, and the territory where I live'; and Christina (F,12), in Greek Cyprus, said, 'we are from Cyprus, it's our homeland, our country, it's where we live, where we stay'. But there were other, more casual, attitudes expressed. In Odense, Julius (M,17) was casual, almost indifferent: 'it's not that often that we get to think about it. Before this interview, I didn't pay that much attention to the fact that I was Danish'. Yet he was able, within the setting of an open-ended discussion with his peers, to make a cogent and sophisticated argument for his sense of distance from a simple or uncontested Danish identity: 'it's all a social construction', he concluded. In Sofia, Daniel (N, 16) felt that 'nationality is not so important—for me, it really doesn't matter very much where you are from—it means who are you, what's your identity—the country is irrelevant, it doesn't matter for me'. In Luxembourg, Ignaz (M, 15) saw his nationality as an almost casual afterthought, as he remarked, 'I don't really feel that I'm Luxembourgish, because we don't have a national football team that is very good, so that we can't support a Luxembourgish team—So, for me I don't have any nationality'.

Those with two or more nationalities described particular identity issues. In Brussels, Maartje (F, 16) explained that 'mostly I feel Belgian—when sports are on, and we win, I feel Belgian—but I have both nationalities. In Morocco I feel like a Belgian, because they see me as Belgian, and here I feel Moroccan, because they see me as Moroccan'. Toni M,16), in Helsinki, had the opposite experience: 'I don't really feel very patriotic or nationalistic—I have dual Finnish and Spanish nationality, so when I go to Spain I identify as Spanish, and when I'm anywhere else I'm Finnish but I don't feel it's a very important part of my identity'.

Some went to the extent of denying or concealing their national identity. Ilta (F, 19) said that she found people saying people describing their identity as 'based on where they live or where they're from . . . as kind of weird—I don't even count that as a part of my identity. I'm quite anti-nationalist. I hate it when people emphasise that they're from one specific country, because it doesn't necessarily describe who you are at all. . . . That's why when I lived in Austria, I didn't necessarily say that I was from Finland, I'd say I'm a girl who likes blah-blah-blah'.

Zhenya (F, 16), a Russian-speaking Estonian, described concealing her background when she was in Croatia. Asked where she was from, 'I said Estonia, and I saw from their eyes, "Where is that?" So it's easier to say that you are from Russia, they will understand quicker, there'll be no explanations. So, I just say I'm from Russia'. Rather similarly, a

Finnish young man said that in internet conversations, he would often describe himself as Russian, simply to avoid being asked where Finland was. Several Icelanders said they described themselves as Danish or Swedish in internet conversations so as not to enter discussions in which they were told that Iceland was an imaginary place or being asked if they had polar bears as pets.

In Lyon, Rolande (F, 12) suggested that 'if I was moving to another country like England or Switzerland, I would take their nationality, so that I would have more advantages, and feel closer to that country'.

There were also some young people who felt that they were denied having a nationality. In Finland, Terttu (F, 17), whose parents were Albanian Kosovan refugees from Serbia in the 1990s), said he felt 'why can't we say "I'm part of this earth" . . . I'm thinking am I Finnish, am I Albanian? What am I? I feel that I'm Albanian, but not many people understand the meaning of Kosovan Albanian—it's easier for me so say I'm Albanian, or from Kosovo—I keep hearing the question "Hey, why do you keep saying you're Kosovan Albanian, when you're from Kosovo"—but there's no nationality of Kosovenian'.

Having a fixed territorial identity, a strictly defined nationality, did not seem, to the majority, to be a matter of importance. Many were content to move between a self-selected repertoire of locational identities, from which they would select particularly appropriate definitions that fit: Agata (F, 17), an Albanian Kosovan born and living in Croatia, described the Croatian identity as being 'shown mostly in sports . . . OK, it's meaningless, sport, but when it's Croatia against Serbia, it's more than sport, it's a political issue—we have to win'. Older Croatians might be different: Petar (M, 14) saw them as having been 'through a lot of struggles throughout that period—they have lived in two different countries, two different rules—it's not the same'.

7. Conclusions

This article features contemporary discussions of young Europeans about their understandings of their geo-locational identities in two frameworks: the historical development of the nation over the past two centuries in the European context and explanations of how identity might be conceptualised: the psychosocial, the cultural, and the poststructural.

The pattern emerging from this is seen in the four sections of data above:

1. The historical evolution of state and nation in Europe since the early nineteenth century and the consequent codification of the attributes of nationality—either jus solis or jus sanguinis, with 'Strict Definitions' to solve anomalies, which combines elements of the psychosocial model of identity, in its apparent stability, and the socio-cultural in the construction of supporting histories and cultures (Section 3 above—historical origins of a singular nationality);
2. The sense of confusion displayed by many young people as they discuss the attributes of attachment: why they identify (or not) with a state, and the multiplicity of reasons they advance for this—a clear example of poststructural identities (Section 6.1);
3. The advancement by them of alternative qualities they anticipate in a state and its behaviour, centring on the values of human rights and democracy (Section 6.2—the qualities of geo-locational identities);
4. The attitudes towards the degree and nature of the identities that emerge from this (Section 6.3—attitudes towards geo-locational identities).

This conclusion draws these sections together, examining firstly the development of the 'strict definition' of national attributes as psychosocial and socio-cultural identities and then outlining the challenges that this definition presents to young Europeans, examining how young people have a sense of time and their experiences that make this a period of particularly formative identity/ies construction—and their prioritisation of the values of human rights and democratic processes.

This paper initially looked specifically at how young people discuss affiliations to a country or nation, initially within the historical context of the development of European nations in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the definitions of nationality based on a combi-

nation of birthplace and parentage. The young people's discussions identify a wide range of reasons for attachment (or not) to one or more states: these include parentage, birthplace, passports, culture, language, residence, etc., many of which are incompatible with each other. Their response to this is often to profess multiple identities, switching to use that most appropriate to a particular context or contingency. But they also offer a range of qualities or values that they expect a state to uphold and deliver, and are sometimes critical of states' behaviour in this area. The combination of these attributes and qualities leads to a range of attitudes towards a polity or polities, ranging from acceptance of their status to indifference. The explanation offered in this paper is that globalisation and migration have resulted in the inappropriateness of the birthplace/parentage model of the early/mid-twentieth-century model as globalisation and migration introduce new potential attributes for identity and the development of supranational codification and implementation of human rights, thus weakening the sovereignty of states. Together, these two factors reduce the perception of the requirement to develop a single overriding national identity. This combination of multiple identities and recognising the importance of human rights values is most commonly found amongst young people who have grown up in multicultural societies, often urban, and the corollary of this is that combination is least likely to be found among the older population in more rural, monocultural settlements.

The idea that there could be a stable definition of the identity of a political place or a strict definition of state or national identity has always appeared problematic and unlikely to be sustainable. In tracing the origins of the nationalist turn across Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, Clark's analysis of the emerging conceptions of nations is revealing: he writes, 'the word 'nation' underwent a dramatic process of semantic inflation' [31] (p. 524), then acquired an almost universal 'legitimizing power' [31] (p. 201), but many families were mixed who defined themselves by social status, not culture. 'Memory makers' created 'specific national narratives' [31] (p. 521). The formation of many European nations post-1918 might more properly be described as state building, and the determination to rule out dual nationalities as possibilities led to a situation that eventually was impossible to sustain, but the recognition of this impossibility nevertheless persisted, and in some areas still continues to persist. But this model of the nation takes on both psychosocial elements of identity in seeking to develop stable core identities and histories being written to sustain socio-cultural elements within this—often as a conscious venture.

The insistence on the 'strict definition' of birthplace or parentage has run into two major difficulties. Firstly, the migrations within Europe, and then from without, particularly from the former colonies of the various empires: these have resulted in a much wider range of potential attributes for nationality that transcend the apparent simplicity of the sui generis or sui sanguis, leading to more transient and situationist identities—which they see as flexible and multiple. The exception to this is often young people who have experienced war or other traumas (either their own or their parents), which may provoke, for some, more fixed and static expressions of identity.

Young people (and some older people, not considered here), from the evidence presented in these discussions, have taken on these challenges of multiple identities. They do so with a particular perspective of a very limited timescale of direct experiences that they can draw on—'recent' events to them are, at the ages of 10 to 20, confined to a very few years: the example of Margareta in Stockholm, talking about the changes she has seen in Sweden since 'when I was a kid' probably refer to perhaps just over the last 6 years (she was 16 at the time of the discussion). This brief timescale can also be seen in the comments of Haydée (F, 14) and Cécilia (F, 14) in a group in Lyon. Haydée argues, 'you can either be French by being born in France, or you can be born somewhere else, and have lived in France for a few years'; Cécilia, from Algeria and with Algerian parents, explained her situation: 'I have been living in France for two years, and for me, this is a long time—I'm fourteen years old'.

These periods seem very short to an adult but are felt as much longer—and sometimes as particularly significant for a young person in the development of their identities. Two

examples of this were Troels (M, 18) in Haslev, Denmark, and Pascaline (F, 15) in the French city of Lille. Troels described arriving at his current school two years earlier: 'I grew up in the countryside, where we didn't have any immigrants—I've never been really prejudiced against immigrants, I'd just never experienced it in the place I grew up. Then I came to the Gymnasium, and suddenly there are lots of them. At the start, I had some prejudices against some of them, because of the way they looked matched the ways I had seen on the news, as the "immigrant criminal" tends to be shown. I started by thinking about them as what I'd seen through the media—but then, experiencing being with them as normal human beings, just ordinary people like me and you, that gave a lot to me'. Pascaline's experience was very similar: 'before coming to this high school I used to live in the countryside, and I can say that there was literally no person of colour in the whole school—it was like "the evil that we don't talk about"—like they never see people from the Maghreb or eastern Europe working and being part of society. In their heads, they were this group of people camping in the country, not doing anything, and slowing the economy—yes, lack of communication. Just being stuck in your prejudices is really what's making it so wrong for France. I think it has really influenced me being French is a whole culture, but it's also many different cultures in one'. Her colleague, Blaise, replied: 'I was born and raised in the city, so in my school, when I was younger, it was the total opposite—it couldn't be further than what Pascaline said—there was a minority of people who were *not* from immigration backgrounds'. In Swiss Vevey, Béatrice (F, 15) reported that young people were used to foreigners: we were born and grew up among the foreigners who were already here—whereas our grandparents, the older generation, they weren't used to it. When they were young, they lived mostly among Swiss people'.

The continuing growth of migration, globally and within Europe, has made the sustainability of a strict definition of nationality as two alternatives—of either parentage or birthplace—untenable. Young people have responded to this, particularly in locations that are increasingly diverse, such as cities and urban areas. Young people, particularly those living in such areas, describe feeling differently about their identities than older people, often particularly their grandparents, and, quite frequently, their parents. Being old and having grown up in a monocultural area tends to explain—in many young people's perceptions—why they are racist, explicitly or implicitly. 'I don't think they realise that they are being racist . . .it's just the way that she was brought up', said Alvilda (F, 18) in København, explaining, not excusing, her mother's racist jokes.

The second difficulty for the 'strict definition' position is the rising salience of values of human rights and democracy, perhaps particularly within Europe. Human rights development and values challenge the hegemony of individual states, who (in Europe in particular) are required to act within the Council of Europe's *Fundamental Charter* [88], and, for EU members, the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* [89]. Many of the young people engaged in the discussions analysed here seem engaged with these values of diversity, of supporting people of different cultures, and of welcoming refugees. They also appear to be more aware of other diversities and rights—in gender, sexual orientation, body ornamentation, etc. Mårten (M, 15) in Stockholm explained the disparity between his physical and psychological genders, flashing his highly patterned varnished fingernails. In Faro, Imaculada (F, 17) reported overhearing older women castigating the appearance of two young women with hair dyed bright red: 'they should have their heads shaved'.

There were very strong opinions raised about the behaviours some governments were displaying towards the Syrian and other refugees in the late summer of 2015: fences were being built and borders closed. Such behaviour, several said, compromised the identity with Europe that they felt that they had held. 'I now feel less European—all the continents should work in a group; (Jamie, M, 11, Madrid); 'when some countries close their borders, I don't feel European' (Albane, F/17, Paris); 'Europe is one, but things like Hungary are not the same—the unity is destroyed. They are not respecting the principles' (Lola, 15, Montpellier); 'it's a big divergence from the European mindset, that we should help them'

(Jacinta, F, 17, Bellaterra). The dominant narrative—perhaps particularly of this generation, but also of many older people—was that refugees should be welcomed.

Human values override state attitudes and the perceived attitudes of an older generation. Many young people expected their own governments, and European political leaders, to uphold and lead on these. Discussing the inherent need for fairness, solidarity, and access to rights and freedoms and recognising that rights and freedoms may compete and decisions need to be made, particularly when rapid advances in understanding are being made—for example, in genetics and in artificial intelligence—values are not static and need mechanisms to adapt to new circumstances. Europe has a particular advantage in the way that the European Court of Human Rights operates to accept changes and adaptations (for example, in comparison to the 'originalist interpretation' of the USA's supreme court.

Young people are increasingly aware of the impossibility of maintaining birthplace and parentage as the sole defining markers attributing identity. Instead, many offer a kaleidoscope bricolage of competing identities that they selectively adapt to particular circumstances, as required—and find no sense of confusion in summoning this up. Their awareness of the ways in which the European agenda of rights affects the sovereignty of states allows presumed loyalties to be further extended, weakening purely national allegiances.

Both of these factors—recognising plural identities that are used to find an identity appropriate to the circumstance that is not inevitably tied to parentage or birth and the recognition of supra-national human rights as more fundamental than ties of nationality—are critical. Decoupling allows them to have a palette of identities that are freely available to be used in a contextual selection to fit the hour and the location.

The effect of this is a rejection of the certainties implied in the stable, relatively unchanging assurances that are implicit in psychosocial identities: many more changes need to be constructed to help recognise the lack of a stable core and the task of constructionists that need to be adopted. Equally, the socio-cultural school, with its emphasis on the social context, is useful.

We have partly come full circle, taking us back to the 'confusions' about nationality and identity seen in 1848 by Clark, but with the added complications of the subjugation of state autonomy to the global or continental rights and values agenda that have—and will continue to have to compromise the authority of the state. This should not be a cause for concern but a recognition of the validity of their concerns, which requires a response that recognises young peoples' voice and constructs a mechanism for this to be incorporated into both national and supranational levels.

Institutional Review Board Statement: This study received ethical approval from the London Metropolitan University, in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, in two stages: for the study in Phase 1 (between January 2010 and October 2013) (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, and Türkiye) on 15 October 2009, extended 22 September 2012, and for the study in Phase 2 (September 2014–January 2016 (Austria Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland) on 25 February 2014.

Informed Consent Statement: Written consent was obtained from all participants (young people) and from the parents or guardians of those under 16 years of age before each discussion took place. This included permission for the discussions to be recorded, transcribed, and then used in a range of unspecified academic publications, including articles and books, based on their anonymised contributions. These statements are held in the archives of the university.

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