



Salvador de Madariaga Institute

*Representations of Europe and the Nation:  
How do Spaniards see themselves  
as Nationals and Europeans?*

- Antonia Maria Ruiz Jiménez



**Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series  
Vol. 4. No. 13  
October, 2004**

**This publication is sponsored by the European Commission.**

## The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series

The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series is produced by the Jean Monnet Chair of the University of Miami, in cooperation with the Miami European Union Center.

These monographic papers address issues relevant to the ongoing European Convention which will conclude in the Spring of 2003. The purpose of this Convention is to submit proposals for a new framework and process of restructuring the European Union. While the European Union has been successful in many areas of integration for over fifty years, the European Union must take more modern challenges and concerns into consideration in an effort to continue to meet its objectives at home and abroad. The main issues of this Convention are Europe's role in the international community, the concerns of the European citizens, and the impending enlargement process. In order for efficiency and progress to prevail, the institutions and decision-making processes must be revamped without jeopardizing the founding principles of this organization. During the Convention proceedings, the Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Papers will attempt to provide not only concrete information on current Convention issues but also analyze various aspects of and actors involved in this unprecedented event.

The following is a list of tentative topics for this series:

1. The challenges of the Convention: the ability to govern a supranational Europe or the return to intergovernmental cooperation?
2. How will the member states figure in the framework of the Convention?
3. The necessity to maintain a community method in a wider Europe.
4. Is it possible for the member states to jeopardize the results of the Convention?
5. The member states against Europe: the pressures on and warnings to the Convention by the European capitals.
6. Is it possible that the Convention will be a failure? The effects on European integration.
7. Similarities and differences between the European Convention and the Philadelphia Convention of 1787.
8. The role of a politically and economically integrated Europe in the governance of the world.
9. How important is European integration to the United States today?
10. The failure of a necessary partnership? Do the United States and the European Union necessarily have to understand each other? Under what conditions?
11. Is it possible to conceive a strategic partnership between the United States, the European Union and Russia?
12. Russia: a member of the European Union? Who would be interested in this association?

Miami European Union Center  
University of Miami  
1000 Memorial Drive  
101 Ferré Building  
Coral Gables, FL 33124-2231  
Phone: 305-284-3266; Fax: 305-284-4406  
E-Mail: [jroy@miami.edu](mailto:jroy@miami.edu)  
Web: [www.miami.edu/eucenter](http://www.miami.edu/eucenter)

**Jean Monnet Chair Staff:**  
Joaquín Roy (Director)  
Aimee Kanner (Editor)  
Roberto Domínguez (Research Assistant)  
Nouray Ibryamova (Research Assistant)  
Markus Thiel (Research Assistant)  
Wendy Grenade (Associate Editor)  
Eloisa Vladescu (Editorial Assistant)

---

**Representations of Europe and the Nation:  
How do Spaniards see themselves as Nationals and Europeans?**

---

Antonia María Ruiz Jiménez\*

The Jean Monnet Chair  
University of Miami  
Miami, Florida  
October 2004

---

\*Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez is Professor of Political Science, Universidad Nacional a Distancia (UNED, Madrid). Affiliation and contact address: (1) Dpto. de Ciencia Política y de la Administración UNED, c/ Obispo Trejo s/n. 28040 Madrid [truiz@poli.uned.es](mailto:truiz@poli.uned.es) or (2) CEACS, Fundación Juan March, c/Castelló 77. 28006 Madrid [a.ruiz@ceacs.march.es](mailto:a.ruiz@ceacs.march.es). Tel: (+34)652478246.

# **Representations of Europe and the Nation: How do Spaniards see themselves as Nationals and Europeans?<sup>φ</sup>**

---

## **Introduction**

The core theme of this article is the relation between citizens' national identity and their European identity. After the European Union (EU) launched a series of policies aimed at creating a European identity at the end of the 1980s, the member states responded by including a paragraph in the Maastricht Treaty specifying that the Union should respect member states' national identities (Article F, point 1). This reaction, along with the introduction of the principle of subsidiarity and the rejection of the word "Federal", suggested that many member states saw the creation of a European identity as a potential threat to their own national identities and their citizens' national loyalties. Indeed, in the early 1990s national identity was used by the political elites as a means of justifying the right to independent statehood and sovereignty. Due to the close links between national identity and national independence, many scholars have argued that the European integration process could be seen as a threat to national identity (Höjelid 2001), and hence difficult to achieve.

A concept of identity, based on the existence of pre-political cultural groups (sharing cultural heritage, language, myths and symbols), as used by authors such as Smith (1992, 1999) and Østerud (1999) entails an almost "necessary" incompatibility between ethno-cultural national identities and a European identity. This alleged incompatibility derives from the idea that a hypothetical European identity would be founded on elements similar to those which gave birth to the national identities in the context of the formation of modern nation-states. However, as Smith sees it, the emergence of such a European identity is, at best, a difficult process, since Europe lacks myths and symbols that might wield "the people" of Europe into a cohesive whole.

In fact, however, European and national identities seem to coexist. Various Eurobarometer surveys have shown that sentiments of European identity are expressed alongside those of national identity. In other words, European identity does not appear to replace, or compete with, national identity. There are several possible explanations for this. An optimistic view of the possibilities for the future development of a European identity maintains that this could be based either on calculated individual self-interest

---

<sup>φ</sup> I am in debt to many people for their valuable comments and criticism to this article and earlier papers on which it is based. In particular, I would like to mention José Ignacio Torreblanca Payá, from the Universidad Nacional a Distancia (UNED), as well as Carmen González, Paloma Aguilar and Elisa Chuliá from the same institution. This work draws on work from two different research projects, the results of which were presented at the interim conference meetings of the EURONAT international research group, held in Athens in December 2002 and in Budapest in June 2003. I would also like to thank all the participants at both meetings for their suggestions. Finally, this paper was made possible by financial support from the European Commission V Framework Program (EURONAT project, contract no. HPSE-CT2001-00044) and UNED.

(Gabel 1998; Kaltenthaler and Anderson 2001; Fernández-Albertos and Sánchez-Cuenca 2001)<sup>1</sup> or on voluntary agreement over rules for peaceful, political co-existence, shared cultural norms and beliefs (Mancini 1998:8; Weiler 1999: 346; Kersbergen 1997), as opposed to the ethno-cultural elements that are more generally associated with national identities. Some authors see the increasing globalization of communications and the economy as fuelling a decline in popular interest in strictly national issues and increasing identification with transnational developments (Cerutti 1992). Others, such as Moravcsik (1998) and Millward (1992), in contrast, conclude that the EU integration process actually strengthens the nation-state.

Any discussion of the compatibility or otherwise of national and European identities should be informed by the recognition that individuals can hold multiple identities. Most of the authors mentioned above would admit this possibility. Some, however, would insist on distinguishing between individual and collective identities. In their view, while people can easily hold more than one individual identity (such as being a woman or of color), collective identities (such as national identities) are pervasive and persistent, implying that it is more difficult for more than one identity to be held at the same time or to change from one to another. Without defending that distinction, other authors have also pointed that people can share multiple *demoi*, each deriving from the same source of human attachment (something like “concentric circles” with different levels of intensity), or feel simultaneously attached to multiple *demoi* based on different subjective factors of identification.

Most of the theories mentioned above have been developed in the absence of corresponding empirical research. This article presents an empirical analysis of European and national identities in Spain and of the core elements of these identifications (ethno-cultural, civic, instrumental, symbolic-affective). More specifically, the article examines the extent to which national loyalty and identification with Europe and/or the EU are mutually exclusive, or whether they are compatible and intertwined with one another. It also considers the content of national and European identifications, evaluating the relevance of different elements in the representation of the nation and Europe.

## **Data and Methodology**

This article combines the qualitative analysis of 24 interviews with the quantitative study of three batteries of questions included in the standard Eurobarometer 57.2. Both data sources were specifically designed by the EURONAT international research group<sup>2</sup> to provide answers to exactly the type of questions posed in the Introduction.

The Standard Eurobarometer 57.2 (Spring 2002) contains one battery of questions measuring closeness to different in-groups and out-groups (including the

---

<sup>1</sup> These researchers have focused on the variable “support for the EU integration”. However, since there is a strong correlation between feeling European and supporting the EU, it is reasonable to think that what these authors have to say about support for integration also tells us something about European identities. On the other hand, their work is more empirical than the other research cited here.

<sup>2</sup> This is the acronym for the project “Representations of Europe and the nation in current and prospective member-states: media, elite and civil society”, financed by the EU (European Commission Research DG, Key Action Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base, contract No. HPSE-CT2001-00044).

nation, the EU, Europe and Central and Eastern Europe), as well as two batteries of questions measuring the most important elements of respondents' identification with the nation and Europe. Details about the samples can be found in the codebook ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/) <http://www.nsd.uib.no/cessda/europe.html>)

We will use measures of closeness to fellow nationals and closeness to EU citizens and Europeans as indicators of national and European identities. Closeness entails a sense of belonging to a community, and is "neutral" in that it does not imply that any of the possible components of identity mentioned in the previous section are assigned more importance than the others.

The two batteries of questions measuring the elements perceived as most relevant for identification with the nation and Europe include a set of 14 items, each relating to the different conceptions of identity mentioned in the Introduction. In the case of national identity, common culture, customs and traditions, common language, common ancestry and common history and destiny are clearly related to an ethnic-cultural conception of identity; common rights and duties and common political and legal systems are linked to a civic conception; a common system of social security/welfare is associated with an economic-instrumental notion of identity, as too, probably are national economy, national army and common borders. Other elements, such as national independence and sovereignty, national pride, national character and national symbols could be defined as implying a mainly affective-symbolic notion of identity. A similar classification of items can also be made in the case of European identity. A sense of sharing a common civilization, of belonging to a European society with many languages and cultures, a common ancestry and common history and destiny refer to the ethno-cultural components of identity; emerging common political and legal systems and common rights and duties relate more to a civic conception; a common system of social protection and the right to freedom of movement and residence are linked to an instrumental conceptualization of identity, as too, probably, are the emerging European union defense system, common borders and the single currency.<sup>3</sup> Pride in being European, European sovereignty, or the European Union and a set of EU symbols are more affective-symbolic.

In these last batteries of questions, the respondent had the option to respond "I do not feel national/European". In such cases, the interviewer did not proceed with the remaining questions in each battery. Qualitative interviews were carried out with Spanish ordinary citizens in Madrid between January and May 2003. The sample was selected taking into account respondents' gender, the population of their place of residence, educational level, and personal experience in terms of having lived, worked or studied in another EU member state (for at least one year). Interviews took between 35 and 55 minutes and were semi-structured. The interviewer started by explaining what the interview was about, emphasizing that the researchers were interested in the respondents' feelings, opinions and experiences, rather than their knowledge.

---

<sup>3</sup> These items could also have an important affective-symbolic dimension. More specifically, a single European currency may have a strong symbolic value "because a country's money is a symbol of its sovereignty. Support for the EMU and the euro is a crucial test case for whether and why European citizens may be willing to transfer power from the nation-state to European institutions, and it has important implications for the future direction of institution-building within the European Union" (Kaltenthaler and Anderson 2001: 141).

Respondents were also directly asked if and why they felt Spanish and/or European. Respondents were invited to give their general opinions about Europe and the EU. Following on from these very general topics, the interviewer raised particular issues if these had been mentioned spontaneously during the initial responses. The interviewer abided by the respondents' narratives and adapted the order and type of questions to the needs of each of the individual interviewees.

The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed using content analysis techniques assisted by appropriate qualitative analysis computer software (ATLAS/ti). In this research, the content of interviews are treated as a partial reflection of an objective reality which is nevertheless mediated by the social context that the respondents were talking about. We do not assume that our respondents constitute a representative sample of Spanish citizens on the variables on which they have been selected. Indeed, our aim was to maximize the possibility of different discourses emerging. Nevertheless we consider that these variables may have an impact on our respondents' perceptions, feelings, discursive tactics, etc., which is also explored in this article. We do not posit the validity of our findings other than for our sample, but we do consider the congruencies between our survey data and interview data which reinforce each another, and therefore, boost the reliability and validity of the findings.

### **Being Spanish**

When asked why they felt Spanish, only a small minority (2.8 percent) of our quantitative survey respondents stated that they did not feel so. Accordingly, most of our qualitative interview respondents declared that they did feel Spanish, linking this feeling to the territory (Spain) where they were born or have lived most of their lives. However, immediately after stating their identity, a large majority used the conjunction "but" to reject any link with "nationalism" or "patriotism". In our opinion, this behavior is due to the fact that Spanish nationalism is identified with the country's recent authoritarian past. Because of the Francoist dictatorship, and the abuse of Spanish nationalism both to curtail Spaniards' political and civil rights, but also to deny a national identity and cultural rights to Basques and Catalonians, a majority of Spaniards feel uneasy about any kind of praise of the Spanish nation, its national symbols or its historical achievements. Therefore, the representation of Spain is not easy for many Spaniards, who constantly feel obliged to draw a distinction between (legitimate) national pride and (old-fashioned) nationalism (see Ruiz Jiménez 2002).

(...) I feel Spanish because I was born here and I speak Spanish, *but I do not feel Spaniard in the typical sense of the word* (ea1).

(...) I feel Spaniard because I was born in Spain, but I do not feel..., it is my country and I am proud of my country, I like my country, I like where I live (...); well, there is also another, different type of identification with the mother country, *but I do not practice it* (ea2).

(...) I do feel Spanish and I have a Spanish identity, *but I am also critical of Spain* (ea12).

[To feel Spanish] is an honor, it is where you are born, and where you have your roots, and where you have formed your family; and you feel proud of where you live, who you live with and with the people you live with (...). *It seems that people are ashamed to say that they are Spaniards* (ea18).

[You feel Spanish] because you were born here and you fight..., a little bit, for your country, and if there were a conflict, or whatever, you would fight for what is yours (...) (ea23).

Some people declared that they did not feel Spanish at all, but as was also the case in our quantitative survey, they represented only a small minority. In some cases, we could interpret this as indicating their stronger negative image and rejection of nationalism. Those who did feel Spanish conceded similarly great importance to all the items of national identification tested in our quantitative survey research.

Nevertheless, Table 1 and Figure 1 show that our survey was able to capture small but significant differences among items. Thus, common culture, customs and traditions, in the first place, and common language, second, were the items agreed to be most important for national identification; in contrast, national army, national independence and sovereignty, national pride and national symbols, were held to be a little less important. These latter elements are deeply linked in Spaniards' consciences with the country's authoritarian past which is strongly rejected in Spain. Civic components of national identities (common rights and duties in our survey), emphasized by contemporary Spanish elites, are also important for Spanish citizens, over and above other ethno-cultural elements such as common ancestries or history. In the context of the theories discussed in the Introduction, Spanish identity would be defined by a mixture of ethno-cultural and civic elements and the lesser importance of symbolic components.

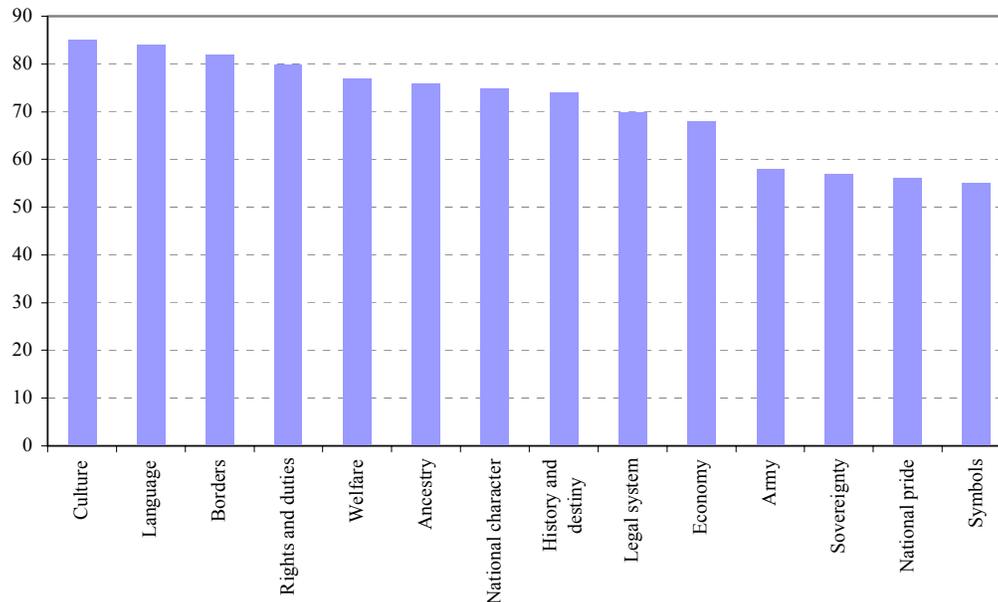
**Table 1. Meanings of National Identity in Spain  
(Eurobarometer 57.2, 2002)<sup>1</sup>**

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>mean</b>
2) A common culture, customs and traditions	2	6	43	50	3.39
3) A common language	2	6	36	56	3.47
4) Common ancestry	2	10	42	46	3.31
5) A common history and common destiny	3	10	42	45	3.29
6) A common political and legal system	4	11	41	44	3.26
7) Common rights and duties	3	7	40	50	3.37
8) A common system of social security/welfare	3	8	40	48	3.33
9) A national economy	3	13	38	46	3.27
10) A national army	8	13	37	42	3.13
11) Common borders	3	6	40	51	3.39
12) A feeling of national pride	8	14	36	42	3.12
13) National independence and sovereignty	7	14	38	40	3.11
14) Our national character	5	8	38	50	3.32
15) Our national symbols (the flag, the national anthem, etc.)	10	13	36	42	3.09

<sup>1</sup>. Frequency distribution (in percentages) and mean of items in question Q.26 (Different things or feelings are crucial to people in their sense of belonging to a nation. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? "I feel (SPANISH) because I share with my fellow (SPANIARDS)...").

SOURCE: Eurobarometer 57.2.

**Figure 1. Spaniards' net agreement with the importance of different items for their national identification**



We also asked our qualitative interviewees why they felt Spanish. Reflecting the strong presence of national stereotypes, our respondents identified the “Spanish way of life” as the strongest determinant of Spanish identity. The answers enabled us to clarify the meaning of the item common culture, customs and traditions in our survey research. This way of life could be summarized as a *leisure culture*, the main feature of which would be the understanding that work is an instrument to obtain the resources needed to live a happy, easy, care-free life. From this perspective, the fundamental objective seems to be the use and enjoyment of time spent outside the workplace. In accordance with this particular way of life, our interviewees divided Europe into two different “cultural spheres”; they feel closer to the Mediterranean geographical area, while they perceive Northern European countries (including France) as belonging to a different sphere. They identify Northern Europe, again resorting to widely-available stereotypes, as a region in which private life (lived out in the domestic space) takes precedence over public life (social relations outside the workplace or home), and also as one in which working life takes precedence over the enjoyment of free time; Northern Europeans are seen as more “sober”, “serious” and “austere”.

(...) We know how to live, that stereotype, “Spaniards know how to live”, that is true, we know how to live. When you see countries where at six in the afternoon (...) it is already night, that there is no life, that there is no happiness, that everything is dead, you go to bars and everywhere is empty (...). We live very well [in Spain] (ea3).

(...) They are less open, they are cold, they do not develop strong relations, there are even neighbors, neighbors, who do not talk to each other, they have different schedules, they go to bed early, at night almost everyone is already in bed. (...) They do not know how to enjoy life as we do here [in Spain] (ea7).

When I say Spanish I should say Mediterranean instead, that is, I would respond “I am Mediterranean”, if that were possible. I even see a difference within the European Union between Mediterranean countries and non-Mediterranean countries, big cultural differences (...) (ea9).

You have to consider how we eat, the hot weather, the people in the streets, in the bars (ea24).

Language is also an element that found a strong consensus among the qualitative interviewees when it came to specifying what made them feel Spanish. It was also the second most important element in our survey research. Again, however, our respondents emphasized Spain’s linguistic diversity, which they said they accepted and respected, as opposed to what happened during the dictatorship.

(...) I feel Spanish because (...) I speak Spanish (ea1).

(...) Language is almost the strongest element in forming your identity (...), and, besides, I think also that, obviously, the literature...(...). The language is something that will mark you during your whole life, and wherever you go, when you are in a foreign country and you find a fellow Spaniard it is a signal of identity (ea11).

When I speak about a language, I mean Castilian; I respect other minor languages spoken in Spain, but I think that Castilian is our language, and that this must be Castilian, and the Castilian language is very important, it is spoken by millions of people around the world and we should look after it better than we actually do, because we are using more and more English words all the time (ea13).

In contrast to these elements above, but in line with the results of our quantitative survey, most of our qualitative interviewees found it difficult to identify with national symbols (the flag or anthem). Even if they acknowledge that these symbols do represent Spain, they are associated with a series of historical and ideological elements (specifically, to the Francoist dictatorship and, more particularly, to the victors in the Spanish Civil War) that make it difficult for our interviewees to identify with these symbols. Only in a few concrete situations, both the flag and the anthem, work as collective symbols of identification for all Spaniards. That is, specially, when Spanish citizens are in a foreign country or when Spain is competing in international sports events.

Maybe in a sports competition (...), sport is the only thing which is related to the anthem and with the flag (...). I am aware that it is a symbol and in some countries patriotism is more sentimental, but, for some reason, in Spain (...) patriotism has nothing to do with the motherland (ea1).

As a symbolic icon [the flag], I do not think that it means the same as in other countries. I mean, I have lived in the US and for them the flag is their icon, it is the most important thing (...). It is not the same thing with the Spanish flag. I agree that it is my flag and I respect it but (...) we have not been taught to love our flag (...). The Spanish anthem is linked to the political Right alone, and only the Right (ea3).

I don't think it is very important, I know the anthem (...) but it is not a patriotic thing (...). And same goes for the flag, (...) outside Spain maybe (...), but you know that in your own country you don't have to show anyone, you don't have to brag about it (ea19).

The problem with the Spanish flag, obviously, is that it is identified with the political Right, but the Spanish flag is not of the Right, it is the flag of Spain. But the thing, clearly, is that it has been the flag of the Right for such a long time that it is still identified as such (...) (ea24).

Even a member of the Civil Guard (a militarized police force dependent on the army) stated:

I could tell you something, and I might be doing wrong by saying this given my job, but I do not feel those things [the flag and anthem] (...). When I am abroad and I hear the Spanish national anthem, then I feel warm inside (...) and when you see the flag (...). But then, now I am here [in Spain] and I do not pay attention to them (...). To me, symbols are meaningless (ea7).

In short, both qualitative interview and quantitative survey respondents coincided in stressing various ethno-cultural elements as the main basis for their national identity (common culture, customs and traditions, as well as a common language). At the same time, they dismissed symbolic components (the flag and anthem) as the least important. Civic components of identities were given medium level importance in our survey research, but were not mentioned in our interviews.

## **Being European**

### ***At the same time and at no cost?***

Asked why did they feel European, only a small minority (3.1 percent) of our quantitative survey respondents stated that they did not feel so. This implies that most of them felt Spanish and Europeans at one and the same time. In fact, the cross-tabulation of closeness to different groups of people shows that Spanish citizens see national and European identities as being compatible, some 61 percent of the respondents stating that they feel simultaneously very close to their fellow nationals and to Europeans. There is also a positive correlation ( $\text{taub}_b r = .277^{**}$ ) between pride in being Spanish and pride in being European.<sup>4</sup> Belot (2003) has also used qualitative data to show that younger people who have a positive image of their own countries find it easier to identify simultaneously with Europe than those who do not. Nevertheless, in comparative terms, Spaniards are still more attached to their national identity than their European identity,

---

<sup>4</sup> Eurobarometer 57.1 (Spring 2002).

with an index of 0.718.<sup>5</sup> That is, ties to the nation are still seen as stronger than bonds to Europe, thereby giving support to the theory of concentric circles of identification mentioned in the Introduction.

Our qualitative interviews show surprisingly similar results. Most of our respondents stated that they did feel European. Most declare themselves to be Europeans when distinguishing themselves from people from other countries or cultures, or when their national identity feels too narrow. Nevertheless, their European identity was almost always identified as secondary or weaker than interviewees' national, Spanish identity. But both were also considered compatible.

(...) I feel Spanish, but European too. First, I consider myself Spaniard, one hundred per cent (...) and then I consider myself European. Yes, I also feel European, but that feeling does not have deep roots (...) (ea3).

(...) First you go through your country and then comes Europe (...). Before European [I feel] Spanish (ea5).

First and foremost I feel Spanish, over..., yes, I feel European because that is obvious, we are in Europe, we belong to Europe (...). I am a European citizen, but before that, I am a Spanish citizen, that is, I think you must place "I feel Spanish" before "European", because I share more things with Spaniards than with Europeans (...). (ea13).

I feel Spanish, but that does not mean that I do not feel European, that is, I... I do not use my identity as an obstacle, to distinguish myself from others (ea15).

As for the potential threat that the emergence of a European identity might represent for national identity and loyalty to the nation, the qualitative interviews provide us with more information than our survey research. The process of European integration is seen in different ways. For some interviewees it is as a potentially enriching process, while for others it represents a threat to national identity. The latter link this danger more generally to the supposed impact of cultural and economic globalization on Spain and Europe.

(...) It [the EU] could enrich us. It is up to us to maintain, or not to maintain, our Spanish traditions. If we allow different ways of life, that would damage ours, to seduce us, I don't know, like swapping our customs of sitting down together at the table for one hour and having a half an hour nap for fast food... Because that depends on us and, besides, that is not European, it is American, that is, it is up to us (ea2).

I think that probably we will be losing things that are basic, such as our origins, each country's traditions, won't we, if we are adding slowly? In fact, in the Spanish language, you can see it happening, little by little in the dictionary there are more and more English words, you know? Therefore I think that fundamental things will be lost (ea7).

---

<sup>5</sup> This is the median value obtained on subtracting the median identification with the EU from the median identification with the nation. A positive value indicates that attachment to the nation is stronger than attachment to the EU.

I think that there must be a European identity, but I also regret it, and I think that this..., clearly this is only the education that I have received, I regret that the Spanish identity will be lost, in the sense that, if everything, is globalized, if everything is Europeanized, if everything... (...). But I think that it is necessary to have a sense of being European (...) if that implies losing our Spanish identity, I do not know; I mean, I think that we will feel more European, and we will be European, as times goes on, nevertheless I think that Spain will resist the idea of losing its Spanish identity (ea10).

The disappearance of the national currency, in particular and contrary to the situation in other countries (above all the UK), is not experienced as a threat to national sovereignty or independence. The *peseta* is missed only in some cases because it is still easier for some Spaniards to make calculation in the old currency.

I do not think that anyone feels tied sentimentally..., although it could happen because we are peculiar, - to his/her currency; that is, I think it means absolutely nothing, I do not think it has the same significance as a language (ea10).

Mental calculations are still done in *pesetas* and so I still have it in my mind, but I do not miss it. In the end the currency is only a way of paying for things and nothing more, to me it doesn't matter if notes are one colour or another (ea13).

It is not that I miss it, it is that we are used to it (...), maybe older people would have more problems (ea17).

This kind of discourse, in which European identities are not seen as a threat to Spanish identity or loyalty to the state, accords with the messages given by Spain's political elites (Jauregui 2002; Ruiz Jiménez 2002), which may of course have influenced citizens' opinions. During the transition to democracy, joining the EU was seen as a means of leaving the past behind, breaking out of economic and cultural backwardness and isolation; Spain's largest political parties, the Socialist PSOE and the conservative PP, have both based much of their prestige and propaganda on their "successes" within Europe (this is the case, for example, of the PP with respect to Spain's membership of the common currency).

### **What does it mean to be European?**

As can be seen in Table 2 and Figure 2, those who did identify themselves as Europeans in our quantitative survey research distinguished between a small set of items considered important for their European identification, and another larger set of items with less bearing on this identity.

According to the findings shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, the most important dimension of citizens' representations of Europe is the economic one. The single currency, followed by freedom of movement and residence throughout the EU, are the two most important items in Spaniards' identification with their fellow Europeans. This accords with the conclusions of a recent qualitative study on perceptions of the EU carried out by the European Commission (2001: 58). Rights and duties also figure prominently among the components of Spanish citizens' identification with Europe (Table 2), which is congruent with the important role that the democratic elites have

assigned to European integration as a means of modernizing the country and consolidating democracy during the transition period (Jauregui 2002). In contrast, symbolic elements are far less significant. Common ancestry, European symbols and pride in being European are the items considered least important for Spaniards' identification with Europe. In relation to the theories discussed in the Introduction, this finding provides evidence in favor of the idea that attachment to different identities is more feasible when they derive from different sources. In this case, European identity is basically instrumental, while national identity is more ethnic-cultural. The importance of civic elements in both kinds of identities is also relevant when accounting for the compatibility between them.<sup>6</sup>

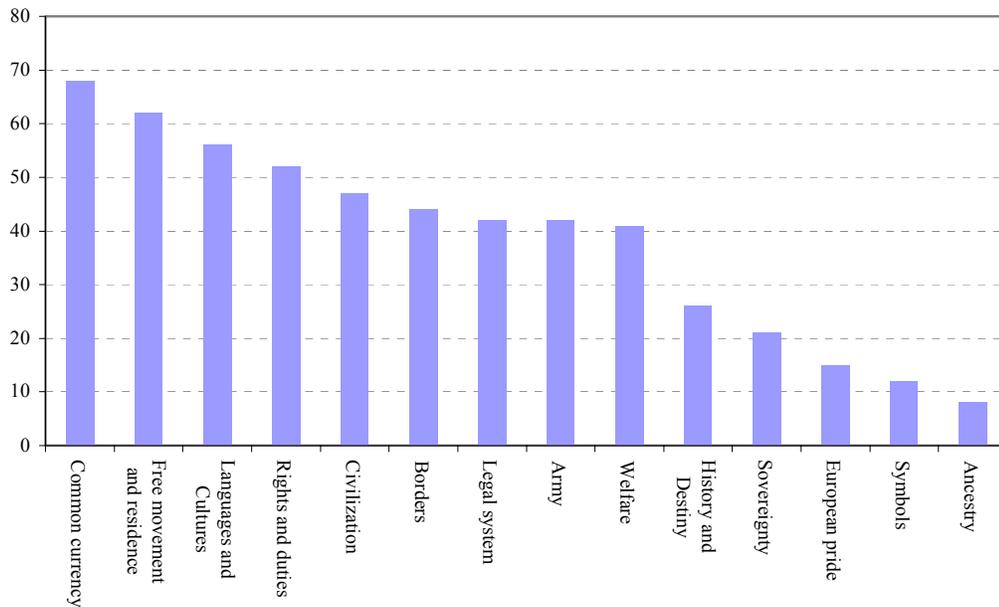
**Table 2. Meanings of European Identity among Spaniards  
(Eurobarometer 57.2., 2002)<sup>1</sup>**

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Mean
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
2) A common civilization	6	20	56	17	2.84
3) Membership of a European society with many languages and cultures	5	17	56	22	2.95
4) Common ancestry	11	35	42	12	2.56
5) A common history and a common Destiny	8	29	48	15	2.69
6) The EU institutions and an emerging common political and legal system	7	22	53	18	2.82
7) Common rights and duties	5	19	54	22	2.93
8) Common system of social protection within the EU	8	22	51	20	2.82
9) The right to free movement and residence in any part of the EU	5	14	51	30	3.07
10) An emerging EU defense system	8	21	52	19	2.82
11) Common borders	6	22	52	20	2.85
12) A feeling of pride in being European	11	31	44	13	2.59
13) Sovereignty of the EU	10	29	47	13	2.63
14) A common EU currency	5	11	50	34	3.13
15) A set of EU symbols (flag, Anthem, etc.)	15	29	43	13	2.53

<sup>1</sup> Frequency distribution (in percentages) and mean of items in question Q.27 ("Different things or feelings are crucial to people in their sense of belonging to Europe. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? "I feel European because I share with my fellow Europeans ..."). Source: Eurobarometer 57.2.

<sup>6</sup> Ruiz Jiménez *et al.* (2004) have shown an interesting positive correlation between the importance of civic elements both for national and European identities and a greater compatibility. Thus, Italy and Spain are the two countries with the highest proportion of citizens who mentioned civic elements among the five most important elements for their national as well as their European identity, and they are also the countries where the net percentage of population with dual identities is highest.

**Figure 2. Spaniards' net agreement with the importance of different components of their European identity**



Our qualitative interview research helped us clarify what the respondents were thinking about when they answered the questions about the most important elements for their European identification. From our qualitative interviews it is clear that most people distinguish between Europe and the EU. Few people use both terms as synonyms, and those who do are mainly those who are less knowledgeable about the EU. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees, when thinking about this question, saw Europe as a larger, earlier and different entity to the EU. Europe was perceived in more historical and cultural terms, while the EU is mainly understood as an economic and political project promoted by the political elites with the aim of competing with the United States.

Europe is a continent, a group of countries (...) I think it is the cradle of civilization, isn't it? from where all the ideas that have later spread throughout the world have come from. (...) The EU is a group of countries with several agreements (...). There are European countries which do not belong to the EU (ea2).

I think that the EU is more a project, and specially at this moment in time, is a project to compete with the US (...) and, in contrast, Europe, in my head, is a much more beautiful idea that implies culture, history, the origin of civilization (...) (ea10).

The EU does not cover the whole of Europe (...). Not all the countries that belong to Europe belong to the EU, as a personal experience, people who belong to the EU have rights and advantages (ea12).

Europe is a larger concept. The EU, well, somehow, it has more economic connotations (...). Historically Europe consists of more countries than the EU now has (...). Eastern countries have always been part of Europe, thus... simply, there are more people and more countries in Europe than in the EU (ea19).

Europe does not suggest to me the EU, on the contrary, Europe is larger (...). There are Eastern countries, Russia, I don't know, it is much more larger (...). The idea would be that all will join the EU, but that would take a long time... (ea21).

It seems, therefore, that our quantitative survey respondents were speaking as citizens of the EU when stressing the economic dimension of their European identity. In this sense, our qualitative interview study also shows a conception of the EU as an economic and political project; the EU is seen as the construction of a new world power able to match the United States, and, in this sense, it is closely tied to the introduction of a common currency and the disappearance of internal borders. The euro is perceived as a practical and logical consequence of a more integrated EU; it works as a symbol of collective identity at the same time as it allows Europe to compete economically with the United States. The disappearance of borders has less symbolic meaning, but is also seen as another practical and logical consequence of the European integration process.

The euro has been an important stepping stone in the [construction] of European identity because now we identify with a currency, it is the same as in the US, they also have a single currency, the dollar (ea6).

This is a logical consequence, isn't it? If we want to build up a Union in the economy, in society, in everything, I think... (...). Exactly the same as the US, which has the dollar, we could have a single currency that we tried earlier with the ECU (...) and I see this as a logical consequence (ea21).

The EU implies many advantages: traveling freely, working in different countries (...) (ea10).

The perception of the EU in instrumental terms is further enhanced by the vision given of the European project by the Spanish media, which assigns it a primarily economic function. At the time, the launch of the euro, in particular, was presented as the tool that would bring economic growth and give Europe a leading role in the international arena (Ruiz Jiménez 2002). This vision is shared by citizens, but not all the interview respondents who declared a European identity thought that their country, or they themselves, have benefited from EU membership. Instrumental and ethno-cultural reasons are more mixed here than in our survey research. In very general terms, our respondents valued the EU mainly because it had allowed Spain to overcome its isolation from Europe after the dictatorship and become a modern country; or they believe that things would be worse had Spain not entered the EU.

If Spain were not..., if it were not..., then I don't know, it would seem to me like when Spain was in the period when... when Franco was alive, totally isolated, economically as well as politically, structurally, I have lived through that period (...). If Spain were not in the common market we would not belong to Europe, there would have been many more problems (ea3).

Precisely because of trade and because now really we do not feel isolated from other countries as before, before we were isolated (ea18).

However, on more practical issues, they think that Spain has only benefited from belonging to the EU with respect to the question of terrorism. In other important areas of national interests (such as agriculture and fisheries, immigration or Spanish-Morocco relations) the opinions are mixed or clearly negative.

In the Spanish countryside, in agriculture, Spain has had to concede a lot, to make too many concessions I think, in the agricultural field, to get into the Economic Union (ea1).

I think that there are areas in which it has been damaging, for example, in agriculture (ea22).

(...) It has damaged us, limiting traditional crops, such as wine, olive trees, etc., etc... hasn't it? (...). If we were not in the EU we would not have had to sacrifice a lot of livestock, we could have [negotiated and reached agreement] again with [Morocco] (ea5).

It is the Union which negotiates, but I don't know, clearly, if they do it well or not, it seems that they do not negotiate very well and that this has damaged Spain [for example] in the fishing agreements with Morocco (ea18).

It is interesting to note that even though our interview respondents did not base their European identities on instrumental considerations alone, attaching some importance to some ethno-cultural components (identifying themselves as inhabitants of Europe rather than citizens of the EU), they still hold dual identities. This contradicts the hypothesis that European identities would not emerge as long as national ethno-cultural identities remain strong. It also undermines the assumption that European identities cannot be based on ethno-cultural elements of identity.

## **Conclusions**

First, the research carried out for this paper confirms the ethno-cultural basis of Spanish national identity. This, of course, comes as little surprise. More significant, perhaps, is the evidence, drawn from both survey and interview research, which highlights Spaniards' uneasiness about Spanish nationalism and their negative identification with their national symbols, due to their linkage with our authoritarian past. Place of birth and residence, language, and common culture, customs and traditions (perceived in a rather stereotypical fashion) are the most important elements in Spaniards' national identity.

Second, both the respondents to our survey and our interviewees consider that European and Spanish identities are compatible. They also coincide in describing their European identity as secondary and weaker than their Spanish identity. Only a minority of our interview respondents considered that the development of a European identity might threaten national identity or sovereignty.

Third, and probably a more substantive conclusion, we explain this compatibility between these two identities, in part at least, because of the different sources of attachment to each identity. While national identity is mainly ethno-cultural (Smith 1995), European identity (understood as being a citizen of the EU) is generally founded on instrumental considerations, supporting in part arguments put forward by authors such as Gabel (1998) and Fernández-Albertos and Sánchez-Cuenca (2001). This argument was more strongly supported in our survey research. Our interviews, on the other hand, presented us with a more complex, but very interesting, picture. Our interview respondents distinguished between Europe, defined largely in historical and cultural terms, and the European Union, defined above all in instrumental terms. However, even when respondents recognized the importance of the benefits of different EU-level policies, their European identity was not based on those instrumental considerations alone. In fact, our respondents think that Spain has only benefited from EU membership in relation to the issue of terrorism. Opinions are divided or clearly negative with respect to other important national issues (including agriculture and fisheries, immigration or Spanish-Moroccan relations).

Therefore, we reject the argument put forward by authors such as Smith (1995, 1999) and Østerud (1999), who have stressed that the emergence of a European identity would be difficult, if not impossible, as long as national ethnic-cultural identities remain strong. In Spain, European and national identities are compatible even though national identity remains strong and based on ethno-cultural elements. As for the relation between them, we find support for the hypothesis of concentric circles of identification as well as for the hypothesis of attachment derived from different sources. That is, our survey research suggests that Spaniards hold simultaneous identities, and that their attachments to each derive from different sources: above all from ethno-cultural elements, in the case of national identity, and instrumental components in the case of European identity (understood as being a citizen of the EU). Meanwhile, our interviewees showed dual identities, even though their European identities also had an important ethno-cultural dimension and they had a weaker instrumental sense of European identity (in this case understood mainly as being inhabitants of Europe).

Although we found that instrumental considerations constitute quite a significant dimension of Spaniards' European identity, our findings contradict the hypothesis put forward by Fernandez-Albertos and Sánchez-Cuenca (2001) which states that the people who are most likely to display European identities are those who are disaffected with their national institutions. Our research also challenges the notion that the emergence of a European identity implies an erosion of national loyalties or identities (Davies 1996; Seton-Watson 1985; Wallace 1990; Papcke 1990; Llobera 1994; Deflem and Pample 1996; Carey 2002). As already mentioned, both in our survey and interview research, respondents' attachment to the nation was stronger and more important than their European identities.

These findings about the compatibility of Spaniards' national and European identities should be seen in the light of Spain's transition to democracy and the public discourse developed by political elites and disseminated by the mass media. Europe has been seen in fairly positive terms as Spain's "inspiring other", both due to the democratic values that it would help to consolidate as well as the economic development that it would bring. Accordingly, elites have always defended the compatibility of Spanish and European identities and interests (Jaúregui 2002; Ruiz Jiménez 2002).

## References

- Belot, C. 2003. “‘We Europeans?’ From European Political Community to a European Demos, from a European Identity to National Identities and Backwards: Some New Developments Towards Assessing EU Social Legitimacy”. Proceedings of the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops (Edinburgh 2003).
- Carey, S. 2002. “Undivided Loyalties. Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?”. *European Union Politics* 3(4): 387-413.
- Cerutti, F. 1992. “Can there be a Supra National Identity?”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 18 (2): 147-62.
- Davies, N. 1996. *Europe: A History*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Deflem, S. and F. C. Pampel. 1996. “The Myth of Postnational Identity: Popular Support for European Unification”. *Social Forces* 75(1): 119-143.
- European Commission. 2001. *Perceptions of the European Union. A Qualitative Study of the Public's Attitudes to and Expectations of the European Union in the 15 Member States and in 9 Candidate Countries*.  
([http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/quali/ql\\_perceptions\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/quali/ql_perceptions_summary_en.pdf)).
- Fernández-Albertos, J. and I. Sánchez-Cuenca. 2001. “Factores Políticos y Económicos en el Apoyo a la Integración Europea”. Unpublished manuscript (Fundación Juan March, Madrid).
- Gabel, M. J. 1998. *Interest and the Integration. Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Höjelid, S. 2001. “European Integration and the Idea of European Identity: Obstacles and Possibilities”. Proceedings of the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops (Grenoble 2001).
- Jáuregui, P. 2002. *Europe as a Symbol of Modernity, Democracy, and Renewed International Prestige*. Project report prepared for the EURONAT  
(<http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/EURONAT/Projects.shtml>)
- Kaltenthaler, K. C. and C. Anderson. 2001. “Europeans and Their Money: Explaining Public Support for the European Currency”. *European Journal of Political Research* 40(2): 347-361.
- Kersbergen, K. Van. 1997. “Double Allegiance in European Integration: Publics, Nation-States, and Social Policy”. *European University Institute Working Paper* 97/15.
- Llobera, J. R. 1994. *The God of Modernity. The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Mancini, G. F. 1998. “Europe: The Case for Statehood”. *Harvard Jean Monnet Working Paper* 6/98.
- Millward, A. S. 1992. *The European Rescue of the Nation State*. London: Routledge.
- Moravcsik, A. 1998. *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina To Maastricht*. Cornell University Press.
- Østerud, Ø. 1999. *Globaliseringsringen og Nasjonalstaten*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal.
- Ruiz Jiménez, A. M. 2002. *Nation and Europe in Spanish Public Discourses: a Comparative Analysis of Press, TV and Parties*. Project Report prepared for EURONAT.  
(<http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/Research/EURONAT/Projects.shtml>)

- Ruiz Jiménez, A. M., *et al.* 2004. "European and National Identities in Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components". *European Integration on line Papers*. <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/>
- Seton-Watson, H. 1985. "What is Europe, Where is Europe? From Mystique to Politique". *Encounter* LXV(2): 9-17.
- Smith, A. D. 1992. "National identity and the idea of European unity", *International Affairs*, 68(1): 55-76.
- Smith, A. D. 1995. *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Cambridge, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Smith, A. D. 1999. *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Wallace, W. 1990. "Foreign Policy and National Identity in the United Kingdom". *International Affairs* 67(1): 65-80.
- Weiler, J. H. H. 1999. *The Constitution of Europe. "Do the New Clothes Have an Emperor?" and other essays on European Integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.