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For Love of Europe: Ethics and the Case for Euro-Patriotism

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Abstract

Political philosophers of the Left have recently developed a case for supranational patriotism as a basis for a democratic political union of Europe. But should citizens be asked to cultivate a 'love of a world region'? This essay offers an ethical assessment of the case for 'Euro-patriotism'. Two versions are discussed: (i) the original, neo-kantian argument for Euro-patriotism as 'European constitutional patriotism'; (ii) the final, moderately communitarian argument for Euro-patriotism based on 'quasi-national European identity'. Drawing on a dualist ethical perspective that advances the moral significance of patriotic loyalty and global justice, the author claims that serious moral objections can be raised to both versions. Ethically, the case for Euro-patriotism seems inadequate.

1 Introduction

"Is it sacrilege to ask that each European should have the feeling of belonging to a Community that would be, so to speak, his second patrie?" Posing this question during his speech in Bruges in October 1989, former president of the European Commission and fervent European federalist Jacques Delors expressed his faith in a Europe-wide super-patriotism (1992: 332, translation mine). While knowing fully well that only few Europeans felt that way, Delors nevertheless believed it was necessary to provoke his fellow Europeans to consider seriously the moral duty to raise their sense of solidarity beyond the level of the nation-state. For "if one refuses to do so (...), European construction will not succeed", lacking the "soul and popular rooting without which every collective adventure is doomed to fail" (ibid.). Thus, ample two years before the Maastricht Treaty marked the foundation of the European Union (EU), left-wing politician Delors made a passionate plea for what may be called 'Euro-patriotism' (Jacobs & Maier 1997).

In this essay, I examine the question of whether being Euro-patriotic may properly be regarded as a moral obligation for citizens of European states. During the past decade, political philosophers of the Left appear to have

turned Delors' vision into an alternative political theory of European unification. As the ethics of this theory will be evaluated below, I begin by offering a reconstruction of its emergence.

Starting-point for the case for Euro-patriotism is the thesis of the 'democracy deficit' and, consequently, the thesis of the 'death of functionalism'. Put briefly, the democracy deficit thesis consists of two propositions. First, a process of fundamental democratization is lacking in European politics. There is no high democratic politics in the sense of a European constitutional assembly. There is no low democratic politics in the sense of fierce competition between political parties within a European spectrum with clear cleavages, public discussions and coherent coalitions. Second, such a European regent politics is a politically intolerable state of affairs.

The death of functionalism thesis also states two claims. First, the functionalist method of European integration (a gradual spillover of European cooperation from one policy area to another) may have been very effective for economic integration in the past, but it fails to finalize political integration. Second, functionalism conceived as a prescriptive and political theory of European integration is dead. A philosophy that states that the creation of a truly democratic European federal state is a matter of privileged aristocratic, technocratic experts cautiously looking to incremental improvements, has no intellectual future (De Beus 1995, 1997, 2001; De Beus & Scheffer 1999; Marquand 1995; cf. Fischer 2000). Accordingly, it is wrong to believe that consociationalism, as a method of rescuing functionalist philosophy by justifying 'aristocracy in democratic design', is sufficient to bring about what is really needed: a political union based on the principles of constitutional representative democracy and active citizenship (De Beus 2001).

Claiming that the failure of citizens to identify with Europe is a major problem for democratic political integration, our left-wing critics advocate the abandonment of functionalism in favour of a long-term, more visionary approach. Originally, Euro-patriotism was conceptualized from a neo-kantian perspective as 'European constitutional patriotism' (Habermas 1992). European citizenship, this argument runs, must be founded on a post-national, constitutional patriotism based on shared principles of justice and democracy. The true base of European unity is a constitutional arrangement of the public goals of Europe. Elimination of the democracy deficit goes hand in hand with the rise of European identity, which differs from traditional national identity in being purely political, civil, reasonable, and universalist. It is probably because of its principal openness towards membership of large groups of migrants that the constitutional patriotic view has acquired adherence today (Cohn-Bendit 2000; Crowley 1999; Føllesdal 2000; Jacobs & Maier 1997).

However, the neo-kantian account has been judged as deficient lately. Shared principles of justice and democracy seem insufficient; a constitution

by itself cannot bring about substantial European democracy. Thus, a moderately communitarian argument for Euro-patriotism has arisen, which claims that a democratic political union of Europe eventually requires a pre-political, thus deeper, solidarity between a single group of people sharing a "quasi-national European identity" (De Beus 2001). Constitutional patriotism is "too broad and general to be a strong source of political capacity", and gets "stuck into the evidence about large-scale federations (...) such as the United States of America, India, Australia, and Germany", whose democratic character apparently "require permanent critical cultivation of fellow-feeling and a sense of belonging" (De Beus 2001: 299, 306). European identity is not to be delinked from traditional national identity. A Europe-wide sense of equal dignity and solidarity among ordinary citizens of member states and their representatives should make possible a Europe that is politically democratic and socially just. Thus, democracy in Europe requires that ordinary citizens come to love their world region, this final, yet eccentric, argument for Euro-patriotism concludes.

Now, does this political theory of European unification make sense? In what follows, I examine both versions of the case for Euro-patriotism from an ethical perspective. I shall not assess the empirical and political validity of the theses concerning the democracy deficit and the death of functionalism. Rather, my key question is whether the case for Euro-patriotism advances a morally sound concept, even if we accept that the theses concerning the democracy deficit and the death of functionalism are plausible. Thus, I am not concerned so much with the empirical or political plausibility of the case for Euro-patriotism, but with the ethical adequacy of its moral implications.

But what kind of ethics might be adequate for the task of assessing such a case? In section 2, I attempt to show that, like any case for patriotism, the case for Euro-patriotism ought to be evaluated from an ethical perspective rooted in both universalist and particularist moral considerations. This dualist perspective on the scope of moral obligation, advancing the moral significance of patriotic loyalty as well as global justice, will be applied later to the two versions of the case for Euro-patriotism.

In section 3, I present and evaluate the neo-kantian argument for European constitutional patriotism. I suggest that this position is conceptually confused, and ethically one-sided. The alternative, moderately communitarian argument is socio-psychologically plausible in pointing to the need of pre-political identity and solidarity. But more importantly, it seems very difficult to understand, let alone justify, the very idea of 'European patriotism' from a neo-kantian perspective. In rejecting the moral significance of patriotism properly understood, this original argument for Euro-patriotism ultimately boils down to cosmopolitanism – a respectable (Brown 1992) but arguably one-sided, deficient position within contemporary global ethics.

In section 4, I present and evaluate the final, moderately communitarian argument for supranational patriotism based on quasi-national European identity. Of both versions of the case for Euro-patriotism, this seems to be the most coherent one. I shall argue, however, that the moderately communitarian version too may face serious moral objections. Such Euro-patriotism may violate the demands of both patriotic loyalty and global justice. It would, then, be inappropriate to demand that citizens cultivate it.

Section 5 concludes, and suggests that the case for Euro-patriotism, being morally questionable, may have consequences for the moral standing of European democracy itself.

2 A dualist ethical perspective on the scope of moral obligation

I start my argument by developing an ethics of the scope of individual moral obligation, to be used for the purpose of assessing the case for Euro-patriotism in both versions. Thus, I examine the question, to whom do individuals, such as those living in Europe, have a moral obligation of assistance. This will make it possible to determine whether 'patriotism' is a concept that deserves serious ethical attention. If this can be shown to be the case, it makes sense to examine further whether 'Euro-patriotism' is a version of patriotism that has a solid theoretical foundation.

At present, two answers exist to the above question of the scope of moral obligation (cf. Brown 1992). The ethical universalist, or liberal, who acknowledges that her position ultimately leads to cosmopolitanism, answers that such assistance should be provided for all human beings, at least in principle. Living in an interdependent world in which resources are unevenly distributed among individuals, the rich should make justice possible for the world's poor. In contrast, the answer of the ethical particularist, or communitarian, is that such assistance is only obligatory for compatriots, with whom one lives in a community of fate. Helping needy outsiders is a matter of humanitarianism, not of justice.

In what follows, I opt for a synthesis of ethical universalism and ethical particularism (for more detailed arguments see Kamminga 1998). As these perspectives each appear to have their strengths and weaknesses, we must make a virtue out of necessity by adopting a dualist perspective on the scope of moral obligation – a perspective that upholds the *prima facie* moral significance of both universalist and particularist considerations. Thus, regarding the scope of moral obligation under present conditions, the individual will appear to have two *prima facie* moral obligations: (1) an obligation of patriotic loyalty, and (2) an obligation of global justice. The result is a moderate patriotism, which attempts to merge both obligations.

Ethical universalism and ethical particularism are incompatible positions. Whereas the latter entails a defence of the fundamental moral significance of patriotism, the former, if consistent, must reject such significance. Any version of patriotism that is substantial and irreducible to some universalist moral standard, entails the principal inclusion of a particular group of people (members) and the exclusion of other human beings (non-members). Therefore, the ethical universalist should reject patriotism, whether this be with respect to, for example, the nation or 'Europe'. For while Euro-patriotism entails an attempt to overcome national attachments, by definition it implies a continuation of the logic of limited moral concern. In contrast, the ethical particularist should reject the universalist's ideal of cosmopolitan justice. Indeed, it is her defence of a limited moral concern to the boundaries of 'the community' that implies an endorsement of patriotism as a separate domain of morality.

It is obvious, therefore, that if ethical universalism must be regarded as the superior theory of global ethics, it would make no sense to examine the morality of patriotism to Europe any further. Indeed, the search for a moral justification of Euro-patriotism would be ended in rejection. However, I doubt whether ethical universalism counts as an adequate theory. Indeed, I agree with ethical particularism insofar that patriotism has at least some fundamental moral significance. I now elaborate this stance.

Ethical universalism has strong but also weak sides. I suggest that the contemporary case for applying John Rawls's theory of justice (Rawls 1971), notably the 'difference principle', to the global scale (Beitz 1999; Pogge 1989; Van Parijs 1995, 1996) be taken as our starting-point. Rightly insisting that Rawls's own image of the international system as a system of states or, rather, 'peoples' (Rawls 1971, 1999) is outdated, adherents of this case opt for cosmopolitan egalitarian distributive justice, whereby the position of the world's worst-off is maximized. In today's world, the 'basic structure of society', which is the primary subject of Rawlsian justice as it determines the conditions for cooperation, has become strongly dependent upon the relations with other societies. A 'global basic structure' has emerged as a result of globalization of trade and finance; increased political, legal, and technological interdependence; increased international cooperation; widespread migration and mass tourism; international sharing of air and water, clean and polluted; the implications of the greenhouse effect. Individuals have thereby become much more vulnerable to cross-border effects of misery and domination. Thus, given the empirical conditions of the contemporary world – conditions that do not seem likely to alter in the foreseeable future –, there seems to be a strong case for an ethical universalist's conception of obligations of cosmopolitan justice. Under non-ideal circumstances, in view of the great, and increasing, distributive inequalities that exist, the ideal of justice embodied by the

difference principle implies that rich individuals and states have substantial obligations to help create just global institutions, relations, and living conditions (but, see also Rawls 1999).

Yet, while the above version of ethical universalism entails a plausible extension of Rawls's theory of justice (Hinsch 2001; Veldhuis 1990), there are various problems with this approach. First, as egalitarian cosmopolitanism will presumably entail a massive international reallocation of immensely large amounts of material resources, it must be feared that a huge 'moral overload' for states and their individual members will be the result. The counterintuitive consequence is that heroism becomes a moral requirement, so that only little room is left for societies and individuals to choose their own way of life (Fishkin 1986; Veldhuis 1990). Second, individuals will probably not develop their capacity to move beyond selfish behaviour, to feel responsible for other human beings, and to develop and abide by a sense of justice, if they are not allowed to have strong feelings of loyalty towards their communities. Whatever its drawbacks, loyalty is probably the mainspring of most people's morally praiseworthy activities. Human self-sacrifice and exercise of virtue are mostly to be found amongst those people who are seeking not to preserve some universalist moral ideal, but to preserve and foster the objects of their strongest loyalties in any situation – not just in the case of spouse and family, but also in the case of country (Baxter 1986; Oldenquist 1982). In short, ethical universalism as just described could well be self-defeating. While the ethicist still ought to acknowledge its moral force, this theory seems wrong in overlooking the particular loyalties that form much of the substance of moral life.

This brings us to the ethical particularist's defence of patriotism as an attitude grounded in loyalty, which, however, has strengths and weaknesses of its own. Adherents of this view deserve credit for having offered a comprehensive account of the concept of patriotism. A basically psychological concept, patriotism must be seen as a combination of four complex attitudes: (1) a special affection for one's country; (2) a sense of personal identification with one's country; (3) a special concern for the well-being of one's country; (4) a willingness to sacrifice to promote the good of one's country (Nathanson 1997). Each of these characteristics is necessary to being a patriot. Moreover, true patriotism is irreducible not only to some (universalist) ideal but also to egoistic self-interest. Patriotism is not just gratitude for benefits that individuals receive from their country; it is a particular kind of gratitude. It is not that what they owe their country is simply a requital for benefits received, based on some relationship of reciprocity, like in a contract. Like loyalty in a traditional marriage, patriotism is, at least partially, unconditional (MacIntyre 1984; Oldenquist 1982; Scruton 1999).

Now, ethical particularism offers a strong defence of patriotic loyalty. First,

the ethical particularist will rightly insist that loyalty is a prerequisite for individual and social morality as such. In fact, it is significant that the notion of positive duties regarding mutual support and loyalty, as stressed by ethical particularism, is part of a minimal moral code shared in common by all cultural, religious and legal traditions in the world (Bok 1995). Second, while the ethical particularist must acknowledge patriotism to imply an unconditional attachment to the community, at the same time she can claim that allegiance to particular governments, forms of government, or particular leaders is always a matter of conditionality. Without becoming unpatriotic, the patriot may well criticize her government and the politics pursued by those exercising government, if particular community standards are being violated. Patriotism may in such cases even call for civil disobedience (MacIntyre 1984; Nathanson 1997). Third, while correctly claiming that patriotism can only be understood by (also) taking particularist grounds into account, the ethical particularist will want to distinguish irrational patriotisms from rational ones. Patriotism is irrational if directed at a country that has systematically disowned its own true history or substituted a fictitious history for it, or in which the bonds deriving from history have not been the real bonds of the community but replaced by the bonds of reciprocal self-interest (MacIntyre 1984; Sandel 1982). Thus, it seems safe to agree with the ethical particularist that patriotism properly understood has some fundamental moral significance.

However, ethical particularism, too, is a one-sided position in global ethics. A serious weakness of the ethical particularist position is that it has no satisfactory answer to the problem of contemporary global inequality. By definition, it is blind for it. Ethical particularism is suspiciously conservative, as it legitimizes the collective egotism of the rich. As the ethical universalist would rightly insist, ethical reasoning is incomplete if it fails to take into account the interests of everyone affected, in particular the interests of those people outside 'the community' who have little capacity for defence. We live in a world where individuals and states do not operate in isolation, or possess equal economic and political power. Therefore, even if we grant the ethical particularist a fundamental moral significance of patriotism, we would still want to put limits to this significance for the sake of global justice.

As ethical universalism and ethical particularism each seem to hold part of the truth, the question arises whether a synthesis is possible. I think a synthesis can be achieved, by taking the following two steps. First, we should adopt a dualist perspective, in which the obligations of patriotic loyalty and global justice are taken to have *prima facie*, not actual, moral significance. Of course, this leaves us with the problem of practical conflict, but there seems to be no magic formula available to solve this. Yet, for present purposes, we can do better than just balancing on the basis of intuition, even if the result remains tentative. Thus, we may now give a positive answer to our question of whether

patriotism is to be taken ethically seriously, provided that it is redefined in such a way that, while maintaining the typical attitudes of special affection and concern towards one's country, it is no longer unduly exclusivist qua scope of moral concern (Nathanson 1997).

Thus, second, I suggest that the obligation of patriotic loyalty be linked to 'community' – the unconditional dimension of patriotism – and the obligation of global justice to 'politics' – the conditional dimension. Patriotism, then, is morally obligatory, if (1) the community is of fundamental significance to the moral identity of the individuals constituted by it, not being historically deeply flawed or a mere bond of reciprocal self-interest, and (2) the politics is marked by the fulfilment of obligations of global justice, to the point where 'moral overload' for the community starts to arise. When these two criteria are satisfied, an individual may be said to have a moral obligation to be patriotic, and a case for it may be ethically adequate. Therefore, they will now be applied to both versions of the case for Euro-patriotism.

3 Euro-patriotism as European constitutional patriotism

3.1 The argument

Having put my ethical cards on the table, I now discuss the first, original version of the case for Euro-patriotism. Both German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1992) and Belgian philosopher Philippe Van Parijs (1995, 1996) have advanced a neo-kantian argument for Euro-patriotism. I shall focus on Habermas's well-known plea for 'European constitutional patriotism', as it provides the basic features of the argument.

According to Habermas, European unity should be based on a concept of citizenship of which the normative content is characterized by a patriotism that is constitutional and, as such, post-national. European unification requires an open, political concept of citizenship freed from pre-political, national-cultural attachments. Citizens should no longer cultivate 'immature' ethnic sentiments. Instead, they should cultivate a consciousness of "an obligation toward the European common-weal" (Habermas 1992: 9), which is conceived as a devotion to shared and, consequently, constitutionalized principles of justice and democracy in Europe. Gradually, a post-national, constitutional patriotism is to be extended from Europe to the global scale, making world citizenship possible: Habermas's ultimate goal.

Habermas's argument for Euro-patriotism presupposes a subjectivistic, or voluntaristic, understanding of human group formation. Human associations do not constitute individual action, which is what the objectivistic, or romantic, conception wrongly assumes. Instead, human groups are

constituted of the support of those individuals who are willing to join it. They are, in Ernest Renan's famous phrase, 'daily plebiscites'. This entails a flexible as well as critical view of group membership.

Originally, in the 1980s, Habermas advanced his constitutional patriotism as a post-national alternative to traditional all-German cultural identity. He saw it as the only form of patriotism still available for the German people after the Holocaust. Consequently, due to the principal openness of the subjectivistic conception of nationality, Habermas could smoothly extend his notion of constitutional patriotism to the level of European unification in the 1990s (cf. also Van Parijs 1996). At the European level, it is a supranationally shared political culture, featuring a particularist anchoring of principles of justice and democracy that is compatible with their universalist validity, which must serve as the common denominator for a constitutional patriotism. Accordingly, a unified Europe is to be based on a concept of citizenship that does not allow arguments for restrictive and obstructionist asylum or immigration policies. European constitutional patriotism, while at most consistent with a pragmatic resistance of too many immigrants, is inconsistent with privileging particular people in the process of immigration and naturalization on the basis of criteria such as ethnic origin, language and education. Finally, since constitutional patriotism is based on a conception of human group formation that overcomes "particularistic biases" (Habermas 1992: 17), it is able to prepare the way for world citizenship.

3.2 Ethical analysis

While the emergence of the neo-kantian argument for Euro-patriotism is quite understandable for historical reasons, I believe that it is unsatisfactory. But before applying my two ethical criteria developed in section 2, I again mention the moderately communitarian objection of socio-psychological inadequacy. This objection plausibly states that European constitutional patriotism, grounded on such lofty principles as democracy and justice, cannot be self-sustaining, but is in need of the support of – non-voluntaristic – cultures that do not themselves arise out of liberalism. Renan, the champion of subjectivistic theory, "knew perfectly well that nations also had objective elements in common" (Hobsbawm 1991: 8). In reality, even the model experiments in constitutional patriotism, France and the United States, have always also needed many of the trappings of nation-states, including founding myths, national symbols, and ideals of historical and quasi-ethnic membership, to achieve widespread popular attachment (Bader 1997; Kymlicka & Norman 1994; Taylor 1992/93, 1996). In short, constitutional patriotism seems 'too thin' a basis for a European political union, thus also a democratic one. I think

that Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who is a dedicated adherent of European constitutional patriotism, is naive in expecting that a common European constitution of basic rights will strongly contribute to “winning the people in Europe for the shared project” (2000, translation mine). I suppose, then, that the moderately communitarian version of the case for Euro-patriotism, to be examined in section 4, could be plausible socio-psychologically.

Meanwhile, my own question here is whether the argument for European constitutional patriotism is ethically adequate. First of all, we have to establish whether European constitutional patriotism is, or can be, rooted in a community that is of fundamental significance to the moral identity of the individuals constituted by it. It will presumably come as no surprise to find that, as a neo-kantian argument, this version of the case for Euro-patriotism does not meet the demand of an authentic European community. Indeed, the plea for constitutional patriotism is actually based on a rejection of this particular requirement, and shows indifference, even hostility, towards patriotism in any substantial version. I now try to explain this.

Habermas's plea for European constitutional patriotism seems to be based on the view that 'Europe' is, or should be, the champion of some great moral ideal: world citizenship, for which democratic citizenship in Europe should prepare the way. But what distinguishes this attitude from patriotism as defined in this essay is threefold. First, it is the ideal and not the country – the 'world region' (Europe) – that is the primary object of regard. Thus, if for some reason or another a shared, European democratic and just political culture is not established, or shows no viability, the consistent constitutional patriot would have to drop her allegiance to 'Europe' entirely. Second, insofar as the European constitutional patriot's love for the ideal provides good reasons for allegiance to her country, it provides good reasons for anyone at all to uphold her country's cause, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship (MacIntyre 1984; Oldenquist 1982). Third, the argument for European constitutional patriotism seems to imply a rejection of patriotism per se, as that is largely based on pre-political, thus 'immature' sentiments. More specifically, it seems to imply that patriotism to countries that are not, or not yet, democratic and internally just, is unjustified. On the basis of my dualist ethical model, I would argue that such an implication is inappropriate, if only because patriotism may well entail a commitment to make one's country morally better, precisely because one loves it first. In short, the argument for European constitutional patriotism appears to advocate an overall conditional attachment to Europe, rejecting the very idea of unconditional support. If so, it can hardly be called an argument in favour of patriotism.

Significantly, the easy extension of political identity from the national to the European level, only to become extended ultimately to the whole world, turns 'Europe' into an inherently unstable entity with wholly unclear boundaries.

In the original German case, Habermas's attempt to define West German identity in terms of democracy made it no longer 'German' (Knischewski 1996). Yet the very story of the unification indicated that to be German meant something else beyond allegiance to political ideals. It assumed some sense of pre-political unity of a community with a shared common historical destiny (Viroli 1995). In the present European case, Habermas's attempt to do the same for European identity does not seem to make it very 'European'. Principles of democracy or justice can be widely shared across national and supranational groups (Kymlicka 1996), without necessarily giving such groups any strong reason to join, or remain, together, rather than remaining, or splitting into, two or more separate countries (Kymlicka & Norman 1994). Constitutional patriotism, being based on such shared principles, cannot principally explain why the boundaries of the political community should fall here rather than there. Indeed, it begs the question, for what settles boundaries may well be a shared sense of nationality of a more traditional kind, which embraces more than allegiance to a constitution (Miller 1995). Thus, the argument for European constitutional patriotism also fails to advance a sufficiently clear view of the patria, the pre-political fatherland (Bader 1997, 1999) that is to be loved.

Thus far, the analysis suggests that the argument for European constitutional patriotism is incoherent. The confusion lies in a failure to keep analytically separate two quite different concepts: 'patriotism' as a particularist attitude towards a community (basically pre-political) and 'democracy' as a universalist, albeit politically particularized, ideal (political). It seems, then, that we must say already that this version of the case for Euro-patriotism is untenable. But the consistent neo-kantian universalist could naturally decide to withdraw her plea for Euro-patriotism, concluding that, if only a substantial, traditional kind of patriotism might be a tenable position, patriotism to Europe, like to the nation, is a bad thing after all. The search for a defensible Euro-patriotism has failed; we should be pure universalists. I make two remarks about this, thereby bringing in my second ethical criterion. This criterion demands that European constitutional patriotism entails a politics marked by the fulfilment of obligations of global justice, to the point where moral overload for the European 'community' starts to arise.

First, I think that the consistent ethical universalist should not attempt to justify non-contractarian, particularist attachments (whether national or European). Instead, she must recognize that she ought to be a cosmopolitan (Miller 1995). But second, as section 2 has suggested, such cosmopolitanism is a one-sided theory of global ethics, wrongly rejecting the possible fundamental moral significance of existing (national) communities from the outset. Now, this position plausibly claims that rich states and individuals have moral obligations to provide significant material assistance to the world's

poorest. But I also mentioned two weaknesses there. Perhaps the argument for European constitutional patriotism does something to eliminate the first weakness – the danger of moral overload –, by allowing a pragmatic resistance to too many immigrants in Europe. Yet it is doubtful whether it is able to satisfy my second criterion: the requirement of a globally just European politics, to the level of moral overload. This is because it cannot eliminate the second weakness of cosmopolitanism. In emphasizing an abstract ‘world citizenship’, the argument for European constitutional patriotism fails to acknowledge that concrete individuals need community life around them to learn the virtues of responsibility and solidarity – first, regarding those human beings with whom they have a special communal relationship. Hence, while it rightly aims at more justice in the world, this position runs the risk of being self-defeating. Insofar as it does “render our moral concern weak and pallid” (Oldenquist 1982: 181), it hampers, rather than promotes, a more just European politics.

I conclude that the argument for European constitutional patriotism seems ethically inadequate. If my argument has been correct, we cannot yet say that the individual European citizen has a moral obligation to be Euro-patriotic. Let us now see whether a moderately communitarian, thus non-ethnonationalist, account is more adequate in this respect than a neo-kantian one.

4 Euro-patriotism based on quasi-national European identity

4.1 The argument

Dutch political philosopher Jos de Beus (1997, 2001) has developed an alternative, moderately communitarian argument for Euro-patriotism. His prospect being “broadening the domain of patriotism” (De Beus 2001: 300), De Beus’s claim is that the rise of a democratic political union of Europe requires a ‘quasi-national’ conception of European identity. De Beus starts by presenting himself as a strong adherent of supranational democracy, which he regards as the highest goal of European politics. He then goes on to argue that if European democracy is to come about, millions of nationals in Europe must, apart from loving their nation, come to cultivate a “love of world region” (ibid.: 289). A Dutchman, says De Beus (1997), should become a ‘Euro-Dutchman’: a ‘Nederpeaan’. The moderately communitarian vision, one may say, is one of a democratic ‘European fatherland of fatherlands’.

De Beus regards his approach to European identity and patriotism as “explicitly instrumental” (2001: 283, 305). ‘Supranational democracy’ in Europe and ‘quasi-national European identity’, while conceptually distinct, are empirically linked in that the latter provides essential support for the

former. In fact, the link seems so strong that the Euro-patriot will not wait in vain for her reward: “It is important to acknowledge that European identity is a prerequisite to the fundamental democratization of European politics (...). Indeed, identification with Europe may be ultimately justified in terms of the basic promise of democracy” (De Beus 2001: 300). But what, exactly, does De Beus mean by these basic concepts? And how does he clarify the positive empirical linkage between them?

‘Supranational democracy’ in Europe entails the presence of such features as non-violent interaction between European states that induce multi-lateralism; majority voting in the European Council; empowerment of the European Parliament; enhanced influence of European politics in the daily life of ordinary citizens as well as member states’ policy-making. But De Beus adds to this an idealistic conception of a democratic political union of Europe. Such a union should: (1) promote and protect the humane moral minimum (basic human rights, such as the right to life, to property, the right not to be tortured or kept in slavery) within Europe, and, on the basis of “additional humanitarian obligations” (ibid.: 291), also outside Europe when necessary; (2) establish a well-ordered European society, which promotes the good life of all its members, and respects one European standard of justice; (3) make Europe, which should not aim for a fully-fledged unitary state, safe for plural democracy in the special sense of liberal-democratic fusion of liberal-democratic civil nations.

The concept of ‘quasi-national European identity’ implies that European identity mirrors, to a certain extent, the traditional concept of national identity. Heuristically, drawing the analogy makes sense, because “the present European nations and the future European supranation are both modern and massive collectives of strangers” (ibid.: 292). De Beus makes several assumptions about European identity as a quasi-national version of identity, of which the following must be mentioned here. First, European identity is the disposition of numerous separate nationals to consider themselves, their fellow nationals, and their fellow Europeans equal members of the European community – “intellectually, emotionally and willfully” (ibid.). At most, functionalism can generate instrumental identification among European citizens. In contrast, patriotism based on quasi-national European identity entails non-calculated support based on deontic and aretaic considerations. Second, European identity is largely civic, that is, while it may seek ground in certain myths, say about Charlemagne or Churchill, it blocks ‘blood and steel’ and many other irrational and immoral expressions of national identity in ethnonationalist ideology. Third, European identity and national identity are “roughly balanced in terms of the moral psychology of persons” (ibid.: 293). A domesticating interplay of European identity, national identity, and minoritarian identity is the best means to preserve collective identity as support

of liberal democracy. "The chances of success of simple personalities (pure Europeans, pure British, pure Scots), the opportunities for hegemonic and extremist leadership, and the risks of nationalist pathology (...) may all decrease, while the civility of diverse individuals and institutions may increase" (ibid.: 294). Hence European identity should not be overarching, replacing national identity and other identities.

The positive linkage De Beus wants to defend can now be stated as follows. A Europe-wide sense of equal dignity and solidarity that is committed, civic, popular and multiple can protect and promote a democratic political union of Europe, which is marked by the moral minimum, a well-ordered society, and plural democracy. Unfortunately, as "Theoretically, the very possibility of international democracy is an unsettled question", and "Empirically, national identity is still the primary source of allegiance in European politics" (ibid.: 296), De Beus cannot but give a theoretical defence of the positive linkage. Therefore, he offers a series of bold propositions, which all speculatively refer to the rise of a Europe-wide, post-functionalist civil society, which is politically conscious as well as concerned, dedicated, solidaristic, cooperative and meddlesome concerning the fundamental democratization of European politics.

In sum, De Beus presents himself as a Euro-patriot who loves his world region as a 'second patrie' (Delors), and, consequently, wants a European political union that is truly democratic. We have seen that the neo-kantian view, which starts from universalist premises, seems unable to offer a coherent vision of patriotism, national or European, in any substantial version. In contrast, De Beus, in carefully keeping European quasi-nationality and supranational politics analytically apart, realizes that Euro-patriotism must also be grounded on particularist, pre-political sentiments. While in agreement with Habermas, that citizenship and fairness are necessary for a democratic European politics, he adds the insight that it is a sense of community and spiritual unity in Europe that makes the democratic difference. Indeed, it may even be that turning 'Europe' from a predominantly 'cognitive' concept into an 'emotional' one is necessary to guarantee a really unified Europe in the long run (Segers 1995). There is, then, every reason to put the moderately communitarian argument for Euro-patriotism to the ethical test.

4.2 Ethical analysis

Although one may doubt whether a "weak" (De Beus 2001: 289) sense of common identification can bring about substantial supranational democracy, particularly in a deeply segmented society such as the present EU (De Beus 1997), in what follows I shall not dispute De Beus's central thesis. Thus, for

the sake of argument, I assume that Euro-patriotism based on quasi-national European identity could be conducive to the rise of European democracy. May it be said, then, that someone who lives in the European region, and is a citizen of a EU member state, has a moral obligation to strive to further the interests of her 'European country' and 'European compatriots', so that a truly democratic political union emerges? What we have to establish is whether Euro-patriotism based on quasi-national European identity (1) is, or can be, rooted in a community that is of fundamental significance to the moral identity of the individuals constituted by it; (2) will entail a politics marked by the fulfilment of obligations of global justice, to the point where moral overload for the 'European community' begins to arise. If these two demands are met, an individual may be said to have a moral obligation to be Euro-patriotic.

From the perspective of our first ethical criterion, it is obvious that a defence of Euro-patriotism on the ground that it is conducive to the rise of European democracy in no way demonstrates the fundamental moral significance of a future, constitutive 'European community'. For even if the 'democratic promise' is fulfilled, the fundamental moral significance of a European community still has to be demonstrated. The present argument for Euro-patriotism itself focuses on the 'instrumental' significance of quasi-national European identity. Indeed, the argument is still surprisingly 'functionalist': an aristocratic functionalism of experts becomes replaced by a democratic 'functionalism' of ordinary citizens. Now, it seems improper to ask of people in Europe to develop a sentimental, non-calculated attachment to their world region, if their Euro-patriotism is only valued for its functional worth. Admittedly, De Beus seems aware of this problem, emphasizing the need for further research that clarifies the "intrinsic value [of quasi-national European identity] for citizens" (2001: 311). But ethically, the primary question is not whether Euro-patriotism has functional worth, but whether it could have at least some fundamental value. Euro-patriotism must be rooted in a community that is significant to the moral identity of citizens themselves. Thus, considered from my dualist ethical perspective, it is regrettable that this argument for Euro-patriotism gives most of its attention to a question that seems of secondary importance. Yet the argument is thereby not disqualified; perhaps it is possible to find an ethical defence for it.

In his own reflections on European identity, De Beus is unclear about what it is that binds Europeans together in 'community'. Do Europeans have anything in common, apart from a common market, a common currency, a body of law, and a more than fifty-year period of 'eternal peace'? An affirmative answer often given is that Europeans share an "ideal of civilization in the wake of the Enlightenment" (De Beus & Scheffer 1999: 11, translation mine). Several Enlightenment-related qualities and values do indeed pervade the

whole world region: a strong belief in a linear model of progressive improvement both for society and the individual, implying a linear rather than a cyclic view of history; an individualistic approach, which accepts that the individual has inalienable rights and corresponding inescapable responsibilities; a respect for the rule of law as separate from the structures of religion or the exercise of political power; a disapproval of corruption and veniality as an inherent feature of social or political organization; the important role of market, modern science and technology. British Quaker Geoffrey Hubbard, who regards himself as a Euro-patriot, even argues that "nationality is a far more artificial concept than participation in [such] a common civilisation" (1991: 10). However, it should be clear that an 'ideal of civilization' has insufficient morally-communally-binding capacity. As we have already seen, patriotism cannot coherently be based on some ideal, which, moreover, may be shared by people outside Europe, too. Thus, this answer does not provide us with a truly European community.

What we are actually looking for is some kind of 'objective' basis. It is really problematic for the argument for Euro-patriotism that 'Europe' seems to have no such foundation. For what 'Europe' lacks, in contrast to most nations, is a kind of common 'ethnic core' (Smith 1986, 1995). Thus, in Europe, there is no shared, central, and continuous culture, let alone a distinctively 'European' one. There is no European religion; Europe does not stand for Catholic Christendom (Marquand 1995). More importantly, there is no common language, let alone one that is authentically European; English and French serve only as *linguae francae*. There is no European history that serves to unite, rather than to divide, peoples; insofar as states' histories overlap (colonization, warfare, alliance formation), shared experiences have served to emphasize differences (colonial interests at the expense of closer ties with neighbours, the process of European integration itself covering but not reducing such differences) rather than to give a sense of shared past. The historical gap cannot be filled by drawing on contested myths, such as those of Charlemagne and Churchill, as De Beus seems to suggest. The Europe of Charlemagne with the addition of southern Italy could only be the 'Europe' of the founding fathers of European integration, who never asked the 'European question' (Marquand 1995). The most fundamental problem is that 'Europe' has no clear, undisputed political and geographical (eastern) boundaries (McCormick 1999; Miall 1993; Wilterdink 1991) – a crucial condition for widespread psychological identification. In short, it is hard to see how the present argument for Euro-patriotism can show that there could be a European community that satisfies the demand for sufficient historical plausibility (historical accuracy, of course, not being required), which is needed as it is of fundamental significance to the moral identity of individuals. While getting its history wrong may be part of being a nation in certain cases, it is certainly part of being 'Europe'.

As Europe seems to lack some 'objective' basis, one should ask to what extent the present EU is a subjectivistic entity, and tends to turn the people of 'Europe' into a bond of reciprocal self-interest. The EU may well be regarded as an association of states for mutual support, rather than as a genuine community whose members acknowledge a responsibility for the welfare of the rest (Miller 1995). But such an "uneasy mixture of nation-state and supranational bureaucracy" (Brown 1994: 181), lacking popular democratic legitimacy from the start, has made it very difficult for citizens to regard Europe as a community. Significantly, like other defenders of the democracy deficit thesis, De Beus himself observes that "the deficit engenders popular alienation" (2001: 285). Therefore, it is also hard to see how the present argument for Euro-patriotism can show a European community *ex ante* coming into being that satisfies the requirement for a bond that is more than one of reciprocal self-interest – the basis for patriotism as a rational attitude. As bureaucratic states already tend to reduce (national) communities to this condition (MacIntyre 1984, 1994), the prospects at the European level will probably be worse still.

There is a further moral problem for a particularist justification of Euro-patriotism. The moderately communitarian Euro-patriot wants people to conjoin patriotism to Europe with patriotism to their nation. What is defended is a 'dual patriotism' within Europe in line with a balanced view of 'the moral psychology of persons' and the undesirability of 'simple personalities' – hence the 'Nederpeaan'. I suspect this position is less plausible than it may seem. Of course, people can and do identify themselves with more than one human group. They can feel attached to their neighbourhood, village, region and country (in rare cases even to humanity as a whole). And in Europe, it may be psychologically possible for most people to come to identify themselves with two countries – their nation and Europe – simultaneously. In fact, such a widespread, albeit vague "sense of 'dual nationality'" (Economist 1995) already exists within Europe. However, we must take into account that patriotism is not merely about identification; it is also about making sacrifices. Empirically, most people in Europe do not seem to be prepared to make personal sacrifices, such as paying more taxes in order to help another EU country that is experiencing economic difficulties (Miller 1995). And ethically, we could question whether people should be willing to make sacrifices permanently in order to uphold two loyalties simultaneously. What should a citizen do, if loyalty to nation and loyalty to Europe come into conflict, say, about economic or moral-cultural issues? Can one really 'serve two lords'? In contrast to mere identification, the whole idea of being loyal to two partially alike, potentially competing entities may well turn patriotism into a morally unstable position.

Let us consider three positions on the issue of potential conflict. First, 'always, or normally, choose your nation first'. Second, 'choose either your

nation or Europe first, depending on circumstances and overall consequences'. Third, 'always, or normally, choose Europe first'. As the first position would deprive the concept of Euro-patriotism of its substance, this cannot be De Beus's stance. He holds that "the democracy deficit of the European Union can be eliminated by partial *denationalization* of the current self-image of the populations of the member states" (2001: 310, emphasis mine). De Beus's view, then, comes closer to the second position. However, such a dualist stance deprives patriotism to the nation of its unconditionality, while Euro-patriotism may not become an unconditional attitude either (two 'beloved' may now have to compete with each other). It is precisely because of this problem that defenders of traditional patriotism claim that, just as you can have only one spouse and one family, you can also have only one country (Scruton 1999) – 'one patrie'. If this is correct, adopting Euro-patriotism would entail a lasting separation between you and your nation. Therefore, I think that De Beus, insofar as he really advocates love of world region, should have gone so far as to opt for the third position. Perhaps he should have advocated a federalist, US-like model, in which most citizens put their loyalty to the federation above their loyalty to the states in which they live (McCormick 1999). De Beus clearly regards a mere 'European fatherland' as unrealistic and undesirable, and does not accept a monistic Euro-patriotism – Europe as the sole fatherland. This is understandable, but it is questionable whether a 'dual patriotism' can be a tenable moral position.

And furthermore, irrespective of whether love of Europe is adopted in a dualistic (second position) or monistic (third position) version, both positions may endanger people's sense of community – of, indeed, their patriotic loyalty. In many instances, the nation has become existenzbegründend (substantiates their existence) for most ordinary people of whatever class, thus becoming part of their personality. The nation, though an 'imagined community', has a halo about it of being 'pure', 'natural', 'disinterested', 'unchosen'. That is why it can ask for sacrifices (Anderson 1983), and be the object of a special kind of gratitude. Thus, national identity, which is not merely about functionality for industry, is about fulfilment of identity in the modern world (Gellner 1983, 1997). But a quasi-national European identity may well threaten national identities (through 'denationalization'), and thereby the very notions of community, identity and loyalty. For instance, should we expect West German taxpayers to pay for the French unemployed, if that only increases their current reluctance to fulfil their obligation to pay for their own compatriots in the east (Garton Ash 1998)? This potentially dangerous aspect of European identity, then, offers one further reason why a European identity cannot be something that deserves our specific gratitude. It is all but obvious, then, that the ordinary European citizen should not adopt the first position; that is, a monistic national patriotism in a moderated version.

Thus far, it seems clear that the present argument for Euro-patriotism violates my first criterion – the requirement of an authentic, European community, without which patriotism to Europe is an irrational, morally unjustified attitude. Let us now see whether it might satisfy the second criterion – the requirement of a globally just European politics, to the level of moral overload. The moderately communitarian argument itself is silent about the issue of global justice; De Beus speaks of 'additional humanitarian obligations' beyond the borders of the EU. But my question is: will Euro-patriotism – a form of group solidarity still to be created – entail a politics marked by the fulfilment of obligations of global justice?

It must be feared that a shared quasi-national European identity by itself will have negative consequences for global justice, and thus for the poor outside Europe. Wilterdink (1991), who believes that the present lack of a sense of European identity is bad for effective European governance, also points out that whether this is really something to feel sad about is far from obvious. For Euro-patriotism implies extending, or 'doubling', internal solidarity within Europe in the sense of privileging one's own group above others. If Europeans must uphold two loyalties simultaneously, their room for meeting global moral obligations, thus for making sacrifices for this purpose, would probably be even more limited than when there is one such loyalty, if the level of moral overload is not to be violated. Thus, a quasi-national European identity may well aggravate the drawbacks of patriotism as a form of exclusion.

Has a conclusion been reached too quickly? Striving for Euro-patriotism, one might object, could also bring with it an increased popular concern for global justice. Thus, it might be that regrouping at the larger, European level simultaneously makes people more used to thinking in a more global manner. It might also enlarge their mental horizons, so that they would be more likely to take seriously the claims of outsiders. Yet I think we should be highly sceptical towards attempts to justify Euro-patriotism this way. First, while Euro-patriotism might contribute to a further enlargement of mental horizons, there is no guarantee at all that it will make people think more globally. Perhaps, rather than increasing global thinking, Euro-patriotism makes people in Europe even more used to thinking in an American way than they already seem to do now, as American popular culture is one of the strongest binding factors within contemporary Europe (Segers 1995). Second, even if Euro-patriotism does make people think more globally, again there is no guarantee at all that they will take the claims of the world's poor more seriously. It is doubtful whether Europeans, if they give up, at least partially, their specific sense of moral responsibility towards a particular nation and its members, will come to share their wealth with the world's least fortunate, and devote their resources and energies to improving the chances that others may

acquire some wealth of their own. In short, a belief that Euro-patriotism is likely to bring with it much effective global moral enthusiasm seems to have little foundation other than sheer optimism.

Turning to politics, we must note that the EU and most of its member states have not yet shown a serious commitment to tackling global injustices (Hurrell 2001). And there may be two specific reasons why a creation of Euro-patriotism will probably not entail a European politics that is more globally just. First, only a few EU member states – Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands – have long, solidaristic moral traditions shaping a humanitarian and egalitarian outlook of domestic and foreign politics (Lumsdaine 1993). Hence at the level of the EU as a whole, systematic ‘domestic’ influences supporting a more globally just politics have little chance of development. Second, it makes little sense to expect that European politicians will fill this moral gap, and play the role of moral educators in shaping the citizens’ preferences, or create globally just policies on their own. This would largely contradict the whole idea of European integration, especially the principle of ‘Community preference’ (barriers around the single market). In a world of scarcity, ‘Europe’ and its institutions are based on the desire to develop rich countries’ clubs that are devoted to the protection of their members’ interests (Seers 1983). In particular, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must be mentioned here. The CAP is not just some unfortunate detail of European integration. It is by far the largest single item of EU spending, swallowing up about half of the budget every year. It dominates EU external trade policy, distorting the world market and seriously undermining the ability of poorer countries to export their own agricultural produce (Malcolm 1995). The point is, it seems inconsistent to strive for Euro-patriotism – thus, for an extension of particularist solidarity within a wealthy world region – and, at the same time, to expect politicians, say, to adopt trade policies that do not threaten indigenous (food) production in Third World countries; to stop dumping agricultural surpluses; to opt for a radical CAP reform; to support increasing foreign aid and cancelling (most of) Third World debt; to strive for a drastic reduction of greenhouse gas emission – thus, to act more out of universalist considerations.

The argument for Euro-patriotism based on quasi-national European identity does not seem to have much chance of meeting my second ethical criterion. I must acknowledge that the above analysis might turn out to be too pessimistic, since assessing the exact consequences of Euro-patriotism for global justice is difficult, if not impossible. However, precisely because Euro-patriotism is a form of group solidarity still to be created, we must eventually ask a fundamental question. At present, rich nation-states and their citizens are doing far less for the world’s poorest than global morality requires (Kamminga 1998; Opekin 1996). If citizens of European nation-states may

be said to have unfulfilled, significant obligations of global justice, do they, then, have a moral right to regroup at a larger scale? Are they morally permitted to make sacrifices to support other Europeans, calculating perhaps that these will not harm the world’s poorest, or even improve their position? Would regrouping at a larger scale not simply serve to increase unjustified group egotism? Before it may be said that citizens and states in Europe have a right to create an extended patriotism, they should ‘already’ have fulfilled their obligations of global justice. Thus, any claim that European citizens should now accept more moral obligations for other European citizens for the sake of European democracy seems dubious, so long as the rights of the world’s poorest take moral priority.

In sum, the moderately communitarian version of the case for Euro-patriotism seems ethically inadequate. It seems to advocate an argument for a kind of patriotism that may violate both universalist and particularist moral demands. Again, we can not say that the individual European citizen has a moral obligation to be Euro-patriotic.

5 Conclusion

The concept of Euro-patriotism has recently been put forward by left-wing political philosophers who believe that the functionalist philosophy of democratic European unification is discredited. I have tried to answer the question whether the case for Euro-patriotism is ethically adequate, in other words, whether it advocates a concept that ought to be endorsed by millions of nationals in Europe. Drawing on a dualist ethical perspective on the scope of moral obligation, I have argued that both versions of the case for Euro-patriotism may have dubious moral implications. The neo-kantian argument for European constitutional patriotism entails a universalist critique of the whole idea of ‘patriotism’ (whether national or European), and seems at best a cosmopolitan doctrine – which, in my view, would turn it into a one-sided, deficient theory of global ethics. The moderately communitarian argument for Euro-patriotism based on quasi-national European identity advances a concept that may be at odds with obligations of both patriotic loyalty and global justice. Thus, if my argument has been correct, Euro-patriotism in either version cannot properly be regarded as morally obligatory, not even if it promotes the presumed political virtue of democracy in European politics.

Insofar as it is socio-psychologically plausible, the moderately communitarian version of the case for Euro-patriotism might be said to reveal a moral tragedy in the process of European unification. For suppose that full democracy is politically superior to consociationalism (but see Gabel 1998); and suppose that European patriotism based on quasi-national European

identity does engender European democracy. Unfortunately, even if the final argument for Euro-patriotism itself is politically and empirically strong, we would still have to accept that trying to repair the 'democracy deficit' might be a morally questionable task; the essential instrument – Euro-patriotism – seems to lack moral justification. Perhaps it is even worse than this. Ethically, the question, how 'democratic' a political union of Europe must be, seems at best of minor importance. Of major importance is the question how the European project is to operate as a mediator between patriotic loyalty and global justice. 'Europe', I believe, should not be a super-patriotic whole of nation-states legitimizing their collective wealth for the sake of unity and democracy, but a platform of (national) communities joining together in effective and efficient cooperation, particularly for the sake of global justice.

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