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European Identity and Identitarians in Europe¹

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Abstract

The following remarks are concerned with social identity, particularly with the antagonism between “European identity”, which reflects the achievements of the integration process of the European Union, and the xenophobic “Identitarian Movement”, which strives for disintegration of any supranational entity. The financial crisis of 2008 and the migration wave of 2015 have resulted in rapid structural changes and spreading uncertainty about future living standards in the EU. Extreme right-wing populist movements have capitalized on the anxieties emanating from these changes. They propagate a retreat from globalization and from the EU while advocating an inward-oriented policy with national borders against migration and cultural diversification. To forego a relapse into insular nationalism, the EU needs a revamped narrative which rests on the established liberal democracy and takes seriously the EU’s motto “United in Diversity”. The upcoming elections to the European Parliament provide a chance to rebuff anti-EU populism while strengthening forces attempting a democratic regeneration and further development of the European integration process.

The **social identity theory** of group behavior, originally formulated by Tajfel – Turner (1985), pertains that part of an individual’s selfhood can be explained by membership in specific groups. Such groups might include the family, the neighborhood, the country of nationality, and possibly also transnational entities like the European Union. According to Turner – Oakes (1986), social identity “describes those aspects of a person’s self-concept based upon their group memberships together with their emotional, evaluative and other psychological correlates.”

Since the 1960s and 1970s, “**identity politics**” has been applied to political activities concerning groups who identified themselves with their own individual cases, such as workers, women, or peasants, and there were only limited linkages between the various groups and across national borders. Identity politics “emerged originally as a way of consciousness-raising among marginalized groups and as a means to empower these groups who felt oppressed by the society around them” (Wiarda 2014). In its further development, identity politics was associated with rather radical left-wing causes. Public group activities raised the interest of the media, the groups themselves tended to establish links with similar groups in other countries. In the 1980s and 1990s, mainstream politicians became slowly aware of these activities, when already some political observers felt that they were detracting politics from the more fundamental issues of society such as class conflict and capitalism. According to Wiarda, identity politics is currently “a part of contemporary political discourse, used in the media and at the popular level as well as by political operatives and academic specialists.”

¹ This paper was also published as Flash Paper 1/2019 of the Policy Crossover Center: Vienna-Europe (<https://www.europaplattform.at/rt12019-1>)

The following overview is notably devoted to disentangling the mainstream inclusive view of “European identity” from the radical right-wing opinions of the exclusive “Identitarian Movement”.

Living up to European Identity

An application of the social identity concept in the context of identity politics is the notion of collective “European identity”. In the post-WWII era, the idea of cooperation between major countries of Europe has evolved to mark an alternative to the interwar dominance of national primacy and to inhibit any reoccurrence of war between European nations. As an outgrowth of this desire, the project of economic integration was launched early on, starting with the “European Coal and Steel Community” in 1951, continuing with the Treaties of Rome in 1957, and being largely completed with the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. The economic integration process has been accompanied by a debate on “European identity” which first appeared, as an official technical term, in the Council documents of Copenhagen in 1973. At that time, defining the European identity by the nine EU Member States involved the following aspects (European Commission 1973):

- “Reviewing the common heritage, interests and special obligations of the Nine, as well as the degree of unity so far achieved within the Community.
- Assessing the extent to which the Nine are already acting together in relation to the rest of the world and the responsibilities which result from this.
- Taking into consideration the dynamic nature of European unification.”

Based on these aspects, the motto of the EU (introduced in 2000) was derived: “United in Diversity”. European identity was subsequently circumscribed by the intrinsic values of the Community including freedom, democracy, rule of law, solidarity and respect for human dignity. The collective European identity is not supposed to replace existing identities on the national and local levels but to serve as a complementary and overarching set of values. In this sense, European identity is a multi-layered narrative, which also includes horizontal elements, such as language, religion, and education.

As a precondition for transnational cooperation, the importance of national identity is emphasized by Fukuyama (2012) when he writes that “national identity and nation-building are absolutely critical for the success of any society.” The often-diverging national identities are not lost if an all-embracing transnational one becomes superimposed. The potential conflict of European versus national identity is not about repressing the latter. Rather, and as a general rule, any local identity should be embedded in the national identity and this in turn in the European identity, analogous to the subsidiarity principle. After all, national identities are often hard to establish – as one may be reminded of the arduous process of identification which Austria as an independent republic had to endure in the decades following World War One.

According to Nissen (2004), European identity means the cognitive and emotional affinity of people with Europe as a bordered space. Belonging to Europe thus requires empathy as a basis for solidarity and loyalty. However, Nissen considers such an emotional bond as a fragile basis, competing with established subordinate identities. In the case of collective identities, emotional and irrational fluctuations may occur in the wake of serious changes, such as the EU's Eastern enlargement.

In order to further advance the integration of Europe, Walkenhorst (2009) calls for an unambiguous and publicly accepted understanding of European identity. Such an understanding would not only promote concrete integration steps but could also contribute to a political vision of a future Europe.

Walkenhorst examines five perceptions to substantiate the concept of identity in general, but also with regard to the EU:

- *Historical-cultural identity* refers to a perceived common European past with cultural roots and common values.
- *Political-legal identity* is based on citizenship, representation, and participation.
- *Social identity* focuses on solidarity for the benefit of all citizens.
- *International identity* seeks to achieve a unified image of Europe in the world.
- *Post-identity commonness* renounces the concept of identity and most closely corresponds to the EU motto of being “united in diversity”.

European identity arises only from a meaningful combination of these perceptions, which are not fixed but constantly evolve with the circumstances of the time. Temporary adaptations cannot be ruled out if, for example, an established stance in favor of more tolerance for ethnic and cultural minorities is reversed in the event of massive immigration from alien cultures.

Critics of the term “European identity” invoke that, among other deficiencies, people in Europe only exude diffuse feelings of sympathy towards others as Europeans. White (2012) uses a more direct language when he says that “European identity is an illusion, and some would say a foolish one”, but it may have proven useful in practical politics. Instead of the singular view conjured by the term “identity”, he would prefer a “narrative diversity” which is an already existing reality for Europe’s intellectual elites. Another option would be to look at non-territorial forms of subjecthood, such as distinguishing between the political Left and Right or between professions. “‘Europe’ and its political arenas are best seen as a terrain on which events, actions, and diverse experiences unfold – the stage rather than the heroic actor.”

Many of the identity problems in Europe are based on the obvious design flaws of the EU (and especially of the Eurozone) that weaken acceptance among populations (Hartleb 2011). This applies to the democratic deficit, which still clings to the EU's established institutions. And it also applies to the austerity policy towards Greece and its deplorable consequences for that nation’s people and economy. Just as Greece obviously joined the eurozone too early, any ambition for further EU enlargement should meet with utmost skepticism. The EU is also held responsible for perceived overregulation, even if the drivers behind are often located in the Member States. Many other weaknesses, such as the rather inefficient approach to foreign and security policy and the prosecution of crime, complete this picture.

How difficult it is to achieve progress in deepening the European identity is shown by many fruitless attempts to attain solidarity among the Member States. Often, instead of supranational solutions, only intergovernmental agreements are reached that build parallel structures to the core EU project. Several attempts have not even come that far, such as the European Social Union, with the central aim of community-wide unemployment insurance. As the EU membership becomes more heterogeneous, prospects for the integration progress in the social sector are fading. The financial crisis of 2008 as well as the refugee and migration crisis of 2015 eventually approached the displacement of any European identity by national identities.

Although originally the European identity was associated with the positive values of a common society, this concept has gradually evaporated into a defense construct against alien religious and other cultural influences. The basic idea of the EU as a “liberal democracy” has been put into question by elements of an “illiberal democracy” and of autocracy, as advanced by political parties

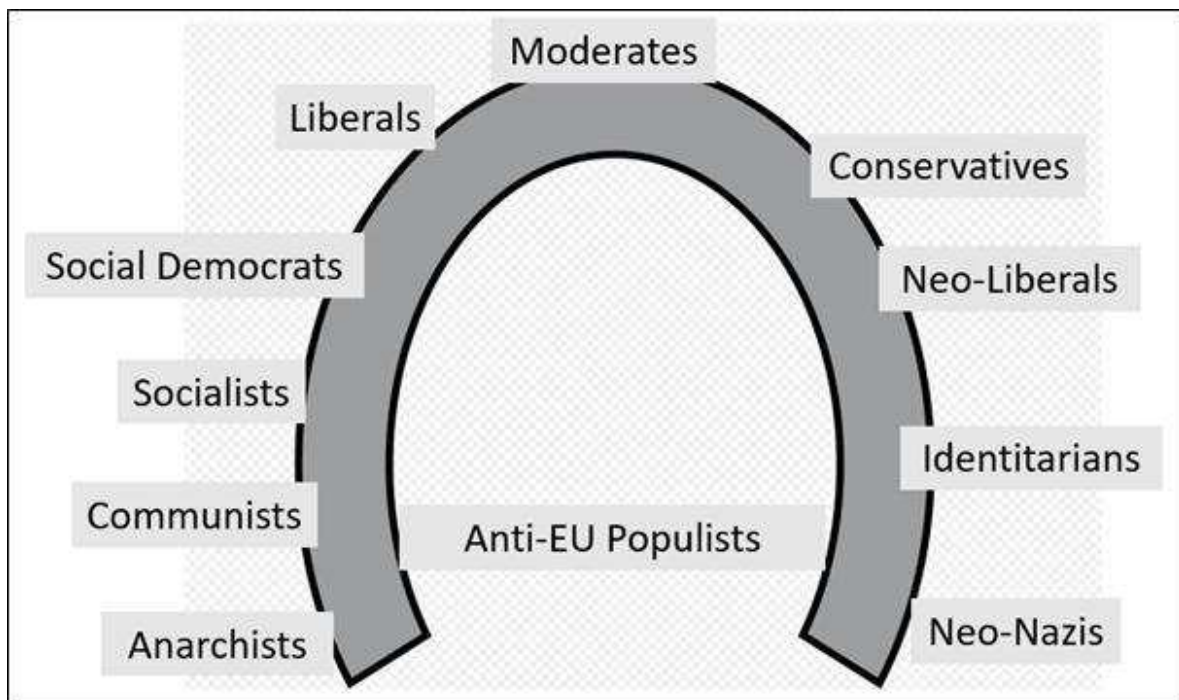
of Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland, Matteo Salvini of Italy, Marine Le Pen of France, just to name a few on the European continent (see Lloyd 2018).

The bundle of liberal-democratic values that form the basis of the collective “European identity” as pursued by the European Union and its representatives must be strictly distinguished from the populist “Identitarian Movements” operating at the extreme right of the political spectrum (White 2012, Kaina et al. 2013, 2016, Hafenegger 2014, Ciaglia et al. 2018). While European identity is supposed to function as a common substantive envelope over diverse national and local identities, Identitarians battle for denouncing any step toward, and destroying any existing evidence of, such an envelope.

Spectrum of Political Positions

While the dominating tone of identity politics was originally radical left-wing, it has moved since to the extreme right and to positions such as ultra-nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, resulting also in strong opposition to European integration. Considering the whole spectrum of political parties and organizations, left-wing to right-wing, a non-linear order can be established where the extreme left and extreme right positions are closer to each other than either is to the political center (Figure 1). This “horseshoe theory” (attributed to Faye 2002) is just a somewhat more elaborate version of a simple linear presentation of political positions. A still more comprehensive form would be a “circular theory” where the ends of the horseshoe actually meet (Bottrell 2016), a more sophisticated presentation would include a second axis ranging from libertarian to authoritarian regimes.

Figure 1: “Horseshoe theory” of political movements



Source: Based on Muscato (2018).

The horseshoe theory has been criticized by Choat (2017) as “nonsense”, given the meagre common ground in the substance of the extreme positions. However, some more recent governing coalitions (think of Greece and Italy) seem to corroborate the model at least with respect to methods of agitation and vis-à-vis the liberal democratic programs of the center. The political positions making up the horseshoe are just examples which may differ from country to country. Looking at the right-wing axis of the horseshoe, radical positions are maintained by the Identitarians and the neo-Nazis, either of which can be considered a populist movement.

As far as *national populism* is concerned, there is little difference in methods between left-wing and right-wing groups, and this contributes to the very shape of the horseshoe. There is also accordance in the disgust of the EU in its current shape, while no common ground can be discerned in most other substantive issues.

The Rise of Identitarian Movements

A particular variant of right-wing groupings is now forming the populist Identitarian Movement (IM). It has its origins in the French “Génération Identitaire”, the youth section of the anti-immigrant “Bloc Identitaire”, which is the successor organization of the right-wing extremist organization “Unité Radicale”. The Unité Radicale was banned in 2002, following an assassination attempt of one of its members on French President Jacques Chirac. The Génération Identitaire received public attention in October 2012 through a video designed to discredit the liberal movement of 1968 and multiculturalism in general. A parallel public action by an identitarian group was the occupation of a mosque roof in Poitiers where they enrolled a banner showing “732 generation identity” in reference to the year 732 A.D., when in that area the Frankish mayor of the palace of Austrasia, Charles Martel, stopped the advance of Muslim invaders. Among other recent activities, European identitarians made headlines when they rented a C-star boat to stop NGOs transporting migrants rescued in the Mediterranean to Europe.

The French roots of the IM are visible in their leading intellectual figures, among whom are the essayists Renaud Camus (*1946), Alain de Benoist (*1943), and Guillaume Faye (*1949). De Benoist is regarded the founder in 1968 of the Nouvelle Droite with its distinctive transnational and ecological spirit, Faye as one of its major theorists, and Camus as a warner against the “Grand Remplacement” via immigration. Generation Identity denies platforms to both fascists and national socialists, it shares however positions that are in favor of ending politically correct orthodoxy, halting mass immigration, and defending an exclusive aberration of European identity.

Zúquete (2018) summarizes the sociocultural trends that feed IMs as “the perception of an ongoing multicultural and multiethnic transformation of traditional European societies and the related ‘sense of threat’ to traditional European values and identities that it provokes”. Identitarians feel that a once great civilization is ravaged from inside by the Western model of civilization and from outside by foreign peoples. In that situation, radicalism is seen as the only possibility to stop the “Great Replacement” of “indigenous Europeans” and revive most of the fading old values. One of the biggest concerns is to become a minority in one’s country. Therefore, IMs strive for “a reset of the system ... toward a rebooting of Europe’s ethnocultural tradition”.

Since the turn of the century, the network of Identitarians has quickly spread over European and American countries. Although national movements may differ in targets and methods, most of them abhor globalization, liberal markets, consumerism, immigration, and treacherous elites. According to Bocci (2017), the leading force of European identitarianism is the youth-based pan-European

“Generation Identity” movement which is active in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. American identitarianism is represented by the Alternative Right (“Alt-Right”), a loosely defined movement mainly led by white nationalists. It includes a range of people who reject the mainstream liberal conservatism in favor of conservative ideas that embrace implicit or explicit racism and white supremacy (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alt-right>). The alt-right is described as “a weird mix of old-school neo-Nazis, conspiracy theorists, anti-globalists, and young right-wing internet trolls—all united in the belief that white male identity is under attack by multicultural, ‘politically correct’ forces.” (<https://theweek.com/articles/651929/rise-altright>)

Today the “Generation Identity” defines itself as a “Europe-wide patriotic youth movement that promotes the values of homeland, freedom, and tradition through peaceful activism, political education, and community & cultural activities” (<https://www.generation-identity.org.uk/>). The actual emphasis seems to lie just on homeland, tradition, and activism. The latter can be rather rude, and it is often hard to distinguish it from criminal assault.

It is a general attitude of IM groupings to resort to historical symbols. The overarching symbol is the Greek letter lambda in commemoration of the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC where the Persian army successfully fought against the outnumbered but heroic Spartan forces who carried a yellow lambda sign on their shields – as an abbreviation for Lacedaemon, the historic name of Sparta (Pella 2013).

The programmatic texts of IMs contain xenophobic and especially anti-Islamic statements as well as conspiracy theories which consider ethnic groups to be threatened by the mingling of different cultures. Every ethnic group should live exclusively on its own territory and thus preserve its identity. As immigration is perceived as a threat, IMs demand “remigration”, i.e. the reversal of migration movements. Mulhall (2019) pertains that there are “direct ideological parallels with classical fascism and the historical continuity from then, through post-war neo-fascism until the emergence of the Nouvelle Droite”. The ideas of the New Right are to some extent transnational as they long for the recovery of a mythical European Identity. This includes a fundamental rejection of the ideals of Enlightenment as well as Christianity and extends to a fight against the materialist ideologies from liberalism to socialism. The preferred result is a pan-European nationalism and a world of ethnically homogeneous communities. According to the Austrian IM activist, Martin Sellner, the “European heritage” should be understood to cover the last 30,000 years.

Although the IM is a conglomerate of various national groups, a few characteristics are common to all of them (see, e.g., HopeNotHate 2019):

- The self-image of Identitarians is to be the “indigenous youth of Europe” which defends an alleged common European heritage.
- In essence, the IM is a reaction to the ‘68ers and their perceived left-liberal dominance of society (Mulhall 2019).
- Identitarians have established networks among supporters and sympathizers preferably via social media.
- Identitarians are affine to extreme right-wing positions and ethnopluralism which strives for ethnic cleansing to result in a separate territory for each ethnic group.
- The IM ideology includes a chauvinistic exaggeration of “national self-esteem,” which often manifests itself in an authoritarian elitism and vilification of outsiders.

The IM has also been described as part of the Alternative Right, a far-right anti-globalist grouping which offers a radical “alternative” to traditional/establishment conservatism (<https://alternativeright.hopenothate.com/what-is-the-alternative-right>). Hope Not Hate (HNH) distinguishes identitarianism and the alt-right as “ostensibly separate” in origin, but with “huge areas of ideological crossover”. Many white nationalists and alt-right leaders have described themselves as identitarians. American alt-right influence is evident in European identitarian groups and events, forming an amalgamated “International Alternative Right”. Figures within the IMs and the alt-right often quote Nouvelle Droite founder Alain de Benoist as a reference. However, de Benoist rejects any alt-right affiliation and states, “Maybe people consider me their spiritual father, but I don’t consider them my spiritual sons” (HNH 2017, 2019a).

On a country-by-country basis, the following IMs and related groupings, representing a spectrum from right-wing parties to neo-Nazi organizations, may be mentioned (see, e.g., Hope Not Hate and Wikipedia, Identitarian Movement):

- In *Germany*, the IM emerged from earlier groups, connected to the magazine “Blaue Narzisse” and its founder Felix Menzel. Drawing upon thinkers of the Nouvelle Droite and the Conservative Revolutionary movement such as Oswald Spengler, Carl Schmitt, it contributed to the rise of the PEGIDA² marches in the city of Dresden in 2014/15. Even more to the right, the National Democratic Party (NPD) is described (by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) as a neo-Nazi organization which uses racist, antisemitic, homophobic, revisionist agitation and intends to disparage the democratic and lawful order of the constitution.
- In *Austria*, the “Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs” (IBÖ) was founded in 2012 by Martin Sellner, Patrick Lenart, and Alexander Markovics. Markus Willinger in 2013 published a booklet entitled “Generation Identity: A Declaration of War Against the '68ers”. It is now considered the manifesto of the IBÖ. The group has become publicly known through its activism, such as an attempt in February 2013 to counter-occupy the Viennese Votive Church that had previously been seized by refugees, and the interruption in April 2016 of a play at the University of Vienna authored by Nobel-Prize winning Elfriede Jelinek and performed by refugee actors. Martin Sellner has evolved leading spokesman of IBÖ who frequently also contributes to IM activities in Germany.
- In *Italy*, an “identitarian-legalitarian turn” happened when the humanitarian Turco-Napolitano law on immigration (1998) was replaced by the Bossi-Fini law of 2002 which, under the auspices of the Lega Nord (now Lega, chaired by Matteo Salvini), also replaced the “logic of amnesties” with a strategy of “prevention” (Garau 2015). Currently, the campaign “Safe Borders, Safe Cities” is intended to draw attention to the link between terrorism, crime, and open borders. Matteo Salvini, now also the Minister of the Interior, attempts to build an alliance of his Lega with the PiS of Poland. The origin of the “Generazione Identitaria” proper dates back to 2012. This group is now advertising that “Lampedusa is the European gateway to terror ... What is happening in Lampedusa ruins not only Italy, but also endangers Austria, Germany and the whole of Europe” (<https://www.generation-identity.co/identitarian-resistance-in-italy/>). The “CasaPound Italia-International” which started in 2015 by setting up a Facebook page is considered by some other Identitarians as “post-fascist” and therefore deviating from Identitarian philosophy. However, many commonalities with Identitarian

² “Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes”, founded 2014 in Dresden, is a populist right-wing organization with extreme xenophobic attitudes.

thought exist, the major difference being the rather close connection of the post-fascists with their historic ideal.

- Identitarian activities in the *United Kingdom* and the *Republic of Ireland* were originally confined to online exchanges. In October 2017, key figures of the IM (among them Martin Sellner of Austria) met in London to initiate a British chapter as a “bridge” to radical movements in continental Europe and the US. At that occasion, activists made a public appearance by unfolding a large banner on Westminster Bridge reading “Defend London – Stop Islamisation” (HNH 2019b).
- In the *United States*, the Traditionalist Youth Network/Traditionalist Worker Party is modeled after the European IM. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League, American Alt-Right groups like “Identity Evropa” use almost identical self-definitions as those of Generation Identity in Europe. Richard Spencer's National Policy Institute is also a white nationalist movement, which advocates a version of identitarianism. In 2012 Stephen K. Bannon took control of Breitbart News, an alt-right news outlet, engaged in the election campaign of Donald Trump and for a short period served as an advisor to President Trump. Bannon has since extended his alt-right campaign to Europe where he assists in unifying far-right national parties to form a faction for the 2019 elections to the European Parliament. The largest neo-Nazi organization in the US is the National Socialist Movement (NSM) with about 400 members in 32 states (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Nazism#Germany>).
- In *Sweden*, neo-Nazi activities have previously been limited to white supremacist groups, few of which have won a membership over a few hundred individuals. The main neo-Nazi organization as of 2017 is the Nordic Resistance Movement. It identifies itself as a National Socialist political movement with a parliamentary branch; it is also active in Norway, Finland, and Denmark.

The IM has now become a global phenomenon, with organized representation in many countries and international networks. Identitarian personalities and their activities are often close to those of neo-Nazi groups which are obsessed with their nationalistic ideology. They borrow elements from Nazi doctrine, including ultra-nationalism, racism, antisemitism, and anti-communism. Holocaust denial is a common feature, as is the incorporation of Nazi symbols. Neo-Nazis promote hatred, attack minorities and in some cases strive for creating a fascist political state. Identitarians have many a time emphasized to differ from neo-Nazism by deploring racism and violence, although Martin Sellner concedes that he was involved with neo-Nazis when he was younger (Cox-Meisel 2018).

The basic concept of IMs is, of course, in stark contrast to the liberal version of “European identity” as espoused by the European Commission and most of the Member States of the European Union. Gemmingen (2013) maintains, however, that thanks to the IMs’ anti-EU activities the attention to “European identity” proper has been revived in the European Union.

A New European Narrative

For Europe, after being covered by a wave of nationalism and populism as a result of the financial crisis, the subsequent austerity policy and the migration crisis, there is possibly no way of return to earlier liberal visions. Ben-Ami (2018) emphasizes that Europe needs a new narrative that exudes more social competence than it currently does, but above all must lead (in the words of Winston

Churchill) to a “European family” based on patriotism and European citizenship and built on the diversity of its history and political structures. As an example, the “American dream” comes in one’s mind, with the promise of shared individual freedom which could be strong enough to survive the attacks of the Trump Administration. However, as Eatwell – Gordon (2018) emphasize, a new European narrative must seriously engage with the supporters and ideas of national populism in order to understand their positions. Approaching their constituencies and working out solutions to their problems may alleviate the appeal of non-democratic developments.

The upcoming vote for the **European Parliament** (EP) will decide on the future course of European integration, including a new structure and personal composition of the European Commission. Box 1 summarizes the current EP factions and their relative voting power and provides some clue as to the future composition of the EP. The decision will be between continuity of the integration process, though with slow and only step-by-step improvements, on the one hand, and a radical step backward to exclusive nationalism with a lack of common positions concerning economic, social, ecological and migration issues on the other. This would manifest the resurrection of an allegedly overcome ominous nationalism.

Box 1: Composition of the European Parliament as of year-end 2018

The following groups are currently represented in the European Parliament (Lamy et al. 2018, European Union 2019, and European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/home>):

Group	Seats	Countries represented
The European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) Group (EPP)	217	28
The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats European Parliamentary Group (S&D)	187	28
European Conservatives and Reformists group (ECR)	75	16
The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group (ALDE)	68	22
Greens–European Free Alliance group (Greens/EFA)	52	18
The European United Left–Nordic Green Left group (GUE/NGL)	52	14
Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy group (EFDD)	41	9
Europe of Nations and Freedom group (ENF)	37	8
Non-attached Members (NA)	22	8
Total	751	28

In case of Brexit, the UK MEPs (now 73) will drop out and the future EP which will consist (adjusted for demographic changes) of 705 seats. None of the remaining Member States will lose seats.

The EPP (chaired by Manfred Weber), S&D (Udo Bullmann) and ALDE (Guy Verhofstadt) are all pro-European groups, although the EPP also includes the euro-skeptic Hungarian FIDESZ of Viktor Orbán. The right-of-traditional-right parties are split into ECR (Syed Kamall), EFDD (Nigel Farage) and ENF (Nicolas Bay, Marcel de Graaff). The ECR is a Euroskeptic and anti-federalist group that includes the Conservative Party of the UK and the Law and Justice Party (PiS) of Poland; they want to reform the EU, but do not reject it outright. The EFDD consists of the British UKIP and the Italian Five Star Movement, and the ENF is composed of Marine Le Pen’s National Rally party, Matteo Salvini’s Lega party, and the Austrian FPÖ. Environmental programs are represented by Greens/EFA (Ska Keller, Philippe Lamberts) and GUE/NGL (Gabriele Zimmer). Among the NA group, the following extreme

right-wing groups are represented: the Alliance of European National Movements (AENM) with 3 seats and the Alliance For Peace And Freedom (APF) with 2 seats. The Hungarian Jobbik avails of 2 seats. On the left wing, the European Communist Initiative (ECI) also holds 2 seats.

According to projections published in “Der (europäische) Föderalist”, <https://www.foederalist.eu/p/europawahl-umfragen.html> (retrieved 28 January 2019), the majority currently held by EPP and S&D could be lost to the advantage of Euroskeptical groups. In a dynamic forecast, the EPP is estimated at 185 seats and the S&D at 130 seats. A majority could still be conceived in a coalition including the liberal ALDE faction. The populist ENF could progress to 86 members, and the ECR to 91 members, while the EFDD, because of Brexit, would lose its status as a separate faction. As a result, the populist right-wing could end-up with a total of 177 seats, up from 153.

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