Conclusions: Europe's Lived Space

1 Constructing Europe from Below

In this book we explored how the participants in EU cultural initiatives construct notions of Europe and the 'European', what concrete meanings they give to them, and how they build their own relations to Europe. Hence, the focus was the construction of Europe and belonging to it from below. The analysis of our three cases, the European Capital of Culture (ECOC), the European Citizen Campus (ECC), and the European Heritage Label (EHL), clearly showed that there are many competing narratives of Europe and, concomitantly, people's narratives of belonging comprise wide-ranging, mutually interdependent, and accumulative constructions, including discrepant ones. As exemplified by our case studies, Europe means different things to different people, which suggest that it has different overlapping territorial, political, cultural, and ideological connotations. The multitude of notions of Europe among the interviewees and respondents reflects the variety of linguistic and cultural practices and historical pasts in Europe. These notions assist in creating and confirming a vague and contradicting perception of Europe as 'united in diversity'. The most frequent elements that participants used to discuss their conceptions of Europe in all our three cases included values, borders and cross-border experiences, mobility, and diversity. These elements were used in various combinations and resulted in several types of constructions of Europe, the 'European', and belonging to Europe.

The discussion of values in our data echoes the value discourse found in the EU policy documents. In this value discourse, the EU is closely linked to the development of the market economy and parliamentary democracy over the course of the past 200 years as well as to general efforts at keeping peace between European countries. Furthermore, this discourse places the EU in the intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, emphasizing human rights, freedoms, democracy, and solidarity. The values that our respondents and interviewees referred to include tolerance, the rule of law, various freedoms (e.g. opinion, press, religion, movement), human rights, openness, equality, and solidarity. However, the same values can be used for both drawing and crossing boundaries within Europe and between Europe and 'non-Europe'. Some of our respondents and interviewees highlighted these values as a way of overcoming the internal European divisions caused by past wars, conflicts, and invasions. They understood these values as symbolizing

belonging to Europe in the age of globalization, interconnection, and Brexit, and as a means of facing common concerns and challenges, such as climate crisis. Some framed these values as tightly 'European' and a few interpreted them even as a basis for perceiving Europe as a progressive and morally highly developed, and thus a more exclusive entity. Others emphasized values as an inspiration for more inclusive attitudes towards 'others' in terms of non-Europeans and non-EU citizens. However, in general, Europe was still frequently identified with 'Western' Europe and its specific value discourse, while East European countries continued to represent the 'European other' for many West European interviewees. In other contexts, the Americas, Africa, Oceania, or Asia were repeatedly referred to as the main group of what constituted 'the real others'. Usually, the discourse included references to the European social welfare system or model of parliamentary democracy, which were viewed as marking Europe as distinctive from other countries and continents.

Other commonly used tropes in our data deal with borders, bordering, and movement across borders. In the case of the EHL data, many of our field-work heritage sites are situated close to national borders, which might have prompted many interviewees to allude to borders and how unrestricted mobility helps overcome national and cultural boundaries and thereby defines their perception of today's Europe (see also Lähdesmäki et al. 2020). Mobility was frequently referred to in our ECOC and ECC data as well, so it can be seen as central to how participants in the EU cultural initiatives constructed Europe and their relations to it. The emphasis on mobility was also closely linked to another central element, cultural diversity, which was commonly raised in discussions on Europe and the 'European'. Europe was often characterized as culturally diverse, and this diversity was seen as manifested through cultural exchanges in Europe and personally experienced while travelling in Europe.

Although our focus is on participants and visitors with a privileged background to three central EU cultural initiatives, we believe that our book offers new findings about the construction of a cultural discourse of Europe. In sum, our findings suggest that the participants in EU cultural initiatives emphasized a cultural dimension in their relationship to Europe and constructed 'Europe' as a historically grown or contemporary-focused cultural space with a social responsibility towards its community of people, rather than in terms of a clearly bounded territorial entity (see also Risse 2004, 256).

2 Two Narratives of Europe

In our empirical data, experiences of mobility and cultural diversity are significant for characterizing today's Europe and perceiving it as an 'object of

identification' (see also Delhey et al. 2014, 357). According to our analysis, the interrelation of these two phenomena, mobility and cultural diversity, helps to produce belonging to Europe imagined as a cultural and social entity. A culturally diverse Europe corresponds to most of our interviewees' and respondents' conception of Europe and reflects the socio-spatial embeddedness of people and their practices. However, the notions of cultural diversity in our data resulted in two different ways of understanding Europe, and the personal experience of mobility is a decisive factor here. To put it bluntly: on the one hand, cultural diversity was viewed as preventing the emergence of European identity; on the other hand, diversity was considered a core element of European identity shaped by transnational experiences that also involved personal mobility and various forms of cross-border interactions. Therefore, based on our data, we have formulated two narratives capturing the main elements that our interviewees and respondents used when constructing their conceptions of Europe and their relations to it, focusing particularly on cultural diversity and mobility.

These narratives inform a spatial and cultural discourse of Europe between "spaces of places and flows" (see Sassatelli 2010; Castells 1999, 2000). Sassatelli draws on Castells' (1999, 2000) theory of the network society for explaining how a complex interplay and interrelation between a 'space of places' (e.g. the EU) and a 'space of cultural flows' (e.g. new communication processes, technological change, information) shapes contemporary social organization, and affects the transformation of social relationships and people's situatedness in the context of European politics of belonging. According to Castells, social organization and political representations, just like many personal experiences, take place within spatially defined places "whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of territorial contiguity" (Castells 1999, 296). However, influential societal networks and systems as well as personal networks are organized around the space of cultural flows that enable a "simultaneity of social practices without geographical contiguity" (Castells 2000, 14) through producing hubs of interaction and connection between different flows, which can lead to processes of decentralizing responsibilities and resources in the space of places. As Sassatelli (2010) points out in the context of the European Landscape Convention, the cultural policies of the EU, and the notions of belonging they bring about through the creation of a specific cultural discourse, seem to function as a 'space of flows', while the (nation) state remains the 'space of places'. We see the same phenomenon grounded on the emphasis on cultural diversity and mobility in our data. While the two narratives constitute distinct discourses, people may draw on both to construct their personal narratives of belonging. In our previous chapters (Chapters 4–7) we provided evidence how these narratives interact with each

other in constructing notions of Europe and the 'European' based on travel and manifold transnational and interpersonal interactions, which helped to produce an experience of cultural difference that shaped people's notion of cultural diversity and equally affected the meanings they gave to Europe.

In the first narrative, Europe is understood in terms of different nation states and cultures, and the cultural differences between Europeans are seen as a decisive factor that prevents the development of a 'true' community of Europeans despite political and legal harmonization across EU member states. In this narrative, the interviewees and respondents refer to examples of experiencing difference in their everyday lives, such as the multitude of European languages, but they also repeat the EU's grand narrative about a shared history and appreciate the values embedded in it, such as peace, freedoms, and democracy. Belonging to Europe is predominantly understood in terms of creating normative and functional relations with Europe, for instance based on sharing common political and economic interests or practical benefits in the EU framework. Hence, Europe is conceived as a culturally diverse but essentially political and economic entity. At the same time, this conception emphasizes that power relations between European countries are unequal based on perceived economic and political differences. The cultural aspect remains abstract, and a personal dimension of constructing belonging to Europe or to an imagined community across 'fixed' national boundaries seems to be missing here. Frequently, this narrative includes the fear that a European belonging may lead to the homogenization of Europe's cultural differences. While this narrative depicts Europe as being under construction, it simultaneously conveys the opinion that the goal of European identity will never be attained because of witnessed cultural diversity. The respondents and interviewees frequently used emotionally loaded terms such as identity, roots, and home, which shows the relevance of the affective dimension in the discussion of belonging to Europe. But the reference to identity, roots, or an emphasis on a common history also serves to construct narratives of exclusion.

In the second narrative, the notion of a culturally diverse Europe supports the acceptance of communality among Europeans across national borders despite persisting cultural differences. While the 'European' still incorporates the notion of a common history of wars and invasions that used to separate Europeans in the past, the personal experience of mobility, e.g. travel and various forms of cross-border interactions, indicates a shift in the understanding of the past and its significance for people today. Cultural differences are not considered as creating decisive antagonism between Europeans, but they are regarded as defining Europe in a positive way. This cultural diversity represented the 'charm' and 'essence' of Europe for both European citizens and

non-European citizens alike. The association of Europe and Europeans with existent cultural and linguistic plurality is further reinforced by people's individual mobility, in terms of travels or student and professional exchanges.

In the second narrative, personal, individual, and first-hand encounters and social relationships with other Europeans – through work, studies, travel, family links, or friendships – have an important influence on how our interviewees and respondents perceive and describe belonging to Europe. In this narrative, Europe is often associated with everyday practices of 'doing Europe': taking part in dialogue, exchange, and encounters across plural boundaries. The narrative stresses the possibility of developing and sharing cross-cultural commonality based on experiences and encounters in everyday situations. First-hand transnational encounters enable the construction of a sense of 'lived' European reality, based on the legal and political harmonization of frameworks in the EU and associated states in Europe. In this respect, the relation to Europe goes beyond the functional aspect of the EU, reflecting a personal approach to belonging and connecting with feelings towards fellow Europeans that are used to construct a notion of a transnational 'shared space' in Europe. This space is not territory-specific but brings together Europe's various 'others', including citizens of other EU member states, citizens of non-EU member states in Europe, and, in some cosmopolitan or humanist views, even 'non-European others', such as third-country citizens residing in a EU country and refugees. In this narrative, the EU is understood as a social entity and personal signifier that both guarantees the necessary social and civic rights and facilitates cultural and personal experiences of Europe as a "lived space" (Lefebvre 1991, 362).

Both narratives share the idea that the national antagonism between European states, which used to fuel European wars in the past, has been overcome. Participants in the EU cultural initiatives no longer thematize cultural differences as a potential source of future military conflicts between European states. In both narratives, the perceptions connect to legal and political harmonization of frameworks in the EU and its associated states. Another commonality to both narratives is that values, such as equality, social justice, human rights, peace and rule of law, are a central means of depicting Europe. Participants in the EU cultural initiatives thus use both legal and political integration as well as values to construct Europe in terms of a shared cultural space in both narratives. However, in the second narrative, the emphasis on mobility and interpersonal interaction enables the participants to conceive Europe as a more tangible social space that is concretely experienced in their lives and has a greater personal relevance for them. This emphasis challenges people's nation-based territorial socio-spatial attachments and instead can help

to create a transnational notion of a cultural community of Europeans. Such an idea of transnational cultural community does not exclude simultaneous place-specific or local, regional, and national attachments. However, the notion of Europe as a transnational cultural community is characterized by multifarious interpretations of Europe in various European countries and economic, social and political inequality may deepen the gap between them.

A significant difference between the two narratives lies in the perception of who is included in, or excluded from, and, hence, entitled to belong to this cultural space. While values are used in both narratives, the second narrative emphasizes that they can help to unite different groups, including non-European citizens who have moved to Europe for various reasons. This narrative is more common among young people who seem more likely to have early experiences of and with mobility (such as exchanges), among people with transnational family links, and among older participants (particularly in Western European countries) who often described themselves as the generation that supported the visionary beginnings of the EU after the experiences of World War II. In contrast, many middle-aged interviewees and respondents follow the first narrative and predominantly connect the construction of Europe with an identity discourse analogue to national identity discourses. Cultural differences, the lack of a common language, as well as a history of violent conflicts, wars, and antagonism are viewed as real and continuing obstacles to creating a 'united Europe', and thus affect people's construction of belonging to Europe and views on the EU.

The two narrative strands reveal that views on European belonging and integration are polarized along the lines of mobility. While some Europeans share such experiences, others do not. Mobility experiences provide a different access to Europe and the EU and promote a more concrete and affective way of constructing belonging than narratives of common values or legal and political harmonization, which may remain remote and abstract. Particularly for the younger generation, narratives that stress personal experiences of intercultural dialogue, peaceful exchanges, and experiences of mobility across national borders seem to have become new powerful, empowering, and more concrete narratives. Thus, mobility is a key aspect in EU cultural policies that function as a means for reflecting the interdependencies of belonging between places and flows on the one hand and at the same time enable to re-conceptualize diversity and change as compatible with unity on the other (see Sassatelli 2010, 80). The latter is achieved by defining diversity and change as part of a 'lived experience' of Europe that additionally has the effect of softening and relativizing these multiple cultural differences in Europe. The emphasis on mobility and dialogue does not replace the frequently repeated 'grand narratives' on peace

and values as a foundation of EUrope but helps to broaden them and give them a new tone. Through this emphasis, then, mobility becomes an important component in the EU's value discourse. At the same time, mobility poses a new challenge to understanding Europe in the context of current (im-)mobilities of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Europe, and intertwines with issues of social justice, participation, EU citizenship, and belonging. The two narratives therefore speak of the challenges in building Europe as a cultural and social entity, which our interviewed and surveyed European citizens were concerned about and in which they themselves played an active part.

3 Europe in the Making: Multilevel Dynamics of Europeanization

Our analysis shows that the participants of the EU cultural initiatives actively participated in the meaning-making of Europe as a socio-cultural space in all its dimensions that goes beyond a passive reception of the EU rhetoric into their construction of a socio-cultural discourse of Europe. However, their various narratives on Europe that help to construct their imaginary and subjective notion of community and belonging to Europe do not drastically differ from the ways, in which dominant EU narratives are produced.

In all our cases, Europe and the EU overlapped very frequently. The close connection between Europe and the EU has a formative influence on how people living in Europe construct belonging to Europe from below – including their images of Europe and how they want it to develop in future. The interviewees and respondents often referred to the EU when they discussed European identity or their own feelings of 'Europeanness'. For example, the participants in the EU cultural initiatives commonly discussed Europe by referring to institutional arrangements established by EU integration, such as the Euro currency, EU citizenship, freedom of mobility, and common policies in the fields of international relations, the economy, and trade. In addition, the EU was entwined more indirectly with other types of discussions on Europe and belonging to it in our data. In turn, sometimes they used the term Europe even when clearly discussing matters related to EU integration and institutions. The notions of Europe constructed from below are closely connected with the EU but also go beyond it. Thus, in our data Europe and the EU formed an ambivalent entity of EUrope (see Chapter 1).

Our ethnography of Europeanization enabled us to explore the interrelations between the micro, meso, and macro levels and their impact on constructions of Europe from below. Our findings show that regarding the politics of belonging in EU cultural policy, these levels intermingle and connect in

various ways. Our analysis indicated that the interviewees and respondents often repeated EU rhetoric and used EU symbols when discussing Europe and belonging to Europe, which suggests that they have adopted the EU discourse of 'shared values' and a 'common future'. However, many of them rejected the concept of identity, thereby detaching themselves from the macro-level EU discourses that explicitly used the concept in their politics of belonging. As we discussed in Chapter 6, rejection of the concept did not necessarily entail negative attitudes to Europe in general. Many of our interviewees and respondents depicted Europe as a 'community in the making', and while they often acknowledged the EU's top-down endeavors to construct Europe, they also highlighted citizens' personal contributions and active participation in its construction. Thus, they perceived belonging to Europe as based on activity, agency, and participation in a community (of people) of which they felt part.

Perceptions of Europe created from below are reflected in the EU's official policy ideas and in turn, these EU discourses are adopted in people's everyday practices and lives. As our findings demonstrate, Europe is understood at the micro level in terms of individual situatedness and belonging, as well as expectations and ideas that refute understanding Europe as a mere top-down political project. The EU discourse does not only reach the micro level through top-down diffusion. This discourse also emerges from the bottom up. It is important to remember that EU civil servants and experts who help to design policy documents are themselves European citizens and therefore their policy discourse replicates the narratives they experience in their everyday lives (Risse 2004).

As discussed above, the participants in the EU cultural initiatives repeatedly referred to legal and political harmonization within the EU in their accounts on Europe and their own relations to it. At the same time, despite many interviewees and respondents characterizing the EU as an economic and institutional entity, the analysis of the data revealed more nuances to this view and showed that many people take a cultural approach to the Union. In our data, the imagination of Europe as a cultural space is closely interrelated with perceptions of a social reality in Europe that is strongly shaped by actual EU policies and provisions. Since the 1990s the EU has become more tangible in people's everyday lives, starting with the single market, the introduction of EU citizenship, the implementation of a single currency (the Euro), and the promotion of free movement of EU citizens in the framework of the Schengen Agreement. The public debates about Eastern enlargement and about institutional reform and an EU Constitution have contributed to increase the public visibility of the Union since the early 2000s. At the same time, the EU has consolidated its role as a political actor for and 'voice' of Europe's states, going beyond the perception of the Union as an economic market. Attempts to construct the EU as a

significant global player include both the development of the EU institutions and the efforts to promote identification with the EU narrative and value discourses (see also Risse 2004, 267).

EU cultural policy seeks to further increase the EU's visibility in citizens' lives and to create a greater sense of belonging to Europe through its programmes and initiatives, as we have discussed in this book. For example, the EHL is envisioned to cover 100 heritage sites within and outside EU member states by 2030 (EC 2017a). By doing this, the original aim of the Label as a cultural action of the EU is extended to help construct a notion of a shared, trans-national 'European cultural space' across the bounded space of the EU. At the same time, EU cultural policy contributes to blurring the boundaries between the EU and its member states as well as between EU and non-EU countries. The multi-layered discourse of the European dimension in the ECOC and the insistence on European significance in the EHL avoid addressing the national layer, which is often perceived in the EU policy discourse as a challenge to the construction of the European (Lähdesmäki and Mäkinen 2019; Lähdesmäki et al. 2020). As a result of the increasing visibility of the EU in the media and everyday life, through its cultural initiatives and numerous other channels, citizens engage in a process of constructing 'banal Europeanism', which is enabled by similar triggers and processes as seen in banal nationalism (Billig 1995; see also Cram 2012 and previous chapters in this book), as our data also indicates.

Previous studies have highlighted the high psychological reality of the EU observed among Europe's political, economic, and social elites, whose dealings and business in Europe make them constantly aware of and refer to EU rules and regulations (see Hermann et al. 2004). Castano (2004) argues that processes of political and economic integration can make the EU become real and supports the conception of Europe as community arising from shared cultural values, a perceived common destiny, increased salience, and boundedness. In this respect, the EU and its policies shape European citizens' social reality. Equally, we can see people taking specific EU provisions and regulations, such as mobility or social equality policies, for granted, which increases the perceived normality of the EU in people's everyday practices and lives. In the context of mobility, the EU plays a significant role in facilitating movement and encounters between European citizens, which in turn makes the EU become a real psychological existence and a personal signifier for some people (see also Cram 2012).

As our analysis of cultural Europeanization in this book manifests, notions from above and below mutually influence each other in people's imagination of Europe as a cultural space. Thus, we see EU politics of belonging playing a role in people's constructions of belonging, attachments, and interests, which suggests that Europeanization is a complex process, in which the micro and

macro levels of discourses and narratives about Europe conflate and mutually reinforce themselves. Our findings show that Europeanization cannot be viewed as an isolated phenomenon that only takes place through processes from above bringing multiple outcomes on European citizens. It needs to be put in relation to how transnational cultural flows and processes change our relationship to space and time, and how various forms of movement allow for social decentralization by establishing a hub of interconnections between various spaces at different levels, and how they become reflected in politics of belonging (see Castells 2000; Urry 2003; Sassatelli 2010). Our findings in our previous chapters speak against a distinct separation between top-down and bottom-up processes in how belonging and community in Europe are constructed at the micro level. Rather, we find evidence that links exist between the construction of spatial and cultural dimensions in the narratives at the micro, meso, and macro levels that imply multiple interrelations between them. Thus, Europeanization includes both top-down and bottom-up processes and a circulation of ideas between various positions and levels, in which citizens actively engage with the idea of Europe through their own agency and thereby co-construct conceptions of what Europe is that also can impact the cultural discourse at the EU level.

In the context of EU cultural initiatives, we therefore suggest that ‘Europe’ and the ‘European’ are constructed in an interrelated process that refers to networked diversity and connectivity between different notions of Europe. Moreover, such a networked connectivity allows European citizens to associate Europe and the ‘European’ with everyday experiences and ‘banal’ representations, as well as with discourses about Europe and its people and manifold history. The conflation of the EU and Europe in various social, political, and economic spheres has led scholars to argue that “[o]ne could not be a ‘real’ European without being an EU member”, as Risse (2004, 255) has noted. As a result, “the EU increasingly is Europe” (Risse 2004, 263) and, hence the wider public within and outside Europe perceives European states and the EU as pursuing similar objectives. Our findings suggest that the European integration process may have left a mark at various social and political levels, defining both state- and nationhood in Europe. At the same time, the EU constitutes a meaningful resource and social entity for the individual (see also Risse 2004, 255).

4 Mobility: An Answer and a Challenge to Politics of Belonging

As the core principle of the integration process, mobility is an important factor in the EU’s politics of belonging and connects to several areas of its cultural

policy, practices of citizenship, and social equality concerns. In all our three cases, mobility is at the core of how people understand contemporary Europe. Our data reveals an interrelation between the experience of culturally diverse Europe and mobility. Our interviewees and respondents commonly used this interrelation to elaborate their sense of belonging to Europe. Many of them emphasized direct connections with EUrope, that is, belonging to a borderless European space with harmonized systems where they can travel freely. Our findings thus support the assumption that the extent of individual transnational interaction is key to 'feeling European' (see also Kuhn 2011).

Mobility has changed people's personal identification and relationship with Europe and the ways they think about fellow Europeans. It has transformed the notion of who (and what) 'we' are and who the 'others' are. Individual experiences of mobility – whether studying, working, or living in other European countries, and binational partnerships and ethnically mixed families – support the construction of cross-cutting and overlapping multiple allegiances that may also strengthen individuals' sense of belonging to Europe (see also Risse 2004, 251; Čeginskas 2015) while preserving distinctive local, cultural, and national allegiances. Mobility can contribute to new and lasting memories and create new connections that may foster processes of belonging and place-making, in which 'Europe' becomes meaningful and positively loaded. Some of our interviewees and respondents associated the practical effects of the EU politics of integration (such as the borderless Schengen area) with their own, personally meaningful memories and experiences. Although they had different and manifold understandings of what they associate with Europe and the 'European', our participants seem to suggest an interrelation between a 'lived' European integration and the increasing acceptance of the EU as a relevant social entity in the lives of Europeans. Particularly in the context of mobility and travel, this can produce a 'European experience' for some. The materialization of personal benefits connected with the EU may strengthen a sentiment of belonging to Europe and the EU, in particular if threats to acquired social and economic standards and security become concrete and real (see Cram 2012, 80), for instance in the contexts of the Brexit negotiations or the current political alienation between Europe and the US.

In general, according to surveys, most European citizens have positive personal experiences and associations with mobility across European borders. For instance, in a recent survey, European citizens highly valued their freedom of movement, and it is listed as a very positive result of EU integration along with 'peace among the EU member states' (Eurobarometer 2015). EU citizens' free and unrestricted mobility is usually associated with the experience of different places and cultures in Europe that enable people to learn about and to become acquainted with different practices, places, and people. Moreover, encounters

between citizens of different European states often result in acknowledging the far-reaching harmonization of systems (including roaming regulations, ease of travel in the Schengen area, the common currency, standardization of various citizens' rights, etc.) and cultural interrelation between European states and people, as our data reveals.

The idea of restricting EU citizens' movement in various spheres of their public and private lives has commonly become regarded as an unpopular socio-political move, only acceptable under very specific circumstances, such as limiting the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of Brexit, national-populist movements and parties in France, Sweden, and Italy no longer seek to dissociate their countries from the amenities and securities of a European single market, the Euro currency zone, and Schengen area, while they remain highly critical of the EU membership and the EU itself. This again emphasizes the extent to which individual mobility experiences and the right to free movement have a significant social impact and direct consequences for politics of belonging.

The right to free movement was one of the controversial political issues in the Brexit negotiations between the European Commission and the UK government. The apparent difficulties with 'decoupling' the UK from the EU reveal the extensive institutional, social, economic, and political interconnections between the EU and its member states. However, the highly emotional political debates and speeches in both the UK and continental media and parliaments reveal that the ties between the EU and its member states are often interpreted in terms of a specific 'cultural' connection. In this respect, the events and experiences connected with Brexit since the referendum in June 2016 prove relevant for Europe's reinvention and crucial for how the EU constructs and positions itself in the future, as well as for how belonging to Europe is perceived and constructed among European citizens.

The relevance of the right to free movement can be also seen in terms of posing new problems and hazards, as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world shows. At the time of writing (March 2020), many EU countries have taken far-reaching governmental measures to restrict movements of people across and within their borders. The new restrictions on movement, together with the call for people to practice 'physical distancing' during the health crisis, have made EU citizens notice how essential free movement has become for them, and how closely it connects to the exercise of their essential rights and civil liberties. The restriction on movement makes people directly vulnerable as regards supply chains and the economy at large, but also as individuals as regards issues, such as rise in addictions, domestic violence and abuse, or racism, and limited personal range of movement. It also connects

to limitations on (national and EU) citizens' democratic rights, as seen in Hungary, where Viktor Orban has used the pandemic to increase political control over the country for his own political agenda. Similar situations can be observed in other European countries, which exemplifies the general political importance of free movement for individuals and collectives as a determining feature of our contemporary societies.

Mobility is generally associated with positive stereotypes in the context of elite mobility and privileged border-crossing, however, movement in terms of migration often still carries a stigma. The recent Brexit discussions in the UK media revealed openly xenophobic and racist views about citizens of Central and East European countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, or Poland, and provided new insights into the stigma of mobility. Whether mobility is perceived as a positive or negative factor also affects the relationships between the EU, its citizens, and its member states. Hence, mobility has important implications for European societies and for people's constructions of belonging to Europe. On the one hand, it increases individual freedom, offers citizens new perspectives, and can favor the formation of transnational identification, rather than emphasizing membership and participation in a single political community such as the nation state (see Witte 2019, 93). These factors are particularly important for mobile people whose lifestyle challenges traditional modes of constructing belonging as well as for the socio-cultural construction of Europe (e.g. Favell 2008; Čeginskas 2016; see also Koikkalainen 2019). On the other hand, mobility in the European context is also associated with distinct social, economic, and political disadvantages. In some countries, it connects to the brain drain of young, highly educated people and loss of necessary manual laborers, while in other countries it links to increased competition for social rights between national and foreign residents and invokes fears about maintaining certain standards.

The experience of mobility reveals a new political cleavage between mobile and non-mobile EU citizens, which affects people's attitudes to European integration, their extent of association with the EU, and their willingness to transfer sentiments usually associated with the national to the 'European' (see also Bauböck 2019a; Fine 2019, 130; Kuhn 2015; Risse 2004). Several studies suggest that unequal access to resources and opportunities of transnational practices can deepen the imbalance between those people who can participate and who cannot participate in cross-border interactions (see Kuhn 2011, 815; Fligstein 2008; Faist 2014; Delhey et al. 2014). This view is supported particularly by our EHL data, which indicates that interviewees with mobility experiences were more likely to feel European and support the EU than those with limited or no mobility experiences. According to empirical research, transnational

interactions have become increasingly frequent over the past decades but there is a great difference in the numbers of European citizens who engage in transnational interactions and in the extent to which they engage in them, which can result in their unequal socialization as Europeans (e.g. Favell 2008; Recchi and Favell 2009; Kuhn 2015). Also our data showed an interrelation: those people who were able and willing to engage in transnational interaction and practices were also more likely to embrace European integration as a new source of personal opportunities (see also Kuhn 2011, 2019; Faist 2014, 212). While individual experiences of transnational mobility may shape positive attitudes towards European integration, our analysis suggests that other personal dispositions or social locations, such as family background, gender, and education, also impact on people's notions of Europe. Moreover, not every European citizen who has lived or worked abroad feels transnational and European but, on the contrary, these people can hold strong nationalistic views (the former British MEP Nigel Farage is an excellent case in point).

The right to free movement is at the core of democracy (Witte 2019, 98). It therefore closely connects with the practices and the rights of EU citizenship. In fact, the first right mentioned in the article establishing the citizenship of the European Union is the "right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member states" (EC 2016, article 20). However, as Bauböck (2019a, 127) argues, "[a]s long as European citizenship is nearly exclusively about free movement, immobile Europeans will not perceive it as a value and as an important aspect of their identity." In the citizenship article, the only rights not about mobility are the rights to petition the European Parliament, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to use any (official) EU language in the communication with the EU institutions and advisory bodies. In a recent edited volume (Bauböck 2019c), many prominent scholars discuss the current cleavage between mobile and immobile European citizens and address the civil, social, and political dimension of EU citizenship in the light of mobility. Their contributions add to the ongoing debates about extending voting rights in national elections to resident EU citizens from other member states. While citizenship and its practice are fundamental democratic principles, the present provision at the national and EU levels is contradictory: promoting free movement of EU citizens on the one hand and, on the other, restricting their political participation in the EU member states where they choose to reside without being citizens there. In the context of mobility, EU citizenship can change existing constructions of national identity and belonging to Europe, but being a 'mobile European' does not imply the same rights and duties as being a citizen of the EU member state in which one resides (Breakwell 2004; see also Witte 2019; Paskalev 2019).

EU citizenship and freedom of movement as one of its core aspects reveal the limits on participation and the danger of exclusion and social inequality. As Witte (2019, 95) argues:

The construction of EU citizenship, in particularly [sic!] within the context of the rights to free movement and nondiscrimination, has the potential to lead to more inclusive ways of thinking about what freedom, justice, equality and participation should mean in the EU. It also has, however, the potential to lead to more practices of exclusion. The fact that EU citizenship and free movement are not embedded in a sufficiently sophisticated, responsive and democratic institutional structure makes it very difficult for the EU to mediate the social conflict that practices of inclusion and exclusion produce, and to legitimise the choices made.

Mobility as a social phenomenon is bound to produce divisions by assisting in creating images of first-class and second-class EU citizens and third-class migrants in the European context. Hence, it has the potential to undermine democracy. As regards third-country nationals, despite its transnational design with the aim to ensure a “new – less ethnic – way of thinking about the role on the individual in the EU” (Witte 2019, 98), EU citizenship has a strong national impetus, since it is not possible to obtain EU citizenship without first being a national citizen of one of the EU member states (see Neuvonen 2019). Several contributors to Bauböck’s edited volume therefore advocate for a stronger social dimension of EU citizenship by increasing the visibility of a social Europe in order to reconcile mobile and non-mobile Europeans (see Bauböck 2019d, Part III).

5 Belonging and the Social Dimension of Europe

The cultural understanding of Europe and the EU, produced by the participants of the EU cultural initiatives in our data, includes a social dimension (see also Bruter 2004) that goes beyond the mere economic and institutional integration of Europe. The imagination of Europe as a cultural space connects to the perception of Europe as a relevant and unique space that provides social welfare. The connection of cultural and social dimensions was particularly manifest in our data through the emphasis on social rights and values, such as freedoms, equality, and justice. Freedom of mobility and peace among the EU member states were commonly highlighted as positive aspects of EU integration (see also Eurobarometer 2015). Both aspects are interconnected as the

ability to move freely across national borders symbolizes peaceful relations and enables participation in a community.

The discussion on the social dimension of Europe in the EU policy discourses is part of a broader debate around Europe's future. In its White Paper on the Future of Europe (EC 2017b), the European Commission sets out a number of options for collective actions to respond to the transformations of contemporary European societies and their worlds of work. The actions are targeted at issues such as the precarity of work and housing, restructuring of work conditions, falling wages, social insecurity in the face of rising rental and purchase prices, social inequality, and poverty. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Charter), which was proclaimed in 2000 but became legally binding with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, incorporates fundamental legal rights into EU law to ensure common standards of social justice and equality for EU citizens and residents consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights (CoE 1953). However, the Charter is not a replacement for the national systems for protecting and interpreting rights, as the recent open conflict between the Polish government and the EU on legal reform in Poland has shown.

Similarly, the European Pillar of Social Rights (Pillar) outlines a notion of Europe as a social entity that both involves EU member states and has consequences for countries in Europe that are associated with the EU. The Pillar refers to EU citizens' rights regarding the labor market, working conditions, gender equality, and social protection and inclusion, especially the rights of disabled citizens, the elderly, and children (EC 2017c). The Pillar also calls for social rights to be reinforced in order to create a "promising future for all" that should help to "build a more inclusive and sustainable growth model" that will contribute to fostering social cohesion (EC 2017c, Articles 7 and 9).

The four freedoms of movement are underpinned as a core value and right for "the peoples of Europe" in both the Charter and the Pillar (EC 2012, preamble; see also EC 2017c). As stated in the preamble of the Charter (EC 2012, 395):

The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States and the organisation of their public authorities at national, regional and local levels; it seeks to promote balanced and sustainable development and ensures free movement of persons, services, goods and capital, and the freedom of establishment.

The emphasis on EU social policies fosters the perception of Europe as a social entity. The objective to increase the significance of the EU for European

citizens is intertwined with cultural policy measures to increase and strengthen belonging between EU citizens and the EU. Indeed, the social dimension is embedded in various ways in EU cultural policy. The decisions of the core EU cultural programmes and initiatives call for promoting social cohesion, inclusive societies, engagement of different people, and social equality. The social dimension has recently been given a more central role in EU cultural policy discourses. In 'A New European Agenda for Culture', the European Commission has identified the social dimension as the first of its three strategic objectives for "harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being" (EC 2018, 2). Interconnection between European cultural and social dimensions, thus, "brings people together", "empower[s] people", "increase[s] self-confidence", enables "community regeneration", "improves health" and "psychological well-being", and promotes "opportunities for all to take part and to create", as the Agenda envisages (EC 2018, 2–3).

Mobility (and free movement as a fundamental principle) is a factor that intertwines economic and social dimensions in the European context. The political question as to who should be able to access social rights, and who should be discouraged from doing so, reveals the dilemma inherent in the EU's politics of belonging. This question is at the core of the conflict between EU countries about immigration and asylum policies, security interests, and social (in)equality concerns and relates to the topical discussions about open and closed borders of the EU. The political dilemma about endorsed versus unwanted mobility also reveals a tension between transnational belonging to Europe as proposed by the EU and national belonging as lived in practice by many European residents (see Bauböck 2019b). This tension will not be solved in the near future, as the ongoing conflicts between EU member states on the issue of receiving refugees and migrants from poorer countries suggests. In the context of 'migration crisis' discourses, we are faced with growing practices and processes of policing mobility and securing borders within the UK-EU-Schengen area that reshape (im)mobilities across the EU, and affect both non-EU migrants and asylum seekers, as well as Europe's 'undesirable' mobile citizens, such as the Roma.

A transnational "vision of social justice" (Thym 2019, 103) based on equal and fair treatment could help to bridge the gap between immobile residents in Europe and mobile EU citizens as regards their attitudes to belonging to Europe and the EU (see also Neuvonen 2019, 114). If Europe is increasingly associated with a European social model surpassing national models of social welfare by representing harmonized social regulations on employment, health, social protection, welfare, social rights, and so forth, then European integration becomes a significant aspect of the lives of mobile and immobile

residents of Europe. Indeed, our data showed that participants in the EU cultural initiatives construct belonging to Europe through value-based discourses that include references to a 'social Europe'. Thus, their imagination of Europe as a cultural space is interconnected with the imagination of Europe as a social entity, which in turn has consequences for the EU's politics of belonging.

Mobility and migration create new challenges for social rights and new categories of citizenship that transcend the traditional context of nation states (see Bauböck 2005, 2007, 2019c; Wiesner et al. 2018, 11). Mobility as a social phenomenon that defines belonging links not only to EU citizenship but also to participation – and participation enables inclusion, while limited participation increases exclusion. Belonging in the light of mobility also raises the problem of how inclusive such a 'social Europe' is and who participates in it and is entitled to claim social rights. We found some evidence that constructing boundaries is no longer seen to be as relevant among 'fellow Europeans' as against citizens from outside 'cultural Europe'; as a result, specific cultural and religious groups of people, such as Muslims, are singled out.

To construct belonging to Europe around the right to free movement equally justifies providing non-discriminatory access to social benefits to everybody in every European country (Ferrera 2019, 196). However, the social reality shows that "the mobile citizens are losing a significant aspect of their freedom due to their movement", as Paskalev (2019, 119) points out. This concerns practices of social rights and inclusion, which applies not only to mobile EU citizens but equally to permanent, long-term EU citizens residing in another EU country and migrants and refugees from outside EU countries (see Rodríguez 2019, 71; Swoboda 2019, 56). Some EU citizens may perceive the act of extending social rights to citizens from another EU country or to non-EU immigrants as reducing the value of nationals' rights and opportunities. This may result in alienation from the EU and fuel inner-societal conflicts. Therefore, confining the imagination of Europe to mobility and EU citizenship potentially replicates the "exclusionary 'community of fate' transnationally", as Neuvonen (2019, 114–115) cautions.

In the context of mobility, it is therefore important to discuss who the 'people of Europe' with whom "Europe starts" (as in the EHL slogan) actually are. All mobility is not equally accepted, and our interviewees and respondents distinguish between travel, intra-European movement, and migration from outside the European continent into the EU. Nevertheless, mobility can help to deconstruct real and imagined boundaries and borders among EU citizens and residents and thereby create cohesion. Thus, it can promote recognition of Europe, characterized by transnational cultural and social dimensions with

which it is desirable for EU citizens to identify, that equally shapes and intertwines ideas about belonging to Europe and the EU.

6 The EU's Politics of Belonging: Opportunities for the Future

While EU cultural policy complicates the distinction between the EU and Europe, its transnational perspective on culture and heritage offers new ways of dealing with and negotiating what the EU and Europe actually are and who belongs to them. EU cultural initiatives may encourage people in Europe to exchange their views and experiences as well as helping both policy-makers and fellow citizens to listen to different 'voices'. With regard to the EU's current politics of belonging, we can note that in some areas and for some people it is very successful, but in other areas and for other people Europe does not evoke or enable feelings of belonging. Our book proposes a strong interrelation between belonging, identity, participation, and citizenship by foregrounding the importance of mobility. The interrelation of and interdependence between different and distinct spatial, cultural, and social dimensions manifest through mobility and situate citizens and residents of Europe between various 'spaces of places and flows'. Similarly, mobility contributes to a cultural and spatial discourse, in which Europe is constructed as a 'lived' cultural space, in and through which people meet, cooperate and manoeuvre in their everyday lives. Our book argues for the need to acknowledge the role of culture and cultural discourses for achieving equal participation also in other policy fields. However, there is a need to research further the voices of migrants and non-EU citizens, as well as EU citizens who lack resources, means, and opportunities to engage in transnational interactions within the 'European space'. Future studies on how they receive EU cultural programmes and initiatives and experience participation through them could shed new light on interpretations of belonging in the European context.

The politics of belonging always connect to issues of social inclusion and participation. Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to whether and how EU cultural policy enables and encourages citizens' participation. This means more than consuming cultural products and services and taking part in cultural activities: it means a role in decision-making and knowledge production concerning culture as well as producing and experiencing culture through one's own citizen-driven grass-roots activities. Only if equal and democratic participation are adopted and implemented in the EU cultural policy can manifold notions of Europe and belonging to it constructed from below become visible

in the context of EU cultural initiatives. Over the past decades, there have been signs of such a participatory approach from various actors of cultural policies and practices, the EU included, but in our fieldwork data, it was not a prominent feature.

A more participatory approach to the EU's politics of belonging could yield new ways of including and limiting the exclusion of mobile and immobile residents in Europe. It can also help us to find a new *modus operandi et vivendi* vis-à-vis migrants and refugees from other parts of the world and to engage with their belonging to and inclusion in Europe. Emphasis on participation in transnational cultural and heritage policies could transform views of belonging to Europe and the EU and favor the imagination of a transnational cultural and social community of Europe. The major challenge facing EU cultural initiatives is at the same time their greatest opportunity: to find new ways of reducing social and societal polarization and advancing social cohesion and social justice in order to make belonging to Europe equally accessible to all.

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