

European Political Rituals: a Challenging Tradition in the Making

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Abstract

The emergence of the European Union as a supranational political order has given rise to new political rituals. European rituals such as the dramatization of European governance via a European ceremonial, the celebration of European memory in Europe Day, the European anthem and the voting process in European elections offer various theoretical challenges. Given the difficulty today of inventing traditions in relativist and disenchanted societies, the possible obsolescence of the notion of ritual itself may be at stake. This paper argues that the development of European symbolism is more likely to follow well-established, national paths and pass via a cross-fertilization of national and supranational references. These national processes may facilitate the incorporation of the European dimension in national identities and practices but not their articulation in trans-national and/or supranational schemes. This leaves open questions on the nature of the European polity and the symbolic functions it is required to perform.

Key words: Anthem; European Union; European Identity; National identity; Political Communication; Protocol; Rituals; Symbols; Vote.

Political Anthropology at the Conquest of the European Union

Since its foundation, the European Union has frequently been presented as the product of a highly functionalist integration process in which interests were supposed to govern ideas and identities. As a “regulatory state”, the EU appears to be a very rationalized and utilitarian political body. Nevertheless, the emergence of a supranational political order has produced a number of symbolic settings (Foret 2008): political roles, events, commemorations, codified experiences and material symbols. Scenarios diverge. The production of symbols has sometimes occurred directly in European arenas and been shaped by European actors, although it remains circumscribed to elites and determined by national backgrounds and actors. It sometimes takes place in trans-national networks or in the Europeanization “from within” of national spaces.

This production of European symbols cannot be properly understood without taking into account the structural changes in contemporary political communication. Disenchanted European societies offer little raw material for any classic development and dramatization of political narratives. But there is a social demand for renewed, deinstitutionalized and individualized cultural codes. Europe is not de-ritualized if this means the absence of symbolic markers of time and formal or informal social rules that guide the political drama. Rather, the exposure of the games of power and the dramatization of the relationships between rulers and ruled follow logics based on

immediacy and are structured by the recognition of relativism, and uncertainty. In this context, European institutions have developed *ad hoc* patterns of symbolic legitimization.

This article focuses on European rituals that are to be compared with the symbolic mechanisms, which helped in the making of nation-states. The rituals are used as indicators of the potentiality of an autonomous European tradition or of the cross-fertilization of national traditions. The purpose is two-fold: to understand the conditions and modalities of the political effort to produce meaning in the frameworks of European integration; and, to assess the effects of this political effort on collective belonging and allegiances. In achieving this purpose, three steps will be taken. Firstly, a brief assessment of the state-of-the-art indicates how political anthropology has come to terms with complex societies and how it has progressively developed in the study of European fields. It will be shown that this development has grown alongside an interest in the analysis of symbols as a way to understand new forms of domination that increasingly rely on non-institutional and non-formal resources. Secondly, the legitimization of the EU is put in the general context of the transformation of political communication. The European polity is not the only level of power struggling to regulate its society through rituals. The question is whether the nation-state's capacity to structure a common temporality and spatiality organized around a political center is definitively obsolete. Thirdly, four empirical examples are discussed: the EU order of precedence among the rulers of the European multi-level polity; the use of the European anthem; the celebration of Europe day; the organization of voting, the founding ritual of democracy, in European elections¹. It appears that the center (Brussels) is challenged by national peripheries as master of ceremonies. Its ability to stimulate or enforce a common narrative that underlies homogeneous rituals in member states is far from obvious. As a result, the development of European symbolism is more likely to follow well-established, national paths and pass via a cross-fertilization of national and supranational references. The question is whether the future will see the incorporation of the European dimension in national identities and practices but not their articulation in trans-national and/or supranational schemes. This leaves open questions on the nature of the European polity and the symbolic functions it is required to perform.

A political anthropology of Europe: from margins to institutions, and return?

A glance at the anthropological literature dealing with Europe shows well-known trends. Anthropologists' interest in modern societies is not new. But in looking at their own societies, researchers have been obsessed by the quest for "authenticity". Originally, anthropologists wanted to find communities where human relations were interpersonal and not mediatized. This narrowing of "the field" drove anthropologists towards remote areas and peripheral social groups. Progressively, since the seventies, the discipline has started tackling complex social formations and has dared to study urban zones, elites and related institutions. This transformation is also marked by the shift from a functionalist social anthropology focussed on structures to a cultural

anthropology devoted to symbolism and rituals of contemporary Europe (Boissevain 1994: 41-56). The European Union became an object for anthropologists at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. Given the speculations about European identity and the rather abstract notion many Europeans have of the EU, it may be seen as the final outcome of the symbolic turn in the anthropology of Europe.

Relying on its rich expertise in analyzing micro-social realities, anthropology is keen to underline how social formations are constantly reinterpreted by individuals and altered by conflicts. To this extent, its perspective is complementary to political science, which tends overall to have a primary interest in macro-dynamics. Furthermore, political scientists offer a much-needed understanding of the way the state works and determines individual and collective identities. This alliance of anthropology and political science paves the way for a comprehensive conceptualization of the two dimensions of human beings in the words of Abner Cohen: *Symbolic Man and Political Man* (Cohen 1974). The study of symbols becomes more prominent and urgent when belongings are increasingly regulated not by contractual but by informal disposals. At the center is the permanent reconstruction of power relations and selfhood. The notion of ethnicity, understood as a mechanism of adaptation to social change – notably to the evolving balance between state and market – and as a product of intercultural interactions, is a good example (Comaroff 2009). The transition from communism to democracy is another one (Wydra 2007). The transformation of national identities and systems of governance through the process of European integration is a further case to be developed subsequently.

But how can one work on European integration anthropologically? Again, the quest for “the field” has driven attention towards the rare places where the European polity exists in flesh, namely the European institutions inhabited by specialized actors of European affairs. Drawing on classic works depicting institutions as, on the one hand, the matrices and the best expressions of culture, and on the other hand as the vectors of integration and conflict (Douglas 1989), anthropologists of Europe have analyzed actors and places (Bellier and Wilson 2000; Bellier 1999; Bellier 1995), policy communities (Thedvall 2006), policy processes (Theiler 2005) and the production of political discourses (Holmes 2000 and 2006). This scrutiny of the European bureaucracy has provided valuable empirical and theoretical data. However, the danger may be to overestimate the representative nature of the EU's structures and elites. There is a wide gap between the realities of Brussels and the way Europe is lived in national societies. If we want to assess the range and the meaning of the transformation brought about by the emergence of the European political order it is necessary to document the symbolic channels making the link between the institutional world and the average citizens. Otherwise, the risk is to see anthropologists in European studies return to a fascination with margins, conceiving of “eurocrats” as powerful but atypical social agents.

Continuation or overtaking of the nation-state?

An enquiry into the symbolic effects of European integration may help to frame identity-politics in national societies. This also concerns the question of the salience and

force of the EU as a polity. In short, two main scenarios are offered, illustrated by the two most influential anthropologists writing on European affairs. Cris Shore promotes the idea that European institutions, far from inventing a new type of politics, have imitated processes of state-building current in the nineteenth century (Shore 2000). European civil servants see themselves as an enlightened vanguard having the historic responsibility of revealing to EU citizens their common identity. They are also political entrepreneurs united by a true spirit of class and aiming for the maximization of their material advantages. They use the spill-over effect theory as a justification, turning it into the last big narrative inherited from the Enlightenment: this postulates the achievement of integration by rationalization of politics and convergence of interests (Ibid.: 207). The European project legitimates itself by a mythical reference to the future rather than to the past (Ibid.: 50). Apart from this, it has everything in common with the nation-state pattern. Europe borrows from this nation state many symbolic resources with unequal success.

Marc Abélès shares numerous theoretical and methodological choices with Cris Shore (*Anthropology Today* 2004: 10-14) but draws opposite conclusions. He insists on the irreducible singularity of the European polity (Abélès 1996). Abélès emphasizes the pregnancy of the European idea which underlies a societal trend towards rationalization and harmonization. In this context, European civil servants are not a class working for its own interest, but a group acting in collaboration with other social groups under the pressure of societal and geopolitical forces. For Abélès, the absence of tradition and territoriality, and the inability to promote cultural homogeneity radically distinguish the EU from the nation-state model. Thus, the symbolic politics underlying the nation-state is on the verge of obsolescence without the prospect of being replaced by a clear alternating political order.

Is the EU the continuation of the nation-state or will it overtake the nation-state? The answer to this question has big consequences for our view of the place of rituals in contemporary Europe. A methodological choice has been to use as the main (but non exclusive) toolbox French political anthropology. This literature has two main assets. On the one hand, French anthropologists have heavily invested themselves in the field, thus benefiting from a privileged access to European institutions since the nineties (Foret 2008). On the other hand, the processes of nation-building by the centralized French state have strongly drawn the attention of social scientists to symbolic matters.

Rituals Today: Europe as an “A-Ritual” Polity?

The deinstitutionalization of political symbolism

Political anthropology offers a qualified analysis of the transformation of present political dramas. It is more accurate to speak of individualization and constant reinvention of rituals rather than of “de-ritualization” of politics. According to Georges Balandier, a founding father of modern political anthropology and a theoretician of decolonization, one major transformation is the disappearance of the “local”, the

material or immaterial place where collective belonging, history and identity were rooted (Balandier 2005: 4). At the same time, all political, social or cultural conceptions of a unified entity become increasingly obsolete. Direct social relationships are seriously affected by the effects on human life of technological innovation as well as by the reconstruction of reality by mass media and cultural industries. In this era of weak sociability, the human being is emancipated from all strong, cultural definitions by his belongings and cut off from references to any transcendence and tradition. People are left to themselves in a world of fragile connections that are based on affinities and permanently endangered by mobility (Ibid.: 14, 90-91). Individuals have to determine alone their own *manière d'être au monde* (being in the world). With the decline of traditions that nurtured codified meanings, symbols have lost their significance. They are only kept fully alive in specific arenas that maintain initiation and repetition over the long term. Signs, on the other hand, proliferate. In contrast to a symbol, a sign carries temporary meanings that are immediately understandable. Its use has exploded to express interdictions or orientations in the constant movement of society. Signs are merely functional, defined by their uses and, without any singularities, they can be duplicated infinitely to mark “non-places of surmodernity” (Ibid.: 78; see also Augé 1992).

Political communication has been fundamentally transformed by these societal evolutions. Power can no longer dramatise its omnipotence by the mobilization of symbols. The use of symbols is restricted to times of celebration. It can be reactivated when crises occur. But public authorities cannot rely on traditional symbolic resources on a day-to-day basis to maintain their social control. They have to demonstrate constantly their ability to master change and deliver efficiently the results expected by citizens. Symbols still matter, but the construction of the political drama is radically altered (Balandier 1992). The purpose of symbols for political power is the same: to show strength and to express legitimacy. Technological means and cultural conditions are incongruent. Leaders and institutions have the potential to reach anyone at any time. They are under a continuous obligation to communicate, as silence would mean indifference or helplessness. Power is permanently on stage (Schwartzberg 1979). It is no longer a distant center that appears at leisure in a carefully controlled ceremonial setting, like the triumphant arrival of a king in a loyal city. It must be an interlocutor, listening to citizens and responding to them. Mass media forbid the segmentation of the public *a priori* (even if new media tend increasingly to do so in practice). It creates the obligation to have a catch-all message with a neutral content that makes sense to the majority of the audience without alienating any minority groups. In short, technology is not only means of communication but also a communicative constraint.

This “revolution” in communication has deeply redefined power discourses. Political orders see their external justifications (God, history and nation) challenged more and more. They are sustained only by the adhesion of the ruled, and this adhesion has to be constantly renegotiated. Leaders and institutions have to prove their competence and desirability on a daily basis. In contrast to traditional societies where rituals work on reproduction and repetition, “hypermodern” societies function on the rhythm of the media, looking for innovation and originality. Symbolism is degraded to

communication. Myths are still at the roots of authority, but current myths are rapidly consumed and must be renewed perpetually to reaffirm the unity of the community and the representativeness of power.

In pre-modern times, symbols were the way to regulate order and disorder. Rituals organized limited periods of turbulence and inversion as a cathartic way of enforcing the return of established rules in the end. In present times, rituals are too weak and restricted to operate in such a regulatory fashion. It is up to leaders and institutions to manage tensions and protests by seduction or “foreclusion”. The state then has to organize the conflict by constructing an appropriate political drama. In this game, political leaders are merely some players among many (journalists, experts, representatives of civil society, etc.). They are both the organizers and the objects of the spectacle. Individuals are free to choose whether to take part or not. Instead of speaking of de-ritualization, it is therefore more pertinent to speak of the individualization and deinstitutionalization of political symbolism. This is true at all levels of social communication. As Erving Goffman has emphasized, the individual is the new principle of sacrality structuring ordinary social relations. The individual is the unit at the centre of the organization of human interactions in daily life and of the links between institutions and citizens (Goffman 1974: 43, 85). Formerly, rituals celebrated collectivity; now, they refer to individuals themselves, who have increasingly escaped definition by public authorities while being ever more dependent on their immediate social groups or networks. It is worth noticing that these groups and networks remain deeply national in the context of Europeanization and globalization (Medrano 2003).

Political drama in a risk-averse Europe

This fundamental transformation of political communication produces major effects at all levels of political systems and communities, Europe simply being one of the most visible stages. Using the French “no” to the constitutional treaty on May 29, 2005 as a basis, Marc Abélès describes a general shift from the politics of *convivance*, based on participation and shared identity in the present, to the politics of *survivance*, focused on the priority of reducing risks and managing an uncertain and dangerous future (Abélès 2006: 94). The nation state was the universe of *convivance*, a stable setting for common memory and destiny, a community whose continuity was the main purpose and the main guarantee for the individual citizen (Ibid.: 104-105). But the nation state is no longer able to face up to the challenge of global environmental security or socio-economic threats. Participation in the national political community is no longer a way of having one’s say in an efficient process of control of private and collective destinies and thereby loses its importance. The politics of *survivance* has more to do with the long-term challenges of survival for humanity as a whole, but has yet to find its proper arenas for political action and participation.

The rupture underlined by Abélès lies between the sphere of social and political integration and the sphere of the effective regulation of reality. In pre-state societies, the king was the nexus of a transcendent or immanent superpower, a combination of nature

and culture to ensure the preservation of life. This superpower was in touch with superior forces that determined the future; it was also a social entity by which ritual action was a way of influencing the future. The nation state signified a further step in human history when integration in the civic community and participation in the expression of national sovereignty were a means of taking part in the production of the future. The welfare state and national politics were inclusive and decisive enough to maintain the necessary fictional idea of the mastery of collective fate and the accountability of the power in charge (Ibid.: 135-155). In both cases, political ceremonies provided people not only with reassurance but also with a symbolic empowerment thanks to the projection of the leader as an incarnation of the representation of the community, allowing people to think of themselves as actors rather than passive victims.²

Contemporary societies are desperately on the search for symbolic mechanisms to restore the illusion of control and the link between participation and survival, between belonging and destiny, between individual and collective life. New rituals of exorcism have appeared, such as world conferences on global warming, charity events, as well as networks in the wake of natural disasters or focused on the fight against diseases. These new processes and settings linked to politics of *survivance* have developed alongside traditional patterns of sovereignty. They remain widely dependent on states, even if they constrain the state by imposing a partial redistribution of power and resources due to the growing role of NGOs (Ibid.: 223). However, in this new scheme, survival does not signify more participation by the public. Most often, new elites and decision-makers are faceless to the average citizen. The public figures of this new order are more often committed pop stars or generous benefactors rather than accountable politicians (Ibid.: 224). Sources of superpower on the level of global threats therefore escape collective control. A world state is still a utopia, as much feared as hoped for, and this is not the goal of most people or of most actors' strategies.

In this context, the European Union is simply a different level of governance, not really able to offer symbolic resources of reassurance or patterns for the re-appropriation of power. The EU is less the cause than the manifestation of a deep transformation in the connection with politics. According to Abélès, a restoration of the classical articulation between participation and empowerment via a leader working for collective survival is not to be expected in Brussels. Distancing himself from his previous writings, Abélès puts forward the hypothesis that it may be necessary to forget the search for an omnipotent and overhanging political centre, regardless of the level of power being considered (Ibid.: 231). The idea of a hierarchical order of actors and allegiances rooted in tradition within a well identified, limited and territorialized community on the model of the nation state is outdated. The notions of justice and right take on a meaning only when referring to the minimization of risk for the future (Ibid.: 219). The mandate given by citizens to public authorities today is no longer to implement a vision of progress and social engineering. It is rather to avoid any potential danger caused by modern factors of progress: science, technology and politics. Rulers are not expected to organise the change; on the contrary, they have to reduce

uncertainties. Here starts the problem of the European Union, which represents a major change, in contradiction to popular expectations of politics. Fundamentally, the European project is on the side of radical modernity and mobility.

The EU has promised transformations without offering reassurance and compensation. Therefore, citizens rationally chose to vote “no” to its constitutional dimension on the basis of controversy that was focused less on the actual tools of public agencies as outlined in the treaty and more on the potential aftermath (Ibid.: 129). It was a question of precaution rather than opposition to European integration in itself, and was above all the manifestation of this new relationship to politics. The charisma of the word “constitution” was mobilized at the launch of the process, very shyly put to work in the writing of the draft treaty and totally abandoned in the public debate to promote the text afterwards. It highlights the failure of the EU vis-à-vis the founding ritual of modern political communities: a constitutional moment as a constitutive period of time, the standardization of legal and political languages and references, the writing of a fundamental charter as an expression of a common will, the summit of a hierarchy of norms and values and an anchor for collective imagery. This unsuccessful attempt to give Europe such a ritual has illustrated both the feeling that it was necessary and the impossibility of achieving it.

Limited Emergence of Specific European Rituals

Precedence and exposure in a multi-level system of governance

Given this context, what can we say about the attempts to organize European political symbolism? Indeed, every political order is led to offer (or to be attributed to) visions of time, space and collectivity. Despite its weak and frequently negative media exposure, the EU is no exception. The first example of this is the way that power games are regulated and dramatized in Brussels. In order to test the resilience of the notion of ritual in contemporary European governance, the political spectacle is not analysed here via the prism of political roles and resources, but through the codification of protocol. The weakly institutionalized, self-limited and ostentatiously modest EU ceremonial is revelatory of the softness and secondary nature of the supranational political system.

Protocol is the symbolic system that expresses the political order, a hierarchy that classifies actors and makes power relationships visible. It is the projection of the structure of the relationship between rulers and ruled (Deloye, Haroche, Ihl 1996). In historical state-building processes protocol provided the way for signifying and performing the transition from a system of personal power and allegiances to a formation of impersonal and rational domination, namely the modern state (Elias 1974). Today, it is fashionable for political leaders to “play it cool” by displaying simplicity and spontaneity. But in the event of dissent or disrespect they are quick to reactivate their prerogatives. The discretion of the protocol only means that the self-regulation of individuals via the incorporation of social norms is sufficient and privileged over

ostentatious control disposals (Elias 1975). In a situation of conflict or uncertainty, formal norms are rapidly re-established, as in the French “co-habitation” when the president and the prime minister belong to different parties (Monclaire 1992). The EU is particularly interesting because it represents a universe of permanent uncertainty and conflict, with overlapping and fluctuating arenas and hierarchies. As such, it is a very challenging polity to dramatize in stable, codified forms. Historically, the choice has clearly been to privilege a symbolic *laissez-faire*, thus giving advantage to the most powerful players. An endogenous, European ceremonial has emerged, with sufficient flexibility to integrate constant changes in the perimeter of the EU or the relationships between leaders. Although the EU has been strengthened in the process it nevertheless has remained subordinate to national governments.

There are no written rules for European ceremonies, neither as legal texts nor as guides published by former civil servants. It makes the EU closer to the German than the French model on this point. According to bureaucrats in charge of this task, the topic is too controversial and variable.³ It means that oral tradition from one European civil servant to another is the only source of reference. The case of the European summits, the European political events most covered by the media, exemplifies the emergence and the maintenance of a constantly reinvented tradition. The guardians of this tradition are the civil servants of the general secretary of the Council of the European Union, the institution in charge of the organization of summits under the authority of the successive national presidencies. Their role is purely consultative, deferring to member states as soon as a decision has to be reached. Yet, European bureaucracy has been able to preserve the *modus operandi* of a ritualized dialogue between heads of state and govern the recurrent conflicts due to various rounds of enlargement and major extensions in the competencies of the EU.

The evolution of the “family picture” is good evidence of the tension between continuity and adaptation. The picture represents a key moment in time of each summit and is a symbol of European unity. The exploding number of participants in European councils – including new and future member states, but also external guests – means that the setting has to be more strictly organized. Before 2004, the arrangement of all the leaders was rather loose, with the disordered presence of presidents and guests in the front row of the photo the only constant element. After 2004, the tradition was established of marking the place of everybody on the floor by using small, national flags, with a far more precise order of precedence from the centre of the stage (the acting president of the EU, the presidents of the European Parliament and of the European Commission, the national rulers bearing the title of heads of state, the representatives of the other member states in the order of the future presidencies).⁴

The initial preference for a very sober and simple European ceremonial is both a matter of necessity and choice. European institutions do not have symbolic resources such as military honours or decorations at their disposal.⁵ They have to find the smallest common denominator between very different national traditions, hence the strategy to depict a rationalized rather than theatrical political order. This is not only a solution by default. It also constitutes the explicit wish to offer an appearance of political modernity

and pragmatic collaboration by breaking with the formal ceremonies of power politics, as European discourse often attributes the catastrophe of two world wars to the competitions of national prides. The underlying message is that the decorum of the past is no longer required between countries engaged in long-term peace through reason.⁶ The relocation of the European summits to Brussels, where meeting sites provide functional though not aesthetic settings, has reinforced the propensity to minimize the solemnity of these meetings. The search for simplicity, with equality between member states as the only guiding principle, is also at work in the management of bilateral contacts and exchanges. It is a way of offering to decision-makers the best atmosphere in which to reach an agreement and to the audience the image of rule by “common sense” (a recurrent motto) and friendship between leaders.

The absence of any codification of behaviour and the equality between actors mean that the self-regulation of leaders is crucial. The legacy of “diplomacy by intimacy” inherited from the founding fathers is supposed to be sufficient to make the national rulers comply and adopt the required friendly and cooperative manners. The media coverage of European summits scrutinizes the slightest detail, thus making body language as important as political discourse. Usually, this system has worked rather well beyond the standard conflicts of national interests, even after the increase in the size of the events as a result of EU enlargements. Nevertheless, some representatives of new member states have been criticized for not respecting the courtesy and moderation required among peers. Some examples have been provided by Polish representatives who were accused of radicalization and the controversial use of historical references during the renegotiations of the constitutional treaty in June 2007⁷, or by the Czech executive acting as the presidency of the EU but pursuing mainly national priorities in the first half of 2009⁸. Older member states have been subject to the same criticism, especially Nicolas Sarkozy for his personal style as the president of the EU in the second half of 2008, and Silvio Berlusconi for his unpredictable behaviour in several European and NATO meetings⁹.

The virtuous constraint to look for compromise and a representation of unity is in permanent tension with the necessity to take into account national particularism and/or to regulate potential conflicts. This is the anthropological function of rituals, a way to restore a sense of continuity while allowing for adaptation to changes and regulation of crises. The European ceremonial is flexible enough to adapt to new situations. The rule has been to have no more than two representatives per member state around the negotiating table in order to keep the size of the assembly small enough to allow for personal contact. In 1986, during the first *cobabitation* in France, the prime minister, Jacques Chirac wished to take part in the councils with the then president, François Mitterrand. Other countries agreed in the name of the free choice of every capital to compose its delegation¹⁰, but on condition that the French minister of foreign affairs leave the room. The presence of both the president and the prime minister has become the common practice during the successive French *cobabitations* and other countries have followed this method in similar configurations (e.g. Finland, Cyprus and Romania). But the rule has not been so easily accommodated in other cases. Nicolas

Sarkozy, when acting as president of the EU, enforced the presence of a third French delegate at the negotiating table in December 2008.¹¹ The Polish delegation publicly exposed its internal dissent, sparked by competition between the prime minister and the president, in October 2008.¹² These two recent cases have shown the limits of self-regulation among EU actors, and also those of European tradition when it comes to managing national tensions.

Basic symbolic principles established by history have a strong resilience, however. The idea of taking two “family pictures” - one depicting the heads of state and government and the other the ministers of foreign affairs - was rejected because it was perceived as a violation of the original spirit of the exercise which was to underline equality and unity not only between countries but also between leaders.¹³ In the same way, the ceremonial of European summits has been able to integrate the arrival of new players like the high representative for the common foreign and security policy, also acting as general secretary of the council. The European Commission did not want Javier Solana to have precedence over the Commission vice-president, but member states imposed this hierarchy. The high representative has precedence over ministers of foreign affairs and joins the heads of states and government during negotiations.

The European ceremonial is more codified when there is a conflict between countries. At the Lisbon summit in March 2000, the Portuguese presidency had to manage the crisis between the Austrian chancellor, Wolfgang Schäussel (who included the populist Jörg Haider in his government) and the other national rulers. French and Belgian representatives refused to appear together with Schäussel in the same picture. This situation compelled the organisers to replace the “family picture” by a simple “group picture” and to arrange the participants in such a way that leaders on bad terms would not have to rub shoulders with each other.¹⁴ In the long term, the European ritual has worked relatively efficiently to prevent major diplomatic incidents within the European Union. But the details of the ritual itself have sometimes been a problem. Since 2004, the tradition has been to mark everyone’s place for the “family pictures” with a small, national flag. Two external guests, namely George Bush (USA) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Turkey), judged this as an unacceptable trampling on their national colours, providing evidence of a far less easy-going relationship with their national identities than their EU counterparts.¹⁵ This is a good illustration of the difference between the naturalized, informal and relativistic “domestic” symbolic order of the EU and “normal” international diplomacy.

Besides being a system to regulate actors, the political ceremonial is also a way of structuring territoriality. Hierarchies among representatives of power express the differences between centres and peripheries. The EU is a place of business-like exchanges where European politicians and civil servants are considered “at home” everywhere in Europe. The former president of the European Commission Jacques Santer once wondered why he had to be on his own in the traffic jams of Paris, regretting the time when he was the prime minister of Luxemburg with an escort of motorcyclists to open the road (Quermonne 2001: 74). However, Europe remains divided by national boundaries in terms of the symbolic treatment EU dignitaries

receive in domestic hierarchies of honour. In Germany, for example, members of the European Parliament are treated like members of the national parliament according to the official protocol; they precede their domestic counterparts in Greece, but in France they are far behind MPs in terms of the concession of official honours. European representatives are often held in higher regard at the local level and especially in the margins of national territory than in the capitals.¹⁶ The *laissez-faire* approach and the absence of a unified European norm lead to a reinforcement of the status of already well-established national actors. The EU has to submit to the national symbolic order at all times. The guests invited to Brussels have to pass through the Belgian authorities. The diplomatic delegations accredited by the EU have to follow three timetables in the matter of displaying the flag – their national one, the one of the EU, but also the one at work on Belgian territory.¹⁷ European rituals always take place in a temporality and a spatiality which are structured by national powers and traditions.

So how does one assess the evolution of European rituals? Some progress – since De Gaulle's indignation in the mid-1960s about the demand by Walter Hallstein and the Commission for a diplomatic ceremonial (the famous "red carpet") similar to the one for a head of state – is undeniable. The EU has developed an *ad hoc*, modest and flexible practice that reflects the logic of its own structures (multiplicity of centres, diversity of traditions) and the political constraints (sensitivity of member states to any abuse). The question is whether the ceremonial has been able to play a constitutive role similar to the institutionalization of the nation state, especially with regard to three points: firstly, as a codification separating political symbolism from the individual in power and linking honours to a function rather than a person; secondly, as a way of developing civil servants' loyalty by imposing codified behaviour and a standardized bureaucratic imagery; and thirdly, as the integration of all administrative units into a unified, institutional setting dominated by a centre (Ihl 1996: 235; see also Kantorowicz 1989; Giesey 1987). As far as the depersonalization of functions is concerned, the *laissez-faire* approach within the EU is in contradiction to the process of the depersonalization of functions as it provokes strong variations depending on the resources of the incumbents of holders of the public office. With regard to codification of behaviour of civil servants, the self-image of eurocrats is characterized by a cult of intimacy and low profile. Politics in Europe appears to be driven by an 'enlightened vanguard' untainted by conventional politics but committed to further the general interest. However, the *laissez-faire* in terms of symbols goes hand-in-hand with the growing inability of European institutions to structure the identity and ideological preferences of its agents. Finally, on the third point, the polycentrism of the EU and the lack of any unity in its ceremonial practices make the integration of all administrative components into a unique, institutional setting dominated by one center unlikely. To conclude, the European political system has distinguished itself from national orders by developing *sui generis* a partial codification of symbols, albeit a weakly institutionalized and a barely visible one.

The discretion and simplicity of European rituals are to be understood in connection with the general impoverishment of social rituals today. Nevertheless, in the

fundamental redefinition of political communication towards less collective and repetitive forms and towards more individualized and continuously innovative patterns, the EU does not have the same established positions and resources as national states. A European tradition may emerge and regulate the behaviour of the actors involved with a certain amount of efficiency, but it does not make full sense to the vast majority of citizens. European representatives are condemned to stay in positions that are subordinate to national ones in most cases. They do not have the means to be both the expected embodiments of change in progress and the reassuring signs of continuity and unity. Their situation exemplifies the hiatus between Europeanized, decision-making processes and the systems of accountability that remain resolutely national. The symbolic sobriety and the matter-of-fact style have been the conditions for successes in the European integration process. The absence of protocol has aided the avoidance of asking embarrassing questions about the transfer of competencies and the redefinition of hierarchies. The challenge is probably not to restore the majesty of political power but to locate more clearly where this power is exercised. It is a condition of its democratic control and its capacity to win allegiances. The anthropological function of ceremonial has been two-fold across time: firstly, to domesticate political domination by conditioning the allocation of honours on precise criteria; secondly, to convert social inequalities into political equality by replacing an arbitrary hierarchy by another one based on common utility (Schemeil 2006). Europe does not currently implement this transfiguration of unilateral power relationships into submission by consent.

The silence of the European anthem

Another indicator of the limitations in the creation of European rituals is the anthem. Singing or listening to music contains ritual aspects given that codified behavior involves a level of constraint in the way that respect and collective communion are expressed. The melody of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was chosen in 1955 by the Council of Europe, which remains the legal owner of its intellectual rights. It was adopted in the middle of the 1980s by European Community to illustrate the continuity of the European idea through its different institutional phases. Taking a piece of classical music has been understood as the wish to refer to a common, European cultural heritage that pre-exists the standardization of cultures by nation states in order to justify the existence of a post-national polity. It has also been said that the choice of a well-known piece of music, despite its previous use by totalitarian regimes, or companies, underlines the priority of reinforcing the public profile of European institutions rather than long-lasting, identity-building strategies. The fact that it is an element of high culture rather than popular folklore has also been interpreted as evidence of the elitist dimension of European integration (Buch 1999: 268, 271, 276).

The European anthem does not have the same political meaning as its national counterparts. The European institutions do not use it very often. However, the European Parliament has announced its intention to generalise the playing of the "Ode to Joy" to welcome foreign delegations or during celebrations as a riposte to the

suppression of European symbols in the Lisbon Treaty of 2007.¹⁸ The music sometimes forms part of the diplomatic ceremonial in honour of the presidents of the Commission or of the Parliament abroad. Another important setting for anthems is the army. The first use of the European anthem in a military context occurred with the creation of the Eurocorps in Strasbourg on November 5, 1993.¹⁹ Since this date, it has been played during parades such as the one on the Champs-Élysées in Paris on July 14, 2007 with troops from all the member states. But the European anthem is far from being a naturalized way to celebrate Europe. Commissioners who stood up to salute it in the European Parliament were criticized by an MEP who argued that the EU was neither a nation nor a state and did not have to be saluted in such a way.²⁰ “The Ninth” was more recently played for the opening session of the European assembly on July 14, 2009 and all MEPs stood in honour except those from extreme right formations.²¹ The Council of Europe has tried to make the piece more popular by featuring hip-hop, techno or jazz versions on its website. Unlike the frequent conflicts with regard to reinterpretations of national anthems, these alterations have not raised much interest or controversy.

Beyond its relatively peripheral use and the resistance it may encounter, the European anthem has the weakness of having no words. The initial wish to write a song for such a common symbolic act was never put in practice. A poem by Friedrich Schiller has often been associated with the music but has no official basis and does not create a consensus as it is frequently considered either too universal or too mannered. The writing of an *ad hoc* text would raise insoluble questions about the choice of language (some suggested Latin as a neutral solution), and about references and meanings. Furious debates took place in some member states about national anthems: in Spain the debate centered on finding appropriate words; in Germany the concern was to correct aggressive words; in France the issue was whether the words should be sung at all; Italy’s debate focussed on whether to contest allegiance to Rome; and in Belgium the question was whether or not the French song should be sung. This all makes it less and less likely that any words will be adopted for the “Ode to Joy”. No authority at the EU level has the legitimacy and the will to take on such a political challenge. The European anthem cannot be sung in chorus, which according to numerous analysts prevents it from reinforcing identification (Hedetoft 1995: 141). Like the European flag (Foret 2009), the anthem remains an elegant and selective celebration of a European idea that can be appreciated and admired, but not really appropriated.

Europe Day, a communicative event rather than a political celebration

Commemorations have long been constitutive of European nations. Public holidays have been opportunities for the state to display its power and for the community to dramatize its unity through popular celebrations of the founding dates of national history (Girardet 1990: 139-173). Such rituals have been a matrix of collective discipline. By inviting the citizen to adopt specific behaviour patterns of public and private sociability (participation in processions, meetings and family events), it has also been a way to build and transmit a memory, a normative relation to the past as a major

narrative that grounds a shared identity. Europe Day, a commemoration of the Schuman declaration of May 9, 1950 was an idea based on the same logic. The official creation of the ritual in 1985 produced few reactions, and it is only thanks to the mobilization of the European Movement in France in 1993 that the event has been at all celebrated. Since this date, the mobilization has slowly spread out in other countries but remains most frequently marginal in the public space and does not attract much media attention. The purpose is to promote the symbols of Europe, to educate the citizen about European affairs and to organize multicultural meetings. Schools and universities are the main actors in this education, providing also the locations for the activities marking this day: conferences, cultural festivals, events facilitating familiarity with other member states through food and music, and so on.²²

Europe Day is difficult to decipher for the average citizen. It is a celebration more of the European idea than of the EU as a political system (again, the true creator of Europe Day is the Council of Europe). The member states as public authorities endorse the commemoration but are not directly involved in the collective organization of the ritual.²³ Public spaces do not see military parades or mass political demonstrations. It is up to civil society to mobilise people and events, and so what takes place on May 9 reflects the limited and selective social basis of pro-Europe activists and the limited effect they have in terms of expanding their constituency.

Europe Day has only one of the four attributes of classic national days (Elgenius 2005: 365): it is the commemoration of an historical event in which memory is carefully developed and maintained; but it is not a public holiday that would make people available for collective or private rituals; it is not an annual meeting of the community that aims to be a shared experience, because it is unknown and not experienced as such by the citizens; and it is not a symbol of the human collectivity of which it is supposed to be an emblem because the potent representations of collective identity are still associated with sovereign nation states. The creation of Europe Day has led neither to the participation of the masses in processions or popular rejoicing, nor to displays of power and majesty by public authorities via military parades or heavyweight political events. Europe Day is not a traditional ritual because it lacks a center, a focal point for a symbolic setting that would give the event an overall meaning. With its weak tradition, an absence of consensus on its meaning and the elite-focused²⁴ participation, May 9 resembles October 3 in Germany, the celebration of German reunification. October 3 is commonly taken as an example of the failure to establish a national holiday (Ibid.: 377-380).

The same logic has prevailed for most European commemorations. Ambitious proposals were expressed by the Commission to mark the 50th birthday of the Rome Treaty in 2007, for example the organization of a song contest among the citizens. These proposals were refused or hugely downscaled by the member states who were fearful of the cost, the political risk or the possibility that the operation may simply have come to appear ridiculous. But in order to give an honest view it is necessary to take some fundamental changes in society into account. May 9 is not Bastille Day on July 14, but July 14 is itself no longer what it used to be. In a context of the deinstitution-

alization and individualization of rituals, Europe Day is less a potential matrix for European identity and unity than a communicative act, similar in its organization, content and effect to the usual European communication policy.

Shortcomings of the electoral ritual

In representative democracy, voting remains the main source of legitimacy and the most efficient provider of authority in Europe. European governance has been looking for alternative doctrines such as participative democracy or a functionalist justification by results. Nevertheless, elections have still been the essential setters of the political agenda. Voting and the activities linked to it (selection of candidates, manifestos, activism in parties, campaigning and media coverage) have structured a liturgy by which to organize and regulate electoral competition and conflict. Voting also sustains global narratives on the origins and unity of the political community. It contributes to the maintenance of a common sense of belonging by soliciting the same gesture at the same time from all members of the group following the same rules. The issue is to discover whether a specific repertory has developed since the introduction of universal suffrage to directly elect the members of the European Parliament in 1979.

European elections do not exactly create a “common activity” because they do not follow uniform calendars and rules. In 2009, as in 2004, the vote took place over four days to conform to different electoral customs (Deloy 2009; Deloye and Reynié 2005; Bruter and Deloye 2006). There was controversy about respecting the embargo on announcing the results in various member states of the EU so as not to influence the last electors to go to the ballot boxes. It was the seventh set of direct elections for some countries, and the first for others (Romania and Bulgaria voted separately in 2007). Other elections were held alongside the European ones in seven member states. Different national (or infra-national) electoral rules were applied. Controversy was sparked by stories of citizens voting twice in different countries or by the frustration of immigrants from non-European origins who were unable to vote and who consequently felt discriminated against because citizens from other member states who had arrived more recently in the country could vote. Estonia experimented with electronic voting, which helped increase participation significantly. In short, the European electoral ritual was neither simultaneous, nor homogeneous, nor egalitarian.

In general, European elections do not create a specific temporality, a time of promises and projects, suppressing the usual constraints of the political game. Due to the absence of a clear majoritarian scheme and the impossibility of political alternation when the opposition replaces the force in power, the vote does not have the role of sanction and revival. There is not the ritual humiliation of rulers as illustrated by anthropologists: elections reaffirm the conditional and delegated dimension of power in democracy by temporarily inverting the relation of domination between politicians and masses. In European campaigns, it has become routine to see guests from “friendly parties” in other member states participating in meetings. But this is not sufficient to turn elections or campaigns into attractive events. The attractiveness of European

elections has declined, along with its novelty, since the first ballot – especially when broadcast on television, which has played an increasing role in politics (Leroy and Siune 1994). The politicization of the designation of the Commission president, depending on the results of the European elections, as stipulated in the Lisbon treaty and already sketched out in practice, could be a way to dramatize the process. The experience of 2004 showed that it was not sufficient to increase and change the tonality of media coverage significantly (Gerstlé, Neumayer, Colomé 2005). In some countries media attention has even declined, highlighting an ebb in interest regarding European integration. It was a similar story in 2009. Media exposure was weak and mainly centred on national issues (Brack, Rittelmeyer, Stănculescu 2009). Uncertainties concerning the ratification of the Lisbon treaty left a shadow of doubt on the final number of MEPs to be elected, the extension of the European Parliament's powers and the procedure for the appointment of the President of the Commission. At the time of the election, the president-in-charge, José Manuel Barroso was widely expected to seek a second term and, to a small extent, this polarized the campaign between supporters and opponents of the Portuguese leader. Much remains to be done, however, if there is to be a real competition among candidates endorsed by rival parties and clearly distinguishable manifestos to attract the votes of citizens.

Campaigns have divergent – sometimes opposite – dynamics in all member states. Political parties do try to Europeanize political discourses by producing transnational manifestos. But national factors are overwhelming in terms of the decisions of citizens. The timing of vote is not a break with normality; the repetition of some forms of codified behaviour can be seen, but without much effect.²⁵ Innovation remains rare and non-cumulative. This means that the level of the ritualization of European elections is weak. At the national level, electoral rituals have produced specific discursive resources (metaphors, key words, slogans) aiming to make sense to the large public. This is not the case in European elections at the level of the EU. Language barriers, low levels of competency among citizens regarding European affairs as well as the national framing of the debate are constraints that prevent the possible emergence of a truly European political vocabulary. Specialized idioms of actors in European affairs are too complex and too remote from the classic political discourse to make symbolic expressions politically effective. Even “eurocrat-bashing”, the criticism of European institutions widely practiced all over the EU, is very nationally structured. Scandinavian countries, for example, insist more than others on the corruption and the lack of transparency in Brussels, while France emphasizes the lack of democracy and political leadership.

There is scarce symbolism with regard to elections at the European level. The twelve stars of the European flag are frequently used in electoral propaganda and, on this point, European elections may have been useful in terms of naturalizing this emblem. The creativity of symbols, however, is increasingly concerned with resistance to Europe. Take for example the case of the silver “£” used by the United Kingdom Independence Party to celebrate the British attachment to the pound, or the imaginative posters to support the “no” campaign in the run-up to the Irish referendum in 2008. In

the same way, candidates in the European elections do not allow a strong personalization of the stakes. Campaigns remain informative or focused on party strategies and expected results, but are mainly faceless and devoid of issues (Maier and Tenschler 2006; de Vreese, Lauf, Peter 2007). Generalizing the vote on lists in territorial constituencies has not yet produced major effects on the creation of a reinforced link between the citizens and their potential representatives. The trend has still been to fill the lists with seasoned, specialized political players, youngsters in expectation of greater destinies, losers in search of a post after a defeat in domestic politics and stars from civil society attracted by the idea of some political experience. This mix is associated with a significant turnover of MEPs in the European Parliament. European careers are still considered as second-rate options in the *cursum honorum* of an ambitious political leader. Alternatively, some devoted MEPs are not able to secure their re-elections because candidates are selected by their national party authorities who are poorly impressed by their achievements in Brussels and Strasbourg. This confirms the status of European elections as second-order elections. As a vicious circle, the weak political salience of the consultation maintains the low profile of MEPs, whose roles are little known, little understood and little highlighted.

To conclude the comparison, the national electoral ritual has produced founding narratives that structure belief systems underlying political allegiances. The most important of these narratives is concerned with popular sovereignty and the ability of the collectivity to decide its own destiny. European elections have damaged this narrative because of a steadily decreasing turnout since the introduction of electoral suffrage in 1979. In 2004, less than a half of citizens went to the ballot boxes across the whole of the EU, less than a quarter in the new member states. There was a fresh decline in 2009 (43.23%, with strong variations between countries). The overall picture, however, is far more complex than the cliché depicting citizens as hostile or indifferent to European integration. Euro-sceptic and extremist formations have been contained or have declined. Beyond the traditional sovereigntist criticisms of supra-nationality, “rhetorical” rejections of EU-membership such as in 2004 have had no further consequences (United Kingdom Independence Party) or even lost ground (Danish People's Party). Formations promoting a “constructive distrust” of Europe, a call for profound reform in Brussels or a circumscription of European competencies have resisted unequally. Since 2004, the dogma of an ever-closer union has clearly been challenged and the idea of a European political community has been increasingly discussed, even if integration itself is only marginally contested (Cautrès and Tiberj 2005: 210). Bold interpretations can speculate on the advantage for the EU of conflict-formation and actual politicization of the debate to integrate dissent, turning the European Parliament into a polarized arena. In 2004, as in previous European elections, the agenda was focused on national concerns. Not even the on-going constitutional debate and enlargement were able to lead the debate towards issues on the nature of the EU or issues of identity and values (with reference, for example, to the Christian heritage of Europe or to the candidature of Turkey). In 2009, the economic crisis and the institutional blockade of the Lisbon Treaty by some member states (Ireland, Czech

Republic, to a far lesser extent Germany) saw national political imperatives dominate political discourse. In short, universal suffrage has not functioned as a ritual constitutive of a European political community. It has more difficulties playing this role at the national level, too. Again, the EU's problems and specificities have to be relativized considering the similar questions confronting other political arenas.

Conclusion

Legitimization of the European polity is not characterized by the disappearance of the symbolic dimension, but by a deep change of its forms and principles. Political, cultural and religious institutions have lost a part of their control over their social constituencies and have to constantly reinvent *ad hoc* communicative resources to attract the loyalty of individuals and groups.²⁶ It is not to say that local and national belongings are obsolete. The exacerbation of memory debates and the increasing affirmation of particularism are evidence of collective expectations and strategies to reframe existing frameworks in a more pluralist and flexible way. Structures of opportunities have opened for symbolic entrepreneurship. The European Union is one of the arenas and levels where this re-composition is at work. The supranational scale is neither the most salient (in terms of identity) nor powerful (in terms of agency). The European reference is alternatively perceived as a threat, a complement or a substitute in the reshaping of identity and authority patterns. Its status may vary according to the circumstances, the socio-political configuration or the actors concerned. In this context, speaking of European rituals involves adopting an updated and rather weak definition of what rituality is. There is no sufficiently strong transcendental dimension to the European polity, neither religious (Schlesinger and Foret, 2006) nor political, which could generate a "European liturgy". Democratic principles consecrating the primacy of individual rights may figure as sacralized sources of legal and symbolic orders. Codified behaviour and repertoires do regulate interactions between European rulers, are able to integrate change while preserving continuities and, to a certain extent, prevent conflicts from endangering the functional balances of EU governance. These low-public-profile behaviour codes and repertoires do not fulfil the same function of ostentation as national ceremonies have done in the building of nation states: to focus attention on a centre and to siphon off allegiances. It reflects prevailing contemporary political idioms that rely more on persuasion and seduction than constraint. Another major difference between would-be European rituals and national ones is that the former are, emotionally speaking, relatively poor, except for people who are direct actors (which could suggest that there is no difference of nature but rather of degree and audience). Symbols are aimed at enforcing predefined affective representations and perceptions, either actually felt or at least considered as legitimate, in order to promote compliance with the existing political order. The example of the European anthem suggests that EU symbolism is ill-equipped and/or too recent and elitist to play such a role. European institutional strategies are ambiguous and sometimes contradictory, oscillating between the "founding narrative"

philosophy and the short-term and prosaic practice of communication policy. Overall, voting illustrates the importance and the limits of European rituals. The selection and regulation of rulers, the resilience of the national matrix, and the existence of trans-national interactions show the potential of both integration and fragmentation.

In order to establish its legitimacy, the EU has to face all the difficulties posed by pluralistic, secularized and relativistic societies. In opposition to national states, the European polity can rely neither on the inertia of established structures and practices nor on the “banal nationalism” (Billig 1995) which is so deeply internalized by individuals that it does not need to be displayed through rituals and symbols. Our empirical work suggests that such a “symbolic *acquis communautaire*” could presently exist to a limited extent only at the level of elites, among actors directly in touch with European institutions and networks. The emergence of such a “banal Europeanism” as a mass phenomenon is far from obvious. What is arguably discernible is an Europeanization from the inside of national imaginaries. The reformulation of collective identities and symbolic practices cannot do without taking on board the European reference. Visions of Europe which are thus incorporated are very diverse in their meaning and intensity. Again, there is nothing new in such a scenario: conflicts between competing versions of what should be the “We” have framed the nation. The key point is the potential emergence of a centre to subsume and hierarchize this plurality. It has been argued above that the EU must face the same social claims as previous political orders in terms of reassurance on the continuity of personal and collective identities, security and welfare. The idea has also been defended that such an enterprise requires a certain restoration of the verticality of politics and that sectoral dynamics in European symbolism testify to these needs. This is the reason why the obsolescence of the search for a “focal point” diagnosed by Abélès in his late writings may be contested. Conversely, the thesis of the duplication of the national state’s model by the EU as suggested by Shore does not match empirical findings. European policies are not likely to produce homogeneity and to ensure the congruence between politics and culture in a near future. The European polity would more relevantly be labelled as a regional state (Schmidt 2006: 8), a consociation of states or a new-look benevolent Empire.²⁷ So the story is not to put old things in new clothes, but rather to accommodate new social realities in timeless but reshaped outfits.

Notes

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² This is not to be taken as an idealized vision of rituals that have also been mechanisms of domination, division and alienation.

³ A former civil servant in charge of protocol at the European Parliament testified that the establishment of a written norm had been considered but had to be abandoned because of the resistance of some national delegations defending their national practices, see Mestat (2001: 31).

⁴ Interview with Hans Brunmayr, Head of protocol, Council of the EU, 17 October 2005.

- ⁵ Interview with Wilfried Baur, Head of protocol, European Parliament, 29 April 1999.
- ⁶ The anthropological function of ceremonial is to prevent conflict. In military honours, showing arms means that they will not be used. The renunciation of any ceremonial is not then a symbolic silence but on the contrary a sign that the prevention of conflict is no longer necessary because conflict itself is unlikely.
- ⁷ <http://athomeineurope.blogactiv.eu/2007/06/23/pologneeurope-les-fruits-de-la-prise-en-otage>, accessed 27 April 2009.
- ⁸ *La Libre Belgique*, “Les Tchèques en roue libre”, 27 April 2009.
- ⁹ <http://www.rtlinfo.be/rtl/news/article/231834/-berlusconi+pendu+au+telephone+avec+erdogan+snobe+merkel>, accessed 27 April 2009.
- ¹⁰ This has been true since the origins of the Council of ministers in the fifties. It was recently illustrated by the presence of Nicolas Sarkozy, head of the French state, at a meeting of the Eurogroup instead of his finance minister.
- ¹¹ See Quatremer J., “La chaise de Jean-Louis Borloo”, <http://bruxelles.blogs.liberation.fr/coulisses/2008/12/la-chaise-de-je.html#comment-6a00d83451b56c69e2010536622729970c>, accessed on the 27 April 2009. Sarkozy exemplifies here a significant fondness for issues of protocol despite his supposed spontaneity. He faced less tolerance in other arenas like NATO, where his demand to change the order of precedence to sit in a more prestigious place was satisfied only for the public part of the event. <http://www.rtf.be/info/sarkozy-traite-au-sommet-de-strasbourg-selon-les-normes-habituelles-du-protocole-81906>, accessed 27 April 2009.
- ¹² <http://tf1.lci.fr/infos/monde/europe/0,,4124331,00-le-president-polonais-file-a-l-anglaise-.html>, accessed 27 April 2009.
- ¹³ Interview with Hans Brunmayr, op.cit.
- ¹⁴ *Le Monde*, 24 March 2000; *Libération*, 24 March 2000.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Hans Brunmayr, op. cit.
- ¹⁶ French MEPs are more highly regarded in overseas departments than in Paris, see “Décret 95-1037 du 21 September 1995 relatif aux cérémonies publiques, préséances, honneurs civils et militaires”.
- ¹⁷ “Vade-mecum à l’usage du corps diplomatique accrédité auprès des Communautés européennes”, Commission européenne, January 1999, 291-292.
- ¹⁸ R. Rivaïs, “Les eurodéputés déplorent le retrait des symboles du futur traité”, *Le Monde*, 11 July 2007.
- ¹⁹ *Armée et Défense*, 616 (November/December 1993), 10.
- ²⁰ Written question E-3318/00 asked by Esko Seppänen (GUE-NGL) to the Commission, JO n° C 136 E du 08/05/2001, p. 0193.
- ²¹ P. Canfin, “Premiers pas dans l’arène...”, <http://ecologie.blogs.liberation.fr/euro-ecolos/2009/07/arlement-day-one.html>, accessed 14 July 2009.
- ²² For a broad view of the events, see the website <http://www.feteleurope.fr>.
- ²³ Intense lobbying by the Commission and the European Parliament was necessary to declare Europe Day a “cultural event” in order to allow financial support from the EU for these activities
- ²⁴ Elite-focused means circumscribed to the elites in its effects, not by vocation, which means that it is not elitist in principle.
- ²⁵ The failings of European campaigns must be understood in comparison with the massive influence of the – very national – campaign in the run-up to the French referendum in May 2005 (Gerstlé and Piar 2005: 42-7).
- ²⁶ This view corroborates many points on the conception of ritual as social performance. As Jeffrey Alexander suggested, Europe struggles to manage “refusion” from still national cultural scripts and institutionally poor performers (Alexander 2006, 1-28).
- ²⁷ For further discussion of these concepts see Foret (2008, chapter 1).

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