

# European Social Unease: A Threat to the EU?\*

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This essay is an attempt to resolve the caricatured dispute between the Anglo-Saxon liberal model and the Continental European social model.<sup>1</sup> The economic necessity of reforming and modernizing the outdated policy systems of social security, health care, and pensions is undeniable. Current trends in globalization, immigration, and demography require far-reaching adjustments. There is no doubt that modernization and innovation are needed in order to make the European model economically *and* socially competitive in accordance with the new global »rules of the game.« However, the procyclical modernization of policy systems in response to modernization is not without political and social risks. Indeed, we live in perilous times.

This essay focuses on the widening gap between the political and policy elites and large groups – if not the majority – of the population in continental European welfare states. There is enormous unease in many Western countries; trust in institutions and politics is at a record low; and there is a crisis of confidence and a crisis of political representation.<sup>2</sup> Disturbingly, this great distrust and considerable unease can be encountered not only in countries which have become »manic depressive« as a result of reform postponement (the German disease), but also in countries which have actually carried through reform programs, such as Denmark,

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1. Cf. Katinka Barysch, »Liberal versus Social Europe,« in: *Centre for European Reform Bulletin*, 43 (August–September 2005), p. 1.

2. M. Elchardus and Wendy Smits, *Anatomie en oorzaken van het wantrouwen*, VUB-press (2002); Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (SCP), *De sociale staat van Nederland 2005*. [21minuten.nl](http://21minuten.nl), Report of McKinsey and Company, 2005.

Austria, or post-Third Way Netherlands. The pan-European presence of right-wing or postmodern populist movements, which often appear following welfare state reform, remains an alarming and rather grubby reminder of the general unease and the crisis of confidence which besets the established political scene.<sup>3</sup> In the process of reform, there has been a fundamental breakdown of communication between elites and the general population.

At the very least this shows that reforms are not a panacea; that they create no guarantee of stable adaptation to modern challenges. Postponed or avoided reforms are a problem, but a lot can go wrong with reforms which are actually implemented, too, in terms of deliverance, mobilization, communication, and perception. Much depends on the public discourse engaged in during welfare state reform: trust and support are strongly interconnected.<sup>4</sup> When it comes to perceptions, reforms frequently generate confusion, aggravation, and uncertainty among both citizens and implementing professionals. One problem here is the worldwide hegemony of the neo-liberal narrative, with its decade-long discrediting of inefficient and paternalistic state intervention, the public sector, and social security. Also problematic, is the strategy of combating insecurity with insecurity, responding to a world in flux with »policy flux.«

What is more, in practical terms these reforms are often wide of the mark. They are sometimes counterproductive and have perverse effects, or are emergency or ad hoc solutions or ineffective forms of insecurity reduction. They sometimes unintentionally reinforce social trends which already disadvantage the less skilled and educated, that is, the »Modernisierungsverlierer« (modernization »losers«). They may not be trusted for the simple reason that reforms have, in terms of language, world view,

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3. On the causes and backgrounds of the »populist revolt,« see René Cuperus, »Roots of European Populism: The Case of Pim Fortuyn's Populist Revolt in the Netherlands,« in: Xavier Casals (ed.), *Political Survival on the Extreme Right. European Movements between the Inherited Past and the Need to Adapt to the Future*, Institut de Ciències Polítiques I Socials (ICPS), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, pp. 147–168, Barcelona, 2005; René Cuperus, »The Fate of European Populism,« in: *Dissent* (spring 2004), pp. 17–20; René Cuperus, »The Populist Deficiency of European Social Democracy: The Dutch Experience,« in: Matt Browne and Patrick Diamond (eds.), *Rethinking Social Democracy*, London: Policy Network (2003), pp. 29–41.

4. Cf. Vivien A. Schmidt et al., *Public Discourse and Welfare State Reform. The Social Democratic Experience*, Forum Scholars for European Social Democracy/Mets and Schilt Uitgevers (forthcoming November 2005).

and argumentation, a technocratic, academically professional bias. Reforms are often not supported by citizens and professionals alike. After decades of reform, reform fatigue – or at least »reform discourse« fatigue – has set in.

Unease and distrust in contemporary European society attach to more than welfare state reform, however. We are experiencing a shift right across the board. The post-war honeymoon period seems to be well and truly over: the post-war European ideal, welfare state model, and tolerance of foreigners, all seem to be eroding and under pressure. The overall process of internationalization (globalization, immigration, European integration) is producing a gap of trust and representation between elites and population on questions of cultural and national identity. This article will take a closer look at precisely this complex of problems, which we shall call European Social Unease (ESU).

## **The Erosion of the Post-War »Protection Shield«**

It looks as if we are once again in a period of hypermodernization. All the signals are set for change; for transition and transformation. Let us go through the rather worn-out litany: globalization; European unification; the ICT revolution; the development of a post-industrial knowledge economy; immigration and the rise of multi-ethnic societies; individualization and social fragmentation; environmental degradation; a commercial entertainment revolution in the media; global geopolitical power shifts; and international terrorism linked to political Islam.

All of this points to a world in flux; society, the economy, and politics have entered a phase of acceleration: traditional institutions and attitudes are under great pressure. Such a process of change produces both optimism and pessimism; fear and unease alongside a sense of adventure and spirit of enterprise. Those ready to welcome the future stand alongside those who fear it.<sup>5</sup> A fairly harsh division is appearing between winners and losers; a demarcation line between countries and within countries.

The unease felt by many people in many countries in the face of a world adrift – especially in Europe where the post-war period produced such a socio-economic and democratic-cultural crescendo – seems to be

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5. These are of course tendencies which can coexist even within one and the same person.

rooted in the (unconscious) awareness that the post-war consensus is over.

In the first place, there is disenchantment with the ideal of the emancipated middle-class society. Instead of the certainty that the next generation will have a better life than ours, polarization, insecurity, and pressure are growing for the middle classes. »Natural« social mobility seems to have stalled for some population groups, who are at the bottom end of a fixed-hourglass model (dead-end jobs; inherited deprivation and poverty). The massive claims on – and misuse of – social security have also created difficulties for an important safety valve of the welfare state.<sup>6</sup> We thought that through education and the spread of culture we could permanently guarantee the »decolonization« and emancipation of the citizen. However, despite all the successes in this area, social mobility is still subject to rigid boundaries and moreover a new underclass of immigrants has appeared; the story of emancipation has to start all over again.

And then there is Europe. We were all convinced that Europe would turn out »just like us.« That is what the French, the Dutch, the Germans, and perhaps even the British wanted. Europe as an extension or projection of ourselves. Instead, Europe became a labyrinth of »integration by stealth,« centralized power, technocratic and juridical intervention in fragile national traditions, and a transmitter of the forces of neo-liberal globalization. The EU has become an amorphous giant, without charm or charisma. Following the »non« and »nee« in France and the Netherlands, both European pioneers, Europe is now experiencing the »Great Sobering Up«. The apparently endless expansion, the liberal currency union, the regulatory passion of Brussels, and the spillover effects of the internal market have created a feeling of alienation from the European Project. Despite all the rhetoric about Europe as a new superpower able to compete economically and geopolitically with China, India, and the US, the giant with feet of clay is looking pretty shaky. The time-honored federal ideal is further away than ever; everything points to a reassessment of the nation-state as a basis on which to regain trust between elites and people and for solving identity problems.

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6. Saskia Sassen, »De grote stad: snijpunt van mondialisering en lokaliteit,« in: *Rotterdam, Het vijftiendste jaarboek voor het democratisch socialisme*, Mets and Schilt/Wiard Beckman Stichting (2004); A. van der Zwan, *De uitdaging van het populisme*, Meulenhoff/WBS (2003).

Thirdly, there is the multi-ethnic society. For a long time, shame about the colonial past and the memory of the Holocaust guaranteed a high level of tolerance in dealings with ethnic minorities. The ideal of the multicultural society was alive and kicking: a non-racial rainbow community in which the tone was set by mutual respect between people irrespective of ethnic background, race, and faith. This situation was rudely destroyed by the rise of extreme right, racist parties propagating hatred of foreigners. The established democratic parties reacted to this with a »cordon sanitaire.« Migrants were perceived as victims of racism and discrimination. However, increasing worries about segregation and separated communities, the difficulties of integrating immigrants in education and the labor market, high unemployment and crime all ultimately eroded the politically correct ideal of the multicultural society. We thought that the process of mutual adjustment would happen of its own accord within a few generations. In fact, it is proceeding more slowly and new generations are arriving all the time. Some groups remain persistently disadvantaged; there are serious barriers to participation, including cultural and religious resistance. September 11 and subsequent developments put a further spoke in the wheel. It seemed that integration had worked significantly less well than we had hoped; and we ourselves turned out to be significantly less tolerant than we had always imagined.

Fourthly, confidence in our political system has been eroded. Following the horrors of National Socialism and the Communist enemy during the Cold War, liberal democracy had arisen as a new religion of freedom. A representative democracy with the rule of law solidly entrenched and with popular parties as channels for the masses. The 1960s and 1970s saw a program of further democratization – in social institutions and in companies – and the formation of a new elite which gave the political system the major task of seriously improving quality of life through collective facilities and public services. Unfortunately, however, the state does not work as well as we had hoped; the primacy of the political system has been undermined by the »relocation« of political authority and responsibility. Many feel repelled by the political system, with increasing distrust of institutions and the rules of the democratic game furthered by the rise of populist criticism of representative democracy.

The nature of this fourfold crisis of trust and representation, and what it evokes and also makes possible, has been expertly described by the Belgian sociologist Mark Elchardus with reference to events in Belgium in the second half of the 1990s (the Dutroux affair, the Nijvel Gang, rumors

of political murders, the White Marches held by angry citizens). In his book »De dramademocratie« he observes: »Such a crisis is a privileged moment for sociological observation. The still-hidden fault lines, the worries and values of a society, now rise more easily to the surface. It is as if the normally so unfathomable society becomes – for just a few hysterical years – transparent and self-revealing«.7

This quote could equally apply to Italy following the collapse of its post-war party system, or to France following the victory of Le Pen over Jospin or the French »non« to the European Constitution; or to the state of traumatic shock affecting the Netherlands following the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh.

One could say that as a result of social developments in various countries four pillars or cornerstones of the European post-war consensus are under pressure. The idea of Europe as a »an ever closer Union« is being fundamentally called into question, while the commitment to Europe in founding countries such as France and the Netherlands is waning. The model of the European welfare state, originally conceived as a socio-preventative protection against Fascism and Communism, is also under fire. Suddenly representative elite democracy stands accused by a plebiscitary populism. Suddenly the heavy and politically correct »cordon sanitaire« around issues of cultural and ethnic difference is being breached; racism and hatred of foreigners are returning through extreme-right parties, and issues of integration and acculturation are high on the political-social agenda. This is unsettling.

These new pressures might reflect a fairly fundamental shift: what is at stake are the heritage and after-effects of »European civil war« in the twentieth century. It is as if the magic of the post-war period, the »anti-war vaccine« which European society had been administered under the motto »never again,« has finally worn off. As if the moral impact of the barbarism of the twentieth century – above all the Second World War and the Holocaust – is fading away, and we have broken out of the »protective cocoon« of the post-war era.

The new climate is typified (again) by issues of identity – »who are we?« and »how can we live together?«

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7. Mark Elchardus, *De Dramademocratie*, Lannoo (2002), p. 15.

## The Risky Procyclical Response of the International Policymaking Community

What is the response of the political and policy elites to this tricky complex of problems and popular distrust and unease? The core fact is that we can see a dominant reaction all over the world, a reaction which is fairly insensitive to the unease and insecurity generated in the current period of hypermodernization. This is the procyclical discourse of change, modernization, adjustment, innovation, and adaptation to the new global trends. This is the discourse of politicians, policy-makers, and decision-makers. We have to modernize through the transition. We have to make all policy systems fit for the future. We have to make the people fit for the future, empower and facilitate people for the »new world.« We have to open up to the new world in terms of free trade, free traffic of persons, goods, thoughts, and challenges. We have to give (back) to the citizens the qualities of autonomy, personal responsibility, and individual freedom of choice; we have to organize society on the basis of successful emancipation, with the middle-class ability to cope by oneself as model.

It is also the story of cosmopolitan global citizenship and a cosmopolitan Europe (Ulrich Beck): in other words, the self-dissolution of nation-states. Or as Mark Leonard puts it: »The twentieth century was the century of the nation state. The future belongs to strong regional alliances which are needed in order to create prosperity.«<sup>8</sup> This scenario of openness, change, and increasing flexibility has good credentials. It has the charm of infectious enthusiasm, hands-on pragmatism, »the optimism of the will,« and a forward-looking vision. Embrace the future. Let's make things better.

This »machismo of change« discourse goes hand in hand with a powerful debunking and combating of other responses to the world's turmoil. The forces of fear and unease tend to be ridiculed and demonized. Such reactions are deemed to be worrisome, pessimistic, old-fashioned and conservative in nature, full of unease in the face of the future and innovation-shy. It is the reaction of people afraid to lose what they have; who no longer have faith that politicians and policy elites will restructure, rebuild, and innovate to a good end.

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8. Mark Leonard, »Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century,« interview in: *NRC Handelsblad* (17 September 2005).

It is also the story of social protection set against »social coldness« and the dismantling of social structures; collective protection against individualism; a sense of community, social capital, and trust against individual responsibility and freedom of choice. It includes concern for historical and organic continuity of institutions and traditions, a skeptical attitude to the idea of a »new world,« distrust of upscaling, and a concern for cultural diversity and national identity in a globalizing world. It is the story of conservative and populist unease about modernity. It is about the concerns of people who have experienced the perverse, unintended effects of modernization and innovation. This unease can be both a pre-reform and a post-reform phenomenon.

## **Postponed Reform: The German Experience**

The radical procyclical modernization discourse becomes particularly visible in its hard clash with »innovation-shy« countries such as France and Germany. In terms of coarse caricature, Continental European Passivity here faces Anglo-Saxon Hyperactivity. Above all the political and social climate in Germany is becoming a classic case of confrontation between fear of change, modernization, and unease.

For a decade Germany has been the laughing-stock of the international policy elite. Successive OESO reports have offered the German political scene timetables for adjustment and change, but the political system remains in the grip of »Reformstau:« the old-fashioned giant is wheezing and creaking its way through the modern age. Let there be no doubt, Germany has to »abspecken« (slim down). The policy performance of successive governments with regard to the labor market and unemployment has been, to put it mildly, disastrous. However, the integration of the old GDR into the Federal Republic can be cited as a substantial – and internationally too much neglected – excuse. Let's be fair: what would happen to the British economy if the country merged with Poland? Or to the Dutch economy, if Holland and Bulgaria united?

Behind the Existential Hesitation of the »blockierte Gesellschaft« lies a story more tragic than anything which all those 20-year-old economic analysts on TV business news channels would be able to comprehend and comment on. For Germany, its social market economy and welfare state have been of existential importance for its »Vergangenheitsbewältigung« (coming to terms with the past). »Wirtschaftswunder,« »Wohlstands-

staat,« and a social market economy with harmonious labor relations were Germany's road to normality; the creation of a new, positive self-image; a new civil religion on the mental and material ruins of post-war Germany.<sup>9</sup> Socio-economic success also had to serve as surrogate for a totally clouded, even absent national identity. Germany had to reinvent its national identity without a foundation in its recent history: German football (winning the World Cup in 1954) and the prosperous German welfare state were the anchors of this process.

But there is more. Germany, being a deep-rooted industrial society and culture, is wrestling – like all of Europe – with »a way out of the dilemma between American-style globalization and retention of its own mental and cultural essence.« »From the perspective of many economists, German society is conducting a bitter and drawn-out rearguard action. All the statistics put over the same message: the Rhineland model is dead. But things are different for the major political parties in Germany: they must ultimately aim, in a sense, to redefine the social order in a globalizing world .... But what prospects are available? So far organizational experts, politicians, and employers have not been able to paint a credible and attractive prospect for everyone in the industrial sector. For the political community this is the tough and so far insoluble core of the problem: reforms are required to make the welfare state sustainable in the future, but what form should this society soon be taking? Will something of the Rhineland model remain or will the country simply slide towards hard-hearted individualism? To what extent can a state continue to lead in such a situation? Are all the fine words and ideas actually nothing more than a roundabout way of saying that it's all going to get harder? ... Everyone understands that something has to be done, but as long as the country is not a poorhouse and there is no attractive and credible prospect on offer, inhibiting and delaying reforms still provides more security in the short term than going along with reforms.«.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the result of the elections on 18 September, which had promised to provide a »Politikwechsel« (change of policy), were in line with the

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9. Cf. René Cuperus, »Wie die Kollision von Zivilgesellschaft und Gerechtigkeit eine rechts-populistische Revolte in Europa produziert,« in: Thomas Meyer und Udo Vorholt (Hrsg.), *Zivilgesellschaft und Gerechtigkeit. Dortmunder politisch-philosophische Diskurse*, Projektverlag (2004), pp. 90–102.

10. Ben Knapen, »De malaise van Duitsland is de malaise van Europa,« in: *NRC Handelsblad* (17 September 2005).

dominant climate: an impasse between adaptation and conservation, unease and change. The demarcation line of change versus retention, liberalization versus social protection, still runs right through Germany, right through the SPD, right through the German trade union movement, right through the elite and the majority of the population. But is radical change the answer?

## **Welfare State Blues:<sup>11</sup> Reform Fatigue in the Netherlands**

There are some who like to dismiss the German electorate, or the Dutch and French »no« voters in the constitution referendums, as xenophobic nationalists, frightened enemies of the open society, people who turn their back on the future, or deniers of globalisation and immigration. But these critics are wide of the mark. There are great dangers when a cosmopolitan post-national elite carelessly argues away the nation-state and national identity, at the very time the nation-state is for many a last straw of identification to cling to, a beacon of trust in a world in flux.

A casual cosmopolitan reaction also painfully denies the strong polarizing forces to which society is currently subjected and which can have very different results for different groups. It denies the extremely fragile socio-cultural and political climate in Europe, which is reflected in the pan-European rise of the populist right (and to a lesser extent, left-wing protectionism). The issue is thus the crisis of political representation for traditional parties and the new sociological fault-line in European society, a fault-line which we have just encountered so clearly again in voter behavior on the European Constitution, both in the Netherlands and in France: *la France d'en haut* versus *la France d'en bas*, a division between those who greet the future, and those who fear it.<sup>12</sup>

Now, the big question is how the dominant master-narrative of policy-makers, politicians, and decision-makers – a radical discourse of change in response to radical change – relates to the crises of confidence and representation in the current political and social system. There are many

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11. This is the title of the contribution of Frans Becker and myself to a book by Vivien Schmidt and others on Public Discourse and Welfare State Reform (see note 4).

12. Kees van Kersbergen and André Krouwel, »De buitenlanderskwestie in de politiek in Europa,« in: Huib Pellikaan and Margo Trappenburg (Hrsg.), *Politiek in de multiculturele samenleving*, Beleid en Maatschappij Jaarboek/Boom (2003), pp. 195–196.

signs of a worrying gulf between political policy elites and the population. This came to the surface in the results of the French and Dutch referendums on the European Constitution. But it is also alarmingly reflected – and should not be underestimated – in the pan-European presence of the populist right (from Le Pen to Hagen, from Vlaams Belang to Pia Kjaersgaard). Now populist left or protectionist left parties are also entering the arena, such as the German »Linkspartei« of Lafontaine and Gysi or the Dutch Socialist Party (SP). Time and again, socio-political research in the Netherlands and Flanders reveals the Great Distrust (major social unease combined with lack of confidence in politicians and institutions) among large parts of the population and a great divergence of opinion between the »political and social elite« and the general population.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of the Netherlands, the Dutch Polder Model gained international renown as the best way of making the economy flourish, reforming the welfare state, and still maintaining a social security system. The epithet »Dutch Miracle« referred to the pioneering role that the Netherlands played in a modern reconciliation of social and economic aims, a new balance between fairness and efficiency, and »activating care« and economic dynamism. However, the climate has changed fundamentally. The present centre-right coalition is talking tough about reform of the welfare state. To believe the rhetoric, anyone would think that the present government was tackling the problems from scratch. Nothing could be further from the truth: its approach builds on a reform policy that has persisted for three decades. The general public is showing signs of welfare state reform fatigue: they've had enough, although they still expect the government to continue with its policy of change. A large proportion of their supporters have now turned away from the coalition parties. This is mingled with a more general lack of confidence in government. Although it long remained immune, even in the Netherlands the phenomenon of political cynicism has taken firm hold. Public belief in the legitimacy and effectiveness of government has now sunk to the general low European level.

Any reform strategy will increasingly be confronted by a number of other contradictions. The logic of corporatist wheeling and dealing is hard to reconcile with the logic of a media (or audience) democracy. The general public is losing faith in the central institutions and elites that

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13. SCP and Elchardus, see note 2.

make up the backbone of the policy-making process. The players in this corporatist game are no longer self-evidently the representatives of clear-cut constituencies they once were. While the tinkering with the welfare state goes on in forums of professional experts and neo-corporatist institutions, the government lacks the conviction to win over a large section of the population to its reform strategy. In a decidedly compound polity such as the Netherlands – as described by Vivien Schmidt<sup>14</sup> – the government is ultimately dependent on support from a closed circle of policy-makers and decision-makers. This strategy, however, does not square with the need to convince the public at large of the necessity to intervene in the welfare state: there is a total lack of positive mobilization, generating a post-populist climate of mistrust and insecurity, aggravated since Fortuyn by yet another political murder, that of the film-maker Theo van Gogh by a fundamentalist Muslim of Moroccan origin. On top of this, the media are more than ever demanding a high degree of public accountability.

In the final analysis, the government took too much for granted as regards people's willingness to change and expected too much of them. Research into trends in public opinion shows, moreover, that a substantial majority of the population are in favor of stability and continuity of welfare state provision, but at the same time they are afraid that the government will go on with its adaptation program. The same survey also showed that a large proportion of the population have little commitment to the »public interest« and little trust in government, while at the same time they have a high degree of satisfaction in their private lives. Not only do we now have a situation of private prosperity and public poverty, as Galbraith described in »The Affluent Society,« but also private satisfaction and public resentment.<sup>15</sup>

The situation in the Netherlands is described quite accurately in the following account: »Politics is dominated by unease. Following the revolt against elitist multiculturalism (the core of Fortuyn's movement), this spring it was the turn of the European idea – which is just as elitist – to take a hammering in the referendum, or at least the »post-national« sentiments embodied in the proposed European Constitution. The majority of the electorate is also unhappy about the idea of bidding farewell

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14. Cf. Vivien Schmidt, Frans Becker and René Cuperus, in: Vivien A. Schmidt et al., *Public Discourse and Welfare State Reform* (see note 4).

15. SCP Research, *De Staat van Nederland* (2005), Report »21 minutes.«

to the socio-economic order which took shape after the Second World War. Whatever The Hague (or Brussels) may think, the large majority of Dutch citizens is attached to the nation state, to the type of solidarity organized within it, and to national authority over its attainments. They want stricter controls on welfare and the combating of social security abuses. In other respects, they are all in favor of »their« welfare state. They feel very comfortable with the socio-cultural relaxation that took place in the Netherlands after the 1960s. A little more law and order can do no harm, but the country wants nothing to do with a civilization mission *à la Balkenende*. As convinced communitarists, the Dutch want a solidary, egalitarian society. For the time being they are more attached to their peace of mind than worried about the economic and moral risks of the beloved welfare state. These are reasons why polls for the Balkenende government suggest an electoral bloodbath and why confidence in the government and politics has reached a dramatic low-point.<sup>16</sup>

It has been remarked that the population and the elite may be in the same boat, but they have totally different destinations: the public wants to go down the Scandinavian route, while the political and economic elite is heading towards the USA.<sup>17</sup>

It is precisely at this point that we encounter what I like to call the »reform/trust paradox« of the welfare state. In societies which are engaged in a major transition from high-trust to low-trust as a result of modernization processes (social fragmentation, individualization, globalization, immigration, urbanization), reform of the welfare state »safety net« only further undermines trust and the sense of security. Decades-long bonds

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16. H.J. Schoo, »Neoconservatieve visie stuit op argwaan burger,« in: *De Volkskrant* (20 September 2005).

17. Cf. the director of the Social and Cultural Government Research Office (SCP) Paul Schnabel quoted in Frans Becker and René Cuperus, »Welfare State Blues. Thirty Years of Welfare Reform in the Netherlands,« in: Vivien A. Schmidt et al., *Public Discourse and Welfare State Reform. The Social Democratic Experience*, Forum Scholars for European Social Democracy/Mets & Schilt Uitgevers (forthcoming 2005).

Concern about the Netherlands: 43 % of the population say they are quite worried about Dutch society; 30 % say they are very worried about the Netherlands: a total of 86 % of the population is worried about developments within Dutch society. Overall, the Dutch population is pessimistic about the future, and they expect the next generation to be even less satisfied with the Netherlands. A large proportion of respondents have real concerns, mainly about security and crime, integration of immigrants, and the cost of living (Source: 21minuten.nl, a McKinsey & Company Report 2005).

between political parties and their traditional followers have been destroyed by this innovation which was intended to preserve existing achievements, but was not understood and so not trusted. The Dutch PvdA lost more than a third of its party membership (above all trade union activists) during the social-liberal reforms under Prime Minister Wim Kok, and witnessed both the rise of a substantial old-left classical Socialist Party and a populist revolt under Pim Fortuyn. There is a negative trade-off between reforms and trust, at least in the case of the large social democratic parties. In a time of global hegemony of the neo-liberal ideology and due to the middle-class professional bias in language and arguments («personal responsibility,» «self-sufficiency,» «free choice»), there is a widespread distrust of reforms, especially among the less educated.

The problem may be that, in contrast to, for example, Scandinavia, there is no – or an insufficient or insufficiently convincing – welfare state consensus among the political policy elites within Continental welfare states. In the Netherlands, for instance, there is a repressed conflict between Catholics and Protestants within the Christian Democrat camp, resolved for the time being by the Protestant anti-welfare-state philosophy of the Prime Minister Balkenende government. This »betrayal of the welfare state« by one of its founding parties in Holland, the CDA, is supported by neo-liberal economists who, in great numbers, have taken up positions in the Dutch Labour Party, PvdA. These forces of social liberalism and neo-conservative »anti-statism« with their cold-hearted listing of the failings of the welfare state have for decades dominated the debate on the subject in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. This is why the policy elite and politicians in general are not trusted in case of welfare state reform: in Stockholm a politician is believed when he says »we have to modernize our proud Scandinavian welfare state so that we can retain it for our children and grandchildren;« in a country like the Netherlands the same argumentation no longer convinces.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, what we have called the crisis of representation is leading to new contradictions in the Dutch political and negotiation system, including the reform discourse. In the first post-war decades, political and union leadership clearly represented well-defined constituencies. The channels of communication may not always have been open, and internal democratic control may have been lacking, but political and union lead-

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18. Paul Schnabel in *Becker/Cuperus*, see note 17.

erships reflected the social basis of their organizations. There were direct links between the social partners and political parties. Since the 1970s, the parties have increasingly broken free of their social anchors and have focused particularly on decision-making processes within the bureaucratic-political system – what we refer to in the Netherlands as the »Hague cheese dome.« This is true of the Labour Party too. In terms of their approach and background, Labour Party representatives no longer reflect the sections of the population they aim to represent; they are professional, highly-educated politicians with a public sector background, and this is also true of local councilors and national parliamentarians. A party such as the Labour Party, thus has a serious problem when it comes to representing traditional rank and file. As a result, the natural links between the policy sphere and the public sphere have deteriorated. The populist revolt of 2002 in the Netherlands can to some extent be seen as the result of these tensions.

## **The Elite's Crash Course: Europe and the Multicultural Society**

The previously described problem cluster of social unease and distrust regarding the reform of the welfare state, as well as the demarcation line between future optimists and future pessimists can to an important extent be assigned – or broadened – to the issue of threatened identity. First, as I have argued in the case of the German experience, on the Continent the welfare state is a strong identity issue in itself. A progressive view of national identity arose after the Second World War in many European countries around the concept of the welfare state. This strong sentiment may be described as »welfare chauvinism,« which is a »civil religion« of communitarianism associated with the national solidarity of welfare state arrangements in countries like Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, and Germany (to some extent comparable with the symbolic value of the NHS for the British Labour Party).

This self-image has been shaken so profoundly that even the contrast with the American capitalist model is no longer proudly and unanimously supported. This is causing identity problems. While globalization, modernization, Europeanization, and immigration influence the well-being of the welfare state, they have repercussions at the level of national identity and societal self-image. For this reason alone, we cannot afford to ignore feelings of national identity in the debate on the Euro-

pean Social Model. Only on that basis can we understand the unease which is spreading so alarmingly in Europe and acting as a political and mental block to reforms, whether necessary or not.

By broaching the subject of national identity, I am venturing onto thin ice. Historical thin ice: in its dark incarnation, nationalism is an extremely dangerous political raw material with the very worst of antecedents. And I am venturing onto political thin ice: there is a taboo on this theme in progressive-academic circles. Just as for Margaret Thatcher »there is no such thing as ›society‹,« so for cosmopolitan intellectuals there is »no such thing as a nation-state or national identity.« For those who like to regard themselves as post-national cosmopolitan global citizens, national identity is a fiction: a dangerous, vulgar-populistic, reactionary, collective construction. William Pfaff puts it this way:<sup>19</sup> »The conventional political wisdom since World War II has identified nationalism with fascism.<sup>20</sup> Fascism and Nazism both were nationalist historical moments, but nationalism is not fascism or Nazism. The US at this moment is arguably the most nationalistic country on earth.«<sup>21</sup>

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19. William Pfaff, »What's Left of the Union?«, in: *New York Review of Books* (September 2005).

20. In the words of William Pfaff nationalism is an expression of the intense need for affirmation of national or communal identity as the anchor of individual identity. It is one of the fundamental forces at work in political societies, giving them meaning. It is also one of the »strong« forces in the physics of international relations, if not the strongest. It overrides short-term deviation or distraction. Although it may accompany high-minded internationalism, it does not readily yield to it; the repressed returns. For this reason nationalism has to be accommodated, not stubbornly resisted (see note 19).

21. Here I follow the line of thought and argumentation of the Dutch Council for Social Development (RMO) in its report »National Identity« as an unimpeachable, neutral source in this delicate minefield. The Council explores the field of tension between feelings of national identity and processes of ongoing internationalisation as they manifest themselves in European unification and the multi-ethnic development of our society. According to the RMO, national identity can be understood as 'the awareness of forming part of a people or national society, of a community with specific characteristics; and this awareness is so strong that it leads to identification with this community. National identity as a sense of »us« does not have to be judged negatively as long as it does lead to extreme nationalism and an exclusive claim by autochthonous residents, but instead, in addition to other identities along ethnic lines, also constitutes a new shared identity of belonging and active citizenship. National identity can also be described as »the expression of a certain degree of cultural integration and social cohesion, embodied in such bonding elements as a common

Moreover, centre-left and social democratic parties have long been embarrassed by this type of cultural theme. I shall return to this later, but can say right now that it does not seem wise for progressives to deny the »lived reality« of national identities and thus to allow this issue to become the monopoly of the right. In fact, it is the task of progressives to develop an open, hospitable, non-xenophobic definition of national identity: a greater »Us.« National solidarity, the moral foundation of a social, caring society, cannot survive without this.

There is a tension between the experience of national feelings – »us« – and ongoing internationalization, understood as a double process for the purposes of this argument: the process of European unification and the creation of multi-ethnic societies, the cultural and ethnic differentiation of European society. Both can lead to a felt loss of individuality, in the words of an official advisory body commissioned by the Dutch government to study this subject.<sup>22</sup>

The perception of a threat to – or undermining of – national identity is therefore related to two other dimensions of the headlong process of internationalization, domains in which there is a confrontation between cosmopolitan, highly educated elites and the population at large. Apart from the (perceived) undermining of the peace of mind provided by the welfare state by globalization and post-industrialization, there is a double »integration issue« resulting from internationalization: 1. the integration of nation-states in the European Union; and 2. the integration of immigrants in nation-states.

## European Integration: The Revenge of National Identity

The European adventure has recently been the victim of »imperial overstretch:« seemingly endless expansion; Europe as the heavy-handed

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language, history and – rooted in these factors – heritage and connected to this a sense of shared historical fate; a developing complex of common traditions, values and interests; and national institutions as the embodiment of these.« Cf. S.W. Couwenberg (red.), *Nationale identiteit. Van Nederlands probleem tot Nederlandse uitdaging*. Civis Mundi jaarboek 2001, p. 9.

22. RMO-advies, *Nationale identiteit in Nederland. Internationalisering en nationale identiteit*, advies 9, (September 1999). Cf. Koen Koch and Paul Scheffer (eds.), *Het nut van Nederland. Opstellen over soevereiniteit en identiteit*, (1996).

transmitter or accelerator of globalization and liberalization; Europe as the shears used to keep the Member States trimmed in uniform.

This has made Europe – and this is the real crux of the matter – into more of a threat than an inspired solution. It is where we encounter what I will call the »nationalism paradox« of European unification. European cooperation originated as a way of transcending the aggressive nationalism of the nineteenth century and its catastrophic twentieth-century consequence: what we have called the European »civil war.« With its current changes of form, however (expansion, neo-liberal currency union, a Superstate Constitution, technocratic centralization and regulatory spillover), the EU would seem to have reached a critical boundary. Europe is generating strong national counterforces and, like a magician's apprentice, now denies the nationalism which it aimed to transcend.

The process of European unification has now led to a substantial reduction in the policy-making freedom of the nation-state. The process of delegation of authority to European institutions has progressed further than many are aware. This can be called »integration by stealth,« a process which may be either intentional or unconscious. All things considered, the EU is a remote project of the elite (delegated to a »Europe cartel« comprising a handful of »European« politicians and »European« specialists) in which ordinary members of the public have virtually no involvement: this is what analyses of the constitutional referendums would seem to indicate.<sup>23</sup>

One has to ask what the European process of unification will ultimately mean for the nation-state and above all for the consciousness of national identity (although it is clear that different loyalties and identities are not mutually exclusive but can actually get along with one another just fine, in the same way as ethnic-cultural identity and national identity can also coexist). The Treaty of Maastricht formally states that the European Union must respect the national identity of its Member States, but this issue is crucial to the process of federal or confederal formation. One might have expected this question, certainly in view of the enormous cultural diversity of Europe, to have been a constant focus of attention. The tragic aspect of European unification is that neither the functionalistic ap-

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23. *Europese tijden. De publieke opinie over Europa. Europese Verkenning 3*, bijlage bij de staat van de Europese Unie 2006, Centraal Planbureau & Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, final conclusions, p. 38.

proach of Monnet nor the economic dynamo of the Internal Market have really dealt seriously with this existential question. In the end, Europe is an economic-materialistic project: culture, identity, and tradition are the poor cousins of integration. To some extent, this is the bitter harvest revealed by the Constitutional referendums: the revenge of cultural history, the revenge of national identities and traditions.

It is the self-abolition of the nation-state and the total avoidance of issues of national identity, cultural diversity, and political pluriformity which is generating the new eurodistrust, the »internal nationalism« against and within the EU.<sup>24</sup> It is entirely legitimate and understandable for people to harbor distrust, rooted in concerns about democracy and human rights and feelings of »nationalism,« towards a budding empire embracing at least 450 million people. The burden of proof as regards claims that the formation of a sui generis superstate such as the European Union represents historical progress in terms of democracy, the rule of law, and effective government still lies with those who advocate a larger, more powerful Europe.

The »new Euroscepticism« in Old Europe<sup>25</sup> is not necessarily skepticism about the EU as a whole. Most people are still in favor of forms of European integration and cooperation. They support the European model of welfare policy and human rights, but they are worried about the wild acceleration of Europe in recent times: the Big Bang, the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the presidential system, technocratic regulations, the irresponsible accession of Romania the overemphasized neo-liberal market approach, the unpopular promises to Turkey, and so on. And they are worried about a lack of respect for national cultures and traditions (German beer, Dutch social housing, Swedish pharmacies, French cheese), not to mention a lack of respect for the uninformed public.

And there is more: appearances can be deceptive, but before the French »non« and Dutch »nee« all the signs in Europe were pointing towards greater unity, increased power, and more centralized control. There is no doubt that a secret pact for a »superstate« had been formed in the shadow of the Constitution; a monster pact of (ultra-liberal) econ-

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24. Cf. Larry Siedentop, *Democracy in Europe*, 2000.

25. Cf. René Cuperus, »Why the Dutch Voted No. An Anatomy of the New Euroscepticism in Old Europe,« in *Progressive Politics*, 4 (2) (summer 2005), pp. 92–101.

omists, foreign-policy strategists, Brussels technocrats, and naive Socialists. The whole Eurocratic view of the future focuses, consciously or unconsciously, on a European superstate: nation-states have apparently become too weak, and are unable to survive on their own in the new world order. We must therefore form a strong European bloc, a European power able to compete with the economic and geopolitical power of America, China, and India. But this master narrative about a Strong and Firmly-Welded Europe is precisely what is causing so much concern to the people who worry about the lack of respect for national and cultural diversity in European discourse; particularly in view of the deterministic way in which this European vista is presented as being the only practicable path. Thatcherite intimidation at a European level. TINA, There Is No Alternative for European scaling-up: *Unite or Die! Reform or Perish*: »Europe is faced with a fundamental choice. One way we sink into economic decline, losing the means to pay for our preferred way of life. The other way, we press ahead with painful economic reforms that can make us competitive once again in world markets.«<sup>26</sup> But what is the price of a more powerful centralized Europe, speaking with one voice, and who is supposed to pay? Could this more powerful Europe be just an illusion, a megalomaniac dream on the part of geopolitical stratego-players?

Ordinary people do not want to give up their country for an imaginary European unity. They are neither convinced, amused, nor involved, as referendum exit-poll research in France and Holland has demonstrated.<sup>27</sup>

## The Illusion of the Multicultural Society

During a recent visit to the Netherlands Francis Fukuyama remarked: »For some time I have been thinking that the Europeans, and especially the Dutch, have had their heads stuck in the sand. It now seems clear to me that the entire concept of the multicultural society has been a serious mistake. What has been achieved is not something like a liberal society,

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26. Peter Mandelson, »More than a Squabble: This Goes to the Heart of Europe. The EU Faces a Stark Choice – Painful Reforms, or Economic Decline,« in: *The Guardian* (20 June 2005) (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission>).

27. Cf. »De publieke opinie over Europa,« in: *Europese tijden. Europese Verkenning* 3, bijlage bij de Staat van de Europese Unie 2006, Centraal Planbureau & Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

but a collection of groups who don't talk to each other. You can't call that a nation, I think.<sup>28</sup>

The term »multicultural society,« however inviting it may be intended to be for newcomers, such as incoming immigrant groups, has done a lot of damage. It is at odds with the quite successful integration, acculturation, and assimilation patterns in terms of employment, equality, and social and political inclusion which we can observe over generations in true immigration countries such as America and Australia. The concept has also, so far, done much damage to support for immigration among the autochthonous population. On the contrary, the term has produced unnecessary and perilous xenophobia and resentment.

The concept of multiculturalism as used by post-national politically-correct cosmopolitans suggests that the autochthonous population is no more – if no less – than one culture among many, a minority alongside minorities. It cannot be ruled out that in the longer term this will be a lived reality in some cities (and assuming that by that point the processes of integration, emancipation, and acculturation have succeeded, this need not present a problem), but applying such a normative-imperative description at the start of a mass immigration process is probably the most confrontational way of conducting race relations<sup>29</sup> between established population and newcomers. There is no better way of unsettling and potentially dislocating a host society. In this respect I fully share the view of »Prospect's« David Goodhart: it is disproportionate to imagine »that Britain must radically adapt its majority way of life or reach out to meet the newcomers halfway. ... But in the nature of things most of the adaptation will, initially, be on the side of the newcomers who have chosen to live in an already existing society with a majority way of life and at least some sense of itself. ... It's important that newcomers acknowledge that Britain is not just a random collection of individuals, and that they are joining a nation which, although hard to describe, is something real«.

And Goodhart still errs on the side of caution. The breakdown in communication regarding the core idea of multiculturalism between the politically correct elite of experts, minority experts, highly educated representatives and immigrant organizations on the one hand, and the average

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28. Interview in: *De Volkskrant* (17 September 2005).

29. Race relations is a problematic word for Continental Europeans, with even Nazi associations. On the Continent the whole concept and terminology of race is no longer used, hidden under layers of history.

population on the other hand has (perhaps unnecessarily) caused much damage. Prompted by legitimate feelings of guilt about Western colonialism, racism, apartheid, and the Holocaust, the counter-reaction has taken the form of exclusive attention towards and respect for the cultural ethnicity, individual qualities, and group culture of minorities/immigrants, accompanied by a total denial, if not indeed the demonizing of the group culture and ethnicity of the autochthonous majority.

It is this multicultural illusion, constituting a clear and threatening deviation from lived reality, which drives many »ordinary people« into the arms of extremely dubious parties, luckily only to a very small extent, initially, towards extreme right-wing, racist parties (which in the 1980s agitated against the idea of multiculturalism), but in due course towards large populist right-wing movements such as those of Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, Hagen in Norway, and Kjaersgeld in Denmark. Now mainstream politicians, experts, and social scientists (with an unheard-of delay of 20 years) have also arrived at this position regarding multiculturalism.<sup>30</sup> However, one should not underestimate the fact that in many European countries we are faced with a creeping revolt by parts of the autochthonous population, a stubborn peat-moor fire against the optimistic idea *and* the segregated practice of the multicultural society. This revolt is not always expressed in political voting patterns; this may be due to the nature of the electoral system (as in the UK), a massive historical burden (as in Germany), or a lack of corresponding parties to vote for, as in the Netherlands, where no anti-multicultural party has appeared on the political left. But make no mistake: voter research shows that the great majority of the Dutch population is, in contrast to what the obligatory terminology has prescribed for decades, »uniculturalist.«<sup>31</sup> This means that people want and expect cultural minorities to adapt (up to a point) to the culture of the host country.

In the post-Fortuyn Netherlands there has been a radical change of tack from subsidized multiculturalism to mandatory integration and »citizenship« measures (language and elementary cultural education),

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30. »At present there is a large conceptual and linguistic space between racism, at one end, and liberal cosmopolitanism, at the other. Most people reside in this middle space but it is empty of words for us to describe our feelings.« David Goodhart, »Britain's Glue,« in: A. Giddens and P. Diamond (eds.), *The New Egalitarianism*, p. 170.

31. Kees Brants and Philip van Praag (eds.), *Politiek en media in verwarring. De verkiezingscampagnes in het lange jaar 2002*, Het Spinhuis (2005), p. 235.

also as far as possible with retrospective effect for »oldcomers« – immigrants of the first generation who have been living there for a long time.<sup>32</sup>

The signals are set for more integration, more obligatory co-existence between autochthonous and immigrant residents. The patterns of segregation in education (the Netherlands has traditionally applied confessional education and thus has Islamic schools), housing and social contacts are increasingly causing concern in areas where they continue to result in above-average unemployment, truancy, and crime. These statistics are generating more and more tensions between solidarity and diversity and in theory threaten the sustainability of the European welfare state model, with its delicate balance between horizontal and vertical solidarity.<sup>33</sup>

Even Islamic fundamentalist terrorism can have the perverse positive side-effect that, simply for reasons of state security and citizen safety, there are increased calls for mutual cooperation between immigrant communities and the autochthonous population.<sup>34</sup>

In short, there is a great and increasing urgency for an anti-segregation offensive, against living back to back and separated parallel societies, leaving intact the »multicultural society« in the private sphere (as long as it is compatible with the laws of constitutional liberal democracy), but urgently looking for ways to marry ethnic and cultural diversity with a common national identity. »The biggest question of all in modern Europe is how majorities can express their local and national identities without alienating minorities? How can outsiders be made to feel at home without making insiders feel that they have become strangers in their own home?«<sup>35</sup>

There is a growing need for a uniting, bridging national identity, a bigger »Us.« This is required for »majority reassurance« (Goodhart) and for

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32. Cf. René Cuperus, »From Polder Model to Postmodern Populism. Five Explanations for the ›Fortuyn Revolt‹ in the Netherlands,« in: R. Cuperus, K. Duffek and J. Kandel (eds.), *The Challenge of Diversity. European Social Democracy Facing Migration, Integration and Multiculturalism*, Forum Scholars for European Social Democracy/StudienVerlag (2003), pp. 276–301. See also Rinke van den Brink, *In de greep van de angst. De Europese sociaal-democratie en het rechtspopulisme*, Houtekiet (2005).

33. David Goodhart on the trade-off between solidarity and diversity; see also the Warren House Speech by Wouter Bos on the Policy Network website.

34. Cf. Tariq Modood, *Remaking Multiculturalism after 7/7* (www.opendemocracy.net, 29 September 2005).

35. David Goodhart, p. 170.

the social acceptance and socio-economic success of immigrants. How could European countries imagine that they could differ from the experience of historical immigration of the US, where the umbrella of American (political-cultural) identity is a prerequisite for successful »multicultural« integration and where patriotism produces a sense of belonging across ethnic and cultural heritages?

Viewed this way, the concept of national identity as a replacement for multiculturalism can be both a problem and a solution. It is a dangerous term in the closed, xenophobic, ethnocentric variant; but in the open, tolerant variant it can promote supra-ethnic community formation and solidarity, as well as bridge-building and social, color-blind cohesion.

The migration of highly skilled labor à la cosmopolitan London is essential for a creative economy such as the Netherlands, but broad public support for this can only arise (again) if we regain clarity about what integration is and what it is not; about the boundaries, rights, and obligations of »fellow citizenship;« if the process falls into line with what the great majority of Dutch people see as fair, civilized, and reasonable. The final goal could well be »assimilation with retention of one's own cultural identity« (Cuperus): »hyphenated immigrants,« so to speak, comparable to the US experience.<sup>36</sup> This is, by the way, much easier – relatively speaking – in the United Kingdom, with its umbrella identity of Britishness, related to both the Commonwealth and the English-speaking world, than in countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, or Germany.<sup>37</sup>

The Netherlands is obliged by its history (Holocaust, apartheid) to be an open, cosmopolitan, non-racial society – but preferably one not based on closed ethnic-traditional communities, but rather on individual citizenship, irrespective of ethnicity and religion. The core problem is that multicultural segregation through collective group formation along ethnic, cultural, or religious lines is strongly at odds with the model of a high-quality Western, emancipated, individualized society, where individuals do not permanently »coincide« with their ethnic and cultural traditional communities. Moreover, if segregation results in ghettos of the deprived for European social democracy, this must surely be an in-

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36. Francis Fukuyama, »Nexus Lecture: The Future of Democracy, Culture and Immigration: »Een liberale democratie is niet cultureel neutral«, in: *NRC Handelsblad* (1 October 2005).

37. Cf. Stephen Howe, »Britishness and Multiculturalism,« in: *The Challenge of Diversity* (note 30).

tolerable cultural and socio-economic scandal, to be prevented by all means.

## Concluding Observations

This essay has examined European Social Unease (ESU), an unstable undercurrent in European society, at odds with modern global trends and the dominant response of policy-makers and decision-makers, with particular reference to the issue of threatened national identity. National identity is understood in a broad sense: it seems typically European that it is precisely the social model of the post-war welfare state and the social market economy which form a substantial part of the positive self-image of various European populations. The unease is to be found in the perception of threats to and undermining of national characteristics through processes of internationalization: on the one hand, globalization of the production of goods and services, as well as capital markets, and the apparently limitless European unification, and on the other hand a seemingly uncontrollable immigration and the development of multi-ethnic societies with problems of integration, segregation, and multicultural »confusion.«

Contrary to the gospel of the ultra-modern pundits who advocate the self-abolition of the nation-state in favor of new regional power centers, unstable and dislocating undercurrents in European society require not only prudence in modernization and innovation but also the rehabilitation of and return to the nation-state as a forum for the restoration of trust; as an anchor in uncertain times, a renewed test case for socio-economic performance, and a source of social cohesion between the less and the better educated, between immigrants and the autochthonous population. A restoration of trust between politicians and citizens will have to take place at the national level, as will the creation of a harmonious multi-ethnic society. Europe must facilitate this process, not obstruct it. In other words, the future of the EU, the European Social Model, and a harmonious multi-ethnic society lies with the nation-state. The motto for the coming period of transition is therefore: *How the nation-states must rescue the European Union and the multicultural society!* (freely rendered from Alan Millward).<sup>38</sup>

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38. Alan Millward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (1992).

Does this account seem a little too gloomy? Is this account – although not at all representative of the Dutch Labour Party or Dutch politics, which are obviously dominated by radical modernizers – a symbol of Continental spleen? If so, it is merely intended as a corrective to the jubilant self-assurance, the risky hubris of today’s globalized, multiculturalized, and cosmopolitanized elites.

Jean Monnet, a major figure in European integration, once stated that there are two sorts of dynamic, a dynamic of hope and a dynamic of fear.<sup>39</sup> After nine-eleven, Madrid, London, Van Gogh, the French and Dutch referenda, the German federal elections, mass immigration, and mass integration problems, the Big Bang, and the non-deliverance of the Economic and Monetary Union and the Single Market in a new global setting, Europe has entered a dynamic of fear. We should of course transform this dynamic as soon as possible into a dynamic of hope. However, the fastest way to escape fear is to understand it, not to ignore it or to try to silence it with the blind and blunt »machismo« of radical modernization. I fully support Peter Mandelson when he says: »Economic modernizers need to adopt a new language and a new set of priorities. ... If you want to have any chance of people listening to you, you have to start with where they are.«<sup>40</sup> Leadership without genuine support cannot last long.

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39. Dutch Foreign Minister Bot has made reference to Monnet’s words: Editorial in *NRC Handelsblad* (28 September 2005).

40. Peter Mandelson, *The Guardian*, *ibid.* and Peter Mandelson, *The Idea of Europe: Can We Make It Live Again?* Speech to the University Association for Contemporary European Studies, Brussels (20 July 2005) ([europa.eu.int/comm/commission](http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission)).