Europeanness in Aarhus 2017's programme of events: Identity constructions and narratives

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According to EU cultural policy, European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs) should include a 'European dimension' that promotes cultural collaborations across EU countries and highlights the diversity and similarity of European cultures. However, the European dimension has been underplayed in ECOC events (Lähdesmäki, 2014b) and has not been particularly visible in official communication about ECOC events (European Commission, 2010). The purpose of this study is to investigate narratives of Europeanness that provide templates for identification in the official programme of events for Aarhus 2017, using a qualitative discourse analytical approach and computational tools. The findings reveal that 'Europe' is linked to other spatial/geopolitical levels, and that narratives of Europeanness draw on discourses of categorical identity and relational identity. The various representations of Europeanness in Aarhus 2017's programme of events are discussed with respect to existing empirical studies and theories of European identity, as well as the evolving aims of ECOC.

Keywords: European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs), Narratives, Europeanness, European identity, Discourse, Digital text analysis, Aarhus 2017, ECOC programme of events

1. Introduction

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) project has been in existence since 1985. It has been described as "a flagship cultural initiative of the European Union" (Barroso, 2009, 1), which should further civic identification with the EU, and political integration (Shore, 2000) by winning over EU citizens' "hearts and minds" (Patel, 2013, 2). Although ECOCs have been described as passing through three phases in their ongoing evolution and with respect to various cultural policy amendments (García & Cox, 2013; Staiger, 2013), the focus from their inception has been on presenting the "unity in diversity" of European culture (McDonald, 1996; Sassatelli, 2009). For Melina Mercouri, the Greek minister of culture who proposed the concept of a European City of Culture which later became the ECOC project, culture should be as important a strand in European Community affairs as trade and economics, and culture was envisaged as central to the political aim of European integration (García & Cox, 2013, 37). ECOCs can thus be considered manifestations of what Vidmar-Horvat (2012, 30) has described as the "'cultural turn' in the European politics of integration" that started to gain prominence during the 1980s.

In EU cultural policy that applied for the recent ECOC Aarhus 2017 (European Parliament and Council, 2006), it is stipulated that ECOCs include a mandatory "European dimension" whose aim is to promote artistic and civic collaborations across the EU and present the

unity and diversity of European culture. The main concern of this policy is to generate grassroots support for European integration (Lähdesmäki, 2014a, 192), appealing to "hearts and minds" (Patel, 2013, 2) using the Trojan horse of culture (Sassatelli, 2009, p. 100). Of course, the Europeanising function of ECOCs should garner support for the political integration of the EU rather than for the continent of Europe: culture is used, as it often is, to "fix" a problem (Bell & Oakley, 2015, 58) – in this case, weak or lackluster support for European political integration.

The European dimension is obligatory in ECOCs, and bids for future ECOCs are assessed in relation to whether the European dimension is sufficiently present (European Parliament and Council, 2006, Article 10). However, despite its mandatory status, what is meant by the "European dimension" is not clearly specified. This means that the "European dimension" can be flexibly interpreted at local ECOCs, which can help embed understandings of Europe locally, a process dubbed "Eurocalization" (Fage-Butler, 2020). It also permits greater refraction of the European dimension through local and personal interpretations, and this, coupled with weak appropriation of overt European symbolism or banal Europeanism (Cram, 2009) can result in the mandatory European dimension not being apparent to ECOC event attenders (Fage-Butler, 2020). Its absence from cultural events from the point of view of event attenders is at odds with ECOCs' aim of generating greater awareness of a common, yet diverse European culture and mustering support for the EU as a political project.

A growing body of evidence indicates that the European dimension in ECOCs is underplayed at the expense of local, national and international concerns (European Capital of Culture, 2015; Fischer, 2013; García & Cox, 2013; Lähdesmäki, 2014b; Sassatelli, 2009), with Lähdesmäki (2012, 193) summarizing that, on the whole, "the 'European dimension' or Europeanness cannot be perceived in the contents of ECOC events". The problem of translating European cultural policy into practice in ECOCs is also evident in studies that show that the European dimension tends to diminish as ECOCs move from the early proposal stage to being realized as actual events (Palmer, 2004, 88). Moreover, programme developers of ECOCs often disagree about where the emphasis between the various spatial and geopolitical layers (global, European, national, local) should lie (O'Callaghan, 2012; Palonen, 2010).

The European Commission has criticized the muted European dimension in ECOC events (Immler & Sakkers, 2014) as well as communication *about* the events: e.g. "In some cases, the cities did in fact have a good European dimension in their projects, but did not make it visible enough in their communication material" (European Commission, 2010, 6). The present article takes its starting point in this second point, exploring not the events themselves, but the less investigated aspect of how the European dimension is represented in communication about the events. In focusing on Aarhus 2017, whose motto was "Let's Rethink", it takes Aarhus 2017's official programme book (Aarhus 2017, 2017) as its case in point. Aarhus 2017 (2017) was produced for consumption by multiple audiences, including Danes and the broader European/ international public (it consists of parallel, translated texts in Danish and English), as well as interested stakeholders in the EU. The programme of events book is highly relevant to explore how Europeanness is narrativized by those involved in staging the event, as it reflexively presents the European dimension of the ECOC in question to its various publics. To explore the narrativization of Europeanness in the programme of events book, we will analyze the discursive constructions of European identity. We start with a quantitative approach that characterizes the text in terms of relevant features. Then we undertake a three-layered qualitative analysis that identifies qualitative constructions of Europeanness, characterizes the identity discourses that underpin those constructions, and discusses the discourses in relation to broader narratives of Europeanness.

2. European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs)

2.1 ECOCs and european cultural policy

ECOCs have evolved over the decades to reflect more integrationist intentions (Fage-Butler, 2020). Lähdesmäki (2014a, 192) has described the main objective of ECOC's current policy (European Parliament and Council, 2006) as that of cementing closer cultural ties across Europe, a point that is also acknowledged by EU politicians and political bodies (Barroso, 2009, 1; European Union, 2015, 1). Patel (2013, 2) explains this concern with forging deeper cultural ties as reflecting an attempt to address the EU's "lack of 'cultural legitimacy'" as part of the wider debate on its democratic deficit, a point also made by Karaca (2010, 123) in relation to the EU's involvement in cultural projects more generally. It is believed that greater legitimacy for the EU can be achieved through "a shared and coherent identity" (Lähdesmäki, 2014b, 78).

ECOCs may also promote support for the EU because cities often experience regeneration after becoming an ECOC (Campbell, 2011; Chambers, 2017). Aarhus has also benefitted economically from having been an ECOC in 2017 (Aarhus 2017, 2018).

2.2 Empirical studies of ECOC programmatic literature

Although the European dimension of official material on ECOCs has not received concerted research attention, relevant empirical studies have been undertaken. Aiello and Thurlow (2006, 158) explored the production of a "pan-European identity" in visual discourses in the promotional texts of 30 cities that were either nominated for or competed for the title of ECOC. They found that the visual idiom facilitated an efficient integration of local and global/European themes, and they suggested that visual representations of a pan-European identity could promote narratives of Europe that influenced people's sense of Europeanness (Aiello & Thurlow, 2006, 159).

Turşie (2015) explored the narratives used by two cities she characterizes as peripheral in Europe: Marseille-Provence (ECOC in 2013) and Pecs (ECOC in 2010), focusing on how they reflect the "European dimension" of the ECOC project. In her analysis of the applications (bid books) of the two cities, official web pages and ex-post European Commission's evaluations, she identified narratives of internationalization and multiculturalism in the communication about both cities' events.

Immler and Sakkers (2014) explored how 'Europe' was articulated in ECOC programmes and bidbooks from 2008-2018 using qualitative content analysis. They found increasing use of discourses of postnationalism, transculturalism and diversity. Immler and Sakkers (2014, 23) asserted that recent communication about ECOCs showed "increasing interest in bridging experiences between different groups, local and global themes, and transnational shared stories". They found that the European dimension was largely deflected to other geopolitical levels, and they questioned to what extent Europe was defined in terms of what it was not, rather than what it was. Because the European dimension may be sublimated to other levels (e.g. the local and global), it can be a cultural-political tool for achieving a more profound sense of a common humanity. Immler and Sakkers (2014) noted these trends as implicit features in their data, which suggests the importance of further investigation in this area.

Also worth mentioning is a report that explores the narratives of Europe evident in Aarhus 2017 bidbooks and interviews with managers of specific events (Nørkjær Therkelsen, 2017). This report points out that it was recommended during the bidding and planning stages of Aarhus 2017 that the European dimension of Aarhus 2017 events should be enhanced (Nørkjær Therkelsen, 2017, 13). Also, event managers emphasized youth and the future, as well as linguistic and ethnic diversity as ways of highlighting the richness of

European diversity. The empirical focus of the report was not on the programme of events, however, hence the relevance of exploring it in this article.

3. Narrative, discourse, identity and Europeanness

In this article, we draw on a poststructuralist narrative framework (e.g. Tamboukou, 2013), where "narrative" is understood as an account of an event or experience that draws on discourses that have cultural currency. The definition provided by Vaara, Sonenshein, and Boje (2016, 496) of organizational narratives as "temporal, discursive constructions that provide a means for individual, social, and organizational sensemaking and sensegiving" also highlights that narratives draw on discursive meanings, can act as screens through which we interpret, and can evolve over time. A master-narrative is culturally coherent and politically powerful; it is a way of organizing powerful meanings. It involves "a set of coherent communication acts and embedded ideas. It is dominant in a given cultural context and emerges over time via the repetition of structures, ideas, and policies" (Lueg, 2018, 487).

Given narratives' indebtedness to discourses, one way of gaining analytical traction on narratives is through discourse analysis (Fage-Butler, 2020, forthcoming), also the approach adopted in this article. Our approach to analysing narratives of Europeanness as represented in Aarhus 2017 (2017) is inspired by Foucauldian discourse theory (Foucault, 1972). Discourses are:

> "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe." (Foucault, 1972, 49)

Thus, discourses are not merely descriptive of meanings in society; they are performative, shaping realities. Moreover, discourses are not value-neutral; instead, they represent cultural forms of "power/knowledge" (Foucault, 1980), and are the semantic meanings at the disposal of societal narratives.

Narratives of Europeanness draw on constructions of "identity". "European identity" started to become an issue in political and public discourse from the 1970s onwards, reflecting the increasing popularity of the term "identity" (Gleason, 1983) and the process of European integration. Although the term "Europe" and the history of its discursive constructions reach back to antiquity (Schmale, 2000), the European Community/ European Union as "identity builder" (Bee, 2008, 437) has had a crucial impact on these debates. Different phases of identity as defined by the Commission have been analyzed (Bee, 2008) and discourses of "unity" and "diversity" in the EU's motto "united in diversity" have been investigated (Lähdesmäki, 2012). In her analysis of EU cultural policy and the ECOC-initiative, Sassatelli (2008, 226) argued that "the minutiae of cultural policy-making are never far removed from far-reaching discourses on European identity".

Working within a social constructivist framework, we assume that language constructs knowledge about groups and group memberships that individuals may identify with or reject, shaping their "social identity" as defined by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, 69). For Hall (1992, 292-293), discourses provide meanings for national identity:

> "A national identity is a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves [...]. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it."

The Aarhus 2017 programme of events thus produces discursive meanings that provide material for narratives of Europeanness. This includes constructions of space ("Europe"), attributes ("European"), political institutions ("European Union"), time (e.g. "European history", "future of European culture") and group members (e.g. "Europeans"). Europeanness is, moreover, related to specific discourses of "identity". In the following, we differentiate between two discourses of identity: a categorical and a relational discourse of (European) identity which also represent two contrasting perspectives and traditions in European identity research. In doing so, we draw on a distinction by Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 15):

> "One key distinction is between relational and categorical modes of identification. One may identify oneself (or another person) by position in a relational web (a web of kinship, for example, or of friendship, patron-client ties, or teacher-student relations). On the other hand, one may identify oneself (or another person) by membership in a class of persons sharing some categorical attribute (such as race, ethnicity, language, nationality, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)."

This distinction contrasts identification with others through social bonds (relational identity), on the one hand, and identification based on pre-determined attributes that determine one's inclusion (or not) in a class of persons (categorical identity), on the other hand. The two modes are by no means mutually exclusive, but can be accentuated differently.

Regarding the "categorical" understanding of identity in identity studies, categories such as the nation, ethnicity, culture, and gender have been important focus areas. Many scholars have demonstrated the role of the construction of difference, otherness and boundaries (e.g. Barth, 1969; Krossa, 2016) and of common culture and history (e.g. Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995) for shaping "identities". Exemplifying this approach, using Critical Discourse Analysis, Wodak et al. (2009, 35) explored the construction of "homo austriacus", of a common political past, a common culture or a 'national body', focusing "primarily on lexical units and syntactic devices which serve to construct unification, unity, sameness, difference, uniqueness, origin, continuity, gradual or abrupt change, autonomy, heteronomy and so on".

At the same time, the idea of identity as a closed container has been challenged by poststructuralist thinking and postcolonial studies that highlight more relational understandings of identity. Many researchers have described "identity" as blurred, fluid, hybrid or fractured (e.g. Hall, Bhabha). Moreover, the impact of globalization and migration on identity has been the subject of many considerations. For example, "transnational(ised) identities" in a multi-local life-world have been investigated (Vertovec, 2001, 578), and Beck (2000) has connected plural and transnational identities with cosmopolitanization. The metaphor of the network has proven to be especially powerful, as it seems particularly well-suited to conceptualize identification processes across national borders. Although transnational networks can strengthen ethnic boundaries (Prinsen et al., 2015), the network metaphor can also shift focus towards the local, since, as Castells argues, the "key spatial feature of the network society is the networked connection between the local and the global" (Castells, 2010, xxxv).

From the start, debates on "European identity" have been entangled with general identity discourses and reflect the categorical and relational approach to identification. For instance, Quenzel distinguished in EU cultural policy two basic patterns of European identity construction. First, the tree structure, which conceptualizes unity and homogeneity and in which subjects are invoked as part of a larger community, and national cultural goods, where European art and values and so on serve as material representations of Europeanness. Second, the network structure, where European identity is formed through the establishment of a Europe-wide communication community (Quenzel, 2015, 200–207).

While earlier attempts at establishing a European identity often draw on the first pattern (Bee, 2008), the narrative of a networked Europe has been particularly relevant during the last decades. Castells (2001), for example, described the European Union as the clearest manifestation of the network state to date, and the network metaphor has been increasingly important in European integration studies (Axford, 2015). Likewise, recent studies on the discursive construction of European identity have taken this dimension into account. In his analysis of the discourse of "Europeanness" of members of the NGO "European Alternatives", Zappettini (2019) approached his data from a transnational stance and discussed topoi such as (inter)connectedness and network diversity.

4. Method

When analyzing narratives in the Aarhus 2017 programme of events qualitatively, we drew on Foucauldian discourse theory (Foucault, 1972, 80). Foucauldian discourse analysis rests on the idea that statements – which he calls the "atoms" of discourses and are usually around a sentence long, though they may be longer (Fage-Butler, 2011) – construct objects of discourse. For example, a news item including statements about immigrants constructs "immigrants" with respect to various societal discourses (e.g. immigrants as a boon to society, as economic opportunists or in relation to a racist discourse). These discourses in turn become the material for narratives relating to immigrant identity. In a similar way, the texts in the Aarhus 2017 programme construct Europe with respect to different identity discourses, which in turn providing meanings for narratives of Europeanness.

In our qualitative analysis, we approached the Aarhus 2017 programme both inductively and deductively. We were open to the discursive meanings in the text, but we were familiar with existing theories of Europeanness and identity. Openness to the data was important, as narratives of Europeanness are likely to draw on a range of different discourses. Given the large data set, we found it valuable to supplement our Foucauldian (qualitative) approach with a quantitative approach that used digital analysis tools. Digital tools can support qualitative analyses in many ways (Bick et al., 2019). In this article, the digital analytical tools helped us to identify features relating to Europeanness in the long document (492 pages in its online pdf form) that we otherwise might not have observed. We present these findings in Section 5.1. We present our qualitative discursive approach which forms the basis for the narrative analysis in Sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Both authors of this article were involved in qualitatively coding the data using NVivo (2017). This involved undertaking an initial coding of references to Europe; descriptive codes were derived using an inductive approach where we were highly attentive to the meanings as they appeared in the programme. After this inductive approach, we re-examined the initial coding and looked for patterns in the codes, noting similarities between the nodes and theoretical literature, where relevant (the deductive approach); this helped us to derive broader categories from the initial nodes. Parallel to this analysis, we used AntConc, Voyant Tools and Sketch Engine which are informed by corpus linguistic approaches, e.g. for frequency analysis, key word analysis and identification, as well as investigating other relevant search terms and text sequences. These allowed us to characterize the text in more general terms.

We analyzed all of the English text in the programme, which was approximately half of the complete text. We worked with the bilingual, multimodal pdf-file of the program when we coded in NVivo, and with a txt-file of the English text when we used the other computational tools. In that version, we removed irrelevant elements such as repetitions of headings at the top of pages. All quantitative results included in the following refer to the English txt version.

5. Analysis
In Section 5.1, we characterized the programme with respect to the occurrence and frequency of different geopolitical or spatial categories to see if "Europe" and related forms were present and to what extent, given our literature review which showed that "Europe" often was missing in ECOC programmatic literature. When presenting quotations from the programme of events (in Sections 5.2 and 5.3), we include page numbers in brackets.

5.1 General aspects

5.1.1 Structure of the programme, characterisation of the first part
The programme includes three main 'sub-genres' 1) an introductory part that includes messages written by different representatives and a foreword by the CEO (1,809 words), 2) interviews to explore the thoughts of key players of Aarhus 2017 (13,174 words), and 3) presentations of each ECOC event (48,515 words).
Part 1 is the programmatic part; it includes strategic statements on the vision for Aarhus 2017. A keyword analysis in AntConc revealed that the pronouns "our" and "we" are characteristic of the introductory part compared to the rest of the programme. This suggests that group identity is at stake, although the word "identity" itself is not included. Interestingly, the representatives' messages emphasize different geopolitical or spatial categories. The Queen does not discuss the European dimension, but describes Aarhus 2017 mainly as a source of national pride. Bertel Haarder, the then-Minister for Culture, links the national, European and global dimensions with the concept "culture" as art. Not surprisingly perhaps, the European Commissioner for European Capitals of Culture represents the most "European" approach, calling ECOC a meeting place for European citizens. He refers to European values and Europe's diversity, and mentions the local, regional and global, but not the national. By contrast, the Mayor of Aarhus omits mentioning Europe, focusing instead on the local dimension with respect to regional, national and global frameworks. The representative of the Central Denmark region adds a regional perspective. Finally, the Aarhus 2017 CEO integrates all of the perspectives, starting at the local and regional and proceeding via the national and European to the global.

5.1.2 Frequency analysis
In the programme, the European dimension is referred to as a noun ("Europe"), an adjective ("European"), a demonym ("Europeans"), an abbreviation ("EU") and sometimes obliquely using the term "continent". Besides this, it is present in references to the European currency and in the names of some of the events ("eutopia", "euroinvasion"). The results of the word count are presented in Table 1; note that the figures for "European", "European Capital of Culture" and "Europeans" are exclusive of each other. To assess these results, we compared them with those of other spatial/geopolitical categories in Table 1: the European dimension by no means stands out as more important than the local, regional, national and global categories – quite the contrary. The local dimension was by far the most frequent (again, note that the figures for "Aarhus" and "Aarhus 2017" were exclusive of each other), and both the national and global dimensions occur more frequently than the European one. Besides, the term "international" is widely used. These results become even clearer if one differentiates between the different parts of the programme: the European dimension is most frequent in the programmatic introductory part, while it is far less relevant in the description of the events and the interviews. Apart from the very frequent local dimension ("Aarhus"), we find a stronger focus on the global (in the interviews) and the national dimension (in the events). What is more, even in the programmatic part, only some of the representatives discuss Europe or Europeanness, while others replace "European" with "international" or focus on globality, or the local/regional. These findings

are interesting, given the ongoing calls for more evident inclusion of European aspects in ECOCs, described earlier.

Table 1: Overview of quantitative findings of total number of mentions of spatial/geopolitical elements in Aarhus 2017 (2017) programme of events, ordered by frequency of occurrence

Local dimension **(Total number: 641)**	**local* (85), Aarhus 2017 (151), Aarhus (405)**
National dimension **(Total number: 363)**	Danish* (147), Denmark* (147), nation* (69)
Global dimension **(Total number: 270)**	world* (221), global* (49)
European dimension ***(Total number: 261)***	*Europe (80), European (91), European Capital of Culture (61), Europeans (3), EU (7), continent / continents (5), euro / euros (2), eutopia (8), euroinvasion (4)*
Regional dimension **(Total number: 175)**	Jutland* (32), region* (143)
International dimension **(Total number: 110)**	international* (110)

Source: own elaboration

5.2 Europeanness as constructed within a discourse of categorical identity

In this section and the next, we present the results of the qualitative discourse analysis, where we identify elements and principles of construction in the Aarhus 2017 programme of events that contribute to constructing Europeanness and are connected to European identity discourses. Since the programme is a compilation of many different texts and text types by different authors, our approach was to identify elements and principles that reflected the range of discursive constructions and narratives of Europeanness, while acknowledging that they may be interlinked in the text.

We found discourses of categorical identity and relational identity in the representation of Euopeanness in Aarhus 2017's programme of events. Regarding the first of the two ("categorical identity) that we present in this section (Section 5.2), we found that "European identity" was constructed as homogenous and different from the "other" (Wodak et al., 2009). This was achieved in five main ways, as highlighted below. These have all been derived inductively; some resonate with previous findings.

5.2.1 Europe as a layer

Europe is constructed as a distinct outer layer in the following passage:

> *"And in our year in which we examine our Danish DNA within the European context, artists help us reflect upon society in flux through transient gestures and atmospheric installations." (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 31)*

In this passage, the metaphor "DNA" from the field of biology establishes – despite professions of fluidity – a rather essentialist understanding of national identity. Although the focus in this passage is on the nation, it does not reject a homogenous Europe. Rather, Europe is understood as a layer as in the Russian doll or "onion model" of multiple identities, suggesting a hierarchical relationship between different group categories (Risse, 2010, 24–25) where the European dimension is the middle level between the nation and the global. Europe is thus constructed as a supranational entity, a Europe of nations, in which the European countries are placed.

5.2.2 Contrast as a principle of construction

Sometimes, however, the boundaries between understanding Europe as a layer and as the national "other" seem fluid, as in the CEO's foreword: "This programme has its roots deep in the Central Denmark Region but looks ever outward to Europe and the world" (8). In this example, Europe is referred to as the region's and the nation's exterior, indicating the skeptical Danish attitude towards its European neighbour states and European integration (Giordano, 2018), as reflected, for example, in the still frequently used Danish phrase "ude i Europa" (outside in Europe). As a result, Europe appears as a homogenous unity, reflecting a fundamental mechanism of categorical identity construction: differentiating between "us" and "them" (Wodak et al., 2009). This principle of contrast is also employed in a global context, when Europe is described as a continent or world region in contrast or addition to other continents or regions, such as Asia, Greenland or the Middle East. Compared to the USA, "Europe" even seems to be addressed as a state: "In both Europe and the US, new political parties have arisen" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 98).

5.2.3 European commonalities

Europe is also constructed as a unity with respect to having shared values, culture and history (Delanty, 2002). In his address, the Commissioner refers to "the shared values on which our Union is built: respect for human rights, democracy and freedom of expression" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 5).

Examples of expressions of European unity and homogeneity in the programme include "European culture" (ibid., 272), the Europeans' "common cultural traits" (4), "our common European cultural heritage" (81), "our common European roots" (81), "the shared history of Europe" (92), "European history" (260) or "Europe as it was in 1950-2000" (104). The strategy of creating a sense of unity by constructing a collective history and common culture is well-known from the construction of the nation state (De Cillia et al., 1999, 158). In the programme, we find some examples that point in that direction.

5.2.4 European demos

"Europe" is a category of space and as such does not refer to a group. Particularly relevant for the construction of a specific homogenous European identity are passages that combine the demonym "Europeans" with the use of "we", as in the following interview by the CEO of Aarhus 2017: "We need to open the gates and enter into the historical and cultural communities that we are part of as Europeans" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 23). However, this occurs rarely.

5.2.5 Europe as a political unity

Another way of constructing a united Europe with which individuals can identify is by referring to institutional aspects of European political integration such as the European Union/EU. Besides this, we find examples where the term "Europe" seems to refer to the European Union as in the following example from the description of the film project "The dissidents" by Jeppe Rønde: "What is the future of Europe? Will the tipping points of the refugee crisis, civil wars and economic disparity mean the end of the European Union dream?" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 324). Passages that construct Europe as something animate and capable of reflection and volition also seem to relate to the European Union and go one step further. For instance, Aarhus 2017's CEO, states: "Europe is living through a rather challenging time at the moment" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 22). However, such passages are rare.

We find a connection between an integrated Europe and the discourse of crisis (Büttner & Bernhard, 2018; Eigmüller, 2016) also, for example, in an interview with the Danish television presenter and editor Clement Kjersgaard, when he states: "Look at the EU's crisis,

which is gradually coming to look like a permanent condition" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 96). However, though the European Union is constructed in some passages as being in crisis, the more characteristic construction is "challenge", which occurs frequently in the programme. We will return to this in the following section.

5.3 Europeanness as constructed within a discourse of relational identity

The programme presents a series of events in Gellerup, an Aarhus neighbourhood that has been classified by the government as a so-called ghetto because of poverty, unemployment and a high percentage of immigrants from so-called non-Western countries. The following citation is one of the passages from the programme that highlight the European dimension:

> "Gellerup goes global! EUTOPIA means a beautiful place full of the new energies of youth and hope, mixing peoples and cultures from around the world. EUTOPIA International Festival 2017 is a series of events presenting the diversity of European culture as a force of change. [...] Experimenting with the cross platforms of theatre, music, circus, dance, performance and sport, EUTOPIA will be a lively and leading force in the future of European culture. Amateurs and professional performers are co-creators in this thriving cultural hub and together they embark on a new cultural journey towards a vital new Europe." (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 272)

This passage integrates several elements that are characteristic of a relational identity discourse, namely, transnational interconnectedness, transformation and diversity.

5.3.1 Transnational interconnectedness

Strengthening ties across Europe but also within local and national communities is, as already noted, an important concern of the whole ECOC-initiative and fundamental to the Aarhus 2017 programme of events. It is promoted explicitly in some events, as in the following:

> "Working with children, youth and adults through activities that allow for skills development, knowledge sharing and the exchange of experiences and ideas at the local and European level. The project will develop European cooperation and dialogue, helping to strengthen European identity and diversity." (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 453)

Besides this, the programme names a variety of European events and associations (such as European Championships, European Conferences, European networks, European festivals). This reflects ECOC's official description that it should, according to the European Parliament, "promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens" (European Parliament and Council, 2006).

Transnational nodal points in networks are local which fits well with the local focus of the programme and the ECOC-initiative in general. At the same time, the concept of transnationality also strongly relates to the global dimension: "We can only have a better, safer and more peaceful world if we build strong cultural connections that transcend religious, national, gender or ethnic boundaries" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 23).

5.3.2 Transformation

As highlighted above, we find Europe and the EU connected to a discourse of crisis and challenge. However, the programme is also characterized by a discourse of transformation, which relates to Aarhus 2017's motto "Let's Rethink". This discourse is reflected in words such as "new", "future", "create", "change", "innovate", "transform / transformation", "vision", "flux" and by a focus on young people. The discourse of transformation is connected to many topics and also to the European dimension. For example, we read that "Europe's greatest thinkers will attend the conference, which uses our common history as an

inspiration to think about visions for our collective future" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 416). Es-
pecially against the background of the discourse of crisis, the discourse of transformation
through connectedness can open positive perspectives for the future. Accordingly, Aarhus
2017's CEO discusses the potential of transnational interconnectedness in a situation of
change, underlining the power of culture and replacing "crisis" by "challenge", which is
more directed towards future solutions:

> *"We are living in a time of extraordinary change and flux, an age of uncertainty in
> many ways. Look around in Europe. Economically, socially and politically challenging
> times. So I look to culture, projects and programmes of international understanding
> as incredibly powerful ways to attach, to relate and to associate. Culture is much
> more than books, paintings, monuments and plays – culture is who we are. […] Put
> two people from different countries, religions or cultures together in a room face to
> face, and ask them to create something together and they will find their points of
> similarity and congruence and not their points of difference." (Aarhus 2017, 2017,
> 22)*

5.3.3 Diversity

As we have argued, essentialist categorical constructions of identity such as national iden-
tity focus on homogeneity. By contrast, diversity is often emphasized in the context of
transnational, multiple or network identity discourses. Diversity, however, is a complicated
and ambiguous concept. Diversity, alongside sustainability and democracy, was chosen as
one of the core values of Aarhus 2017. This reflects ECOC's mandated purpose - that it
should "highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they
share" (European Parliament and Council, 2006). This description also reflects the EU
motto "United in diversity", which, according to the EU website, "signifies how Europeans
have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the
same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and lan-
guages" (European Union, 2019). Mentioning Europe's "cultures" (in a plural form) sug-
gests an understanding of "diversity" as "national diversity", without this being entirely
clear. This fits well with the original function of the discourse of "diversity": emphasizing
diversity between the European nations, at the same time as European unity signals the
possibility of reconciling national identities with a European identity.

In the programme, "diversity" is mainly constructed as a positive concept, though its use
is ambiguous; it can, for example, relate to social differences such as in income or age,
differences in sexual orientation, or the diversity of Nordic food. "Diversity" gets especially
fuzzy when it relates to "culture" or "Europe" as it becomes unclear whether "diversity"
describes differences between or within Europe's different national cultures. Although "di-
versity" can mean national diversity, it sometimes seems to construct ethnic diversity as a
common European experience. For instance, the artist Anohni discusses "the prospect of
racial diversity in Europe" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 47) and states:

> *"Touring Europe for the last 15 years, I have observed people across the continent
> struggling to open their hearts to the reality that their countries are no longer a series
> of insulated monocultures. The tectonic plates are now returning children and adults
> of the colonized worlds back to Europe."*

Similarly, EYC 2017, a "summit of young people in Europe", was going to examine "the
importance of cultural diversity in the pursuit of democracy and the upholding of right"
(Aarhus 2017, 2017, 316). In these cases, the discourse of diversity is interwoven with the
discourse of immigration, transforming "diversity" from a signifier of difference to a signi-
fier of similarity. This shift in meaning is striking in the following: "EUTOPIA International

Festival 2017 is a series of events presenting the diversity of European culture as a force of change" (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 272). Here, "culture" is used in its singular form, implying one European culture characterized by (ethnic) diversity.

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

In our analysis, we identified two narratives of Europeanness that rested on two identity discourses: 1) the categorical identity discourse which constructs identity as homogenous and different from the "other", and 2) the relational identity discourse which constructs identity as a dynamic network. With the help of inductive coding and informed by our theoretical understandings, we identified the elements and principles that supported the respective constructions in the Aarhus 2017 programme.

We found a somewhat stronger emphasis on Europeanness as dynamically networked, characterized by diversity, transformation and transnational interconnectedness. This narrative promotes a sense of fluidity and relations, and is strongly connected to Aarhus 2017's motto "Let's rethink", its promotion of the value of "diversity", and an emphasis on connecting the local and the global. A similar finding is evident in Immler and Sakkers (2014, 23) who "identified in the latest programmes a tendency to emphasize interculturality and values" and "an increasing interest in bridging experiences between different groups, local and global themes and transnational shared stories" (Immler & Sakkers, 2014, 23).

However, although the narrative of Europeanness as dynamically networked seemed to be somewhat more strongly represented in the programme, we also found a more traditional narrative, based on the construction of a homogenous European identity. The fact that a diverse discursive repertoire was employed can be explained by the character of the programme itself, as it is a patchwork of different texts by different authors, as well as in relation to the EU's criteria for the cultural programme where cooperation and cultural diversity are emphasized as well as the "common aspects of European cultures" (European Parliament and Council, 2006, Article 4.1).

Interestingly, the combination of various discursive elements and principles sometimes seemed arbitrary and could result in contradictory combinations. For example, emphasizing transnationality and influences or transfer as a result of cross-border connections may support the idea of European commonalities, leaving the question of Denmark's affiliation unclear, as in this passage:

> "For centuries, owners of manor houses looked towards Europe, they travelled and brought European fashion, art and culture back home to their estates. European encounters re-examines these historical European networks and museums, manors and country houses across the region as venues to present this unique cultural heritage. The manor and country houses in Jutland exhibit a historical diversity like few other places." (Aarhus 2017, 2017, 64)

Thus, "Europeanness" becomes a blurry concept caught between the categorical and the relational, between the reified and constructivist, between the national and the "glocal". In particular, "diversity" appears to be a nodal point positioned between the construction of European identity as categorical and relational: the discourse of immigration can transform "diversity" from being a signifier of difference to a signifier of European similarity.

Methodologically, digital humanities tools supported the analysis of a large, polyphonic text. The combination of quantitative approaches, which captured aspects such as important presences, muted presences and absences of concepts relating to "Europe" in the 492-page programme, and qualitative discourse analysis helped to enrich understandings of how European identity and Europeanness were present and discursified in the text. Moreover, the three-part qualitative analysis allowed for a useful scaling up, starting with

statements (the unit of discourse analysis) to identifying the discourses reflected in the statements, and finally, the identification of two narratives of Europeanness that provide scope for identity and identification, both of which are endorsed by ECOC.

To conclude, despite the mandatory status of the European dimension in ECOCs, our analysis of Aarhus 2017's official programme of events revealed a pattern where 'Europeanness' is underplayed, e.g. by being characterized with respect to values that have been associated with other layers (the local, national or global), or by the nation being linked directly to the global, thus sidestepping 'Europeanness' as a superordinate concept. Significantly, the sublimation of Europe at the expense of the global was also identified in interviews conducted with Aarhus 2017 attenders who generally struggled to see a European element in the events they attended, pointing to global elements instead (Fage-Butler, 2020).

Interestingly, new ECOC policy directions from 2020 (European Parliament and Council, 2014) connect the European dimension to the global; the aim of future ECOCs will be to develop a "European agenda for culture in a globalizing world". In the light of these new policy directions, it will be valuable to investigate the narratives framing this "global Europeanness". Will a narrative prevail that constructs a homogenous Europe in contrast to other continents or regions of the world, such as Asia, China or the USA? Or will the narrative, in which globality is understood within a framework of cosmopolitism, and "Europeanness" may fade behind terms such as internationalism, continue its onward progress? To explore that, further research will be needed.

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