



European Identity and the European Union

A Context for International Business

Sources of Diversity and Identity

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Why Europe?

- Before we get started, one of the most obvious questions is why is an American guy (“me!”) talking about Europe? Should he be talking about the United States?
- One reason is that I spent around 5 or so years in Europe, studying, working, etc., and I consider Europe to be like a second home for me.
- Another reason is that talking about yourself or your home place is difficult because it is hard to be objective, it is hard to see the situation from the outside. For example, it is hard for a Chinese person to talk about what China is or means because he or she is just too close to the subject.

What is Europe?



Europe

A Continent?

Shared Geography?

A Country?

A Culture?

A shared religion?

A Shared History?

Is Europe even a real
"something"?

Defining Europe

- Europe is a strange bit of geography when you look at the map.
- In fact, there really is only something like a Europe because Europeans gave us our maps.
- If Africans or the Chinese had been more successful, it's likely we would have just had a single continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean: Asia.

What is Europe?



A diagram illustrating the relationship between Europe and the Global World. It features a yellow oval on the left containing the word "Europe" and a yellow circle on the right containing the words "Global World". A large yellow arrow points from the oval to the circle, indicating a flow or relationship from Europe to the Global World.

Europe

Global
World

Europe Quiz

- What is the most populated country in Europe?
- How many countries are there in Europe?
- What is the capital of Europe?
- Which country has the most lawyers per 100,000 population?
 - Spain / Germany / France
- Which country's citizens drink the most coffee per capita?
 - Italy / Germany / Finland

Answers: It depends on how you count

- What is the most populated country in Europe? *It depends. Either Germany or Russia*
- How many countries are there in Europe? *It depends. 28, 31?*
 - How many countries are there in the E.U.?
- What is the capital of Europe? The EU has a official three capitals.
- Which country has the most lawyers per 100,000 population?
 - *Spain* / Germany / France
- Which country's citizens drink the most coffee per capita?
 - Italy / Germany / *Finland*



- The European Union has **27 member states** and 23 official languages. Moreover there are numerous local languages and cultures. With so much diversity, how can there be such a thing as “European Identity?”

Initial Thoughts

- What is identity?
- *From Many, One?* How diverse is Europe? Europe is a rich and diverse place. It is a mix of many nationalities, cultures, languages, customs and even economies.
- Is there such a thing as European Identity? Or are there just too many differences to consider Europe as a single entity?
- What do I know to do business in Europe and with Europeans?

Summary:

An Interdisciplinary Approach

1. Key Concepts and Definitions
2. Personal Identity (Philosophy)
3. European Identity (Sociology)?
4. The EU and the Globalized Politics of Identification (Geo-Politics)
5. Cross-Cultural Considerations of Europe and Europeans:
Tips for Doing Business in Europe and in our Global World



Key Words and Concepts

Identity, Ethnicity
and Towards Identification

Identity / Identification

- **Identity:**

- ORIGIN late 16th cent. (in the sense [quality of being identical]): from late Latin identitas, from Latin idem 'same.'

1. the fact of being who or what a person or thing is
2. a close similarity or affinity

- **Identify or Identification:**

- ORIGIN mid 17th cent. (in the sense [treat as being identical with]): from medieval Latin identificare, from late Latin identitas (see identity) + Latin -ficare (from facere 'make').
- 1 (often be identified) establish or indicate who or what (someone or something) is
- (identify someone/something with) associate (someone) closely with; regard (someone) as having strong links wit

Ethnicity

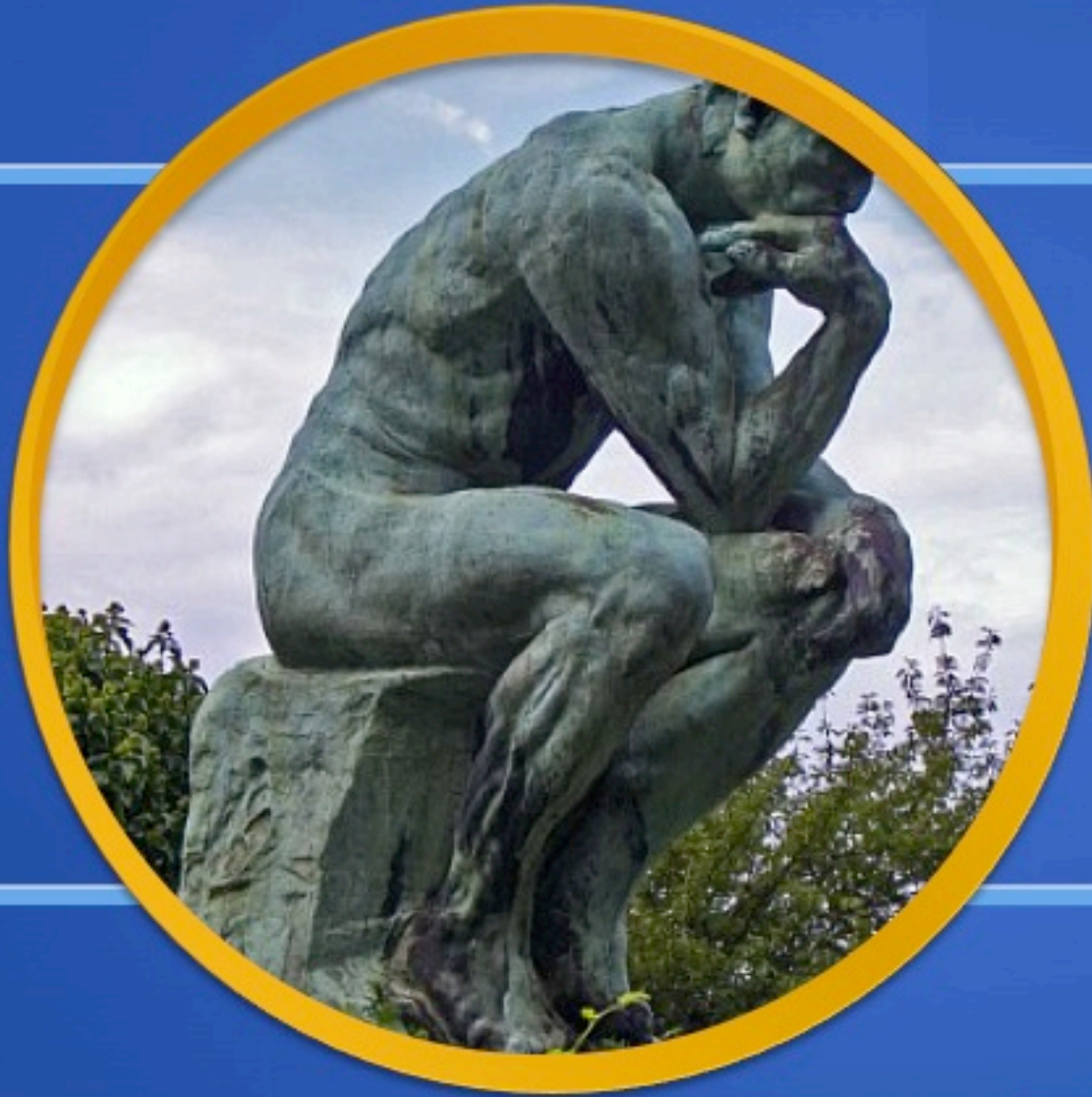
- ORIGIN late Middle English (denoting a person not of the Christian or Jewish faith): via ecclesiastical Latin from Greek ethnikos 'heathen,' from ethnos 'nation.' Current senses date from the 19th cent.
- the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition : the interrelationship between gender, ethnicity, and class
- Is there a common European ethnicity?

Self

- **ORIGIN** Old English , of Germanic origin; related to Dutch zelf and German selbe. Early use was emphatic, expressing the sense [(I) myself,] [(he) himself,] etc. The verb dates from the early 20th cent.
- a person's essential being that distinguishes them from others, esp. considered as the object of introspection or reflexive action
- a person's particular nature or personality; the qualities that make a person individual or unique

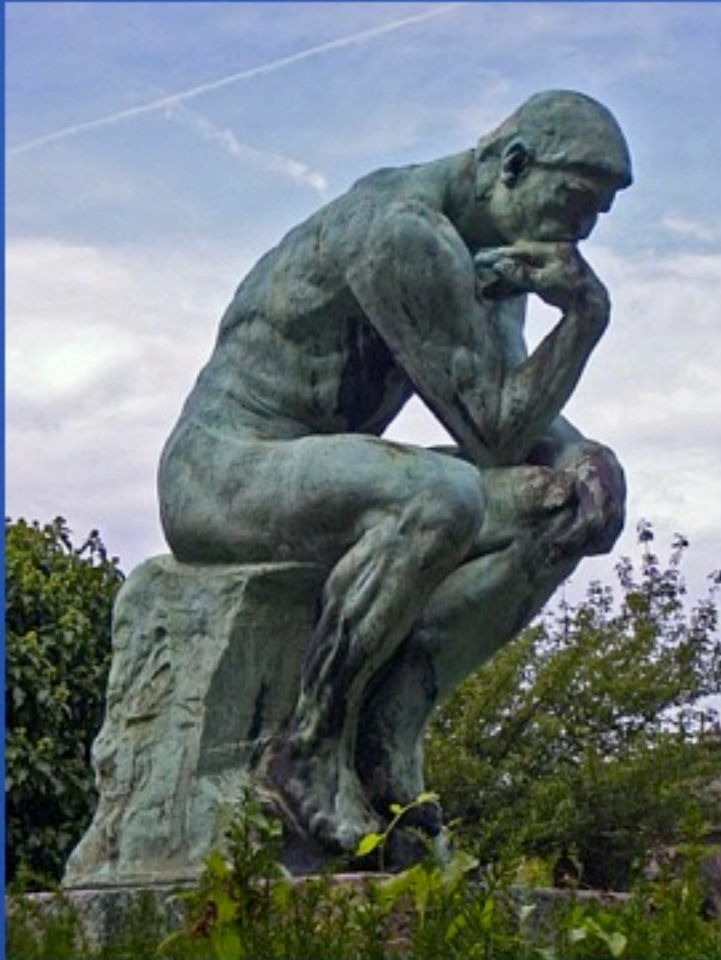
Problems of Personal Identity

General Characteristics and Philosophical Paradoxes



Who am I?

Simple Questions



- What is Personal Identity?
- Who am I?
- What am I?
- And who am I with?
- Assuming that I am not alone:
who are we? What are we?
And who am I with or NOT
WITH?

Ship of Theseus



- Imagine a wooden ship.
- Imagine you remove piece by piece all the wooden pieces from the boat and replace them one by one with new pieces of wood.
- Imagine you replace all the wood of the original boat with new wood. Is it the same boat? If it isn't, at what point did the original boat become a new boat?
- Simply put, this story points to one of the problems of identity: whether an object which has had all its component parts replaced remains fundamentally the same object

Paradox of Personal Identity

- Personal identity is a particularly difficult concept to define linguistically and philosophically. The word “identity” comes from the word “identical,” which means being the same as something else. So, one's personal identity seems to mean “the nature of being identical with yourself.” (?!?) Even more strange is the fact that we are never identical with ourselves, because we are always changing over time and through different experiences.
- = The conditions under which a person is said to be identical to himself through time.



*Personal identity over
time:*

What does it take for
individuals to persist from
moment to moment — or
in other words, for the
same individual to exist at
different moments?

Who am I? Possible Answers

- basic facts (name, hometown, age...)?
- soul or spirit?
- human / DNA / genes? Individuals with similar code...
- my words? my speaking of shared language...
- my body? feeling of physical separation from others
- consciousness? my mind?
- member of a group, family, society, etc.?
- My biography or life story? Storytelling my narrative with others ...
- my actions? feeling of being an actor or agent in our own actions (I myself me, I do it!) and the feeling that our actions are meaningful

A meaningful human agent

- While there are numerous characteristics that can be used to define a person, one of the most important is the sense of Own-ness (= meaning "It's mine!" or it's my body) and the feeling of being yourself (=being the same as yourself) across time and experiences. There are several important ways that you *feel* yourself:
 - As a whole, unique, separate human body
 - As a reflective and thinking mind or consciousnesses
 - As an actor or agent doing some sort of meaningful action
 - As a speaker of language
 - As a storyteller

Collective Nature of the Self

- While Western Philosophy and Religion (unlike Buddhism, for example) focus on our uniqueness and separation from others, what largely defines who and what we are is *shared* with and amongst others. Excluding perhaps our bodies and our consciousness, **most of what defines us are collective: language, action, membership, and even storytelling.**
- In contrast to personal identity, people often try to define themselves or identify themselves with a shared, common ethnicity or ethnic group

Ethnicity or Ethnic Identity

- What makes up a group's shared identity?
 - Heritage (a difficult word to define)
 - "Culture" (an equally difficult word to define!)
 - Language
 - Religion, shared beliefs and rituals
 - Behavioral traits ~ customs and habits
 - Organization ~ how people organize, i.e. politics
 - Arts ~ literature, philosophy, music, etc.
 - Games and Sports
 - Yearly Festivals and Celebrations

European Identity

A Sociological Reflection on Europe's "Unity in Diversity"
and the idea of European Identity



Being European?

Diversity and Unity?

“Unity in Diversity”

- One of the European Union’s key mottos or expressions is “Unity in Diversity.”
- It reflects the desire for collective unity and identification while still respecting and retaining local cultures, languages and traditions.
- How is Europe united yet still diverse? Is it possible?



A Paradox?

Sources of Sameness

- Geographical proximity or closeness: Europe is relatively small and relatively few geographical features like major rivers and mountains prevent migration and movement of people across Europe.
- Just because you are near another culture or people, just because you are neighbors, does that mean you are alike? that you share a common identity?

Geography of Europe

- More often than not, Europeans themselves do not define themselves or their personal identity as European.
- They more often define themselves by their country of origin or in some cases a distinct ethnic group. For example, a person from France calls themselves French or a person from Spain calls themselves Spanish.
- Geography or geographical closeness doesn't seem to define European identity.

Shared History?

- It is true that the closeness of European societies has led to many important business and cultural exchanges. Many important historical events (like the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church, Protestant Reformation, the Renaissance, Industrial Revolution, etc.) started in one location and place and later spread across all of Europe.
- These ideological movements or shared cultural trends have contributed to a shared cultural heritage of ideas in Europe—poetry, philosophy, politics, etc.

History of Conflict

- While there are many shared influences, European history at least until recently would be best described as a series of conflicts and battles, including:
 - Napoleonic wars
 - Colonial conflicts and wars of imperialism
 - WWI and WWII
 - Cold War
- The most important events in modern European history are, of course, World War I and World War II. These events, in particular the Holocaust, caused many deaths and led to difficult border conflicts.

Social Welfare System

- One similarity in many European countries is their systems of social welfare (universal health care, unemployment protection and pension or retirement plans).
- These systems depend on a lot of social solidarity (or unity) between all classes of society.
- These systems vary in their implementation and application but their basic purpose is to insure basic health care, educational opportunities and retirement for its citizens.

Sources of Difference

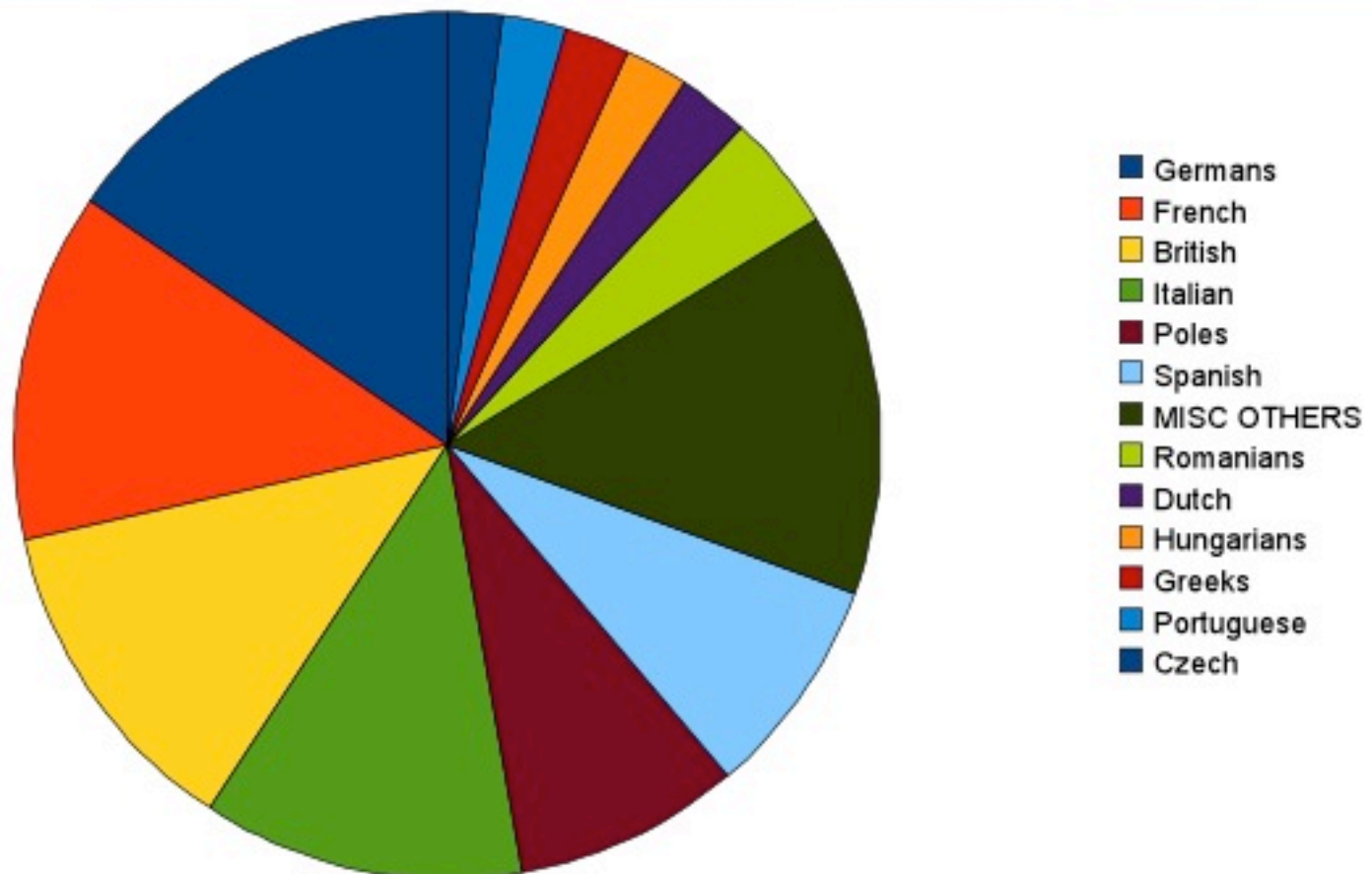
- Language: There are over 23 official languages in the European Union with many other unofficial languages spoken by different people and groups in Europe.
- If everyone speaks a different language at home, how can you say that Europe is united?



Ethnic Groups in Europe

- 1. the Germans (ca. 77 million)
- 2. the French (ca. 65 million)
- 3. the British (ca. 61 million)
- 4. the Italians (ca. 60 million)
- 5. the Poles (ca. 42 million)
- 6. the Spanish (ca. 41 million)
- 7. the Romanians (ca. 22 million)
- 8. the Dutch (ca. 13 million)
- 9. the Hungarians (ca. 12 million)
- 10. the Greeks (ca. 12 million)
- 11. the Portuguese (ca 12 million)
- 12. the Czechs (ca. 10 million)

Ethnic Groups in Europe



- With so many ethnic groups, how can we say there is such a thing as European identity?

Language Families of Europe

- There are several different cultural or ethnic language groups in Europe:
 1. Latin or Romance languages : Spanish, Romanian, Italian, French and Portuguese
 2. Germanic : Danish, Dutch, English, German and Swedish
 3. Slavic: Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Slovak, and Slovene
 4. Baltic: Latvian and Lithuanian
 5. Celtic : Irish and 6. Greek
 7. Finno-Ugrian : Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian

Religion?

- While religion is increasing in the developing areas of the world like South America, Africa and Asia, these same religions that for centuries *ruled* over all of Europe have seen a significant decrease in religious attendance and belief & a rise in secularism.
- The majority of Europeans have some form of religious heritage in Christianity, predominantly Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy.
- There is also a long historical current of Judaism in Europe in spite of numerous events of anti-Semitism.

Religion and Secularism: Europe's Religious Heritage

- Judaism
- Christianity
 - Roman Catholicism
 - Orthodox Christianity
 - Protestantism
- Secularism and Atheism



Secularism

- Secularism is the concept that government or other entities should exist separately from religion and/or religious beliefs.
- In one sense, secularism may assert the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, and freedom from the government imposition of religion upon the people, within a state that is neutral on matters of belief, and gives no state privileges or subsidies to religions.
- In another sense, it refers to the view that human activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be based on evidence and fact unbiased by religious influence. (public reason.)





European Differences and Shared Heritages



Unity and Diversity? One Europe?



Sociology, Europe is a mix of Country Clusters

- **Nordic countries**
 - Denmark
 - Finland
 - Norway
 - Sweden
- **Baltic countries**
 - Estonia
 - Latvia
 - Lithuania
- **British Isles**
 - Ireland
 - United Kingdom
- **Low Countries**
 - Belgium
 - Luxembourg
 - Netherlands
- **Central Europe**
 - Czechia (or Czech Republic)
 - Hungary
 - Poland
 - Slovakia
 - Slovenia
- **Latin countries**
 - France
 - Italy
 - Malta
 - Portugal
 - Spain
- **Balkan Countries**
 - Bulgaria
 - Cyprus
 - Greece
 - Romania
- **German-speaking countries**
 - Austria
 - Germany
 - Switzerland
- **What about the edges of Europe?**
 - Turkey
 - Russia



The European Union

And the Globalized Politics of
Identification (Geo-Politics)

The European Union

- With the creation of the European Union (EU), the idea of Europe has begun to take on an economic, political and institutional reality. Historically, the current conception of the EU finds its direct origins in post-World War II, reconstruction Europe.
- While politically it's Europe's "Never Again!" response to Fascism and the Holocaust and its call for peace that is often cited as the core of EU identity, the actual beginning of the EU can be found in Robert Schuman's urging to create an economic community, the European Coal and Steel Community, for sharing and exchanging resources in order to create a political union of shared values.
- For Schuman, it was from this concrete economic peace that the EU was able establish political peace and a community of shared values.

The European Union

- Farther back, there are several important events, historical trends and people that lead to the Europe of today.
- Even the idea of a Europe is much older than its current institutional realities and finds some of its philosophical and literary sources as far back as ancient Greek and Roman civilizations along with its religious source in Christianity.
- Important European (or trans-european) values include democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Europe:

Cultural and Business Exchanges

- Europe also has a long history of cultural and mercantile exchanges across its borders and seas that have helped to define Europe culturally and economically. There is also several conflicts and wars that shaped its borders and created today's map.
- Over the last 60 years, western European governments have constructed some of the most advanced social welfare states in the world. This “European social model” is characterized by its emphasis on human rights, income equality, universal health care, pension plans, and unemployment benefits.
- In spite of all these successes, the “European Dream” continues to face numerous economic and demography challenges and opportunities internally and externally.

EU: Political Entity

- While from abroad the EU today is often mislabeled and misunderstood as a new “national” entity, in fact in our global age the EU represents an entirely new form of federalism, politics and power on a transnational level.
- The EU is a departure from its very own history of imperialistic nationalism and state sovereignty and is an attempt at a form of **cosmopolitan politics in a global age**.
- Through a process of integration, EU member states are able to gain greater power and stability on a global and transnational level by sacrificing strict national independence and sovereignty; and, in turn, on an economic level, hopefully, increase their economic prosperity.



Shared Economy

- One of the keys to the creation of a united Europe is a shared economy. After WWI, organizations were created to organize the exchange of important raw materials like coal and steel. These materials, which had once fueled the weapons of war, were to be shared and freely exchanged in an open market in order to create a business community.
- Such **a business community of shared interest** would, in theory, make war bad for business and, as such, very unlikely (or at least economically disadvantageous).
- This shared economy is still a work-in-progress...

Shared Institutions



- Europe's three capitals: Brussels (Belgium), Strasbourg (France) and Luxembourg

Understanding Modern Europe

- Contemporary Europe, especially the EU, is in **the process of trying to maintain local culture and differences while also constructing a shared identity**. This is the challenge of all modern, advanced societies today.
- The EU's motto is “United in Diversity,” and it means that we must understand Europe through both its identity (or identifying) and its diversity (or differentiating). The **tension between identification and differentiation** is one of the key concepts in understanding contemporary European society and the world of tomorrow.

The Globalized Politics of Identification

“Europeanization” (or identifying as European) as a form of becoming
Ethnically-Caring, Multicultural, Global Information Societies

Politics of Identity

- Politics of Identity focuses on the uniqueness and specialness of a particular culture (particularly in traditional society). It sets clear in-group and out-group distinctions (with-me or against-me).
- Most countries tend to view the world in terms of “us” and “them”
- Two examples:
 - Eurocentrism
 - Narrow cultural nationalism

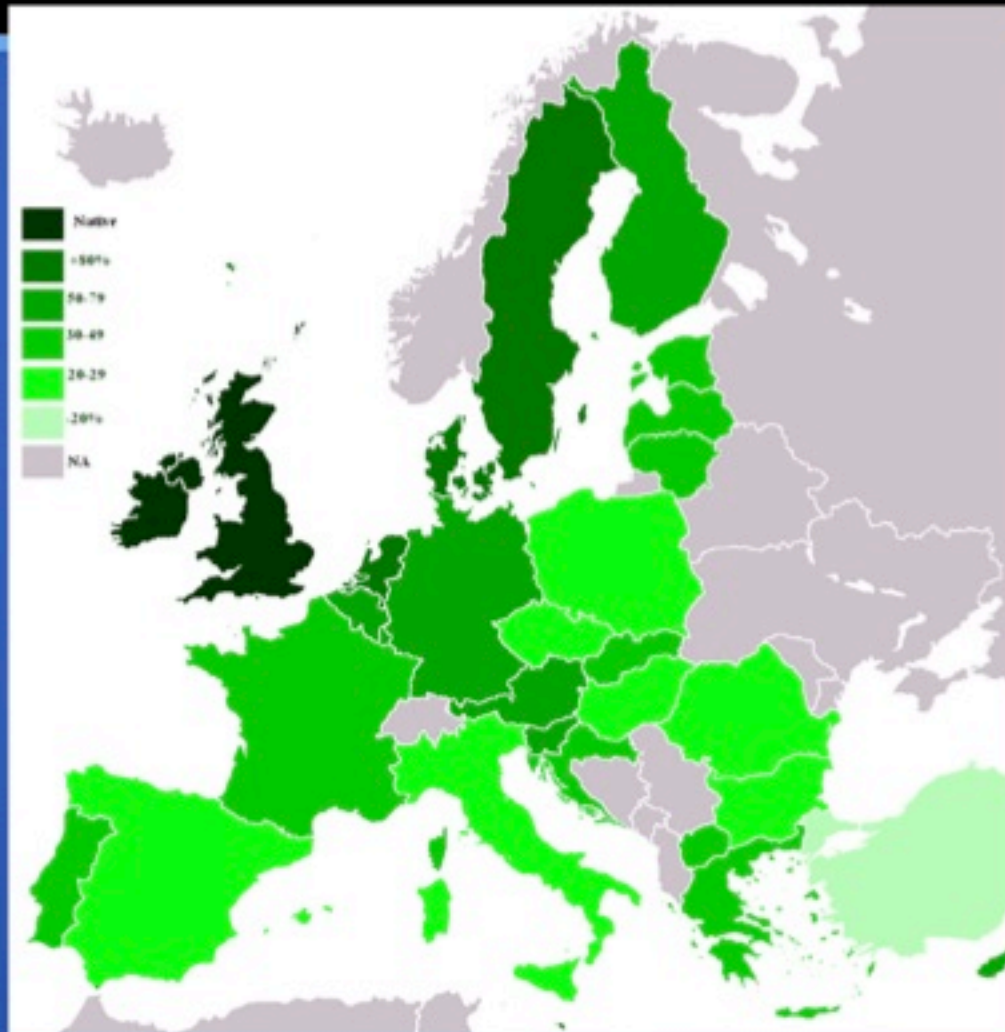
Politics of Identification

- While a politics of exclusive identity is a returning theme in Europe and in the world at large, it seems that there is also a new form of transnational politics, a politics of openness and identification with others, especially with people who are quite different from us.
- This politics of identification is at the origin of the United States, literally a uniting of any immigrant who would come. It is also the new model of most modern democracies: finding unity and an identification amongst a respected diversity of peoples, cultures and languages.

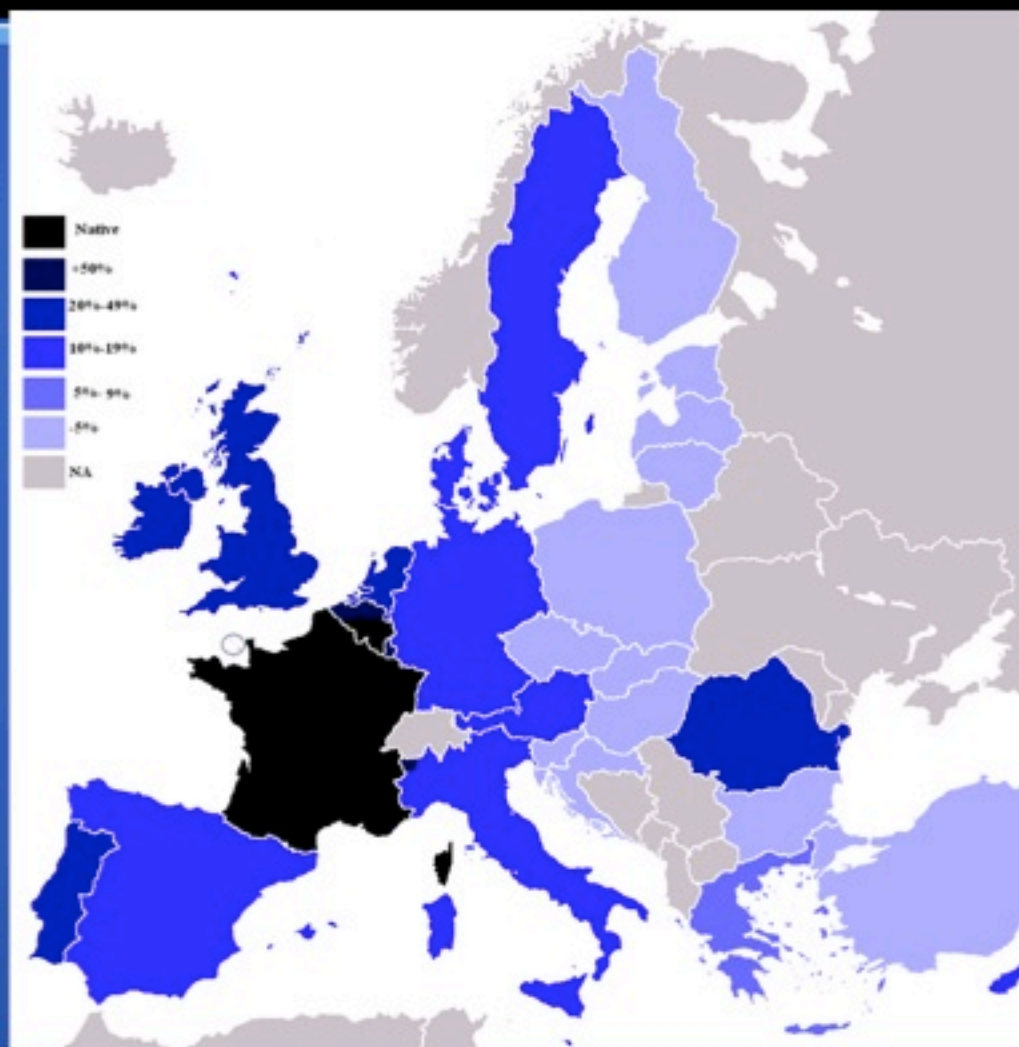
Characteristics of Europe Today

- Challenge to accept and understand the diverse peoples of the world...
- What kind of world do you we wish to live in?
- Socially responsible ~ ethical/moral as well as legal
- Multiculturalism ~ many cultures living together
- Multilingualism ~ a society of many languages along with certain key shared languages like English, for example.

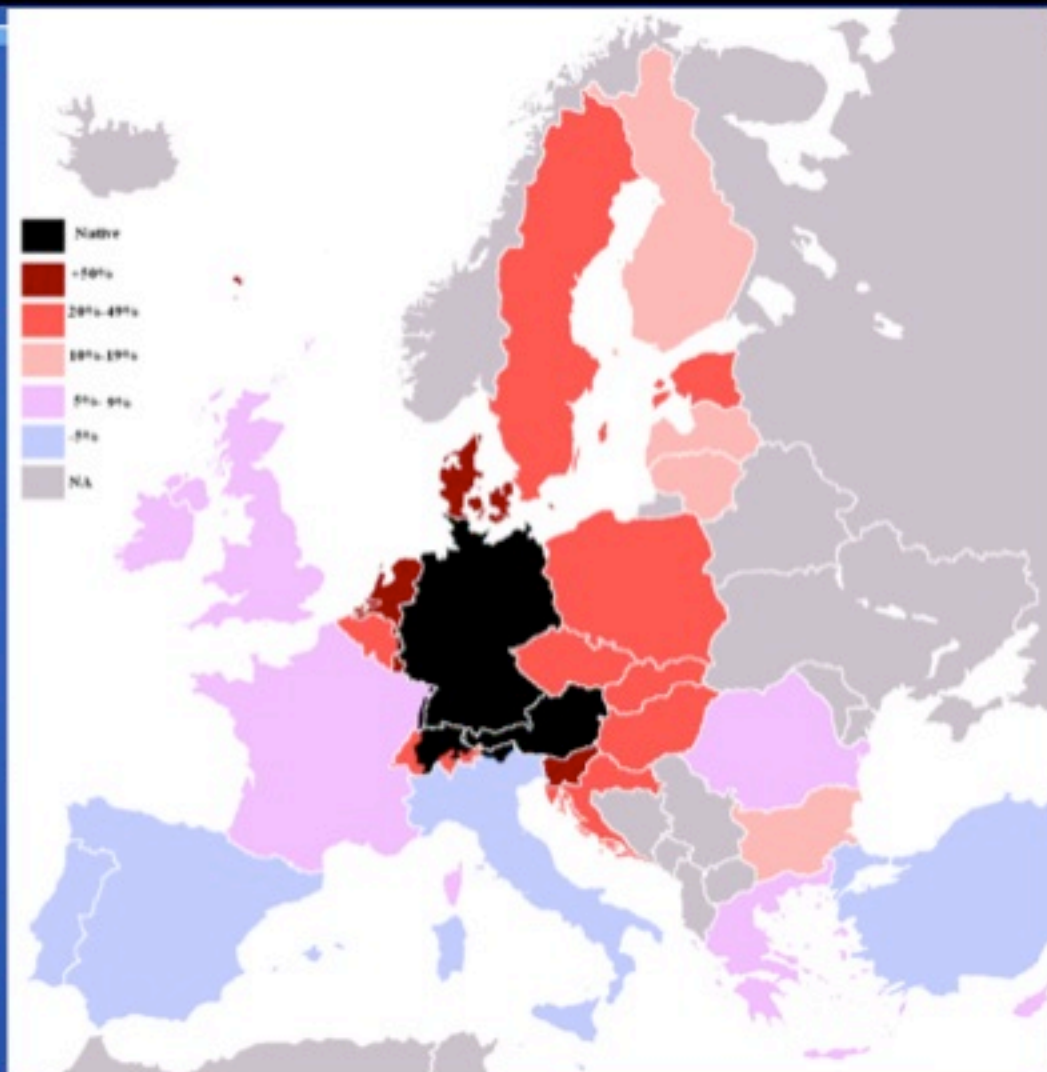
Knowledge of English in EU



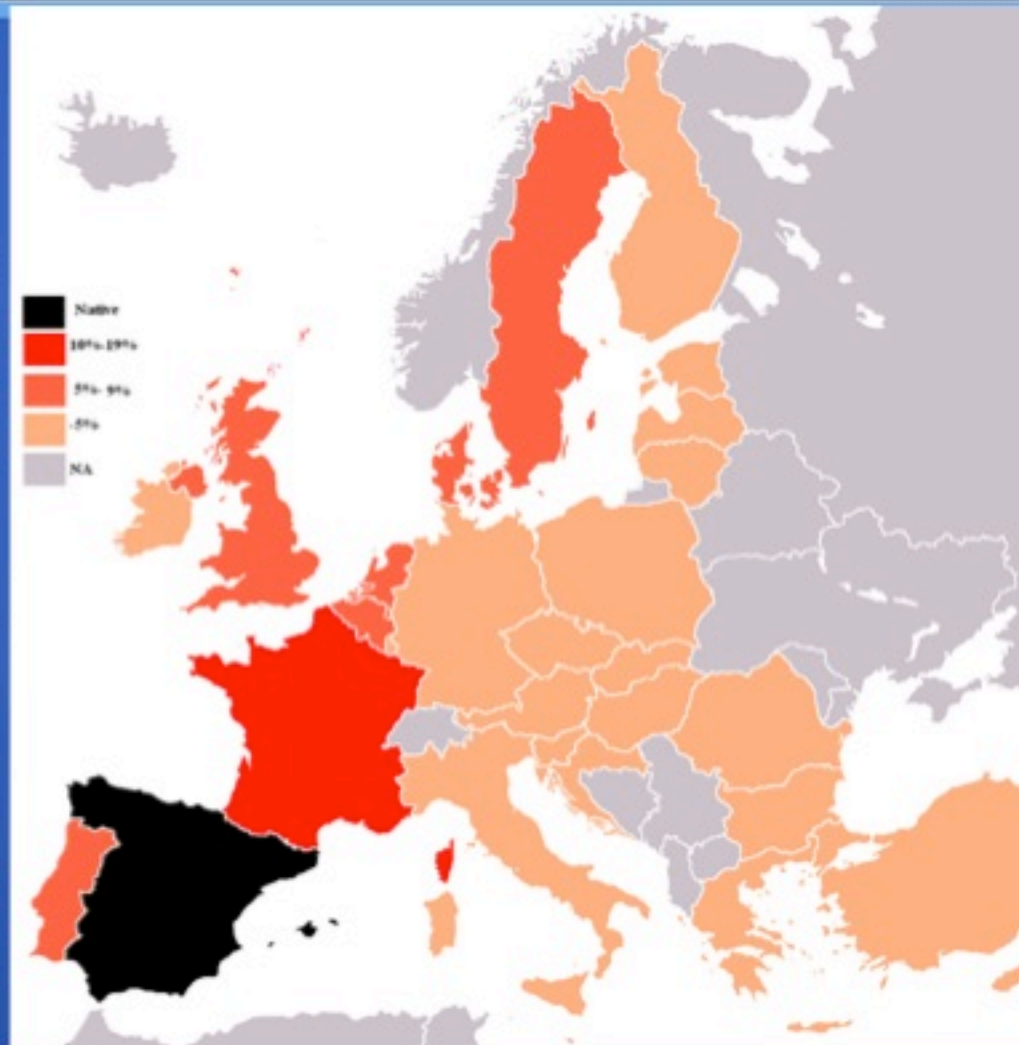
Knowledge of French in EU



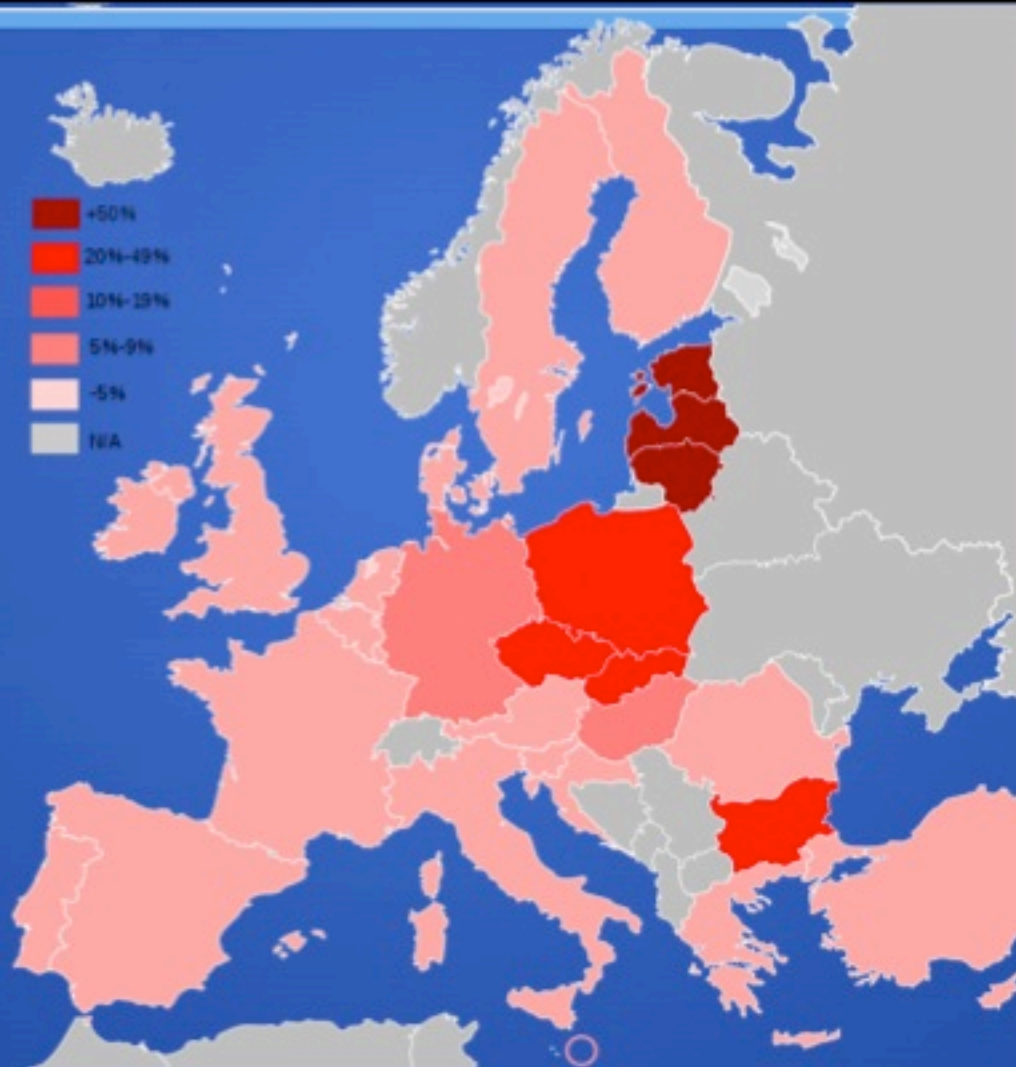
Knowledge of German in EU



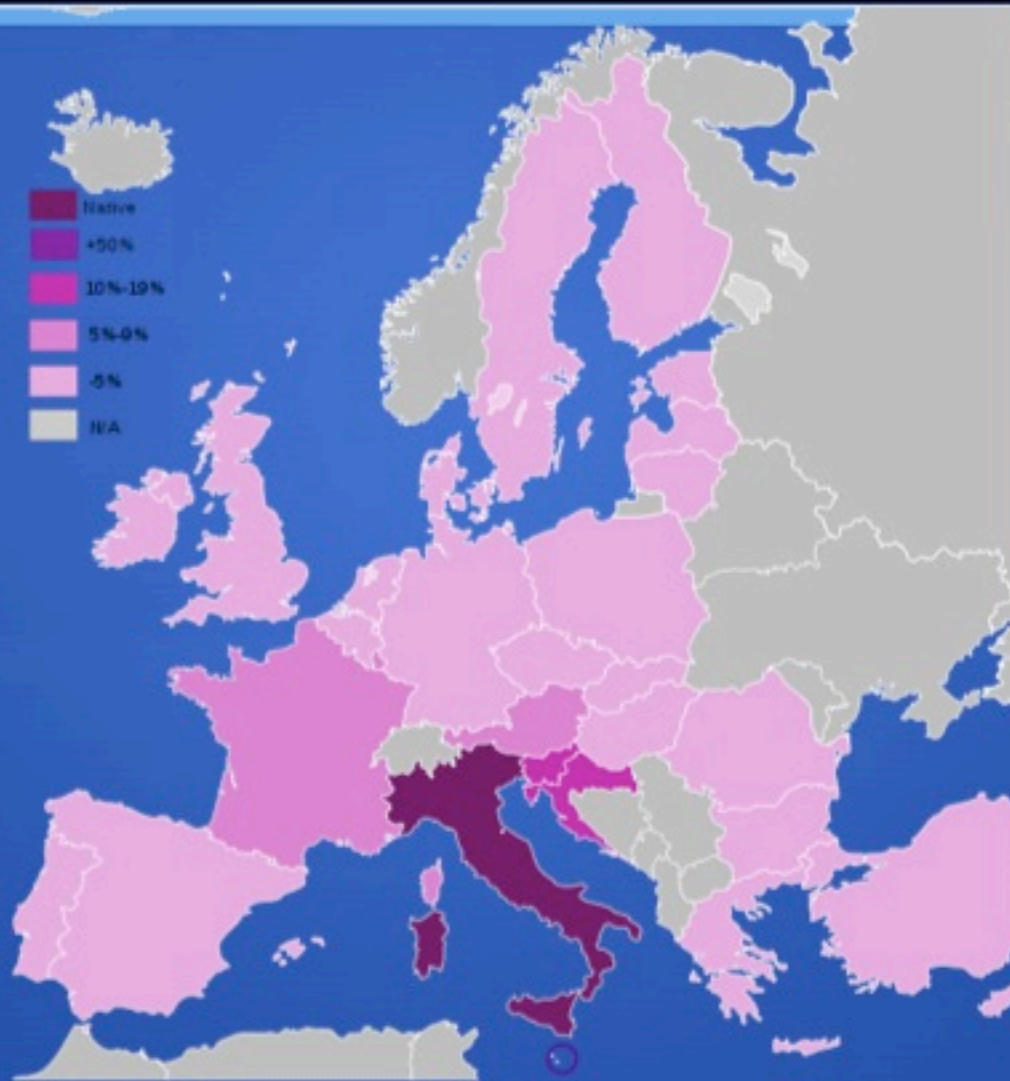
Knowledge of Spanish in EU



Knowledge of Russian in EU



Knowledge of Italian in EU



Tips for Doing Business in Europe and in our Global World

Cross-Cultural Considerations of Europe and Europeans

EU's Broad Intentions

- It is hopefully clear by this point the importance of viewing Europe as a somewhat united and unified collection of differences. While the EU has created shared borders and shared money in Europe, it has not necessarily created a single Europe, nor was this its goal.
- The goal of the EU was to do business in order to avoid another major world war. It wasn't intended to make a *United States of Europe*.
- The creation of the EU was intentionally aimed at maintaining diversity while creating certain shared standards (laws, guidelines, responsibilities, etc.) to better facilitate a collective life, a shared existence.

Cross-Cultural Europe

- We have looked at all the factors that present a diverse Europe: countries, nationalities, ethnicities, languages, cultures, sub-cultures...etc...
- Like USA, modern Europe has become increasingly cosmopolitan and cross-cultural. For example, after Paris, the second biggest collection of French speakers in Europe is London, where many French work.
- Inter-Europe study has become incredibly common.
- Many Europeans don't really look at traveling within Europe as "going abroad." (In terms of visas, it isn't!)

Doing Business in Europe

- What does a cross-cultural Europe mean for doing business?
- It means:
 1. International English
 2. Moderate View of Cultural Customs (= people tend to be less demanding in a single cultural norm)
 3. Higher demand of cultural literacy (= you are expected to know a little bit about lots of cultures even if you don't know all the details)
 - 4.

Doing Business in Europe

- **It doesn't mean:**

1. All Europeans want to be considered as the same (even though English is more common, it doesn't mean they've stopped being French or German!)
2. Cultural rules aren't followed. It just means that there are times and places where cultural customs are more moderate or balanced (for example eating customs).
3. A Shared European Corporate Culture has been created even though English is the norm. In spite of all the unification, behavior still differs significantly from place to place and culture to culture.

Tips for Doing Business in Europe

- *Learn English:* Don't worry if it is American or British or Australian, because ultimately English isn't owned by any nationality but shared as a mode of shared communication)
- *Learn the cultural rules* of the country or countries you are interested in: Europeans are more demanding than Americans in terms of cultural literacy. If you don't know the history or the customs, you won't be as appreciated or as welcomed.

Tips for Doing Business in Europe

- *Learn Another European Language:* There is no better way to impress a European (especially as a Chinese person) than to learn someone's native language. While it isn't required for doing business, it can improve your chances if you speak some of the language of the country you are dealing with. Also there are some situations where you have to learn their language if you want to do business.
- *Don't Assume Europeans are just some form of Americans:* Europeans have become increasingly hostile and distinct from Americans, and you shouldn't assume that if someone speaks with an American accent, that they think think an American too!



Questions? Comments?

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