BRUSSELS:

FUTURES OF IDENTITY IN A NATIONALIST LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

Directly applying the Mānoa School of Futures Studies' four generic futures methodology, this dissertation investigates the driving forces, contemporary trends and emerging issues of Brussels anno 2015 within a nationalistic Flemish, Belgian and European Union landscape. Working with these images of the contemporary Global City of Brussels, futures scenarios for four futures of identity in 2060 are explored: Continued Growth via Social Fortress Flanders in Confederate Belgium; Collapse and New Beginnings in Arabic Fortress Brussels; Disciplined European Survival Regulated by Brussels, E.C. (Capital of the United States of Europe); and Transformation in Organic & Synthetic Identities in Sector 1 of Galactic Europe. This study concludes with a preferred future for Brussels utilizing the futures' backcasting technique.

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Abbreviations, Terminology & Definitions

Cordon Sanitaire	An undemocratic technique where an undesired or considered dangerous political party is strategically isolated by forming a grand coalition between other parties to ensure that the radical ideology cannot take hold of the nation-state.
Vlaams Belang	"Flemish Interest", formerly known as Vlaams Blok (Flemish Block) – Extreme right Flemish nationalist party.
EU	European Union.
IGO	InterGovernmental Organization.
N-VA	Nieuwe Vlaamse Alliantie – New Flemish Alliance – Moderate Flemish nationalist party.
Flanders/Flemish/Flemings	In reference to the northern geographic part of Belgium, in which the Flemish language (a variety of Dutch) is spoken by Flemish citizens.
Wallonia/Walloon	In reference to the southern geographic part of Belgium, in which the Walloon language (a variety of French) is spoken by Walloon citizens.
Autochthones	The original inhabitants of Belgium (Belgian citizens); in other words, the "natives".
Allochthones	Immigrated inhabitants of Belgium.
Rightist	On the right side of the political spectrum in the European/Belgian landscape, this vision opposes mass-immigration (mainly opposing the implementation of Islam in Europe); the European Union as an institutional organization that monitors and governs its member-states; and supports welfare chauvinism in which welfare benefits the autochthones.
Leftist	On the left side of the political spectrum in the European/Belgian landscape, this vision supports egalitarianism, socialism, and a pro-EU attitude.
MEP	Member of European Parliament.
SNP	Scottish National Parliament.
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party.
Brusseler(s)	Loose translation from the Brussels dialect. describing a citizen of Brussels.
Eurocrats	EU officials and EU 'bureaucrats'.

INTRODUCTION

> The constant effort to 'up-scale' the city in modern times –i.e. the 'Belgianization', Europeanization and globalization of Brussels of the last two centuries- has turned the relatively small city of Brussels into a unique, multi-scaled place. Brussels urbanizes the very notion of a 'unified Europe' through its cosmopolitan population, international service economy and government institutions. It also urbanizes the Belgian national state for it is probably the only Belgian locality where Belgium as a nation state has survived in both symbols and real seats of national political power … At the same time, however, the city epitomizes the hollowing-out of the Belgian national state. (Baeten, 2001, p. 118).

Today, Brussels is a main decision center and its position on the international stage is further strengthened by the presence of numerous European and international organizations and authorities orbiting around this European power center like satellites. Examples hereof are the approximately 300 representations of the regions of Europe or the thousands of lobbyists, and the numerous foreign and international companies. Within the network of political world cities, Brussels is one of the world's top three, together with Washington and Geneva. This position is the fruit of a long-winded process of international and political center formation and metropolisation. (De Groof & Elaut, 2010). Some would believe (and logically so) that Brussels' place on the world map dates back to the European integration process immediately following 1945, but in fact the 19th century was already characterized by the city attempting to distinguish itself at the crossroads of cultures in Europe and its function as international center was actively promoted by Belgian intellectuals, opinion makers, politicians, etc. Brussels' ambitions in the years prior to WWI were not only of a European scope, but far more wide-ranging, namely global. Traces of all these protagonists can be found in archives and other historical sources. Based on the records preserved in the State Archives in Belgium (at the Mont des Arts in the nation's capital), evidence can be found indicating that some people already campaigned to turn Brussels into a Federal World District prior to 1914! Indeed, mainly due to Belgium's liberal constitution and the expansion of its railway network, which advanced the mobility of both people and ideas, Brussels developed into a center for international congresses in the course of the 19th century, becoming the seat of an increasing number of specialized international organizations. Once a colonial capital, today the capital of Belgium and the European Union remains one of the wealthiest European economies, while it is at the same time constantly confronted

with far-reaching political fragmentation at the Belgian nation-state and the European Union level. If one wishes to understand Brussels, it is vital to understand its housing nation-state Belgium. Formerly the fourth greatest power in the world, and since 1957 a founding and active member of the European Union, today it finds itself under threat of being dissolved entirely. Indeed, despite claims to the contrary, globalization and the unification of Europe have not resulted in a disappearance of nationalism from the political scene. In this dissertation, focused on envisioning images of the futures of Brussels, the components of Europe and Belgium's past, present and futures stand central in assessing future visions of identity within this global capital.

1.   Setting the Scene

Commenced as a unitary state with one parliament in 1830, there is no difficulty in establishing the exact year in which Belgium became a political state. Belgium today has evolved into a federal state with 6 parliaments in theory equal to one another: The Federal Parliament; the Flemish Parliament; The Walloon Parliament; the Brussels Parliament; the Parliament of the German-speaking Community; and the Parliament of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels. In 1970, the first state reform was implemented by the traditional political parties, supported by both Flemish and Walloon regionalists. Three culture communities were established: the French-speaking, Dutch-speaking, and German-speaking communities. In Flanders, we find the capital of Belgium and Europe: Brussels. This territory of Brussels became a region in itself and is now officially bilingual (French and Dutch – or rather Walloon and Flemish). A separate region was equally created for Flanders and Wallonia. The political parties that were organized in an ideological manner also split based on language. This meant the end of a unitary country with one government and one parliament. In the mean time, Belgium has already gone through 6 state reforms. Figure 1 depicts its current state of geo-political administration.
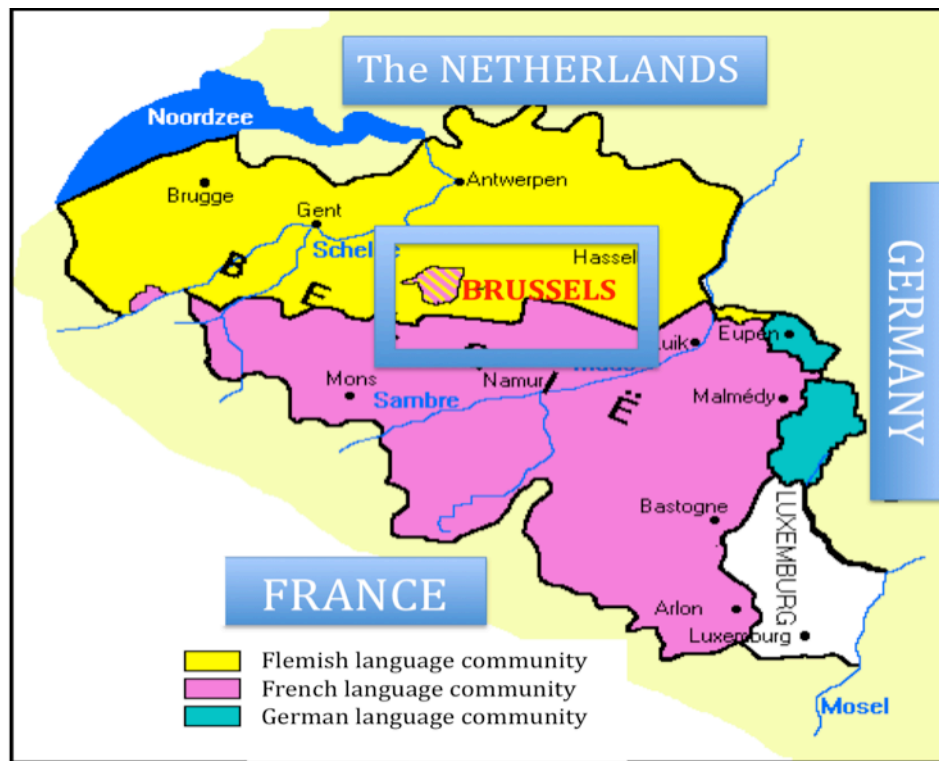
Figure 1: The 3 **communities** of Belgium – Flemish, French & German; Not to be mistaken with the 3 **regions** in/of Belgium – Flanders, Wallonia & Brussels.

As is evident, the Brussels region is nearly entirely located north of the linguistic border and as such belongs to territorial Flanders, where it has created its own cultural and linguistic identity within this region. Throughout this dissertation, "Brussels" refers to the "Brussels Capital Region", in which 19 municipalities make up the city and the political region of Brussels. Pure territorial logic would have striven for the implementation of a separate statue for language and individual-based matters, but would have allowed the regional matters to be dealt with by the territory in which the capital is located. But then Belgium would not be Belgium, would it? Indeed, rather than incorporate the capital into the Flemish territory for regional matters, Brussels became a third region, with French-speaking inhabitants falling under the French communal legislation, while Flemish-speaking citizens adhering to the Flemish regional legislation. (De Beule, 2010) The consequences of this organizational set-up lay at the foundation of the contemporary nationalist political climate, with both linguistic halves of Belgium claiming that Brussels culturally belongs to them, while the Belgian nation-state considers to view it as its unifying capital; with the EU continuing to find it to represent European values and diversity.

In light of the Belgian problematique potentially dividing one of the European Union's smallest (yet politically, culturally, and linguistically highly complex and important) nation-states, themes like "A future for Brussels in Wallonia", "A future for Brussels in Flanders", "A future for Brussels in Belgium" are not uncommon to be addressed in both the popular media/politics and the academic Belgian arena. As Dator (2009) notes though, "a 'flat' image of the future –viewing past, present and the future as essentially unchanged- is probably somehow 'in our genes'" (p. 5), and this is most certainly valid for many politicians in Belgium today. The diversity of the Brussels population -some might call it an assembly of qualitative minorities (including the original inhabitants)- demands an approach that breaks with the conventional political 'flat' scenario vis-à-vis the topic of Brussels. It demands considering Brussels and its people as a unica with its proper Brussels identity, heavily challenged by both the political Belgian and European nationalist climates and in constant movement due to the forces of change that make our world function.

2. The Identity Quest

While there is neither question nor doubt that Belgium as a nation-state is highly complex and diverse, this is usually attributed to the unique character of the Belgian identity. Yet it is this very notion of a Belgian identity that has led the country into its contemporary political climate, governed by strong nationalist tendencies, claiming that a Belgian identity does not exist – only a Flemish and a Walloon identity is present in the state of Belgium. In April 2013, Howard W. Gutman, the American ambassador to Brussels stated:

> "As a foreigner you hold a better (more objective) perspective. When Belgians state how divided they are, I tell them how similar they are. If you want to see division, come to America. The difference between the left wing of the Democrats and the right wing is ten times, no a hundred times, larger than the biggest difference between the political parties here. In Belgium, people speak two languages[1]. Does that cause division? I am still amazed when I hear people in a pub in Brussels switch from Dutch to French, to English, and back. What a wealth … But is everything perfect? Is there a country where everyone wakes up and says that everything is perfect? I know of none, unless a dictatorship

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[1] In the ambassador's defense, the third official Belgian language (German) is not felt strongly either Flanders. Wallonia, or Brussels. Annexed after WWII, the "German Cantons" rarely come into play in nationalistic debates. While linguistically, they fall outside of the nationalistic French-Flemish debacle, they also have no direct benefit to the future of Brussels within another regional context than the Belgian one.

where citizens are forced to feel this way" (interview by Vandersmissen, Knack Political Magazine, own translation).

For ten centuries, and as recently as 1944, the strategic Belgian position between Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and France, made the territory a continuous battleground for other peoples' wars. Indeed, the contemporary nation-state of Belgium, has in the past been the punching bag of great nations, never conquering but always conquered, periodically subjugated, invaded, occupied, bombarded and pillaged, passed like a pawn from one Noble House to another, owned in turn by the French, the Spanish, the Austrians, the Dutch, denied statehood until 1830, and then again invaded and violated in two great World Wars. As Frommer (1984) rightfully asks: Is it any wonder that few Belgians are raving nationalists, or given to patriotic bombast? Or that many Belgians profess not to even know their National Anthem? Even former Belgian prime minister Yves Leterme broke into La Marseillaise, the French National Anthem, instead of Belgium's La Brabanconne National Anthem, on French-language national Belgian television. At the same time, subtle yet visible hints of Belgian nationalism have governed the country since its inception and remain to shape the notion of a Belgian identity today.

This year marks the 200th birthday of Napoleon's defeat in Waterloo. It was one of the most humiliating defeats in Western European history, and on 11 June 2015, it provided European newspapers with journalistic gold. Belgium wished to issue special 2 Euro coins to commemorate the victorious Waterloo battle which actually lay at the foundation of the establishment of the Belgian nation-state, but the French went so far as to veto this decision since president Hollande referred to it as a "negative symbol that would undermine French unity". Clever Belgian citizens found a manner to still bring the coin on the market, in the form of a 2.5 Euro coin, for which no European consent was necessary. In reaction to this, foreign media have applauded Belgium and its inventive Belgians. The British Guardian claimed that "Belgium is now officially the funniest country that exists. The closest in comparison is their little peeing boy as a national emblem. Belgium is the greatest" (11 June 2015). Others joined in and stated that "Actually everything about Belgium is brilliant. The country once was without a government for 18 months, invented roller-skates, pralines and saxophones. Belgium is the country all other wish to be" … "France won the battle, Belgium the war" (The Guardian). The identity question that arises from this can be summarized as follows: If all citizens of the world believe

Belgium to be both a state and a nation; if all other countries believe that the identity of Belgium can be detected in Belgian citizens; if Belgians themselves identify abroad with the specialties of their country (beer, chocolates, French fries –indeed, a Belgian invention stolen by the French – with mayonnaise, etc.); can there truly be any doubt as to whether the "Belgian identity" exists? It is this exact question that has created the contemporary political climate in which the Flemish nationalists leave no room for such a Belgian identity in their agenda.

While symbolism and landmarks of this small nation-state are a visible sign of the Belgian landscape, which seems to reflect a small united country to all unaware by-passers, the nation-state of Belgium is currently characterized by an internal separatist nationalist debate and finds itself governed in part (at both the federal and regional levels) by 2 Flemish nationalist parties seeking to divide the state in two – hence dissolving the nation and the state of Belgium. Contrary to the more extreme right Flemish nationalist fraction, the more moderate and more successful Flemish nationalist party would settle for a further federalization within the European Union. This places them in the pro-EU camp of the nationalist landscape at the higher IGO level, countering the extreme right European nationalist groupings that seek to abolish the EU as an overarching institution "dictating" policy for its member-states. The idea of federalization at the EU level for the benefit of nationalist Flemish constructs, presented by the moderate N-VA, is referred to as absurd reasoning by Minister of State, Mark Eyskens though (2013). According to him, "federal countries are exactly constructions that attempt to bundle the cultural, economic and political diversity in an overarching, communal policy" (Knack, April 2013). Perhaps there is a silver lining in both forms of logic in the sense that the federalization of the EU – dreaded by so many – might actually allow the re-emergence of national identities within a stronger union, free from national borders. Interesting to keep in mind in this regard is Max Kohnstamm, who has been recognized and honored as one of the founding fathers of the European Union. During the last years of his life, he was one of the supportive pillars of the European Policy Center in Brussels. Born in Amsterdam in the early 20th century, he had lived through the drama of WWII in the German camps, and his obsession became the conquest of nationalism – which he feared would destroy the European project, because narrow-minded interests would set the negotiation trend for nation-states (Van Humbeeck & Van Cauwelaert, Knack Magazine, February 2012). But at the same time, Kohnstamm was also a realist. As

such, he came to the conclusion that if you wish to engage in just international politics, you need a vision. At present, this vision for Brussels is 'flat' and in dire need of further exploration from a different academic angle. Today, we find the negativity of anti-EU politics to work against Brussels as a city. Rather than refer to the EU, politicians speak of decisions made by Brussels – setting the tone for the importance of the city, yet at the same time contributing to an already problematic nationalistic climate.

There can be no doubt: nationalism exists today. It is alive and powerful in the democratic union of Europe, and in one of its founding member states, Belgium. Being targeted by nationalist tendencies from two fronts -the EU's Euro-skeptics and the Flemish nationalists- Brussels, the capital of Belgium, the capital of the EU -and as such often seen in direct synonym with the institution of the EU- has navigated into its proper cultural (national) identity within its territorial Flemish geographic boundaries, within its conflicted nation-state Belgium, and within one of its main financial contributors, the European Union. The future of this capital city thus lies within a hostile political climate, yet no efforts have ever been made to identify the impact of the world's functioning on the potential future of Brussels. In fact, the unilateral flat view of "the" future always uses Brussels as a bargaining chip in nationalist debates. This dissertation seeks to change that by offering images of the potential futures, indeed plural varieties and plural imagery, of Brussels in different scenarios for the year 2060.

3.   Research Domain & Research Questions

To understand the contemporary nationalist climate in which Brussels finds itself, it is crucial to understand the underlying national identity sentiments that govern the political scene at the EU and nation-state level. The identity of Brussels today is an important factor to establish since it will greatly influence its reaction to current and potential future driving forces and social issues. How the city deals with certain factors will depend on how that city views itself today. Having been studied from a historical, social, cultural, and even artistic standpoint, the active investigation of nationalism in society for this dissertation has been and remains political in nature – in fact, the identification with a national or regional culture can be considered a strategic tool in the political landscape itself.

Dator, Sweeney & Yee (2015) state that "as Dator's 'Laws of the Future' denote, futures studies, at least from the Mānoa School perspective, is a profoundly political enterprise – one that confronts the forces driving the future down familiar as well as perhaps unwelcome paths". Equally, nationalism at its very core is a political enterprise meant to unite communities based on imagery of the past and present. While the evolution of nationalism, in combination with a search for national identity, can be categorized in the historical domain, there cannot be any doubt that today national movements are political. As Leith (2006) states, "the very existence of any organized national group … ensures political demands based on a sense of nationhood. The enunciation of nationhood, the willing division of a group into a nation, one that differentiates itself from its surrounding neighbors, even when they occupy the same polity, will result in political activity. Even if the majority within the national movement in question do not seek political autonomy for their nation, they seek alterations within the institutional or political framework of the existing state polity" (p. 10). Such is the case for the largest and most steadily growing party of Flanders and Belgium, the Flemish-nationalist fraction of N-VA claiming that Belgium has disintegrated in two different democracies, each with completely opposite socio-economic ideals, and that for this reason the country should be separated with the eventual independence of Flanders from the Belgian state. Following the logic of Guibernau (1999), Flemish nationalists in Flanders see themselves as a cultural community with a communal past, connected to a specific territory, without currently having their own state (p. 1).

Nationalism of nations without state could indeed threaten the 19th century nation-state of Belgium, although it must be remembered that the claim to demanding a (stronger or complete) separation between Flanders and Wallonia is one posed by the Flemish political class, making it a political reality rather than a societal reality ... albeit a very successful strategic one, with grave implications. Indeed, Flemish nationalism is flourishing today. Walloon nationalism equally exists, yet is negligible in the separatist debate since it is essentially a reactionary movement that does not extend to a broader national or European platform. Brussels, in the midst of the nationalist debate of the past decades, has continued to evolve into an entity that embraces cultural diversity and has incorporated it into its own unique urban identity. At least such is the assumption for the present. Prior to embarking into the investigation of contemporary driving forces and social emerging issues that shape

society today, the political landscape in which we find the city of Brussels must be understood. As such, the identity of Brussels must be uncovered within the broader nationalist scene of Europe and Belgium. In essence, the questions that this dissertation seeks to answer can be summarized quite simply in accordance with the three main timeframes under examination: the past, the present, and the futures.

4.   Methods & Futures Studies Approach

The 2010 exhibit (set-up by the National Archives and State Archives in the Provinces – as one of the ten scientific institutions under the aegis of the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office – BELSPO) revealed the 'visioning process' <u>"Europe in Brussels: From Federal World District to Capital of Europe (1900-2000)"</u> that was undertaken over a century ago. As an official citizen of Flemish Brabant, the territorial province housing Brussels, it filled me with tremendous pride to see such a progressive endeavor established at that time! This active historical envisioning towards a preferred future within the compounds of reality then for Brussels, in the late 19th century, led to the creation of the internationalized global city with a proper national identity we know today. In essence we could argue that the visioning exercise of the past, attempting to place Brussels at the heart of the international, diplomatic world, was successful … yet became stagnant in the past decades. At the same time walking through this exhibition created a sense of frustration over the petty politics that have prevented the city of Brussels to flourish beyond the Belgian nationalistic problematique in the past decades. Further even, it angers me to see this grand historical city with tremendous future potential regularly being diminished to a bargaining chip at the Belgian regional levels ("who 'gets' Brussels in the event of a separatist victory?"), when it could and should be realizing its full potential in the European domain. At this latter level, however, we find a similar nationalist threat towards the city: Brussels is held accountable and even used in direct synergy with the concept of the institution that makes up the European Union. As such, negativity and anti-EU nationalist tendencies are targeted at the capital. Finding itself in this precarious political climate, I sought to examine the potential of such a 'visioning process' attempted at the turn of the previous century, which has <u>not</u> occurred in the past 5 decades – or rather, I wished to examine the potential of Brussels when taking into account the contemporary Belgian nation-state political trends that may significantly affect the future (and survival) of the European capital of Brussels …

and its people, in the form (and alteration) of their city identity.

"The fundamental perspectives of what is also called "the Mānoa School" state that "THE future" cannot be predicted, but that several alternative futures can be forecasted and their implications considered, and then that preferred futures can be envisioned and invented, all the while continuing to scan the horizon for new opportunities and problems which might suggest new visions of preferred futures or reinforce the existing visions" (Dator, Yeh & Park, 2013, p. 24). Setting the future of the nation's and EU's capital in different (plural) scenarios rather than in the singular version -more specifically in the context of Dator's four generic futures- has never been attempted. As is the case in most governmental institutions, the notion of thinking about "the" future prevails in Belgium. Stepping away from the one-future idea(l), and instead consider multiple futures based on contemporary facts, the methodological framework in which this study is conducted relies on a qualitative approach examining Brussels within the four generic futures scenarios as developed by Jim Dator at the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies, in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawaii in Mānoa.

Acknowledging the importance of the past and present, the Mānoa School Modeling Method relies on seven components of the Futures Visioning Process. As a stand alone academic endeavor, rather than a community plan that is organized in a physical format, this dissertation will rely on 3 of those main components, which have been applied to the three parts of this dissertation:

1. Appreciating the Past: An in-depth historiography of the theory of nationalism presents the importance of national identity in the formation of the Belgian nation-state. The establishment of a Belgian versus a Flemish national identity was important since it is impossible to "think usefully and creatively about the future of anything until you understand its rationale for coming into existence" (Dator, 2009, p. 2). Via the application of the theories of nationalism at multiple levels –the EU, Belgium, and Flanders-; by positioning the city within the theoretical concepts of internationalization and globalization; the city of Brussels can be linked on a theoretical past and practical contemporary level.

2. Understanding the Present: In order to proceed into envisioning the four different futures of Brussels in the generic model, it is essential to establish

contemporary driving forces and social emerging issues. The emerging forces – in other words, the drivers of societal change – have been selected in accordance with the Mānoa model as applied to earlier studies, and include: Population; Culture; Governance; Economics & Employment; Environment; Energy; Technology & Infrastructure. The social trends and emerging issues – in other words, events shaping, diverting, and altering contemporary life – have been established to include the uncertainty of the European unification and governance process; the fear of Islamification; immigration patterns and policies; the crumbling European economic unity; and the (ab)use of the Belgian welfare state.

This analysis was brought about via careful media scanning that commenced in 2007 and ran until 17 June 2015 – this date especially chosen to incorporate the contemporary success achieved by the extreme right nationalist front at the EU level, led by French nationalist Marine Le Pen. Each of these driving forces, trends and emerging social issues will be observed and analyzed from the nationalist climate angle of Belgium and Europe, and within the context of the internationalized global city identity of Brussels, established in part 1. As noted by Dator, Sweeney, and Yee (2015), "although the process of modeling, and ultimately crafting, scenarios is highly qualitative, which is to say an art, it also very much relies on data from a range of sources, historical as well as current, including economic, demographic, resources, cultural, and other facts and figures. This is what separates futures studies from mere fantasy, creativity and science fiction" (p. 136). The scanned data for this section spans from daily online Belgian, European, and international news sources; to weekly/monthly political magazines; to economic journal publications; to UN reports on climate and population (including immigration); to demographic reports on the evolving situations (from multiple angles) in Brussels. In reality, while political in nature and set-up, the 8-year scanning exercise can be considered multi-disciplinary.

3. <u>Forecasting Aspects of the Futures</u>: After the careful analysis of driving forces and trends in contemporary international/European/Belgian/Brussels society, the futures exercise into the four generic (alternative) futures could commence. "These four futures are 'generic' in the sense that varieties of specific images characteristic of them all share common theoretical,

methodological and data bases which distinguish them from the bases of he other three futures, and yet each generic form has a myriad of specific variations reflective of their common basis" (Dator, 2009, p. 7). The set date for future envisioning, imagery and projection is 2060. Following the Futures Studies approach of the Mānoa School, these can be categorized as follows:

a. Continued Growth: Adhered to by governance structures and organizations, this forms the most commonly held view of 'the' future, in which a continued (mostly economic) growth is assumed. In the case of this dissertation, this assumption will rest on a continuation of the European Union structure and policies, and on the Belgian nation-state with potential increased nationalistic/separatist/confederate tendencies.

b. Collapse: Offering a new beginning, this scenario assumes the collapse of societal structures and systems, including the economy, political and environmental factors. While often associated with a negative future, or a bad future, it must be noted that it holds the potential for society to start fresh. "This form focuses as much on what happens after the storm, so to speak, as on the storm itself" (Dator, Sweeney, Yee, 2015, p. 137). For this thesis, collapse will, amongst other factors, be envisioned in the form of political European Union collapse due to extreme nationalist victory at that level.

c. Disciplined: "Some people feel that precious places, processes, and values are threatened or destroyed by allowing continuous economic growth" (Dator, 2009, p. 10) and for that reason a conscious refocusing of resources and lifestyle is strived for. A 'disciplined' society is created, which centers around newly formed fundamental values. This dissertation asserts that the European Union 'dream' reaches fruition in 2060, where the fundamental European values have become the norm in Brussels – as the 'visiting card' of Europeanness.

d. Transformation: Manifesting itself in the form of either a technological (high-tech) or a spiritual (high-spirit) transformation, this scenario often depicts a "dream society … because it anticipates and welcomes the transformation of all life, including humanity from its present form into a new 'posthuman' form …" (Dator, 2009, p. 10).

A fourth component (to be accurate, combining Dator's components 6 and 7) will be

introduced in the concluding section of this thesis, in the form of perceiving the attainability of a preferred futures scenario for Brussels, and in providing formats and opportunities to institutionalize changes to achieve that preferred future.

Limitations & Personal Bias

Swiss scientist Bernoulli stated that in between real certainty and complete uncertainty arises a new category, that of probability. Dator's 2nd Law of the Future states that "any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous" (Dator, 1995), which as a conditioned European citizen is probably one of the most difficult tasks I have had to overcome in applying Dator's four generic futures model to the city of Brussels. Margaret Thatcher already knew that "Europe is created by history, America by philosophy", and while this is most definitely a rapidly changing trend, I cannot deny to being a product of my social environment. As such, it must be noted that while having lived in the USA for 10 years in the early but strongly formative years of my adulthood, a certain degree of objectivity can be expected. At the same time, having been present in the political climate of the nationalistic landscape in Flanders, 100% objectivity cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore, while this study focuses on the general trends and emerging social issues affecting Brussels, independent futures studies of each individual commune within the larger city could offer further in-depth analysis. Also, the impossibility of grasping all contemporary trends and driving forces, alongside emerging social issues, must be established. Each individual factor could potentially be developed into a full dissertation in itself and as such, this thesis must be regarded as offering a general view of the driving forces and social issues incorporated in this study.

In terms of content and research domain, this dissertation does not intend to propose different political structural avenues to explore for the city of Brussels, nor for the nation-state of Belgium, today. It relies on historical data and contemporary trends that show glimpses of possible futures within the nationalist landscape. This is equally not a historical paper on the foundation of Belgium, nor is it a critique of the establishment of the nation-state in question. For this reason, the historical overview shall be limited and stand in direct function of the nationalist climate currently in existence in Belgium. It must finally be noted that this is not an in-depth study of a specific nationalist party within Belgium or the EU, nor is this thesis a critique on any form of nationalism. For this reason, the Atavistic nationalist niches, in which 'white

supremacy' in strived for, present in small numbers throughout the European Union – in Belgium most notably via the 'Blood and Soil' nationalism – are not incorporated into this document for two distinct reasons: First of all, their actions are branded illegal by the Belgian government, making it impossible for them to break through on the political scene. Secondly, they are not considered as posing a threat to the perceived loss of autochthone identity in Brussels and/or Flanders – to the contrary, their image in society is often shunned due to their association with 'white supremacy'. The aim of this dissertation is to apply the four generic futures model of Jim Dator to the global international city of Brussels within the context of an increasingly moderately nationalist climate in Belgium and the EU. As such, concepts and approaches of nationalism, an investigation of the city of Brussels, and the careful scanning of contemporary societal driving forces and social trends will be examined, to then offer four possible futures scenarios for Brussels as a city and for the identity of that city. Furthermore, several open-ended questions will be posed throughout this dissertation writing. While these questions are reflective in nature and are meant to encourage the reader to ponder them in a futures-oriented context, they equally serve to highlight certain feelings that can be found beyond the classic research or news reporting … yet very much alive in society.

5. Dissertation Structure

The introduction section has provided the motivation that initially led to the interest in this study, and has positioned the interests of Brussels both within the Belgian political landscape, and the futures methodological approach to be employed throughout this dissertation. The structure of the main body of this thesis is divided into three distinct phases in time, each equally vital to conducting a futures-oriented study: "appreciating the past", "understanding the present" and "forecasting aspects of the future".

Part I offers 2 chapters that set the theoretical background landscape for the continued study of this thesis. Whereas chapter 1 aims to provide the broader nationalistic situation of Belgium and Europe, chapter 2 zooms in on Brussels as the complex focus of this investigation.

Chapter 1 considers a variety of historical and trend-setting approaches to the study of nationalism. After the establishment of the basic concepts of the nation, the state, national identity and national movement, a detailed investigation into 3 specific

approaches offers insight into the establishment of two distinct forms of nationalism in Belgium: Belgian nationalism and Flemish nationalism. After placing the latter into the correct Belgian context, and also within the broader European Union scene, the chapter concludes in identifying the importance of Brussels within the Belgian and European nationalistic debate. This first chapter is necessary to provide a correct societal, political and cultural context of the origins of Flemish nationalism, for the further investigation in chapter 2, and to set the correct political tone for this dissertation.

Chapter 2 offers a detailed view of the theoretical and practical factors of internationalization and globalization in the city of Brussels. It furthermore places importance on the geographic and political importance of the city as the capital of Europe. The debate concerning the potential development of a specific Brussels Identity is confirmed via both a theoretical and practical approach in this chapter.

Following the theoretical frameworks surrounding nationalism, and the global city identity of Brussels, **Part II** of this dissertation proceeds into an empirical analysis of the European capital from a multitude of global, European, Belgian and Brussels forces that drive society. Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the current state of affairs from several angles.

Chapter 3 explores the driving forces of population, culture, governance, economics, environment, energy and technology/infrastructure. In paying individual attention to these driving forces from multiple structural/political levels, it is perceived how society has evolved until present.

Chapter 4 analyzes contemporary trends that affect Brussels as a city, and emerging social issues that hold the potential to change the course of the future. The contemporary trends of migration, the perceived fear of Islamification of the city in reshaping its contemporary and future identity, the uncertainty regarding EU political and economic governance, are investigated from both a federal and international level. Seen as all contributing to growing Flemish nationalistic tendencies, these trends play into thankful political agendas. From an internal Flemish nationalism perspective, the social trend of the (ab)use of the welfare state, accompanied by high taxation for its autochthones, further ignites nationalistic tendencies around the Brussels capital region. The introduction of transition towns seeking preparation of communities for a post-peak-oil era finalizes the five major contemporary trends

under investigation. These driving forces are complemented by social emerging issues that have been observed via a Horizon scan of recent under-the-radar events that hold the potential to alter the path of the driving forces in described in chapter 3.

These driving forces factors and social trends will then be approached in different futures orientations to observe how they can potentially develop under different evolutionary circumstances in part III.

In **Part III**, the nationalistic Belgian and European climate, the internationalized identity of Brussels, and the driving trends and social forces of the broader units of analysis examined in parts I and II, will be placed into Dator's four generic futures model to allow a glimpse into the possible future of the above described factors in the potential futures societies of Brussels.

Chapter 5 assumes the four generic futures:

- A Continued Growth scenario in which current driving forces and social trends continue under the same conditions as is the case today, transform the landscape into Social Fortress Flanders 2060 in Confederate Belgium. The flourishing effect of Brussels' adherence to the Flemish nationalist party and agenda becomes evident.

- A Collapse scenario observes what occurs when all contemporary understanding of the fabrics of the political and communal network are shattered, and A New Beginning in Fortress Brussels 2060 arises. The effect of nationalism reaches a higher state of localism in the form of an interconnected yet independent Arabic Capital of Europe.

- A Disciplined future sees Brussels as the European Capital, under the strong control of the United States of Europe's. Operating as the capital of Europe, having always known a higher degree of European symbolism, the formation of a European nationalistic feeling can be detected, in an egalitarian safe state.

- A Transformational scenario observes the Organic and Synthetic Identities of Galactic Europe as defining the identity-landscape of a high-tech, inter-galactic region.

In these generic futures, an assessment shall be made based on the data, to then project the four possible futures of Brussels. So the four generic future projections commence in the past and present. Contrary to this, my preferred future will conclude this academic endeavor and will have my personal preferred future for Brussels as its

starting point and will then observe what needs to occur in the present and near-future in order to achieve this preferred vision. Certain data from the four generic futures will contribute to the shaping of this preferred future. To truly conclude this dissertation, my preferred future will be followed by returning to Dator's laws about the futures.

PART I

PAST THEORY & PRACTICE LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT OF BRUSSELS

CHAPTER 1

Belgian and European Shades of Nationalism Rooted in History

In the Journal of Belgian History (1997), historian Louis Vos describes nationalism as a spiral concept. At theoretical inception, attention was mainly paid to the ideological and doctrinal component of nationalism, which gradually lead to more attention for the historical context, rounded off by a synthesis of images and historical events. Continuing research orientated itself towards structural functionalism with special attention for the role of communication in the origin of nations; for the meaning of modernization in society in the development of nationalism; which is where the point of origin also lay, but was now enriched by the structural-functionalist, societal and post-modern angles. As such, nationalism is not a circular concept, but a spiral one (p. 297).

The first chapter of this dissertation seeks to offer a very brief overview of the "birth" of Flemish and Belgian nationalism and place in the correct theoretical and practical contexts. As noted in the introductory section, the historical aspects of Belgian nation-state formation - more complex than the name implies – shall be focused on the historical formation of Flemish nationalism in and against the Belgian state. A state-perspective and a nation-perspective must thus be identified and while the first is quite factual to determine, the latter refers to the creation of a national identity bound to a nation. In the contemporary nationalist debate, there is no agreement on one common cultural identity that unites all Belgians, and more importantly none that unites all political fractions governing Belgium.. Considering the broad spectrum of nationalist thought, I offer a limited historical overview and place the Belgian discourse within the current existing literature. I then proceed to provide a working definition of the most important concepts related to the study of nationalism: The Nation, the State and the notion of Belgian and Flemish National Identity, as relevant to the historical establishment and evolution of the Belgian nation-state. Since the notion of identity lies at the foundation of the nationalist debate in Belgian politics today, with Flemish nationalists and Belgian nationalists strongly defending the origins of their claim, I apply 3 nationalist theories – a methodological triangulation - to the notion of Belgian and/or Flemish identity to verify where exactly they place the inception of their culture, of their nation. This is done relying on Hroch's Marxist *socio-economic nationalism*; Armstrong's "*mythomoteur*" further

developed by Smith as investigating distant past symbols and myths to explain contemporary nationalism; and Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. After this in-depth application of nationalist theory to parts of Belgium's notions of identity, I expand my focus to provide a broader view of how Belgian (or rather Flemish, as shall be established) nationalism frames within the European EU context. In concluding this chapter I engage in a critical understanding of what the contemporary standing of nationalism in Belgium vis-à-vis Brussels is, and the path towards the unique notion of a city-identity within the capital of Europe shall be introduced, setting the tone for a detailed investigation of Brussels as a crucial international player and a city with its proper identity in chapter 2.

1.1.   A Brief Overview of Theories of & Approaches to Nationalism

While the older scientific studies on nationalism were primarily written by historians who initially focused on the ideology itself, they were joined by political scientists after World War II. Starting in the 1930s, the overall tone was set by the American historian Carlton Hayes in his The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism (1931) in which he differentiated between humanitarian and enlightened nationalism (as developed by Rousseau and Herder); Jacobin nationalism during the French Revolution (Robespierre); traditional nationalism (Burke); liberal nationalism by the British thinkers; a rightist integral nationalism (Maurras); and an economic nationalism referred to as state protectionism. (Vos, 1997) While nationalism as a political doctrine came into existence, it must be noted that this continued to be placed within a historical context. The works by American historical Hans Kohn, particularly The Idea of Nationalism (1944), in which political events were incorporated into the historical data, were very influential. In follow-up of the distinction already made by Ernest Renan in 1882 between French and German nationalism, Kohn characterized nationalism in Eastern-Europe as more organically intoned with a strong focus on the ethnical component, while the phenomenon in Western Europe was observed more as a form of civic free choice in the formation of a nation. Starting in the 1960s, anthropologists, sociologists and linguists, also mingled in the debate and enriched the approach of nationalist studies by no longer following the 18th or 19th century nationalist ideology doctrine, but to ponder the question of how societal change could lie at the foundation of nationalism. In their

approach, they were structuralists because they focused more on the context and societal factors than on the evolution of the nation. In their conclusions, however, they were modernists who considered nationalism an essentially modern phenomenon, which only arose with the modernization of society in the past centuries – free from connections to earlier state formations or ethnic traditions. Quite a new approach, to which one of the first contributions was delivered by American political scientists, Karl W. Deutsch in his Nationalism and Social Communication (1953). The most important condition for the origins of a nation for Deutsch could be found in social communication, which created a sense of group feeling and thus created a community. Ernest Gellner further developed this train of thought, starting with Thoughts and Change (1964) and concluding in Nations and Nationalism (1983). He, too, searched for an economic explanation for the origins of nationalism, and for him, the realization of that principle was the logical consequence of the immersion of the industrial era. This forced people to adjust to new circumstances. The state had to ensure a uniform education system and as such created a homogenous national culture that, supported by an official language, gradually and bureaucratically incorporated all civilians into the nation. Where the government failed, nationalist movements arose aimed against the existing state. The incorporation of modernity into the nationalist ideological debate had thus formally commenced.

Amongst the historians in the 1960s, interest in the structural approach remained limited to one important Czech historian, Miroslav Hroch. This author is of great importance to the Belgian nationalism investigation, as will be explored in the next subsection, since he offers a theoretical and ideological explanation which is still utilized (dare we say exploited) to ensure that the nationalist debate retains its strength in society today. From his Marxist background, he called modern nation-formation a social process that was part of the transition from the feudal society to the capitalist system of citizens. His Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe (1985) demonstrated his research into nationalist movements of state-oppressed or dominated national groups ("small nations" as he called them). Also in the West, Marxism offered a source of inspiration for sociologists to seek social-economic conditioning of nationalism. This can be seen in Michael Hechter's Internal Colonialism (1975) in which he continued building on Deutsch and Gellner's work. While focused on British national development, his assertions are of interest in this investigation as well due to his introduction of the notion of "cultural division of labor"; in which the

professional gap favoring people from the dominant culture offered the nationalist reaction a social emancipating character.

It was not until the 1980s that the until-then dominated social-economic and structural functionalist angle of nationalism was challenged. This occurred in two forms, and shall provide the basis for the in-depth investigation of the Belgian, or rather Flemish, nationalism currently in existence in the political and societal public debate:

1. One investigatory approach reacting to the socio-economic conditioning and the modernism of the structuralists, seeking for ethnic roots of national identity in the *distant* past. Of great importance was John Armstrong's <u>Nations before Nationalism</u> (1982), in which extensive research into factors having contributed to the formation of an ethnic identity in pre-modern time was central. The central idea is that communities developed a unique unifying character, long before the origins of nationalism. He demonstrated how myths and memories from the past continued working in the formation of modern states, which he described as "mythomoteur", in Armstrong's words: "what sustains a polity and enables it to create an identity beyond that which can be imposed by force or purchased by peace and prosperity" (1982, p. 293). Anthony D. Smith, inspired by Armstrong, published a provocative work in <u>The Ethnic Origins of Nations</u> (1986), in which he saw ethnicity and ethnic communities as the predecessors of nationalism and nations. It was a clear anti-modernist standpoint returning to the level of "various myths, memories, symbols and values, which so often define and differentiate nations". In this regard, Smith upheld a different focus than Gellner and Anderson, who had stressed the modernity and novelty of nationalism.

2. The other research approach to defy the exclusive attention to the socio-economic determinants of nationalism can be found embodied in the person of Benedict Anderson. In his <u>Imagined Communities</u> (1983), he attempted to explain how the large structural transformations and psychological forces of attraction were linked in nationalism. Print capitalism in a common language created a sense of community, modernity paved the path for popular sovereignty, while nationalism in a sense took over the role of religion in an increasingly secularizing society. As such, people felt part of an "imagined" community, which was also a reality. My continued investigation will

demonstrate that this concept is of great importance not only for Belgian nationalism; but even more so in the contemporary creation of the "imagined" identity and community of and in Brussels.

Within the conceptualization via either of the approaches developed in the 1980s, the creation of a contemporary feeling of "identity" – a sense of belonging to a certain group or community – plays a vital role. In Western Europe, the beginning of the 20th century saw the presence of a climate encouraging nationalistic ideologies. The implementation of democratic governments ensured that the public opinion became more important, allowing the citizen to feel more involved with and to the governing policies. Furthermore, economic and political renewal increased the need for national and cultural identity. Also the international conflict situation in which countries strived for an expansion of power felt the increasing need for propaganda. In this context, the created national symbols became increasingly important. National symbols such as a national anthem, a flag, the cultivation of one's own past and national monuments via the education, the implementation of a national holidays, etc. had to contribute to the national integration and cultural homogenization of the nation. Industrial, political and economic innovations quickly succeeded one another and ensured that every nation developed a national-cultural identity. The support of the national press and the implementation of universal suffrage had to guarantee the suppression of potential revolutionary movements and create a general atmosphere of contentment and homogeneity amongst the population. The introduction of national values and symbols were framed within a general integration of the entire population in a nation. This in turn stood as a symbol of state nationalism which in the 19th century pushed the emancipatory popular nationalism to the background. This development brought with it that many people had to expand their reality of a group identity.

Until in the 19th century, the identification (at most) was limited to a certain region. After the appearance of state nationalism (the conscious formation of states and/or nation-states), the world became larger and people equally belonged to a larger nation than to a smaller region. Nationalities distinguish themselves via different factors. Geographic obstacles like mountain ranges or waterways, cultural or religious differences define the existence of different nations, each with their own norms and their own past. As already mentioned above, nationalism is an undeniable

consequence of the modernization of the Western society, which since the end of the Ancien Regime, entered into an accelerated stream. The changes that occurred in that period on a socio-economic, political, and cultural level, have allowed the growth of new ideological ideas such as nationalism. Furthermore, the important influence that ethnic roots had on this concept is undeniable. Every form of nationalism seeks fundamental ethnic characteristics like religion, race, language, territory or specific peculiarities and rituals in its past. These specific traits then form the parameters for a national identity … An analysis of approaches to nationalism entails that certain specific characteristics of the country/region are known. In order to uncover these, it is essential to pause for a moment and ponder the development of a Belgian nation-state, and of Flemish nationalism in the recent political history of Belgium, to then return to the theoretical platform to establish which nationalist movement is relying on which approach to justify its contemporary nationalist propaganda and future vision for the country. In essence, which identity do different nationalist streams identify with ("claim"), and how do they justify this view?

1.2.   From a Nation to a State to a Nation-State to National Identity and Nationalist Movements?

Nation – State – National Identity – National Movement

Various theoretical approaches to the study of nationalism can utilize the same conceptual terms with distinctly different meanings. For this reason, it is important to note that in this dissertation, the concept of the nation will be used as an extension of the ethnie's defined characteristics (Smith, 1995), including a name, a historic territory, communal myths of descent, a memory of the national past, cultural traits, and a conscious awareness of belonging to a specific community. Surpassing the theoretical foundation of the ethnie, a nation consciously works towards the maintenance or the reinforcement of its own group identity.   More so than in an ethnie, a nation upholds "the communal culture and public character that, due to the growing communication network, knows how to reach the masses of the population to ensure a platform as broad as possible" (Vos, 1997).

The concept of the state will be used as the organized political community under which the established country operates within is historically determined geographic borders. Government is often seen as synonymous with the concept of state, and in

essence the two will be used interchangeably, both implying the political structural governance operation of the sovereign country of Belgium. In essence I utilize and differentiate between the nation and the state as offering the individual citizen the following:

- The Nation = Cultural sense of belonging
- The State = Political sense of belonging

A national identity can in this context be considered to form a conscious part of the nation, not the state – although in homogeneous societies the identity can certainly conform to both. In theory, it is possible to adhere to one of two camps in the nationalism debate between primordialists and modernists, as Gellner (1996) coins it:

- Those who state that nations have always existed and that the past is of primordial importance for the nation.
- Those claiming that the modern world was created at the end of the 18th century and that the past is of no importance (p. 366).

The notion of identity within these concepts implies both a 'given' as an 'acceptance and mission'. It only becomes something when an individual or a society acts and takes position. Greenfeld (1992) stated that "it is the essential characteristic of an identity: that it is the view of the actor of himself … identity exists or exists not. It can be asleep and then awaken" (p. 13). In the spirit of Rousseau's "Je pense donc je suis", we can take the individual thinking to a level of national identity. Schlesinger (1987) concurs that collective identity is created by people binding themselves to a durable system of social relations that create an identity. The contents thereof are not static. The collective identity of a community depends on the implementation of it that is dominant at a certain moment. If the content of the identity is not static, then we could argue that the continuity thereof mainly relies on defining who does not belong to the collective identity. "A boundary marks the beginning and end of a community in so far as it encapsulates its identity" (Cohen, 1985) . That 'border' is not necessarily an objectively quantifiable reality, even though it might be, but is primarily something that exists in the minds of those involved. Borders are symbols. And symbols are used as markers with which identity is ascribed (Vos, 1997). More than with a collective identity in general, symbols and rituals play a role in the formation of a cultural or national identity. Symbols suggest unity and mask differences, according to Guibernau (1996). If the individual members of a nation can

identify with symbols of the nation and thus create an "us" feeling, they are part of a national identity.

Thiesse (1999), based on Gellner (education) and Anderson (modernity), claims that cultural identity is equally a construction of the 19th century. In essence, the elite ponders all traditions, symbols, and historic events, and from this distills an identity for the nation. This identity then guarantees the vital feeling of unity that binds the citizens to the state. According to this vision, identity is thus the consequence of a random culmination of circumstances (Cederman, 2001, p. 142). Smith (1996) on the other hand states that identity is formed in the deeply rooted nation. The necessity of the existence of an identity is therefore not the consequence of modernity, because modern nation-states could not have formed without a cultural identity having been established prior. He does concede that the truth is sometimes manipulated and that small events can be magnified by the role of nationalism. For him, this poses no immediate problem since the most important task of the symbols utilized, is to provide people with a feeling of unity (p. 361-363). Lorenz (1987) proposes that groups of people do not find their identity, but that their identity is shaped in a reconstruction of the past, based on their vision of the present, with the eye on the future. This makes every individual identity intrinsically historic, yet it does allow room for a present and future identity to being "imagined". In other words, can an identity be created at any given point in time? If we assume that the formation of identity is a contextual and situational act that is formed via a vision of the past, then must we equally assume that the further removed people are from their past, the higher their need for historical connection to the present becomes? Is this what has been occurring since the creation of the Belgian nation-state since 1830? It does seem to be the case for the historical reference points employed by Belgium's 2 most successful nationalist parties today: Vlaams Belang and Nieuwe Vlaamse Alliantie.

Indeed, the nation-state of Belgium implies that the state-operated government is the governance organism for <u>all</u> citizens identifying with the Belgian culture. In the spirit of the above mentioned positions vis-à-vis national identity, one of the first dilemmas in the nationalist debate in Belgium is the rejection of such a Belgian culture, such a Belgian identity – be it pre-state or post-state. Instead, the Flemish nationalist movement argues that the Belgian culture is a politically and historically fabricated piece of fiction with no common ancestry, no common symbolism, and no unifying factors. As such, the differentiation between Belgian nationalism (the belief

and acceptance that the Belgian culture unites all Belgian citizens) and Flemish nationalism (the rejection of a Belgian culture and the strive for an independence –or at least more autonomous- Flanders) must be understood. This distinction is not something that occurred overnight, nor is it a matter of fact.

Growth of Flemish Nationalism and the Arrival at the Successful N-VA

Flemish nationalism has always been a politically important force in Belgium, but was discredited after WWII for having collaborated with nazi-Germany. The Flemish Nationalism would only once again become an electoral factor in the 1960s via the People's Union (VolksUnie). In the late 1970s, the extremist and fascist branch of this party separated from the People's Union and proceeded as the Vlaams Blok (currently known as Vlaams Belang, after having gone through a name change in the early 2000s). Vlaams Belang was an anti-migration party that took a racist stance and found its origins in fascism. With the installation of the Vlaams Belang, the popular Socialist Party lost many of its voters to them, further increased by the neoliberal stream blowing through the political arena in Belgium and Flanders. Due to the continued socialists reformist stance, many voters shifted towards Vlaams Belang and the overall set-back of the Belgian social democracy in Flanders that allowed the Flemish nationalism to further integrate into society.

Contrary to most nationalist parties in Europe, the Vlaams Belang was politically marginalized by Belgium in 1989 - by the traditional parties but also by its former partner VolksUnie. This "cordon sanitaire" –unique to Belgium- is characterized by the (undemocratic) technique in which an undesired or deemed-dangerous situation (in this case party) is isolated by forming a grand coalition between other parties ensuring that the radical ideology cannot take hold of the state. Critical political minds like Derk Jan Eppink have argued that aside from being undemocratic, this technique can actually portray a victimized image which can work to the advantage of the party on an electoral level, and also allows the party to criticize the government from an opposition standpoint since they are denied governance responsibilities. In the end, Vlaams Belang does become polarized in its Flemish independence discourse, but it cannot be denied that they were the founding father for the Flemish separatist thought-pattern. When its political father, the VolksUnie disintegrated in 2001, we saw the birth of another party with a similar yet more moderate (at first sight) nationalist agenda: The New Flemish Alliance (Nieuwe

Vlaams Alliantie, in short N-VA). While they partook in every election, they remained a rather small party until 2006, when the party altered tactics and profiled itself as a democratic Flemish-nationalist party offering a less radical alternative to the Vlaams Belang. They thus carefully stayed clear of the cordon sanitaire. In essence, the N-VA is a classic nationalist party that defines its identity and Flemishness in ethnic terms. The 2010 elections saw this non-traditional party becoming the largest fraction in the federal parliament for the first time in Belgian history. The N-VA obtained more than 28% of the votes in Flanders, while Vlaams Belang accounted for more than 12% of the votes. Together the nationalist parties were able to count on nearly half of the votes in Flanders, and this without taking into account certain Flemish-nationalist-minded politicians in mainstream parties.

Following the 2010 elections, an attempt was made to form a federal government and to negotiate a sixth state reform. As international media eagerly displayed and much to the shame of the country, this resulted in any new authority of the federal level being diverted to the other sub-state levels, since no federal government was formed for 541 days. This naturally played into the hands of Flemish nationalists since they argued that the country was obviously able to continue operating without a federal government. The local elections in 2012 added further fuel to the already heated Belgian debate when N-VA frontman, Bart De Wever, became mayor of Antwerp and in his victory speech asked then Belgian (French-speaking) premier Elio Di Rupo to immediately commence a plan for a confederate Belgian political system. The political shock was great, the support for N-VA grew even greater with their electoral success in establishing themselves at the number 1 party in Belgium at all levels (local, regional, federal and European) during the 2014 elections. At present, all Flemish political parties, except for the socialists and greens, have incorporated the independence thought or confederalism into their party programs. The influence of the nationalist debate can thus not be denied in Belgium, even stronger, it may very well influence the futures of both the nation-state and the city capital of the European Union.

Determining whether the national identity of Belgium originated before the creation of the state, or whether the Belgian national identity was imagined, or whether the Flemish identity was crushed in the creation of a Belgian identity, is something that commands further research and is something that lies at the very

foundation of respective nationalist agendas in Belgium. In section 3 of this chapter, the creation of respective national identities shall be under examination. Different nationalist movements believe that the creation of such a national identity occurred at very different times in history, and as such they rely on theory and history to justify their present claim.   In this regard, prior to entering into historical nationalism, the following figure offers an analysis of the categories of nationalism observed in Belgium today. Of particular importance are the indicated red sections, in which we can clearly position Vlaams Belang as the extreme Flemish nationalist party, and the N-VA as the moderate Flemish nationalists – both relying on the past to confirm Flemish identity establishment. A third section shall be explored, however, in favor of the creation/imagining and existence of a true Belgian identity. For future reference, the current perceived threat for the survival of the Belgian-nation state, and indirectly thus also for Brussels in its contemporary political structure and context, can be reduced to the success of the N-VA.

CATEGORIES OF NATIONALISM IN BELGIUM Anno 2015				
Moderate Flemish Nationalism			**Radical Flemish Nationalism**	**Dutch Re-Attachism**
Strives for a Belgium with 2 sub-states (Wallonia & Flanders)			*Strives for a completely independent Flemish state with Brussels as its capital*	*Strives for the incorporation of Flanders into the Netherlands – with or without Brussels*
Regionalism	**Confederalism**		→ Vlaams Belang	
More authorities for the sub-states to lower the federal importance, without actually dividing the nation-state. Brussels remains a joint responsibility	*Establishment of a Flemish-Walloon "bundes-state" of 2 independent states that make joint decisions on a limited number of matters (i.e. Brussels)* → N-VA			
Belgicism				
	Strives to maintain "Belgium"		→ Belgian Identity	
Walloon Nationalism		**Walloon Re-Attachism**	**Frenchification**	
Strives for the best representation of the Walloons in the Belgian context, mainly to uphold the Belgian state and distribute its financial "wealth" to all regions		*Strives to incorporate Wallonia (possible with Brussels) into France – with or without Brussels*	*Strives for the "Frenchification" of Belgium, a French-language colonization of Flemish Brabant via the "facility communes" that provide the Walloon 'corridor' (geographical access) to Brussels ...*	

Figure 2: An Overview and Analysis of the Types of Nationalism found in Belgium anno 2015.

1.3. The Use of Nationalist Theory in the Search for National Identity: 3 Approaches

Vlaams Belang and N-VA both rely on the Flemish identity created in the past to justify the historical political evolution of the contemporary situation in the state of Belgium. Especially the charismatic frontman of N-VA is often found to rely on theoretical nationalist constructs to justify his nationalist agenda. Giving the impression that your contemporary nationalist claim for Flanders is in line with historical nationalist theory and passing it off as almost scientific phenomenon is a strategic move … and a successful one? As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the direct application of nationalist theory to Belgium shall take form in the distinction between three different approaches identifying the creation of an "identity", the creation of a cultural nation. In seeking credence in these historical identity formations, pieces of history will be explored. Ranging from the socio-economic to its counter-movements, theorists have either looked towards the history and symbolism of the past to understand contemporary nationalism, or have found it "imagined" as a people united in a state structure. While the first two are in direct support towards the creation of a Flemish identity, and the third in defense of a Belgian identity, it is important to understand that while the third may be valid in a theoretical and historical sense for Belgium, the first two are successful on a contemporary political and popular level:

1. N-VA relying on Hroch to demonstrate the emergence of the Flemish movement reinforcing the notion of a Flemish identity, immediately following the establishment of the Belgian state;
2. Vlaams Belang's recognition of Armstrong and Smith's identification in seeking Flemish national identity in the very distant past;
3. And Anderson providing an alternative to the historical identity unification, by imagining the community of Belgian identity in the Belgian nation-state.

1.3.a. Hroch's Marxist Socio-Economic Nationalism

Miroslav Hroch's inception of nationalism driven by a united national identity can be traced back to the establishment of the Belgian state in 1830. Per his nationalist approach, briefly touched upon on page 21 of this chapter, the modern nation-formation is a social process that was part of the transition from a feudal society to the

capitalist system of citizens, in which nationalist movements arise against state-oppressed or dominated national groups. Such a "small group" as he coined them can be found in Flemish nationalism (Belgian nationalism for all practical purposes), which only came into existence due to the establishment of the Belgian state in the form of a liberal democracy against which the Flemish speaking citizens were free to oppose. Without the establishment of the Belgian state and the strive to establish a Belgian culture and identity in the manner as it was established, or in the scenario of a different governance structure at its inception, the very notion of Flemish nationalism as we see in society today would not have existed.

Guibernau (1999), Schnapper (1996), and Smith (1989) all define civic nationalism as observing the geographic boundaries and the jurisdiction of the state to define who belongs to the nation. The nation will take shape via laws and institutions. The individuals belonging to that nation will receive citizenship and this is not to be understood in the mere sense of rights and duties, but also via solidarity by active social and political participation within the state. Ius Soli determines membership to the nation. In contrast, ethnic nationalism (as observed by Brubaker (1996) and Smith (1989) bases its nation's membership on the idea of heritage. The nation is as such a group of people with the same history, the same traditions and symbols, and the same language. The engine driving this nationalism is not the state with its institutions and laws, but the mobilization of the masses by appealing to their ties to the nation. "Ius Sanguinis" defines membership to the nation. Considering the past history leading towards the creation of the Belgian nation-state, there should exist no doubt that civic nationalism would need to lead towards the formation of a true Belgian nation. The presence of two languages within one territory did create tensions.

In the newly formed state of Belgium, the French-speaking citizens had decided that "French became the language of the courts of justice, of the provincial governments and even of some municipal councils" (Vos, 1998, p. 84) in both Wallonia and Flanders. While this could be argued positively from an imagined standpoint, in which the desire was present to unify a country through language, this, of course, gave them the upper hand in this newly formed state, limiting social mobility for the Flemish. Belgian nationalism sought the suppression of the Dutch culture (expressed via a similar language, Flemish) in Belgium. As such, the successful Walloon pressures for the implementation of French as the prestigious

Belgian language was met with resistance and is actually regarded as one of the central frustration points that led to the Flemish underdog feeling within the same Belgian nation. Having a 95% Flemish population, the Flanders region knew Flemish/Dutch as its official language and felt that the Belgian culture was under threat to becoming part of the Belgian French culture[2]. The Flemish felt frustration over the Walloon superiority in Belgium and especially on the Flemish territory. "… It is the creation of territories that defines an 'us' and establishes boundaries between this 'us' and … 'them'"(Penrose, 2002, p. 293) and therefore the Flemish quest for the preservation of their cultural features on their territory commenced.

Hroch (1985) limits his research to nationalistic movements by state-dominated (or oppressed) militants. Following his evolutionary approach, I will ponder his three phases in the initial Flemish nationalist movement formation as identified as the starting point for formal Flemish identity by Vlaams Belang today: A. Scholarly interest; B. Patriotic agitation; C. Mass Support.

Hroch's Phase A of the Flemish Movement had set in, with the "Flemish-minded writers, philologists and other Romantics … regarding Belgium as a bilingual and bicultural nation" (Vos, 1998, p. 84) putting forth the Petition of 1840 demanding the restoration of Flemish language in education, government and the courts of justice. With this petition, the patriotic agitation became apparent through the political campaigns of these Flemish cultural nationalists and thus Phase B was established. The plea from the established Grievencommissie (Complaints Commission) in 1859 for the bilingual status of Flanders was further enhanced by the Flemish Movement's expansion of its nationalist Flemish program. A transition period, strengthened by the opposition of the Walloon Movement, from phase B to phase C, came into being during which the Meeting Partij in Parliament was able to

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[2] Interesting to ponder for an instant here is the contemporary EU setting which introduced the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages. While a voluntary charter that can be accepted and ratified by national discretion, France offers a fascinating case-study in the fear for its "1 language, 1 culture, 1 people" policy, which they believe has until present succeeded in maintain the national French identity. If we apply this logic, we find that Belgium upholds 3 languages, 3 cultures (Flanders, Wallonia, and the internationalization of Brussels) and 3 regions. If we reduce this to Gellner's definition, we could actually reverse his argument and start out from an existing territory and demand that the population becomes one identity. Again, the best example of this is France, a country that throughout history has attempted to impose 'Frenchness' on all the peoples within its territory. Belgium's future would have looked very different if such an approach had been followed, indeed!

pass the first language laws granting the limited use of the Flemish language in Flanders' courts, administration and state secondary schools (latter half of 19th century). After the 1898 law granting Dutch the official status of language of Belgium in Flanders, Hroch's phase C was concluded with a mass support to be detected in Flanders further enhanced by the growing demands of the Flemish Movement (triggered by the realization that the Walloons would not be open to the idea of granting the entire Belgium the status of bilingualism) and a 'nation' (rather than a sub-nation) of Flanders in Belgium was created. As Hroch (1998) claimed "the structure of demands of national movements corresponds roughly to those missing elements which excluded them from the ranks of the fully-fledged nations" (p.97); the cultural and linguistic demands had been established as a priority and now it was time to include the political and social demands for Flanders. Besides cultural nationalism, expressed mainly through language up to this point, the Movement saw the need for an acceptance of the Flemish and of Flanders – which should not be regarded any longer as a second rate position within Belgium – on a socio-economic level as well. One of the major factors (Hroch, 1985) of the masses' attachment to the national Flemish Movement was their realization that high social mobility is a favorable condition for the acceptance of the patriotic program. In other words, if Dutch were to become a national language, then it would become possible for Flemish people to move up the social ladder and thus joining the Flemish nationalist movement was therefore favorable.

A Flemish Movement, initiated by the Flemish middle class and expanded to a mass movement, characterized by its more exclusivist policy (in comparison to the Belgian nationalism that is, since the Flemish one required you to speak the Flemish language – not French) and still democratic nature in the late 19th century, had proven to be successful in the re-formed Belgian nation-state and had even come so far as to demand political freedom. "Although, before 1914, anti-Belgianism did not exist in Flanders, it was nevertheless about to emerge" (Vos, 1998, p. 87) at a similar time as the First World War. Having built up a mass support in Flanders through its merger with the Roman Catholic Church, the Flemish Movement realized that it had to expand its nationalist movement from a cultural perspective to a socio-economic one – if it were to bring the Flemish population into the social mobility of the Walloons. The Flemish Movement experienced a division within its organization brought on by WWI: initially based on cultural nationalism, the Loyalists remained true to their

initial cause of becoming a fully accepted culture within the Belgium nation; whereas the Radicals (which became known in time through their collaboration with the Germans against the Belgian nation as the 'collaborateurs') held anti-Belgian convictions. In essence, we can see the same evolutionary pattern in existence at the EU level today. Both Flemish nationalists, there were distinct features to both parties: The Loyalists, characterized by their democratic, Catholic, rather inclusive (because 'foreign'-speakers could live in Flanders, but just had to adjust in the public sphere to the Flemish language) nationalism, were discredited due to the Collaborators' compliance with the Nazi-Germans' Flamenpolitik. Their urge to create an independent, separate federal Flanders within the Great Netherlands displayed fascist elements and their strong right-wing, undemocratic convictions within their exclusive nationalist ideology were not appreciated by Flanders' masses, nor by Wallonia and a repression of political nationalism took place. It are the pro-Belgian Flemish nationalists who are responsible for the current preservation of the Flemish identity because of their continuing demands, eventually leading to the 1930's Language Acts granting Flanders and Wallonia a monolingual status and making Brussels officially bilingual (Vos, 1998, p. 88-89). The Flemish radical 'Frontpartij' demanded more and kept striving for its federal self-government, totally independent of the Belgian state.   Because of their extreme rightist and fascist ideals the movement was unsuccessful on a large scale and it was the new 1950's 'VolksUnie' - with its pro-Belgian, democratic, liberal-leftist Flemish nationalist party - that was to lead Flanders into its struggle for self-rule within the Belgian nation-state. Thus a fully fledged successful cultural nationalism had extended itself to a socio-political one and was to develop into a political nationalist movement in order to safeguard Flemish 'nationality' in every aspect of the word. Contrary to the successes obtained by the pro-Belgian Flemish Movement throughout the first half of the 20th century …

Similarly, the latter half of the 20th century brought along several developments for the Flemish people, obtained by the nationalist parties. "The fact that the Francophones refused to respect the linguistic laws was enormously frustrating to the Flemings" (Vos, 1998, p.92) and socio-economic nationalism arose when the unequal economic development between Flanders (prosperous) and Wallonia (massive losses) was perceived. As mentioned previously, the amendment of the 1970 Constitution transformed Belgium from a unitary into a federal nation-state. After practically disappearing in 1945, the Flemish Movement knew a cultural

revival (1950's when the Flemish Political nationalism resurfaced with democratic overtones – phase A) and through the political agitation in the 1960's and 1970's it transformed itself once more into phase B of Hroch's scheme, only to gain mass-support for its national consciousness (phase C). One might think that the Flemish battle had thus been fought and an established cultural identity within the nation-state of Belgium could be enjoyed, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Vlaams Belang scapegoating Walloons and foreigners (different cultures) for unemployment, social misery and crime would –wrongfully so- become synonymous with Flemish nationalism and commence the contemporary Belgian separatist desire. The transition into a more moderate fraction of such Flemish nationalism evolved into the political success of the N-VA, who today rely on this very notion of linguistic and socio-economic abuse by Wallonia within the Belgian nation-state. The Flemish identity created, in clear distinction from the French Belgians (the Walloons), following the inception of the nation-state, continues to be the driving force for the Flemish nationalist agenda. Indeed, according to frontman of N-VA, Bart De Wever, "The Flemings are a community of six million people formed by destiny, who can recognize themselves as players of the same team because they have a name. We are 'the Flemings'. We know exactly about whom we speak. The Flemish have a definite territory, a common history and a cultural pattern. That binds us to each other at such a level that we can communicate and act with each other more easily than with outsiders" (2009). Maly (2013) correctly observes that contrary to Hroch, "De Wever sees the territory, the language, the culture and the history as objective factors … even more, he positions these factors as things that are just there, not as results of a historic nationalist struggle".

An article by a French AFP journalist (7 June 2015), in which he and several distinguished Western European historians ponder what would have happened if Napoleon had won at Waterloo, sheds interesting light on the national identity formation employed by N-VA today and described by Hroch. While numerous "what if" scenarios can be played out into the present, it is interesting to note that this historical possibility (if you will) would not necessarily have altered the creation of the Flemish and/or Belgian national identity, as described in the previous section. Hroch and Flemish nationalists would still see a Flemish national movement counter the established authority - unless a dictatorship would have prevented such a liberal

notion. Smith and Armstrong would equally still situate the creation of the Flemish identity in the Battle of the Golden Spurs in 1302 since it occurred long before 1815.

1.3.b.   Smith via Armstrong's "Mythomoteur"

In 1958, Fernand Braudel expanded the French Annales School's notion that history should be recorded according to long-term historical structures rather than isolated incidents or events. In his article "Histore et Sciences Sociales: La Longue Durée", he enforced the concept that history is one of "long term" and found it to rely on "old attitudes of thought and action, resistant frameworks dying hard, at times against all logic" (p. 734). The idea that Flanders and Flemish culture precedes all other regional unifying Belgian 'traits' can be found in the extension of this initial premise of "long durée". In <u>Nations before Nationalism</u> (1982) John Armstrong focused on the idea that communities did indeed develop a unique unifying character long before the origins of nationalism. Via a "mythomoteur" – a myth that gives credence to an 'ethnic' group – myths and memories from the distant past continue(d) working in the formation of modern nations and states. It is Anthony D. Smith (1989) who's <u>The Ethnic Origins of Nations</u>, however, brought this notion into mainstream nationalist theory.

According to Smith (1998), three issues and the debates they have engendered reoccur continually in discussions about nations and nationalism, which should have led or should lead to national identity:

1. The ethical and philosophical issue: Should we regard the nation as an end in itself, or understand the nation and national identity as a means to other ends and values?

2. An anthropological and political issue. This concerns the social definition of the nation. What kind of community is the nation and what is the relationship of the individual to the community? Is the nation fundamentally ethno-cultural in character, a community of (real or fictive) descent whose members are bound together from birth by kinship ties, common history and shared language? Or is it largely a social and political community based on common territory and residence, on citizenship rights and common laws?

3. A historical and sociological issue. It concerns the place of the nation in the history of humanity. Should we regard the nation as an immemorial and evolving community rooted in a long history of shared ties and culture. Or are

nations to be treated as recent social constructs or cultural artifacts, at once bounded and malleable, typical product of a certain stage of history and the special conditions of a modern epoch, and hence destined to pass away when that stage has been surpassed and its conditions no longer apply? (Wan & Vanderwerf, 2009, p. 10-14)

The foundations for such a historic Flemish nation can be found in the northwest corner of what now constitutes Belgium. While firmly established as the region of Flanders by 1100, it was a spectacular military event in the beginning of the 14th century that truly ignited the first signs of a united Flemish identity.

As discussed prior, identity is closely tied to cultural identification, to the degree that someone identifies him/herself with a group, movement or institution. The external and internal image influences the manner in which this occurs (Secord & Backman, 1965, p. 532-540). The historical connection to identity allows people or groups to observe their past and decide whether they do or do not belong to it. Based on that historical information, they can then formulate who they are, what the borders are between them, which differences and similarities they share with other cultural identities. For the Flemings in general culture, and more particularly for the extremist political movement, this dates back to the Victory at Courtrai, coined the Battle of the Golden Spurs - thanking its name to the golden spurs of the defeated French knights that were confiscated as spoils of war by the victorious Flemish. This cannot be considered an everyday event, nor another 'normal' medieval battle. On the contrary, it was an occurrence so unpredictable, in fact so impossible, that 14th century society reacted to it with utter disbelief and astonishment. An occasional army of peasants and merchants bringing total defeat upon the most powerful cavalry of its time … "It was almost as if a small band of Al Qaeda fighters had eliminated a battalion of marines and the Taliban had brought down a B-2 bomber with Lee-Enfield guns from the first World War" (Van Caenegem, R.C. in Trio, P.et all, 2002, p.8.). The 11th of July 1302 was not merely militarily unpredictable; its political context was equally intriguing and was the direct cause for its occurrence.

In essence, the Battle of the Golden Spurs should not have taken place, since the French-Flemish, feudal-dynastical conflict having initiated it, had been resolved. The duchy of Flanders no longer existed, since it had been annexed by the French crown and was administered through a French governor, supported by a French

military force – while the former Flemish count had been imprisoned in France. All events had proceeded accordingly with the desires of Philip the Fair, and his legislates could rejoice over the successful ending of this entire operation. Until a popular revolt in Bruges shattered France's illusion, leading to French revenge, which was followed by Flemish resistance, resulting in the historically known Battle of the Golden Spurs. This victorious battle -or when researching it from a French perspective, the 'désastre de Courtrai', as which it is commonly known in this country's history- is somehow a fact of European significance, not only because it illustrated that a cavalry force was not invincible, but mainly because it proved that smaller autonomous regions could not be annexed at will by any larger power without some form of rebellion. And it is exactly this rebellion that ignited the first signs of a Flemish communal identity within the territorial region of Flanders. The earliest official nation in which a Flemish identity reigned can thus be placed here. While the Flemish culture is still celebrated with extra splendor on 11 July of every year, there is a nuance between the embrace of the national identity of Flanders within a Belgian setting, versus the employment of this remembrance day to stimulate further separatist sentiments.

So, we can establish that under the previously discussed theories, the cultural identity of Flanders can be traced back to at least 1302; the construction of the political nation-state of Belgium commenced in exactly 1830 with an immediate attempt to establish a civic sense of Belgian nationalism; and the Flemish nationalist movement commenced shortly thereafter. On one hand, Smith's historical argumentation seems perfectly logical from the standpoint that the national identity of the Flemings has been 800+ years in the making, and it may also explain why Flemish nationalism has retained its cultural identity within a Belgian identity. But most Flemish Belgians will agree that being one does not exclude being the other. It is perfectly possible to be a proud Fleming in a proud Belgium (and if we wish to continue the trend, in a proud European Union). It is at the point where radical fractions of Flemish nationalists take the upper hand in political debates that problems arise. Contrary to many opinions in today's nationalism debates, I tend to agree with Michael Billig (1995) that "nationalism is omnipresent" in contemporary Belgian society and also in Flemish everyday life. On a daily basis, the Flemish nation is indicated – or 'flagged' if you will – within the Belgian state since when a referral is made in the media by a Flemish parliamentary member to 'us' Belgians, it most definitely means 'us' Flemings. And

this banal nationalism becomes even more apparent with the constant reminder of French-speaking citizens (Walloons) living on Flemish territory – not immediately having any natural topographical boundaries (Grosby, 1995), but containing 'geistige' factors that influence Flanders' boundaries (prominently the Flemish language) – being referred to as 'they' or 'them' and of course, 'they' in 'their' turn referring to 'us' (Flemings) as 'they'. Naturally, as demonstrated above, this division did not occur overnight.

1.3.c. Anderson's Imagined Community Nationalism

Gellner (1983) states that "two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating" (p. 6). The question then becomes whether those associations and signs need to be found in the past or whether they can be actively shaped in the present for the purpose of 'belonging' in the future. After all, in his article "Qu'est'ce qu'une nation", Renan (1882) did see a nation as a spiritual entity supported by the realization of a communal history and a communal project for the future. Benedict Anderson, in his alternative to looking to the past in search for the establishment of a national identity, indeed looks at the present and the future objective. In his reasoning, it is not difficult to detect a Belgian nationalistic narrative – purposefully created. In his Imagined Communities (1983), he shifts from my previously established notion of a nation referring to the cultural sense of belonging, to include a consciously imagined political community: "In an anthropological spirit … I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991, p. 5). While the further examinations in this dissertation shall uphold my earlier defined 'nation' and 'state' concepts, in this particular subsection, we can follow Anderson's logic and find credibility in the undeniable link between both a cultural and political meaning in the 'nation' of Belgium. In fact, if we approach history from a different angle than the one presented by the Flemish nationalists, we could even conclude that the political union in the state of Belgium was actually the result of a cultural Belgian effort. As such, might the Belgian spirit have existed prior to the creation of the political Belgian state? Might the people of the Belgian culture have given way to the creation of a state?

In the 17th and 18th centuries, defeated in their bid for independence, a helpless playthings of larger nations, the 10 provinces that make up Belgium today moved successively from one occupying power to another: First the Spanish, then the Austrians, then the French, then finally the Dutch. One constant remained, though, and that was the failing foreign protection to spare the regions of Flanders and Wallonia from continual war. With foreign armies marching over Belgium, devastating its cities, and in essence utilizing it only as the battleground for their conflicts with other nations, the French Revolution saw Belgium annexed to France – which did not improve the overall situation. A Belgian state was about to emerge after the 1789 Brabant revolution having triggered Belgian nationalism. When the French (under Napoleon) were finally defeated in Waterloo, Belgium was again denied independence by the Great Powers (Congress of Vienna), and forced into a larger territorial unit with the Low Countries – the Netherlands. Important to note here is that Belgium was clearly regarded as the lesser territory of the monarchy. Extreme Flemish nationalists today will have you believe that the Flemish regions of the Netherlands were culturally bound to one another, but the reality is that they were regarded as "lesser" in every possible way. Again though, the Brabant Revolution "developed a national ideology with Catholic overtones and legitimized by 'Belgian' history. National symbols were invented, giving birth to a new cultural and political national identity" (Vos, 1996, p. 86) known as Belgium. The Belgian nationalism characterized was its Catholic and liberal nature, and established the independence for Belgium in the Belgian revolution of 1830 – "a direct success of political liberal, democratic nationalism", Vos (1996).

Whether it was cultural identity, or a refusal to remain the play ball of other European powers, that ignited the establishment of the Belgian state, is something that cannot be established with full certainty. What can be established with full certainty, is that it was civic nationalism that was to be upheld in the creation of this newly established nation. Anderson continues by explaining that "… it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings" (p. 7). In the case of imagining the ideal of a newly formed state, could we argue that a sense of civic nationalism takes over from the previously upheld

cultural nationalism? This would imply that the nation can be shaped within the parameters of the state, if the state ensures sufficient symbolism to unite its citizens into actively imagining its new nation-state. This provision of national symbolism – largely aided in the 19th century by what Anderson refers to as 'print capitalism' allowing for the true and widespread display of that national symbolism - hence marks an imagining effort of not only the state, but also the nation of Belgian people. As such, we can indeed trace back the formation of identity, the Belgian identity, to the inception of the nation-state of Belgium in 1830. Within the territorial aspect of the nation, now the will to belong had to be created via an imagining effort. This independent Belgian nation then had to – in the footsteps of Anderson and Gellner's approaches - visibly start working on a cultural identity for its newly formed country. In this regard, symbolism vis-à-vis a common past and a common culture play a vital role in the feeling of unification within a state.

It is no secret that at inception the Belgian nationalism feeling had to continuously be stimulated. In case of a foreign threat or when the country is performing well internationally, calling oneself "Belgian" seems easy, but it is more difficult to maintain a constant loyalty amongst a population. The identity of Belgians has such been created, been imagined by both politicians, historians and the masses themselves. In order to acknowledge the diversity within the Belgian nation, and to incorporate the differing cultures within the newly imagined Belgian identity, the basic associative symbols to the nation were a direct reflection thereof. The Belgian flag, created in 1830, reflects the shields of armor of Brabant (Flemish) and Henegouwen (Walloon), creating the triband in colors. The national hymne was created utilizing the text of the French-speaking Jenneval, the music provided by the Fleming Van Campenhout (source). The National Holiday of Belgium does not refer to the day on which the revolution commenced, nor does it declare the day of independence for the nation-state. It looks back to the promise of Belgian king Leopold I who promised to honor the constitution and laws of the Belgian people, and to uphold the national independence and the integrity of the territory – 21 July. The imagining effort has been upheld by the state, and the nation still follows in these traditions today. Anderson's ideal that an imagined community is willfully created by and for the people of a nation can be found throughout contemporary Belgium's "symbols" as well. In this sense, contemporary national identity often goes hand in hand with national pride or a sense of patriotism. While we often see a lack of

support for the monarchy, do they not offer a symbol that unites all Belgians? Then again, perhaps the question becomes more evident when we look into global phenomenon that are played out very well via (social) media. After all, when the Belgian Devils played very well during the 2014 Soccer World Cup, all of a sudden the Belgian feeling transcended quickly: When a goal was scored, one would almost believe that it weren't the players themselves who were responsible for it, because "we scored", with a strong emphasis on the "we" – "us, Belgians". Anderson states that "the nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (p. 6). Within our globalizing world, do we see an even stronger strive towards the conscious Belgian identity, in its identification and relation to other nations? The Belgian political system, including its transformation from a unity to a federal state, has operated under these premises of being an 'imagined' community - consciously united in politics and in spirit. Today, this 'image' and 'imagining' effort seems under heavy threat, most notably by the charismatic leader of the N-VA party – the largest and currently most influential political party in Belgium, Bart De Wever. While an educated man, a man who knows his history, he is equally talented in bending nationalist theories to suit his purpose.

Fully acknowledging his admiration for Hroch, he can equally be heard or read to refer to Anderson's famous imaged concept. "De Wever uses the abivalence of the transition of the world 'imaged' in Dutch strategically. Imagined can be translated in Dutch as 'verbeeld' (represented) and as 'ingebeeld' (imagined). He uses this ambivalence to twist Anderson's theory. Where Anderson stresses that the rise of capitalist communication media made it possible to image a nation, to invent and construct a nation that wasn't there before, we see that De Wever stresses the fact that the nation is represented, but not imaginary" (Maly, 2013). The Flemish nationalist agenda is interesting in this regard, especially since Anderson's notion of imagining transcends language and culture and holds the potential to imagine a community that incorporates diversity yet adheres to larger ideals; whereas De Wever's N-VA depicts it as meaning that one identity is carried by one language and one culture – hence believing to provide evidence that there is an internal clash in an unmanageable and an impossible to unify Belgium. Within Anderson's notion of print capitalism, it cannot be denied that the Flemish media has greatly aided the Flemish nationalist movement and cause of the past decades. Not a day passes without television or radio

focusing and raising awareness of the Flemish identity in Flanders. Without dismissing the diversity within the newly formed Belgian state, the imagining effort of the Belgian identity was believed to transcend fractional cultures and today we can still employ this argument when pondering whether imagining one culture and one identity necessarily means rejecting another. The United States is filled with American citizens who clearly identify with the American values, yet display pride in their ancestral heritage. Does this diminish their loyalty and active participation in the imagination of the American identity? If we look at Belgium's history, from the formation of a nation to a unified state to a federal liberal democratic nation-state, we could argue that the actions of the Flemish movements (the minority group at the time) persuaded the French-speaking Belgians (the majority group) into re-shaping the identity of "Belgium", allowing for cultural diversity within the Belgian nationalist ideal. This naturally builds on the notion that Anderson's conceptualization of the imagined community is fluid and open to change … an assumption most certainly reinforced by the possible notion of the shaping of a city-identity for and in the capital of Belgium, Brussels. Furthermore, can we extend and expand Anderson's notion of imagining to the even more contemporary history, to the political institution of the EU? Does belonging to this community also require an imagining effort and how successful has the EU been in providing a sufficiently strong symbolism for its citizens?

1.4. Situating Belgium in the EU Nationalist Landscape

Belgium can actually be considered the most European of all European nations, because every great movement of European history, every major personality, most of the multiple cultures and nations of Europe, have marched across Belgium and left their imprint. The geographic advantage of Belgium cannot be denied. So everyone passed through – German merchants and French kings, Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte, the shippers of British wool and Italian spices, Spanish inquisitors and Dutch Calvinists, Desiderius Erasmus and Karl Marx, Counter-Reformation and colonizing capitalists, Austrian Habsburgs and King Henry VIII of England – all of these were experienced, in the most direct manners, by generations of Belgians, *whose society became, in many respect, as European as it was Belgian* (Frommer, 1984). Undoubtedly, these reasons contributed to selecting Brussels as the capital of

and representative for the European Union. In order to fully comprehend the difficulty surrounding Brussels within the Belgian setting, it is essential to shift the level of analysis from Belgium's nationalism to Europe's nationalism, to ponder the pressure currently exercised on that Belgian and European capital. It cannot come as a surprise to any informed observer of the European Union scene that contemporary events heavily influence (or perhaps even play into the hands of) nationalistically driven political parties within some of the EU's member-states. Struggles for regional autonomy or provincial independence form part of the European landscape. The current Euro-crisis, where we actually see the European Union's solidarity in aiding ailing countries, is met with heavy nationalistic popular pressure from within those recessing countries. The Chrisi Avgi, or the Golden Dawn Party in Greece, finding renewed 'validity' (if I dare call it such) in the EU's bail-out with certain strong restrictions, and the recent popularity rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), serve as evidence that in difficult socio-economic times, it appears to be an easy solution to blame the larger and overarching institution of the European Union – which imposes limitations to member-states that have financially jeopardized the whole of the economic EU. It appears that Hroch's reaction movements (extreme rightist nationalist parties) against a (perceived) oppressor (the EU) are in place at this level as well. Being 'in' Europe is taking on an entirely new meaning, in stark contrast to being part 'of' Europe. While the public seems to become increasingly confused over what exactly the EU has added to their individual lives, political parties jump on the opportunity to gain control of national situations. The lacking top-down communication between the European institutional triangle and the average EU citizen is a matter most certainly in dire need of further attention[3]. The true purpose of this next subsection is to correctly position the Flemish nationalistic climate within the broader European context. While the numerous nationalist parties within the EU and their respective agendas could command an entire dissertation on itself, this section will clarify how the Flemish variety of nationalism is developing and distinguishes itself in several manners – via two notable nationalist parties: The extremist Vlaams Belang; and the more moderate (or so it appears) N-VA. In essence, we can detect two specific types of nationalism within the EU's member-states: Those

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[3] Initiatives in this regard are taking place, with the EU community reaching out to citizens – for example on 4 May 2013, by opening the doors of all its institutions in Brussels to all curious minds.

pro-EU like Scotland, part of the UK; and those anti-EU[4], like France's Front National and the UKIP in England. In Belgium, we find both nationalistic parties each to favoring such a respective idea.

Prior to engaging in a discussion on several of these pro- and anti-EU nationalist parties and how Belgium's nationalism is represented, it is important to understand their overall positioning in the EU parliament. The main intent here is to clarify where we can detect nationalist groupings within popular representation on both sides of the political spectrum.
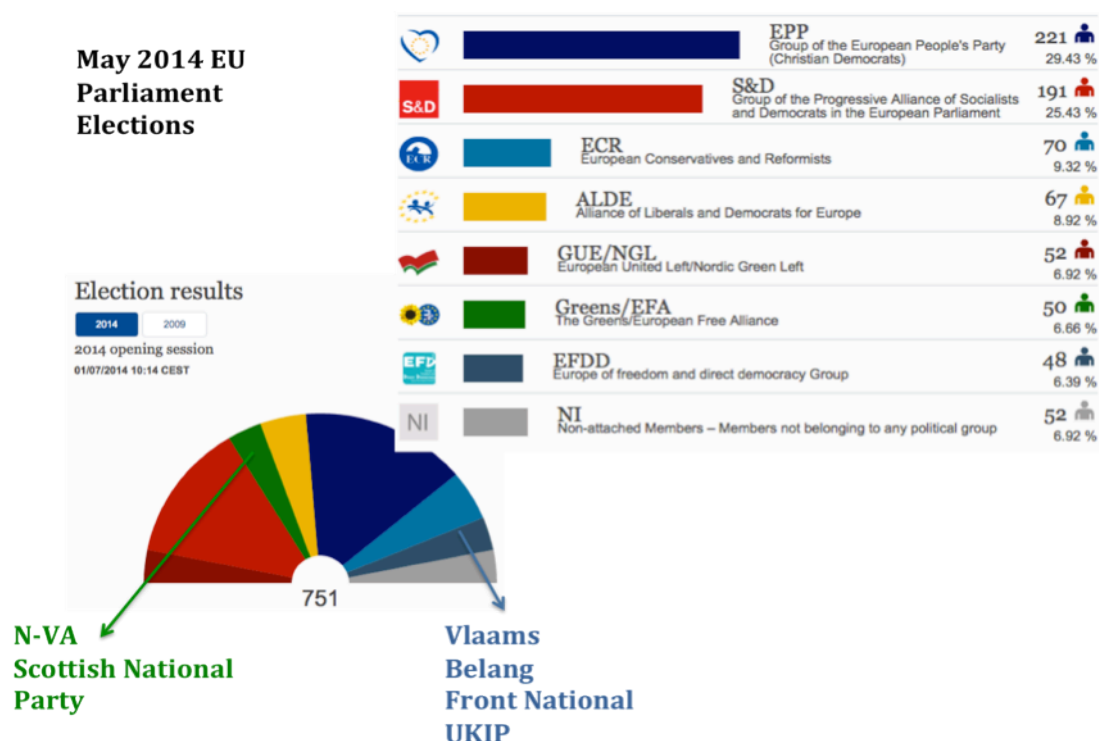
Graph 1: May 2014 EU Parliament Elections – Political Parties. The overall voter turn-out for the EU Parliament election slightly decreased from 42.97% in 2009 to 42.61% in 2014[5] (Results of the 2014 European Elections, 2014). Note that the 17 June 2015 establishment of the new extreme right nationalist fraction in EU Parliament – led by Marine Le Pen of the French Front National – has not been incorporated into this graph yet. While it is officially recognized and financial allowance has been allocated, the "Europe of Nations and Freedom" has yet to be fully incorporated into the EU's parliamentary bureaucratic structure. There are

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[4] Note that this refers to the EU as an institution, not necessarily against Europe as a geographic and cultural continent.

[5] On an interesting side note, know that Belgium upholds a compulsory voting system, contrary to the majority of the rest of European states. In practice, this translates into either a demanded power of attorney to a third party or a monetary fine in case of non-compliance without excuse. As such, could we argue that the Belgian representation of and for its political outcome at the EU level is more accurate than that of other member-states?

no significant shifts within the overall rightist *visions* of respective nationalist parties at the
EU level.

Graph 1 offers an overview of the respective political parties represented in the
EU Parliament today, with the EPP, the European People's Party (Christian
Democrats) and the S&D, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats,
leading the political ideological thought and practice patterns at this level. Contrary to
popular assumption, the representation of nationalist parties is scattered throughout
the political spectrum, ranging from rightist to leftist nationalist ideologies. As such,
we find the most extreme forms of nationalism and a highly Euro-skeptical union in
the three most rightist parties of parliament, with a fourth emerging as this thesis is
being written:

- The *NI - Non-Inscrits*, which does not adhere to any politically recognized
  group yet combines MEPs who display ideologies ranging from communism
  to national conservatism to neo-Nazism. Since 2015, it is safe to state that
  most NI MEPs adhere to a far right ideology and national party. The Belgian
  Vlaams Belang could be situated in this group until 17 June 2015, when it
  joined French Front National's new EU fraction. On that day, the last day of
  the contemporary political and societal scanning for the futures scenarios of
  this dissertation, Marine Le Pen, the frontlady of the French Front National,
  established the "*Europe of Nations and Freedom*" fraction within the EU
  Parliament. While the Front National and the Belgian Vlaams Belang
  (previously in the NI party, as described above) will move into this new
  extremist party, the British UKIP has opted out and will remain in the EFDD.
- The *EFDD – Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy*, where anti-
  immigration, populism, and strong Euro-skepticism govern. Both the French
  Front National and the UKIP used to form part of this ideological party until
  17 June 2015, when the French nationalists united with other extreme rightists.
- The *ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists*, in which we find a strong
  anti-federalist ideology in combination with conservatism and economic
  liberalism. A small percentage of the Belgian N-VA can be found here.

On the other side of the EU political spectrum, we find nationalist parties representing
a clear pro-EU attitude from a leftist angle. The *Greens/EFA – European Free*

Alliance, offers an ideological platform for those adhering to green politics, regionalism and minority politics. It is this particular nationalist movement, in which we find strong tendencies of separatist desires, that is of the utmost importance for this thesis. It is here that we can locate the Scottish National Party and part of the N-VA. Considering the perceived similarities in separatist ideals between the latter nationalist movements, they will indeed warrant a further comparative analysis in the next pages.

In July 2014, current minister of state and former premier, minister of Finance, Economic and Foreign Affairs, Mark Eyskens stated in this separatist regard that "Some continue to announce that Belgium exists in the form of two separate countries with two democracies, a leftist and a rightist one, which have absolutely nothing in common. This of course is useless sophism. In the United States of America there are states with respective Republican and Democratic majorities, which are difficult to unite. But no single American considers this a reason to split the country. A similar analysis is applicable to Germany, where some Lander are governed rightist and some leftist, without this diminishing the German unity" (Knack). While this offers sound reasoning, it also might indicate the exact thought-pattern as to why we can detect a clear divide in the European Union's member-states' nationalist tendencies: Those pro-EU versus others con-EU. After all, does the chance for independence of a region/nation increase if the EU federalizes? Is it for this reason that we see a clear split in the forms of nationalism represented at the European level? Rightist versus leftist nationalism – In favor of dissolving the EU, versus, strengthening the EU to benefit greater regional autonomy?

1.4.a. Anti-EU = Rightist Nationalism

Between 2008 and 2014, there were more than 10 European countries where rightist parties obtained between 10-30% of the votes. Indeed, many 'mainstream' nationalist parties played a part and were successful in the EU elections in May 2014. Marine Le Pen's Front National in France, Nigel Farage's United Kingdom's Independence Party, the DanskFolkeparti in Denmark, Geert Wilder's Partij voor de Vrijheid, and several others. Ranging from extreme radical nationalist parties to more moderate forms, graph 2 demonstrates the leading Euro-skeptic successes of the most recent May 2014 EU elections. Quite paradoxically we see nationalist parties consciously

joining the EU parliament with the sole purpose of abolishing it. Of particular interest for the anti-EU, or Euro-skeptic, investigation are the victorious numbers by UKIP (with an increase from 16.1% to 26.8%) and the French Front National (from 6.3% to 25%) in the time span of no more than 5 years. Equally noteworthy in this graph is the diminished vote for the right-wing party Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest), which can almost entirely be attributed for the shift in extremist vote to a moderate nationalist vote by the Flemish people in the federal elections of summer 2014.

Share of popular vote won by right-wing euroskeptic parties in recent elections

	2009 Euro. Parl.	Most recent nat'l parl.*	2014 Euro. Parl.
UKIP (UK)	16.1%	3.1%	26.8%
Danish People's Party	14.8	12.3	26.6
National Front (France)	6.3	13.6	25
Austrian Freedom Party	12.7	20.5	19.7
Jobbik (Hungary)	14.8	20.3	14.7
Dutch Freedom Party	17	10.1	13.2
Finns Party	9.8	19.1	12.9
Swedish Democrats	3.3	5.7	9.7
Golden Dawn (Greece)	0.5	6.9	9.4
New Right (Poland)	N/A	1.1	7.2
Alternative for Germany	N/A	4.7	7
Northern League (Italy)	10.2	4.1	6.2
Flemish Interest (Belgium)	9.9	3.7	4.1
Slovak National Party	5.6	4.6	3.6
British National Party	6	1.9	1.1

Quartz | qz.com   * First round, if relevant | Data: European Parliament, national sources

Graph 2: Evolution of right-wing Euro-Skeptic Parties from 2009 to 2014 elections.
(Karaian, 28 May 2014))

Today the idea that the European unification would and could be halted and turned back, resulting in a disintegration of that European integration is a scary possible future. The European elections of 2014 sent a serious warning in this direction, with the anti-European party/parties combined, becoming the third most important fraction (combined) at the EU parliament. In essence, we could argue that its parliamentarians will be paid to destroy and dismantle the political union of Europe. "We must return France to the French and break with the interference of Brussels", Marine Le Pen can be heard stating on every occasion in front of a television screen. Note the subtle

incorporation and identification of the European Union as an institution to the city of "Brussels". As such, the negative connotation vis-à-vis this European capital weighs on top of the nationalistic tendencies in its own national home-country.

Founded by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, in 1972, his daughter has Marine, its current leader, has seen the Front National establish itself as the unrivaled major force for and of French nationalism. Since 2015, its economic protectionism, zero tolerance approach and anti-immigration views, have not only secured national but European success, with 25 seats in the European Parliament (26% of the French votes, making it the largest French party at the European level). Located on the rightist spectrum of EU's political parties, in the EFDD – Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy -, it has profiled itself as wanting to "destroy the (institutional) EU". In an interview given to Mathieu Von Rohr in June 2014 (Knack), Marine Le Pen does not hold back and declared the EU to being a grave disaster, an anti-democratic monster. In her view, it has cost France millions of deaths in its glorious history to achieve a free country. At this point, the right to sovereignty is something she considers stolen by the EU and "the majority of people just sit back and allow it to happen". Despite internal ideological differences, Le Pen argues that her allies at the EU level share one common goal: the fight for the sovereignty of nations. In her eyes, "the French wish to once again be lord and master of their own country. They want to determine their own economic and immigration policies. They want the French laws to rise above the laws of the European Union. The French have understood that the EU does not respond to the utopian image they were sold" (p. 8). Driven by a sense of territorial nationalism, Le Pen's reasoning nicely frames in what Storey (2003) describes as a national identity instilled based on where a person was born rather than on ethnic heritage. In the same sense, Le Pen's constant lingering in the glory of the French past, we see a strong symbolic case in support of Armstrong's historical approach of French people having died to maintain the French culture; yet in the notion of an imagined nation, an imagined community, do we see the French creed as attempting to actively build on the notion of belonging? After all, the "liberty, equality and fraternity" following the French Revolution, and the contemporary belief that "one people, one culture, one language" live in one united France seem to lift a portion of the nation (not necessarily the state) to a unified front. While this may sound viable in theory, can this bold speech in today's globalizing world truly translate into viable

practice? In an attempt to experience the near-complete protectionist agenda of Le Pen, an apparently patriotic Frenchman conducted a rather original and demonstrative experiment in France in 2013.

He solemnly pledged that for the duration of ten months, he would consume and use only 100% French products and set three rules for himself: "eat only foods produced in France, eliminate contact with foreign-made goods, and do so on 1800 Euro (above the minimum wage of 1430 Euro) …" (Willsher, K, The Guardian, February 2013). Seeing how most transportation means like cars, trains, metros, planes, etc. are partially or fully reliant on foreign manufacturing, and the energy produced to actually transport passengers is equally not fully French, Carle had to dramatically diminish his movements and rely on a bicycle or his own two feet. At the start of his experiment, Benjamin Carle was shocked to find that only 4.5% of his flat's contents were "national" and was left with an almost stripped apartment. His social life became limited since American films, Belgian beer, Italian pasta, Japanese sushi, Greek olive oil, were amongst a few of the items he could not longer consume. After having lost 20+kg, looking fatigued and depressed, he seems to have suffered from a protectionist burn-out … and offered living proof of the dramatic consequences of nationalist desires as expressed by Le Penn. Especially in terms of technology, such a return to an "all-French" life would mean a step out of the globalizing planet, and an isolationist lifestyle … after all, who – aside from me - still writes letters and sends them via national postal services? While for Carle his experiment was not about French nationalism or patriotism, it was about demonstrating that we are the product of our globalized upbringing, his actions are strikingly interesting in the far-right nationalist spectrum. Sovereignists and nationalists of all sorts in Europe provoke with slogans like "own people first" or "what we do ourselves, we do better". While this propaganda most definitely strikes a nerve with citizens who prefer their own national/regional/local village above the notion of a European village, and while these types of protectionism most certainly seem on the rise, Carle's experiment demonstrates that the nationalist desire might not go hand in hand with the discontinuation of the use of the world's globalizing luxuries to which the majority of Europeans have become accustomed. Theory versus practice creates a void which rightist nationalists often prefer to disregard than address.

As mentioned earlier, Le Pen sees a possibility to increase international collaboration with other rightist nationalist parties in the EU, including with the

equally immensely popular UK Independence Party, led by the charismatic and renowned Nigel Farage, known for literally comparing the former Belgian EU "President" Herman Van Rompuy's charisma to that of a "damp rag … someone who needs to be put to pasture" (EU Parliament plenary session 24 February 2010). While most definitely adding an entertaining element to the otherwise rather dry sessions, it are the provocative statements of extreme right nationalist parties that usually make headlines. Former UK Premier Tony Blair refers to this as a "… minority that yells loud enough and that, like the UKIP, relies on a dated form of nationalism" (Der Spiegel, January 2013). He states that similar arguments of those minority extremists can be heard in the margins of other European country's politics.

While former British prime minister Blair may indeed rightfully stress the validity of the media exponentially helping the extreme nationalist voice, current UK premier Cameron seems to have understood that people in the UK were/are desiring change. Not only did he allow for the organization of the Scottish referendum – where we find similarities in nationalism to Belgium/Flanders, as will be discussed in the following section – he understood the increasing UKIP's public support base, and is leaving the decision to "re-negotiate" the terms of British membership into the EU to the citizens of the UK. Whether in 2016 or 2017, the British referendum will set a precedent for the EU and as such, UKIP has indirectly been able to influence mainstream political policy. While far from being the largest political party in the British isles, this nationalist party founded in 1991, has managed to profile itself in such a successful manner that it holds 23 Members of European Parliament (MEPs) seats – making it the largest British party representing the UK at the European institutional level. While the British public may thus not be inclined to allow UKIP to govern its own nation-state (unlike in France, where we see a distinct correlation at all electoral levels), they did send a clear sign that they find Farage's party ideal for defending the UK's interests and rights at the EU level. Front man Farage declared that "the inevitability of European integration ends today" after his victorious win at the EU Parliament elections in May 2014. In a recent interview with the Wall Street Journal, he illustrates the main two points of his party by stating that "I grew up with the Berlin Wall in Europe, with an East-West split … now … Europe's got another Berlin Wall. It goes down the middle of Europe … and it's called the Euro" and "political correctness says if you even debate immigration, you must by definition be a racist".

In these two points of economic independence from the EU, and rejecting the immigration policies of the EU, we can see clear Euro-skeptic similarities with UKIP's Flemish counterpart, Vlaams Belang. While Vlaams Belang has accepted Marine Le Pen's invitation into her newly established "Europe of Nations and Freedom" fraction in the European Parliament, UKIP has opted out of this and will remain in the EFDD group. Farage, while seeing similar anti-EU goals, feels no further alliance with the Front National because of "prejudice and anti-Semitism in the French party" (Mason, 2015). At their core, UKIP and Vlaams Belang, however, continue seeing eye to eye on several matters though. Indeed, the spending habits of the EU and the immigration policy, which the party claims to be a joke in terms of having been agreed upon in the Schengen Treaty and the Frontex border policy. "A failing asylum policy, the so-called family (re-)unification and the repeated regularizations of hundreds of thousands illegal foreigners, culminates in a failing immigration" (propaganda leaflet September 2013).

While skeptic of the EU, the Flemish party has a further national agenda. Indeed, whereas we see UKIP (now fully representing the EDFF) and the Front National (soon to be even more present in the media with their extremist nationalistic "Europe of Nations and Freedom" party) as mainly acting against the European measures, in protection of their state borders, Vlaams Belang also strives for the abolishment of the current Belgian welfare state abuses by the south of the country, Wallonia. Further even, they desire a completely independent Flemish state. The decades of socialist policy and governance have left their mark on the financial imbalance of the Belgian state, and former Vlaams Belang frontman Gerolf Annemans does not leave anything to the imagination: "Why should older employees pay for the lacking economic action in Wallonia?", "Flanders is crippling due to the surmount of socialists who can import Wallonia into the federal government via parity". He and his party make it crystal clear that "it is time for other parties to explain where the economic added value of 'Belgium' lies. Today, the proponents of the independent Flemish state must always justify why it is better to separate. The opponents only have one argument, in claiming that we wish to push Wallonia into poverty" (Vlaams Belang Media Fragments, 2005). For Vlaams Belang, there was never any 'sweet talk' to soothe the voter. Their popularity rose for decades, although they were consciously banned from entering the governments' coalition formation through the cordon sanitaire. For Belgium, contrary to the European Union, the threat

of the proverbial or literary disintegration does not lie in the euro-skeptic attitude of the extreme rightist party Vlaams Belang though. It extends itself to the internal separation desires, which also lie at the foundation of the more moderate and immensely popular N-VA, Nieuw Vlaamse Alliantie (New Flemish Alliance), a central rightist nationalist party that places the Flemish citizens "first", yet is not Euro-skeptic. While the contemporary separatist nationalistic agenda of both the Vlaams Belang and the N-VA shall be addressed later on, at the European level it is important to take note of the shift in nationalist representation – from a rightist tendency to a very successful and strategically cunning leftist-central one.

1.4.b.   Pro-EU = Leftist Nationalism

As noted in graph 2 on page 49, the rightist Vlaams Belang no longer occupies the reigning nationalist seat for the country. Indeed, it has been replaced with the N-VA, where Bart De Wever paved the path towards electoral victory on all levels of the electoral scale in 2014: Regional (Flanders), federal and European.

In the same EU parliamentary fraction of the Greens/EFA, we find the N-VA joined by the SNP – the Scottish National Party. El Khalfioui (2014) argues that according to Marxist theorist Gramsci, nationalism is a neutral ideology that can be shaped according to a certain image of the world. The chairman of the N-VA, Bart De Wever, has on multiple occasions indicated that he admires Margaret Thatcher and his party combines nationalism, conservatism and neo-liberalism. These actually form the very counter-arguments for the Scottish National Party. The N-VA upholds a classic ethnic nationalism in which a prime condition to belonging to the "us" group of Flemings is the knowledge of the Flemish/Dutch language. Contrary to this view, the SNP adheres to a more modern type of civic nationalism. While different in their strategies and ultimate goals (the N-VA desiring to utilize confederalism to evolve into an independent Flanders; the SNP seeking Scottish independence to evolve into a confederate Great Britain in which the position of Scotland is redefined), one vital unifying factor can be observed: Their pro-EU stance. In the UK, Scotland actually holds the strongest base of pro-EU sentiments in the United Kingdom; and the N-VA is   also   pro-EU.   Their   respective   underlying   desire   for   greater autonomy/independence/confederalism in their current nation-state unions most certainly pushes their desire for a stronger EU presence. It would indeed, legitimize an increased regional/national autonomy if the EU continues to develop in the

direction of a federal system in "The European States of Europe" - contrary to "The European Nations of Europe", in which we see a stronger adherence to the confederate system, where the nation-states remain the strongest players. While in either, a European government shall stand central, controlled by a European parliament that represents the people, and at the same time a senate that represents the member-states, former Belgian Premier and current liberal MEP fraction leader Guy Verhofstadt states that "we are not seeking a superstate, we are striving for a federal system" (Knack, July 2014). And this would politically and structurally only reinforce the desire for greater regional or national (beyond the established nation-states) autonomy.

Indeed, from a geo-cultural standpoint, similarities between Flanders and Scotland may be visible and the SNP, in existence since 1934 as a fusion product of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party, chose for an independent Scotland from its inception. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected British Prime Minister and her conservative neoliberalist policy was labeled as anti-Scottish, striving to annihilate Scotland. From this moment forward, the SNP continued growing and since the Scottish parliamentary elections of 2011, they hold an absolute majority. The 2014 Scottish Independence referendum had been made possible by British Premier David Cameron, who in 2011 obtained a majority vote for Labour in the Scottish parliament under the promise of organizing a referendum, and came through on his promise. While many may regret this decision, he was the person who legally made the independence referendum possible in the UK. Contrary to this premiership's power, we see the opposite in the behavior of the Spanish premier Mariano Rajoy who embraces every means possible to make it legally impossible for Catalonia to embrace such a referendum on a national level[6]. While eventually unsuccessful in its national independence strive towards an independent Scotland in the 2014 referendum, the SNP did have to admit defeat, but sent a very strong signal to the British government. The SNP is utilizing its independence claim as a means to

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[6] Equally striving for provincial independence, Catalan autonomy aspirations face similar unknown factors as Scottish and Flemish independence would: membership in the EU, use of the Euro currency, establishment of a separate social welfare system. Belgium remains unique due to its location of Brussels, located in the center of the country, shared by both regional Flanders and Wallonia. Should Brussels have been located in the center of Flanders or in the center of Wallonia, as is the case with Barcelona in Catalonia, the discussion field may be more leveled from a geo-political standpoint.

evolve to a confederate system within Great Britain. For years, mention of a social union with the rest of Great Britain (Wales, Northern Ireland and England) has existed. In 2011, SNP parliamentarian Wishart wrote about the British identity: "Britishness will exist in Scotland long after we become independent. In fact, I think it could well be enhanced with independence. With independence we will get the opportunity to define a new Britishness, one based on equality and mutual respect. Britishness will still be all about our shared history and culture but it can also be about the new positive relationship we (will) seek to build". Does Wisthart thus acknowledge the viability of two national identities within 1 state? In essence we can argue that the debate around Scotland is not only a debate about identity and nation-building, but also an ideology. The romantic nationalists, clinging to the ancient Scottish culture in which Scotland is seen as an eternal national, form a small minority yet remain in existence. The agenda of the contemporary nationalist movement, though, is the socio-democratic principle of equality for Scotland.

Strategically, the N-VA and SNP differ quite drastically, with the latter stressing the potential of Scotland, whereas the former actively attacks the federal level of its state. At the European level, the Scottish "no" vote was actually met with relief. Maddens (2014) explains that many of the Scottish "yes" voters can actually be considered as those wishing to send a clear message for change to Westminster, not to the EU. The relief at the EU level, though, must have been very great since in essence there was no solution for a potential independent scenario. The European Treaties offer absolutely no answer to such matters, and luckily for them there has been no need to clarify a potential future for an independent regional part of an existing EU member-state. The future of Scotland today thus lies within the nation-state of the UK, not within the EU … A parallel can be drawn to Belgium in this regard, or at least such is the reasoning of many in Europe. With the capital of Europe located in the Flemish territory of Belgium, the city of Brussels would undoubtedly pose a greater problem for the EU than the member-state and nation-state of Belgium. A "yes" vote for Scotland would not have been beneficial for Belgium, especially now that the recently victorious N-VA party has somewhat shelved its communal re-organization (within a confederate model) for Belgium – this to maintain the peace and allow the country (in its entirety) to gradually grow towards it, rather than be drastically thrown into it. The N-VA had high hopes that the "yes" vote would have brought about a wave, not for Europe as a whole, but for Belgium in particular. After

all, if the EU could (and would, considering the Scottish "assets") have found a solution for Scotland, there would be incredible hope for Flanders as an independent member-state.

Contrary to the EU's desire for continued EU expansion, must an internal alignment and observance for independence perhaps be prioritized? Did the Scottish referendum do exactly that, offer the EU with a clear sign for a desire for change? Will the EU respond? Unfortunately until present, this has not been deemed a priority. At the very least, can we argue – as stated by "One Scotland" campaign leader and First Prime Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond (October 2014) - that the democratic process presented by and in Scotland, with a turnout of 86% of the Scottish population, demonstrates the citizens' involvement in political affairs that transcend to every aspect of daily life? Contrary to Belgium, where the electoral process is maintained by the mandatory voting system (under penalty of fines if not upheld), has Scotland shown Europe and Belgium and Flanders how to make decisions? Did many Scottish people vote for independence, because it might offer them a bigger chance to stay within the EU? If the UK 'exits' from the EU, will Scotland have no choice in the matter? These are matters that will most certainly return in future writings, and also play a role in the further examination of the Flemish nationalist stance today.

As demonstrated in this section, the nationalist movements within the European Union differ on multiple levels. Belgium, with its two main nationalist-driven parties, rightist Vlaams Belang and central rightist (although hiding this well in the leftist nationalist branch of the EU parliament), represents both a pro-EU and anti-EU argument. The electoral victory of the N-VA party, after more than 40 years of a socialist-driven governmental coalition in federal Belgium, depicts both the potential for the Flemish nation and state, but at the same time poses a grave danger for the continuation of Belgium as a nation and a state. In order to progress into the concluding section of this chapter, providing a critical stance on where the Flemish nationalist quest stands in terms of Belgium, it must be understood that *the intrinsic desire of both nationalist parties finds unification in their current underlying separatist nationalism, and their future separatist goal via a confederation or complete independence of Flanders* – in which the city of Brussels is geographically, historically, and politically located. Must we, in light of a possible split, take into consideration that Brussels may have developed as an independent unit?

1.5. Concluding Thoughts: Separatist Desire's Impact on Brussels

TINA over TAMARA … or Not?

"There is no alternative" are words often used by the contemporary Flemish nationalist elites of the N-VA in refuting all criticism. "But there is an alternative" states historian Bruno De Wever (2015, p. 31) – not to be mistaken with the N-VA frontman Bart De Wever. "Pretending that an evolution is inescapable is part of a political strategy". Often associated with the British premier Margaret Thatcher, TINA is a slogan that is in full glory in the Belgian, Flemish and Brussels political scenes. The "**T**here **I**s **N**o **A**lternative" doctrine has been proven wrong by history time and again. As least, such appears from The Land that Never Was[7] (2015) by Bruno De Wever and Antoon Vrints, in which Flemish historians offer a plausible alternative for how important moments in Belgian history could have turned out very differently. For example, if the famine during WWI had been even worse and a leftist-radical revolutionary movement had arisen in Belgium; or if Hitler had truly offered Kind Leopold III the room to install a true monarchial system. People commonly wrongfully assume that history will repeat itself, which is flawed thinking. It is also the type of thinking in which history is used for political ends. De Wever challenges to think about the ease with which the argument is made today that migration has always been the rule. He sees an undeniable ideological conviction hiding in such statements. Similarly, "bad Flemish nationalism historians gladly claim that the failure of Belgium as a nation was already determined in 1830" (p. 32), where we could actually argue that at the community level, history is referred to less today than it was 40-50 years ago, when the entire assumed painful history of the Flemish people was still used for political ends. Both authors also defy the assumption that the evaporation of Belgium as a state is an unavoidable process, since they see the splitting of this small country as entirely political-man-made, as were the numerous state reforms the Belgian state has gone through since its inception. In fact, the state reforms and their respective changes, accommodating the political complexity of Belgium throughout the years, could be seen as a "futures-friendly" historical present, since their very nature defies stagnation and embraces change. The fact that the

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[7] Het Land dat Nooit Was

Belgian 3 communities' structure exists today is due to its historical choices. Imagine if the country had been annexed by Germany in 1918, then everyone would be speaking German today and we would not be faced with a language problem (Vrints argues). De Wever continues by pondering 'what if' Belgium had become an authoritarian regime in 1830, like Prussia or the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the time. In this historical 'what if' scenario, we can detect the accurate analysis of Hroch's historical evolution. After all, the Flemish movement was only able to develop because Belgium was a liberal democracy with freedom of conscience and freedom of press. An authoritarian regime could have implemented an entire "Frenchification" by obliging all children to follow French-language education. A Flemish movement would then never have come into existence, because the Flemish-minded would have been removed from the public scene. This to demonstrate that there is no master plan behind large evolutions. There is no such thing as a point of no return for Vrints (2015). Pretending that (an) evolution is unavoidable is part of a political strategy.

As such, both authors find themselves no fans of TINA, but rather of TAMARA: There Are Many Alternatives Ready and Available. Within this context, must we equally place all nationalist propaganda in the Belgian nation-state in the category of political strategy? By focusing on the differentiation within one small state, are we preventing it from truly blossoming? Furthermore, is history hindering the present and future of the Belgian nation and state? If we draw this parallel further, some argue that we can equally find a sense of historical symbolism in the unification of the European Union. At a certain moment in time, the development and strengthening of the Union – especially in Belgium – had become a must scenario to which none dared oppose. Whoever did express skepticism, was pushed to the side like an outcast, like someone who did not seem to comprehend the larger importance. While in reality, we have absolutely no firm idea of where the EU is evolving to, and into. Yet, the symbolism of the past - as described by Armstrong - used to confirm its legitimacy in the present is rampant. A nice example, as Vrints (2015, p. 33) reminds, can be seen in the exhibition "This is Our History" currently held (2014-2015) at the Royal Military Museum in Brussels. Towards the end of the exhibit, a short movie is shown depicting the violent history of Europe in the beginning of the twentieth century, with the movie concluding with a close up of Herman Van Rompuy … indeed, former Belgian EU "President". By doing so, is history not being subjected to

a political message? Without the strong European Union, does the threat exist that former demons might be revived? Apparently WWI serves to justify a certain European ideal. A bloody past to symbolize the legitimacy of the present? This is at least part of the thinking of certain nationalist parties at the EU level, who seek an immediate dissolution of the political and economic framework established by the EU – to the, as they believe, detriment of the national identity and national viability of their sovereign nations.

While in theory this discussion can be lead on an ideological and critical level, the reality for Belgium – and as such for Brussels - today holds several different truths:

- Europe is not united politically, in fact there are strong forces opposing its political and structural existence. The dissolution of the EU is their main operational drive.

- Belgian nationalism and the feeling of belonging to the Belgian culture and Belgian nation and Belgian identity is under serious threat. While the nation-state's symbolism in and of the past may have created the Belgian identity, since the beginning of this millennium, it is being challenged by the identity of Flanders.

- Extreme Flemish nationalism draws on historical notions of the Flemish nation, existing prior to the creation of the Belgian state; while moderate Flemish nationalism relies on the counter-movement establishment against the 1830 state implementations towards building the Belgian nation.

- The argumentation of Bart De Wever, N-VA chairman, in incorporating historical nationalistic elements for the establishment of the grave differentiation between the linguistic lines in and of Belgium, is extremely successful in the moderate Flemish nationalist voice and sentiment. He has led his Flemish nationalist party to becoming the governing party of Flanders, and Belgium today.

With N-VA as the largest party, the future of Brussels becomes part of the equation and of the ongoing debate. Brussels houses 4 parliaments: the Flemish, Brussels, federal and European parliament. It furthermore provides the headquarter base for multiple IGOs and NGOs. From a sociological standpoint, the Brussels capital region knows no majority group and Arabic even constitutes the fourth most spoken

language. Furthermore, most Brussels citizens identify with their region more than with their nation-state. A recent study has even indicated that, should Belgium seize to exist, they would prefer to remain an independent state. (Provoost, 23 Maart 2013). This is a reality that the Flemish nationalists have never wanted to accept and their strive is for an independent Flanders with Brussels as its capital. This is and remains the open and clear demand of extremist Vlaams Belang, while N-VA attempts to distance (and nuance) itself from such a radical statement. They articulate that they seek independence via evolution, through a system of confederalism. So successful in both their propaganda and electoral victories, this state structure has been incorporated into the Flemish liberals and Christian Democrats's party program as well. N-VA presented that the gravity of responsibilities should be moved to the communities (mainly referring to the Walloon and Flemish communities), but in political theory there is no denying that confederalism is clearly a voluntary collaboration effort between *independent* states.

The N-VA's Confederate Program

NVA is aware that the majority of Flemish citizens is not in favor of an independent Flanders and even within their own party, less than 30% of their politicians believe in this thought. The end of 2013 (leading to the successful 2014 electoral victory) introduced the confederate plans of the N-VA in which a confederate Belgium would exist in the form of 2 sub-states: Wallonia and Flanders. A constitutional treaty would establish what remains joint at the Belgian level (defense, asylum, acquisition of nationality and payment of debt), and for N-VA, the Brussels capital region would receive a special statute. At that point, Brussels citizens would have to opt for a Flemish or Walloon statute, and there will no longer be a directly elected federal parliament – but instead a parliament in which members are appointed by the Walloon and Flemish parliament. For N-VA, an independent Flanders is a goal in itself, to be realized via a confederate Belgium. Note that in the case of the Scottish SNP, this separatist vision followed the reverse logic. In other words, N-VA wishes to utilize confederalism to obtain an independent Flanders – a Flemish sovereign state as the end goal. The confederate model the N-VA seeks to establish is based on ethnicity, finding its roots in the Flemish culture. Upholding multiple political and/or cultural identities is something lacking in the N-VA and in the end, the Brussels citizens will have to choose between the homogeneous identity

of Flanders or Wallonia. The most successful Flemish nationalist party does not recognize the identity of Brussels, and sees it as a transit city more than an independent unity. Mind you, while upholding this nationalistic thought pattern that Brussels is part of Flanders, the party plans on investing quite a bit in Brussels in order to ensure that it can equally develop into a fully fledged Flemish identity. In reality, the reactions against Flemish nationalism (and light nuances on the southern line of the linguistic Flemish border) can almost be coined as Brussels nationalism.

The nationalist tendencies of both Belgium and Europe cannot be denied. With Brussels playing the symbolic but also the literal role of the EU's capital, and furthermore being located in the highly volatile political climate of Belgium's nationalist debate, is it time to consider Brussels in a different light than as the 'mere' capital of …? For this reason, the next chapter will establish the uniqueness of the city, place it in its correct global and international importance and context, and will demonstrate that Anderson's imagined community may already be in full development for the people identifying with the culture of Brussels. Indeed, the symbolism and active imagining effort of the EU as a political and imagined community is stronger in Brussels than in any other place in Europe. It creates the unique setting for the formation of a national identity within a city, yet is met with resistance on all fronts of the nationalist spectrum.

As demonstrated in this first chapter, the issue of nationalism is a complex but important concept that greatly affects the daily affairs and operation of the state. At the same time, nationalism in Belgium by the Flemish rightists parties has been related to a political game at times rather than a historical and contemporary accuracy. For these reasons, it can be concluded that the nation-state of Belgium offers its citizens both a united national narrative within an exceptionally free liberal democratic system, and great potential to bring about change to that nation-state itself – as is evident from the six state reforms having been conducted in the past 185 years of Belgian existence. Within the contemporary Flemish nationalistic political tendencies, however, we can clearly see Brussels in association with the EU. This can refer to the grandeur linked to the growing IGO, but also to the negativism that exists from anti-EU nationalist parties throughout Europe. For this reason, the potential impact of nationalism on the capital of Europe is most definitely warranted.

CHAPTER 2
Brussels' City Identity as an Internationalized Alpha Global City

Loeckx et al. (2012) claim that it is not an evident task to define what Brussels is or what exactly it stands for, and that it greatly depends on your target audience as to what they believe it represents. "Some underline that Brussels is – or should become – a fully-fledged region, while others are more inclined to point to the city's status as a capital region governed jointly by the Dutch and French language communities. For some, Brussels is a cesspit of poverty and poor management that does nothing but devour federal money. For others it is a powerful center of economics and decision-making. Many stigmatize Brussels as unsafe, dirty and to be avoided, while others laud it as Belgium's only real major city and thus 'the place to be'. Flemish circles see Brussels as an ever expanding oil slick, threatening the linguistic integrity of the surrounding Flemish territorial landscape and eroding its spatial cohesion, while their French speaking counterparts claim Brussels as part of the Walloon territorial landscape and even dream of establishing a corridor between Brussels and Wallonia. Others still emphasize the internationalization of Brussels and see it as an international center of politics, as the capital of Europe, and even as a post-national cosmopolitan city. One aspect all observers can agree upon is the complexity and importance of the city on one level or another …

This chapter is intended to confirm the importance of Brussels as a capital. Sections 1 and 2 of this chapter will demonstrate its standing by drawing parallels between theoretical constructs of the global city concept and the internationalization of cities. The worldly and global position of the European capital immediately explains why in the last quarter of the 20th century, the interest in (and strive for) the city increased considerably. Indeed, until then, the capital city was considered a political entity that formed an integral part of the administrative functions of the nation-state Belgium. When Brussels developed into something far beyond its humble Belgian tasks, the nationalist propaganda commenced to incorporate Brussels into "their" territorial nationalistic agenda in the case of a possible separation of the Belgian country.   The international standing of the capital did not only turn it into a high commodity within the nationalist debate, it also allowed for the creation of a proper Brussels urban network identity – a notion rejected by Flemish nationalists - which will be introduced in section 3.

Several important factors, that are either a result of, or directly impacted by, the

internationalization and globalization of Brussels will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 on contemporary driving forces and chapter 4 on contemporary social emerging issues. This will allow the formation of a complete picture of Brussels in its nationalist landscape today. This specific chapter will position Brussels as a concept, and as a city.

2.1.   Brussels as an Official Alpha World Global City

Brussels can be characterized as a city impacted by globalization, internationalization (mainly Europeanization), institutionalization, and urbanization. But how does it compare to the international measuring standard for cities in the world? Recognized as an important aspect of the global economic system, cities today represent 54% of the total global population (World Urbanization Prospects 2014, 2015), with the number expected to increase in upcoming years due to continued urbanization. The European Environment Agency (2015) has calculated that in Europe, 75% of the population has chosen to live in urban areas and as such, it cannot come as a surprise that a global atmosphere breathes through these cities. Brussels is no different. In order to correctly position the Belgian capital, and to demonstrate its importance to Belgium, Europe, and the world, this section will comprise two main portions: A critical investigation into how the theoretical concept of the Global City evolved and what it entails; and positioning Brussels within this concept and within the ranking system of the Global Cities Network(s).

Prior to engaging in the contemporary theoretical notions of the Global and the World City, it is important to remember that prior to the theoretical differentiation between both, the concepts of mega-cities and capital cities dominated the socio-political landscape. A capital city was the seat of the nation-state, irrelevant of its size. A mega-city was defined as a large city with a population in excess of 4 million people. The notion of a World City can actually be traced back to 1915 and at that time referred to its strategic location in the world, attracting trade and passage. Today, this characteristic remains valid, although in a slightly more complex framework. Several organisms are in existence to rank a city's global and worldly character, each with their own individual set of measurable dimensions. The two leading ranking agencies can be found in the form of the GaWC – the Global and World Cities Ranking – and

the Global Cities Index. The first, GaWC, mainly driven by Taylor (2004) relies on a combination of both and interchanges between the concepts of the Global Cities and World Cities as defined by Friedmann and Sassen. The latter, the Global Cities Index, is inspired by Sassen's notions of the Global City. While these may sound similar and are utilized interchangeably today, they developed from different ideological undertones. While they are thought-processes that evolved and grew towards one another, mainly in the practical execution of world city research, they remain separate concepts and should be treated as such. Both Sassen and Friedmann strongly rely on the economic capitalist system that literally drives the world.

2.1.a. Friedmann's World City versus Sassens' Global City: World Cities as Centers of Control & Command versus Global Cities as Service Centers

Max Weber (1909) stated that "power equals the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probably rests" (p. 15). As such, a power-relationship is established between a subordinate and a dominant element. The dominant element is expected to exercise control and command. Friedman's (1986) World City Hypothesis continued on this assumption and marked a change of course in urban investigation. The underlying idea of his hypothesis formed the basis for world city research and the study of the world economy for many years. Based on the article World City Formation, an Agenda for Research and Action, Friedmann & Wolff (1982) started a new stream of research into world cities. Friedmann assumes that the altering situation of the world economy goes hand in hand with urban developments. On a world scale, he saw the contemporary city network as an urban expression of a new international labor/employment division in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Friedmann's World City Hypothesis comprises of 7 hypotheses (see table 1). In essence, his World Cities can be summarized as Centers of Control and Command. The World City is a place from which the coordination, the order, the control, and the management occurs regarding the global capitalist production and/or trade (Friedman & Wolff, 1982). In the contemporary capitalistic world, the World Cities are cities from which the transnational banks coordinate, supervise, control and manage the capital investments in one or different regions. This can occur throughout the entire world, in a single region, or between a core and a peripheral zone

(Grosfoguel, 1995). Allen (1997) describes the World Cities' power as "a capacity, a 'centered' conception" (Taylor, 2004, p. 87) with which he perfectly describes how relationships between world cities are constructed. Departing from the world cities with the greatest economic power, we obtain a distribution of this power throughout the rest of the cities and regions, according to the economic importance of the city in the world city network. The power of the World City in this global network is dependent on its control authority over the other network points. This position determines the influence of decision the city holds in the world city network. The most important economic cities hold a larger capacity and more power over the smaller ones and shall as a consequence also strongly determine how the world economy should be divided on a geographic level.

Somewhat contrary to this, Christaller (1933) saw the city as a collection of functions: A city 'caters' to its surroundings. He believed that urban functions contain vastly diverse activities, and cannot be offered everywhere. As such, they occur only in specific central locations, as described via the central place theory. The surroundings with which this central location upholds a mutual relation is not infinite, since it only spans to the maximum distance the population wishes to travel to make use of a service. Denrudder & Witlox (2002) stipulated that several revisions had to be made to Christallers central place theory in order to apply it to the world city network: The addition of several hierarchical levels, since Christaller's highest level spans no further than the nation-state; and the assumed equivalence of the hierarchical position in the urban system and the central place functions must be altered because of the functional specialization that exists between the cities (Cagmani, 1998). These principles form the basis upon which Sassen (1991) published her first systematic analysis of three world cities in the contemporary rapidly expanding world economy, namely The Global City: New York, London and Tokyo. Contrary to Friedmann, Sassen moves from the World City to a global age, and introduces the concept of the Global City: "When I first chose to use the global city, I did so knowingly – it was an attempt to name a difference … In this regard, it could be said that most of today's major global cities are also world cities, but that there may well be some global cities today that are not world cities in the full, rich sense of that term" (Sassen, 2001, p. xix). Following in the footsteps of Friedmann, Sassen equally developed 7 hypotheses (table 1) that define the concept of the Global City. Whereas Friedmann regarded the

power of the city as a capital, Sassen does not subscribe to these economic relations. In the Global City, the relations of service centers cannot be regarded as a sense of power. It offers services that ensure companies can grow to experience the world city as a necessary economic pole. A company that wants to move forward can no longer ignore the world city. In order to maintain their market position, these companies must transfer their services to highly respected service companies. These service companies can market a much more global market than the global company itself could.   In the Global City, an economic climate originates, which cannot be found anywhere else, and it is a networked whole that further advances itself via this global network.   It is in this context that Allen (1997, p. 70) writes of the power as a medium, "a networked whole". "The service companies ensure a new form of concentration in the Global City when it concerns decisions taken at the local level" (Swyngedouw, 1997).   This holds especially true in a "small" city like Brussels, where specialized professionals form part of the city's large immigrant population. Because of these personal connections, a small network is created that can penetrate in the highest decision-making levels.

Table 1: Seven Hypotheses distinguishing Friedmann's World City Hypothesis from Sassen's Global City Hypothesis.

Friedmann Friedmann, 1986, p. 317-331	Sassen Sassen, 2005, p. 28-30
World City Hypothesis	**Global City Hypothesis**
1. The form and extent of a city's integration with the world economy, and the functions assigned to the city in the new spatial division of labor, will be decisive for any structural changes o ccurring within it.	1. The geographic dispersal of economic activities that marks globalization, along with the simultaneous integration of such geographically dispersed activities, is a key factor feeding the growth and importance of central corporate functions.
2. Key cities throughout the world are used by global capital as "basing points" in the spatial organization and articulation of production and markets. The resulting linkages make it possible to arrange world cities into a complex spatial hierarchy.	2. Highly specialized service firms: The contemporary globalization makes it too complex and expensive for several large international companies to maintain some of their own proper economic activities, which they outsource to "highly specialized service firms". As a consequence, certain tasks formerly centralized in the headquarters of the company are now being outsourced and decentralized.
3. The global control functions of world cities are directly reflected in structure and dynamics of their production sectors and employment.	3. Global Cities: The global economy forms the basis of Sassen's Global Cities because it has created a new strategic role for large and important world cities, following an increased globalization. "Being in a city become

	synonymous with being in an extremely intense and dense information loop" (Sassen, 1991, p. 337).
4. World Cities are major sites for the concentration and accumulation of international capital.	4. Place-Independence of headquarters: Leading business centers are no longer formed by the head quarters of the large global business, as stated by Friedmann (1986), but by advanced **service companies**.
5. World Cities are points of destination for large numbers of both domestic and/or international migrants.	5. The Transnational urban system: "Fifth, these specialized service firms need to provide a global service which has meant a global network of affiliates or some another form of partnership. As a result we have seen a strengthening of cross‑border city‑to‑city transactions and networks. At the limit this may well be the beginning of the formation of transnational urban systems" (Sassen, 2001, p. xxi)
6. World City formation brings into focus the major contradictions of industrial capitalism - among them spatial and class polarization.	6. Urban and Socio-Economic Divide: "The dominant narrative concerns itself with the upper circuits of capital, not the lower ones, and with the global capacities of major economic actors, not the infrastructure of facilities and jobs underlying those capacities" (Sassen, 1995, p. 64)
7. World City growth generates social costs at rates that tend to exceed the fiscal capacity of the State.	7. The only chance for survival for many companies: Outsourcing their complex services to prominent service companies to continue competition on the global market.

Depending on different definitions and descriptions of, amongst others the World City (Friedmann & Wolff, 1982), the Global City "Sassen, 1991), the Global City Region (Scott, 2001), the World City Network (Taylor, 2004), it appears that the relations between the world cities are primarily economic in nature. For the purpose of this thesis, the political and cultural relations between world cities are of equal importance. As such, Sassen's definition for a Global City from which I shall continue my study of Brussels can be summarized and applies to Europe's capital as follows:

"These cities now function in 4 new ways:
1. As highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy and political world;
2. As key locations for finance, policy-making and for specialized service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors;
3. As sites of production, including the production of innovation, in these leading industries – most notably the European Union;

4. As markets for the products and innovations produced – and as a symbol thereof.

These changes in functioning of cities have had a massive impact upon both international economic activity and urban form; cities concentrate control over vast resources, while finance and specialized service industries have restructured the urban social and economic order. Thus a new type of city has appeared. It is the global city" (Sassen, 2001, p. 3).

Due to the rather new form of regularization and coordination, Sassen deliberately coined the term "Global Cities". The concept of World Cities had been known for a longer period of time and would have caused confusion since it primarily refers to cities that were dominant as the capitals of political imperia. While interchangeable, they are thus not mutually exclusive: A Global City can be a World City, as is the case in London. But not all World Cities are Global Cities, as Berlin proves. And vice versa, not all Global Cities are also World Cities, as is the case in Miami. While in English the interaction of both concepts is clear, my mother tongue of Dutch (or in Belgium, Flemish) does not allow such a distinction since "global" = "world". In either case, Brussels theoretically fulfills the criteria for both concepts: It is a World City due to its control and command position, strongly strengthened by the international corporations and institutions it houses; and it is a Global City for catering to its surroundings and is characterized by some of the internal social polarization described by Sassen (further elaborated up on chapter 3 Driving Forces). The official rankings equally place Brussels in these categories.

2.1.b.   Ranking of Brussels

As indicated in the beginning of this section, there are two leading ranking organisms that provide an overview of Global Cities, each based on different sets of measuring factors. Initially, this endeavor commenced with GaWC.

The first attempt to rank Global Cities can be traced back to Taylor's Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Study Group and Network, established in 1997. This group conducts research into the inter-city relations of the World City Network. As stipulated earlier, Taylor shifts his methodological use of Global City to World City at times. He bases his investigatory approach on the company organization. He departs from conceptualizations brought to life by researchers like Sassen (1991) and Castells (1996). Sassen's idea(l) of service companies (centers) frames is applied by Taylor in Castells' network logic. Castells' *space of flows* has

become a concept in socio-urban research. The differences in size, magnitude, application, function, etc. of the diverse 'spaces of flow', create a network with a strictly urban division of functions. During this, Sassen claims, the most important are the 'space of flows' of these service companies. Based on these flows, Taylor (2004, p. 56) judges that the World City (again, or Global City) formation is organized by a network of credible service companies. In the World City investigation, people often utilized a world city formation. Taylor (GaWC) follows the example of Castells and Sassen, but takes it a step further and coined a Global City Network formation brought about by the operation of advanced service companies. The definition of this type of network is necessary to practically place the cities in the Global City Network. Taylor wanted to differentiate himself from other researchers, like Sassen and Castells, by not only reflecting the theoretical idea of network formation between Global Cities, but also practically elaborate on them. Selecting the cities was done on a more arbitrary manner and is based on a first GaWC experience in seeing global office networks. He wanted to avoid that a Global City with global service functions would be 'forgotten' in the list of cities and therefore a much larger sample of cities was incorporated in the Global City Network. A total of 314 cities were selected. The pure calculations will not form part of this dissertation, due to their technicality, but we will proceed with the data put forward by the GAWC network and detect the ranking of Brussels. The Global and World Cities Research Network set forth four "advanced producer services" (Taylor, 2002) categories under which the economic, cultural, infrastructure and political functions of cities could be measured: Accountability – Advertizing – Banking/Finance – Law; in which three levels of global cities could be ranked. The most recent mapping[8] (2012) classifies Brussels as an Alpha City. The scale of ranking from Alpha ++ (signifying cities that are more integrated with the global economy than others) to Gamma Cities (linking smaller economic regions into the world economy) placed Brussels in a solid representation for and of the EU as a city that links "major economic regions into the world economy".

The second leading Global Cities ranking is conducted by A.T. Kearny Consulting Firm via the Global Cities Index, largely based on the conceptualization of

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[8] http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/whatsnew.html

Sassen's work on the subject. Foreign Policy states that "the world's biggest, most interconnected cities help set global agendas, weather transnational dangers, and serve as the hubs of global integration. They are the engines of growth for their countries and the gateways to the resources of their regions" (2008).   They rely on five dimensions to calculate the contemporary global cities' standings in the world today: Human Capital – Business Activity – Information Exchanges – Cultural Experience – Political Engagement. While having risen to 9th place in 2012, Brussels today (anno 2014) occupies the 11th place on the overall Global Cities Index (see figure 3). In comparison to its superiors in global city-terms, its strong focus on information exchange and political engagement is striking, yet not surprising, since Brussels fulfills the criteria for both internationalization and institutionalization in a city, as shall be confirmed in the next section of this chapter.

A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index, 2014 (rankings 1–42)

2014	2012	2010	2008	City	Value
1	1	1	1	New York	61.7
2	2	2	2	London	58.1
3	3	4	3	Paris	52.3
4	4	3	4	Tokyo	47.2
5	5	5	5	Hong Kong	41.3
6	6	7	6	Los Angeles	38.0
7	7	6	8	Chicago	36.8
8	14	15	12	Beijing	35.1
9	11	8	7	Singapore	34.3
10	10	13	11	Washington	33.4
11	9	11	13	Brussels	32.9
12	8	10	9	Seoul	32.6
13	16	14	10	Toronto	32.4
14	12	9	16	Sydney	32.3
15	18	17	14	Madrid	31.8
16	13	18	18	Vienna	30.3
17	19	25	19	Moscow	29.5
18	21	21	20	Shanghai	29.4
19	20	16	17	Berlin	29.4
20	22	22	33	Buenos Aires	28.9
21	15	19	29	Boston	28.6
22	17	12	15	San Francisco	27.2
23	23	20	21	Frankfurt	26.7
24	24	26	NA	Barcelona	26.7
25	32	NA	NA	Melbourne	26.7
26	26	29	23	Amsterdam	26.3
27	29	27	27	Dubai	26.3
28	37	41	28	Istanbul	26.0
29	36	34	32	Miami	25.5
30	30	31	NA	Montreal	25.4
31	25	24	26	Zurich	25.4
32	28	28	30	Rome	24.1
33	27	23	24	Stockholm	23.5
34	33	35	31	São Paulo	23.4
35	34	30	25	Mexico City	23.0
36	39	40	37	Atlanta	22.7
37	31	33	35	Munich	22.4
38	38	38	NA	Houston	22.3
39	35	32	NA	Geneva	21.7
40	40	39	34	Taipei	21.3
41	45	46	49	Mumbai	20.9
42	43	36	22	Bangkok	20.7

Legend:
- Business activity (30%)
- Human capital (30%)
- Information exchange (15%)
- Cultural experience (15%)
- Political engagement (10%)

Note: Values are calculated on a 0 to 100 scale.
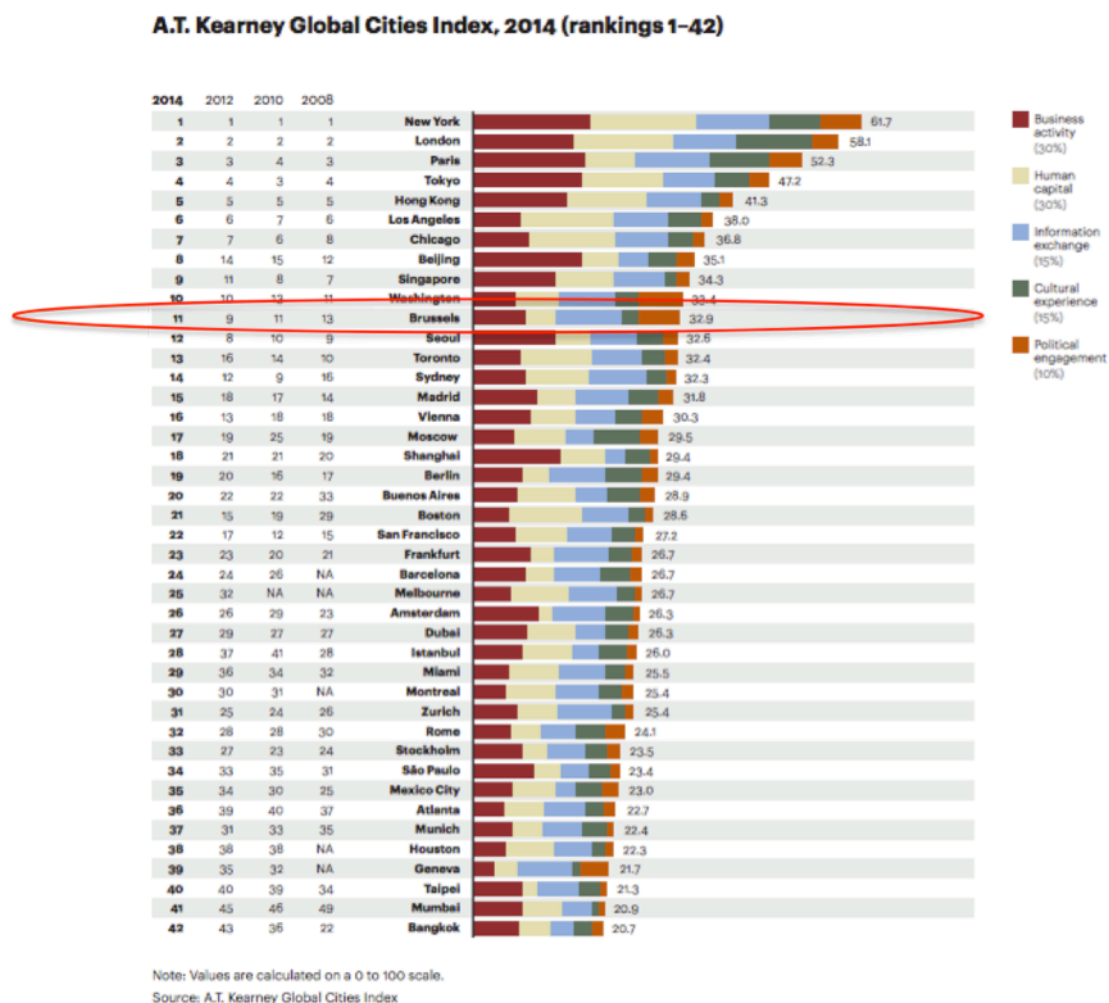Source: A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index

Figure 3: A.T. Kearny's Global Cities Index 2014

Aside from the two leading Global Cities ranking organisms, there are several other indicators of the status and the viability of the Global City of Brussels, amongst which:

- Knight Frank's Wealth Report[9] bases Global Cities's ranking on "wealth" – although we can observe a division within that categorization: Economic Activity, Political Power, Quality of Life, and Influence. It placed Brussels in 12th place for an accumulated wealth in 2013, yet in 2015 the city was dropped from the top 40 list on a global level. From an economic standpoint, the argument can be made that the small size of Brussels made it a rather fascinating presence on the economic activity list at all in 2013. In terms of quality of life, it should ameliorate its standing, especially as the 'visiting card' as the European capital. While Brussels occupied the 3rd highest place of a global city in terms of political power in 2013, it has today been surpassed and pushed to 4th place by Beijing. Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2015 did re-confirm Brussels as "the power base of the EU" (p. 28)

- The Tokyo-issued Institute for Urban Strategies[10] (2012) issued the Global Power City Index, where they take into account 6 parameters: Economy, Research & Development, Cultural Interaction, Livability, Environment and Accessibility. As a more culturally oriented indexation, it places Brussels in 19th place – before most large North American cities.

- Florida's (2012) Global Economic Power Index[11] stationed Brussels at the 4th European place, and at 16th economic power in the world.

Loeckx et al. (2012) believe that the fact that Brussels can rightly call itself a global metropolis of political decision-making and international diplomacy has little to do with the standing of Belgium, which is evolving more and more into a 'light' version of a nation-state. They claim that the international reputation of Brussels is jointly determined by three major factors:

1. The presence of the most important political and administrative institutions of the EU;

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9 http://www.knightfrank.com/resources/wealthreport2015/wealthpdf/04-wealth-report-global-cities-chapter.pdf
10 http://www.mori-m-foundation.or.jp/research/project/6/index.shtml#
11 http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/05/what-is-the-worlds-most-economically-powerful-city/256841/

2. The activities, negotiation, decision-making of European politicals, civil servants, diplomats, lobbyist, representatives of IGOs, NGOs and multi-nationals, think tanks, etc.; and

3. The association of Brussels with the identities and values of the European Union (p. 15).

The first two points will find confirmation in the next section, exploring the internationalization of Brussels - which did not occur overnight. Loekckx's last factor will be addressed in the third and final section of this chapter, in which the establishment of a Brussels Urban Identity will be examined. If the international reputation and the international image of Brussels depicts one that embodies all of the identities of the EU, can we still call it purely Belgian? Has Brussels become truly international due to the companies and institutions housed and operating in it? And are it those institutions that "carry" the city or vice versa?

2.2. Internationalization of Brussels via Institutionalization

Checkel (2005) states that "international institutions are a ubiquitous feature of daily life in many world regions, and nowhere more so than in contemporary Europe. While virtually all would agree that such institutions matter, there is less agreement on exactly how they have effects" (p. 801). In order to truly grasp the underlying internationalization of Brussels from a historical standpoint, however, it is important to observe and ponder its expansion. While the impact of the European Union institutions has most definitely been felt through and by the city of Brussels, and the entire Belgian population, it is important to remember that the formation of such an internationalization project within the current Belgian and European capital was centuries in the making. As such, the following section offers an interplay between theory and practical historical development, and addresses the theoretical understanding of the institutionalization and internationalization process of Brussels from two particular historical angles: Pre-European Union, and post-EU internationalization – Europeanization if you will. Several issues that have arisen as a direct result from this international expansion exercise will equally be addressed within the context of a fading Belgian national identity within the capital.

International, Internationalization, Internationalism

For the purpose of reading fluency, note that the terms described in this sub-title will be utilized in an analogous manner. "The first term (international) generally refers to a quality, the second term (-ization) to a process of change (something is becoming more …), and the third (-ism) to an ideology or a program (a view to be promoted)" (Goldmann, 2001, p. 9). As Goldmann (2001) defines, "internationalization denotes a process whereby an object is becoming more international than previously: the economy, the media, higher education, political decision-making are all more international than they were previously" (p. 10). This was and is certainly the case for Brussels, where we are witness to the megalomaniac dreams[12] of a few great leaders that paved the path towards the contemporary international city we know today.

In Internationalization and Domestic Politics, Keohane & Milner (1996) utilized "the "second image reversed" tradition by Gourevitch (1978). Its distinctiveness derives from the juxtaposition of theories of policy preferences based on microeconomics, on one hand, and arguments that emphasize how existing institutions shape the effects of internationalization, on the other" (p. 6). In a broad sense, their volume "presents a dialogue between international political economy, heavily influenced now by economic models, and comparative politics, driven these days by the "new institutionalism"" (p. 6). One of the institutional views within this sociological theory of institutions investigates and stresses how institutions shape the behavior of agents (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983 and 1991). "The core idea that organizations are deeply embedded in social and political environments suggested that organizational practices and structures are often either reflections of or responses to rules, beliefs, and conventions built into the wider environment" (Powell, 2007, p. 1). In 2001, Scott developed three institutional order pillars which, in different combinations, shape organizations. It takes but a minor stretch of the imagination to draw the parallel between the shaping of an organizational field and the shaping of the society in which these institutions are at play. While the regulative and normative pillars are interesting in their own right, it is the cultural/cognitive element (Scott,

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[12] The megalomania dreams of Leopold II, who sought the establishment of a global school (a world school) next to his Congo Museum; the utopian Mundaneum of Paul Otlet, who wished to disclose scientific knowledge; and the explicit profiling of Brussels (post-WWII) as the 'hub' of international organizations, following the impulse given during the World Exhibition (Expo) in 1958, all promoted Brussels as the crossroads of Europe.

2001) that can be utilized in understanding the institutionalization of international Brussels. Powell (2007) argues that "a key analytical task for institutional analysis is to ascertain which factors are important in particular contexts and the extent to which the mechanisms work to reinforce the prevailing social order or undercut one another" (p. 3). Bordieu and Wacquant (1992) stressed the relational and cultural aspects of membership to a society, and with 19 communes –each with their distinct features and traits- the city of Brussels is characterized by differing institutional influences and impacts due to the great diversity within the capital. The desire for institutional growth within an internationalization context entails both to redistribute wealth in favor of the government's core political constituencies and to preside over an expanding societal pie (Hibbs, 1987; Kramer, 1971; Londregan & Poole, 1990, in Garret & Lange, 1995). With the internationalism of Brussels so closely tied to the financial potential of the European Union, it appears "politicians cannot afford to ask what is good for society as a whole in the long run, lest they lose power in the interim" (Garrett & Lange, 1995, p. 50).

2.2.a.   Pre-EU Internationalization of Brussels

Brussels moved from being an economic city of importance within the European continent, to aspiring to become a federal world city, 'settling' for the (un)official capital of Europe in the latter half of the 20th century. Prior to its unofficial EU standing, however, internationalization commenced before the conclusion of WWII. Indeed, within the contemporary network of political world cities, Brussels is one of the world's top four, together with Washington, Beijing, and Geneva. This position is the fruit of a long-winded process of international and political center formation and metropolisation. (De Groof & Elaut, 2010).

Some would believe (and logically so) that Brussels' place on the world map dates back to the European integration process immediately following 1945, but in fact the 19th century was already characterized by the city attempting to distinguish itself at the crossroads of cultures in Europe, and its function as international center was actively promoted by Belgian intellectuals, opinion makers, politicians, etc. In fact, Brussels' ambitions in the years prior to WWI were not only of a European scope, but far more wide-ranging, namely global. Traces of all these protagonists can be found in archives and other historical sources. Based on the records preserved in the State

Archives in Belgium, evidence can be found indicating that some people already campaigned to turn Brussels into a Federal World District prior to 1914. Indeed, mainly due to Belgium's liberal constitution and the expansion of its railway network, which advanced the mobility of both people and ideas, Brussels developed into a center for international congresses in the course of the 19th century, becoming the seat of an increasing number of specialized international organizations. Already in the years prior to the Great War, more than half of all international organizations in existence at the time were based in Brussels - even in the face of competition from other major cities such as The Hague, Geneva and Bern. The internationally guaranteed and established neutrality of Belgium, which would lead to many problems in the decades ahead though, was another determining factor that attracted international organizations and activities. Belgium played a key role in the development of the international peace movement. After originating in the USA as an initiative of the Quakers, the movement spread to the UK and France until in 1848, a crucial year in European history, it found particularly receptive soil in Belgium (De Groof & Elaut, 2010). On the initiative of the American pacifist, Elihu Burritt, and with active support from the Belgian government leader, Charles Rogier, the American and British peace organizations convened the "Premier Congres des Amis de la Paix Universelle" in Brussels.

From this point forward, the expansion of the peace movement grew. The number of international activities, gatherings and congresses organized in Brussels grew steadily since 1840: from 28 in 1840-1860 to 790 in 1901-1910. At the dawn of the 20th century, the number of international organizations involved in a large variety of fields had risen considerably. A strong trend towards the organization of the universal interests of peoples had emerged. Many of these new organizations chose a small, neutral country in the heart of Europe to establish their seats, secretariats or headquarters. The phenomenon of international organizations led to a sociological study by Cyrille Van Overbergh (in 1907), L'Association Internationale: Out of 109 permanent international organisms existing at the time, 17 had no fixed seats and 42 had their seats in Belgium. In 1910, with 42, Belgium had more permanent seats than all the other countries together. (De Beuele, 2010). Parallel to the 1910 World Fair in Brussels, the world congress of international organizations took place during which initiatives by Paul Otlet & Nobel Prize winner (1913) Henri La Fontaine led to the reshaping of the Central Office of International Associations into the Union of

International Associations, still established in Brussels today. The UIA included 220 organizations under the patronage of 22 governments. In the context of inter-city and international competition, Brussels developed into a junction between cultures and a center for international activities, congresses, institutions and organizations in the early 20th century – a city within a cosmopolitan posture, if you will. The internationalism comprised in this cosmopolitan city ranged from the embrace of multicultural demographics, welcoming world citizens, all gathered in the world city of Brussels. While voices were increasingly raised calling for the drafting of a proper legal statute for international organizations, one man had a legal construct in mind that was much more global in scale: Brussels not as a mere international city, but as a true federal world district.

Louis Frank was a doctor in law, a progressive feminist, an activist for children's rights and an internationalist (De Groof, 2005). In 1903, Frank began to prepare the publication of his two-volume work, the first part of which was published in 1905: Les Belges et la Paix. In this book, he pointed out how Belgium had systematically devoted itself since 1830 to the promotion of peace and international cooperation. In recognition of this, he developed the remarkable project of founding a Federal Work District in Belgium, in Brussels or its vicinity. In 1905, through the intervention of the King's secretary, Edmond Carton de Wiart, Frank managed to obtain the support, at least in principle, of Leopold II for his peculiar idea. Crown Prince Albert's favour could also be won. Frank believed in the need to create a universal confederation of states and peoples, and this world confederation necessarily had to be governed by an international administrative center. The establishment of this Federal World District in 1915 went through several geographic planning exercises and in light of the then 100th year commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, even the latter city was considered. However, finding inspiration in/from Washington DC and as an international and European micro-cosmos, Brussels was the obvious choice for the establishment of a world district, he argued. Belgium had all too often been the battlefield of European wars. Surprisingly, the idea of a world district was not simply dismissed as a wholly utopian daydream. Even the Belgian financial and business press considered it a grand but feasible world society project that could only be of benefit to Belgium. Unfortunately no international consensus formed around this project. Not only was the competition between the cities of Brussels, The Hague and Geneva too harsh, a common point of view on the

expediency of a single world capital was lacking. Meanwhile, increasing international tensions were creating an unfavourable context. Yet despite the intrusion of grim realities, Frank's campaign remains a fine example of the combination of patriotism and pacifism, as well as of the forging of Belgium's national identity as a "terre d'internationalisme."

So again, Brussels' aspirations to grow into a political world center are the result of long-term planning, commenced prior to WWI. Undoubtedly, the groundwork brought in place (literally and figuratively speaking) in support of the creation of an international Brussels was further built upon in the continued evolution of the vast number of international institutions[13] house-vested in the relatively small city of Brussels post-WWII. It found strength and grandeur in the formation of the European Union. Weiss (2000)'s assertion about the internationalization processes in the inter-war period presents "a compelling case for a globalization tendency (that) has not been established" (p. 63), and historical documentation about the establishment of international institutions during this era substantiates this claim for Brussels as well. The more recent (past 50 years) internationalization can and must indeed be traced back to the formation of the European Union and this process has placed the Belgian capital –with a population of 1.16 million inhabitants (Belgian Federal Government, 2014) on the global map.

2.2.b.   Europeanization following the Establishment of the European Union

After WWII, while Belgium was also involved in the foundation of other international, European and regional organizations, it is rather shocking to find that the Belgian government itself voted against advancing Brussels beyond the Belgian nation. Goldmann notes (1995) that "some find it self-evident that internationalization entails the demise of the nation-state … others find it obvious that national identity is such a powerful force in the minds of man and that the nation-state is such a strong

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[13] The most important (in terms of headquarters in Brussels <u>and</u> of an official seat located in the Belgian capital), albeit not exclusive, list can be summarized as follows:
- NATO - World Customs Organization - Benelux General Secretariat – EuroControl - International Labor Organization - United Nations Development Program – WHO - The World Bank Office for the Benelux and the EU - International Organization for Migration – UNICEF – UNESCO - UN Refugee Agency - Liaison Bureau for the Council of Europe – UNHCR - Permanent Office of the African Union - Liaison Office for the Assembly of the European Regions - Etc.

political institution that there are strict limits to internationalization" (p. 21). While it remains speculation that this drove the decision not to advance Brussels beyond the national "boundaries", the issue of a fragile national identity cannot be overlooked.

We find the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquartered in Brussels, the Supreme Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) in the southern region of Belgium, etc. The reasons for moving NATO to Brussels were actually very obvious since already at that time, Brussels was the key European decision center. But this status had indeed not been achieved without a struggle. And, as mentioned earlier, strange as it may seem, initial resistance to further advance Brussels as the seat of the first European economic organization came from the Belgian government itself. After 1945, Belgian foreign policy was still dominated by the socialist minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Henri Spaak, who held his portfolio from September 1939 until August 1949, when he was succeeded by former Christian-Democratic prime minister, Paul Van Zeeland. After the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950, negotiations were opened for the founding Treaty that would create the ECSC (European Steel and Coal Community).

The Treaty of Paris establishing the ECSC was signed on 18 April 1951 by six member states, of which Belgium was one. But the question of where the ECSC's seat would be located still had to be answered and the 6 nations agreed to address this issue at the Paris Summit of July 1952. (De Groof & Elaut, 2010) From today's point of view, it appears incomprehensible and even surreal, but it is a fact that the homogeneous Christian-Democratic Belgian government of that time (1952-1954)) opposed the candidature of Brussels for the seat of the ECSC, going even to such lengths as to veto Brussels in favour of the city of Liege (located in the south of Belgium). Imagine what a different future that would have created for Belgium and Brussels! Following the elections of April 1954, however, the Brussels Syndicate led an intensive campaign to make the population aware that the decision regarding the seat of the European institutions would be crucial to the future of Brussels and its ambitions to become the capital of Europe. The Syndicate furthermore cautioned government and parliament against a too radical stance and called upon Spaak to propose an independent international enquiry in order to find out, comparatively and objectively, which city might best be suited to accommodate the seat. Once again, the advantages of Brussels were listed. Belgium was neither a great power with imperialistic ambitions, nor did it aspire to dominate European politics.

Brussels was in theory then, and remains in practice today, a bilingual capital located in the geographic center of the six nations and formed a pre-eminent contact zone and a tapestry of diversity of Romance and Germanic cultures, where neither French nor Germans would feel dominated. As capital of the nation, Brussels already had the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the European institutions and officials. Brussels was an international junction within the public road, railway and airline networks as well as being a center for culture, science, education, arts, religious worship and mundane society life. Meanwhile, the Belgian government had increased its efforts to be able to open a successful World Fair by 1958. There is no doubt that Expo 58 and its large-scale preparations as well as the heavy investments and infrastructure works that came along with it played a crucial role in the re-launch of the Brussels candidature and the promotion of the city's profile as the future capital of Europe (De Groof, 2008). One month prior to the opening of Expo 58, the Belgian government launched a campaign in support of the candidature of Brussels with a successful 'white book' on Brussels. This was published in the format of an atlas by the government, which had spared no expense nor effort. April 1958 signs the date in which the chairmen of the Commissions of the ECSC, ECC and Euratom all expressed their preference for Brussels. From this moment onwards, the ball started rolling: Due to the swift increase in the number of European functionaries, the Belgian government chose to construct a new administrative complex with sufficient capacities at the Berlaymont. The Brussels-Capital Region continued and continues revising improvements to their master plan for the European District, while the European quarter (located in one of the capital's 19 communes) continues to expand and to condense, and the presence of European institutions is – in the light of the de-nationalization of the Belgian economy and the recent banking crisis – now more than ever the real engine of the Brussels economy.

2.2.c. Internationalization & Identity Association

Morgenthau claimed that "overriding loyalty to the nation erects an 'insurmountable obstacle' to the establishment of a world state" and that "the peoples of the world are willing and able to sacrifice and die so that the national governments may be kept standing" (1960, p. 511). Political philosopher David Miller (1995) further asserts that "the majority of people are too deeply attached to their inherited national identities to make their obliteration an intelligible goal" (p. 184). Neither author must

have had Belgium in mind when making these statements about the internationalization process in relation to the conceptualization of the nation-state. Might it even be possible to trace the 'ease' of internationalization for Brussels back to a lacking national identity felt throughout both the capital and the federal state at that time?

Arts & Halman (2006) find that "… the Maastricht Treaty in Western Europe is said to have awakened nationalistic sentiments and movements, and processes of cultural, economic, and political internationalization and globalization are assumed to have caused not only increasing insecurity about national identity, but also a loosening of the bond between collective and personal identity in Europe". This process, however, seems to have intensified the search for identity rather than having weakened it. It almost appears as if European unification might mean a loss of national identity and might be igniting/emerging a quasi-national European identity (De Beus, 2001) within the cosmopolitan city of Brussels. In 2005, Arts & Halman's study emphasized the general Europeans' disdain for the European Union. "When people were asked what their least favorite affiliation is, Europe was rated second after the world as a whole" (p. 77). Their findings show that, contrary to what some social scientists presume, few people in Europe today adopt a quasi-national European identity, and cosmopolitans are a somewhat larger, but still small minority. The graph (figure 14 - in appendix) assembled for Arts & Halman's investigation provides a rather interesting look into Belgians' overall association with their country: In 1999-2000 (figure 14 – in appendix), Belgians could be characterized as identifying as follows with the following territorial identities:

- Low identification with the locality
- High identification with the region
- Average identification with the country
- Higher than average identification with Europe
- Second highest identification with the world.

Aside from the territory (and as such the past generations of people) having been part of virtually every major historical European power, the strong internationalization commenced in the 19th century could lie at the basis for the Belgian identification with international institutions, concepts, and world views. What is equally fascinating is the high identification with the regional territory which may lie at the foundation of

the establishment of a Brussels identity. In essence, it is impossible for any citizen of Brussels anno 2015 not to be aware of the internationalization of which they are part.

Indeed, expert city researcher Eric Corijn (Corijn et al, 2009) from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel has been involved in numerous studies surrounding the internationalization (from multiple angles) of the Belgian and European capital. According to his observations, Brussels most certainly meets the characteristics (as set forth by himself and his research center) illustrating the importance of internationalization in Brussels:

1. International Connectivity: "Brussels is a highly connected city, located at the heart of Europe (note that 19% of the EU's surface area plus Switzerland and Norway holds 60% of the population and represents 72% of the Europe's GDP), and the center of the continent's densest motorway and high-speed train networks. Brussels' rank among world cities is largely superior to what could be expected from the size of the city and the strength of the Belgian economy. The GaWC (Globalisation and World Cities, 2000) listed Brussels in seventh place among European cities, far behind the "global cities" of London and Paris, but holding its own with Milan, Frankfurt, Madrid and Amsterdam, and ahead of Zurich" (Corijn et al, 2009).

2. International Character: Most importantly the direct impact of its functions as the heart and capital of Europe, housing many of the institutions that make up the EU institutional triangle. The growing international presence (also beyond the EU as demonstrated above) also means that the employment for and by those international organizations contributes to the Brussels and Belgian financial pictures.

3. A population highly international, multilingual and multicultural: Deboosere et al. (2009) found that of the 1,048,491 Brussels residents counted in 2008, 295,043 (28.14%) were not Belgian nationals. When the number of Belgian citizens of foreign origin is added the number rises to 50% of the population who have non-Belgian points of reference.

The above sections have positioned Brussels as a Global City, and as an international city characterized by strong institutionalization. The unique make-up of the city's inhabitants, addressed in more detail in chapter 3 on driving forces, furthermore places it beyond the Flemish-Walloon culture and identity discussions conducted in

the other 2 regions of the Belgian country. There is no counter-evidence that the European Union has not clearly left its mark on the face of Brussels. The city is not officially the capital of Europe, but it is perceived as such. "Brussels", the name –or the brand, if you prefer- seems to be even better known in the world than "Belgium" (Van Rompuy, Introduction to <u>Europe in Brussels</u>, 2010). Located at the heart of the Western nation of Belgium, Brussels has grown from a 10th century fortress town founded by a descendant of Charlemagne into a metropolis of more than one million inhabitants – living in the 19 municipalities of the city.

As chapter 1 indicated, the nationalism debate in Belgium can clearly be construed between the linguistic barriers that are regarded to have a respective cultural identity: Flemish and Walloon – Dutch and French in language. Brussels distinguishes itself from this linguistic separation since it is officially bilingual in both languages. This was not the case throughout its entire history, however. As such, it has been debated for decades as to where exactly Brussels belongs from a cultural standpoint. Flemish nationalists refer to the territorial location of the city, Walloon nationalists find their biggest asset for association the higher use of French in the city. The internationalization, institutionalization and expansion of the city to the level of a Global City makes the capital of Europe prime nationalist value, although the city's citizens are becoming increasingly verbal in identifying themselves with their city above anything else.

2.3. Brussels Nationalism & Brussels Identity

"A few individuals still walk the streets who believe that 'Brusselers' comprise of two categories and that this remain such: 'Flemish' and 'Walloon', and that the integration in Brussels boils down to identifying with one of these categories … (We need to) liberate ourselves from this surreal and disastrous image, and accept that a multiple identity has become the norm and shall remain so; think about how we can transform the heterogeneous and unstable population of this city into one in which everyone is willing to listen to the 'others' and learn from them, and build towards a better future with them"

(Professor Dr. Philippe Van Parijs, 2013)

As the largest international player within the Belgian nation-state, the capital has not escaped the agendas of nationalist streams. In the concluding paragraph of chapter 1,

the idea of incorporating Brussels into Flanders, as introduced by the Flemish N-VA nationalist party, was sketched. Since the moderate nationalists (the confederalists) do *not* perceive Brussels as an identity in itself, they believe it to belong to the territorial geo-political unit that makes up Flanders. The reality is that the Flemish nationalist debate vis-à-vis Brussels revolves around several highly contradictory factors, of which the three most important can be formulated as follows:

- Brussels is perceived as highly positive as a Global City with an outlook to the world in a potentially federalizing European Union, as the N-VA nationalist agenda (contrary to the far right nationalist agenda of other Belgian and EU players) seeks. After all, if Europe federalizes, the potential exists to position Flanders –rather than Belgium- stronger in an autonomous fashion within the EU. In this N-VA scenario, Brussels either belongs to Flanders, or has become its separate region within the confederate N-VA model.

- Secondly, Brussels is considered part of the Flemish territory (see figure 4), yet is seen as a negative factor in the geographic Flemish landscape. The reason for this is the fear of linguistic and cultural emigration out of the capital into other Flemish regions, potentially disturbing both the Flemish identity and the Flemish homogeneity in language.

- Finally, the historical linguistic oppression of the Flemish in Brussels by the Belgian state (the Frensh-speaking elites) has created a counter-reaction and a demand for the return to historical roots.

In essence, the three levels of identity-creation via nationalist theory – in this case via Hroch, Smith, and Anderson - investigated in chapter 1 can equally be found applied in the contemporary Brussels setting. This final chapter section will position Brussels in the current Flemish nationalist debate, via theoretical and practical explorations, and will conclude with the introduction that a Brussels identity is currently in the making. At this point, it is also important to note that chapter 3 on the driving forces for/of Brussels will further clarify the cultural, population, governance structures of the city and its people. The intention of this section is to establish that within the culturally diverse population of Brussels, a new form of identity has arisen. Rather than identify with Flanders and the Flemish language, or with Wallonia and the French language, the Brussels' citizens believe themselves to be simply that: "Brusselers" (loose translation of the Brussels' dialect for people living in Brussels).

2.3.a. Notions of Nationalism In, For, and About Brussels

Brussels as a historical city with a rich past knows no shortage of city legends, historical symbolism, and folklore. In a purely theoretical context, Smith (1994)'s theory would apply *if* "…the role of the past was clear and unproblematic. (If) The nation was always there, indeed it is part of the natural order, even when it was submerged in the hearts of its members. The task of the nationalist is simply to remind his or her compatriots of their glorious past, so that they can recreate and relive those glories" (p.18). The deliberate incorporate of 'if' in this citation hints at the continuous changes in demography throughout the past centuries, most notably since the inception of the French language in the Belgian nation-state in the 19th century, which realistically do not allow the return to such nostalgic common ancestry or heritage as a city. In fact, the argument could be made that only an extremely small percentage of the capital's population regards these historical myths as anything more than mere history – history without a sense of belonging to the city's culture. No, the sense of belonging or the active disconnect to belonging, should be traced back to the creation of monolingual Brussels in which the French Belgian elite government monopolized the country.
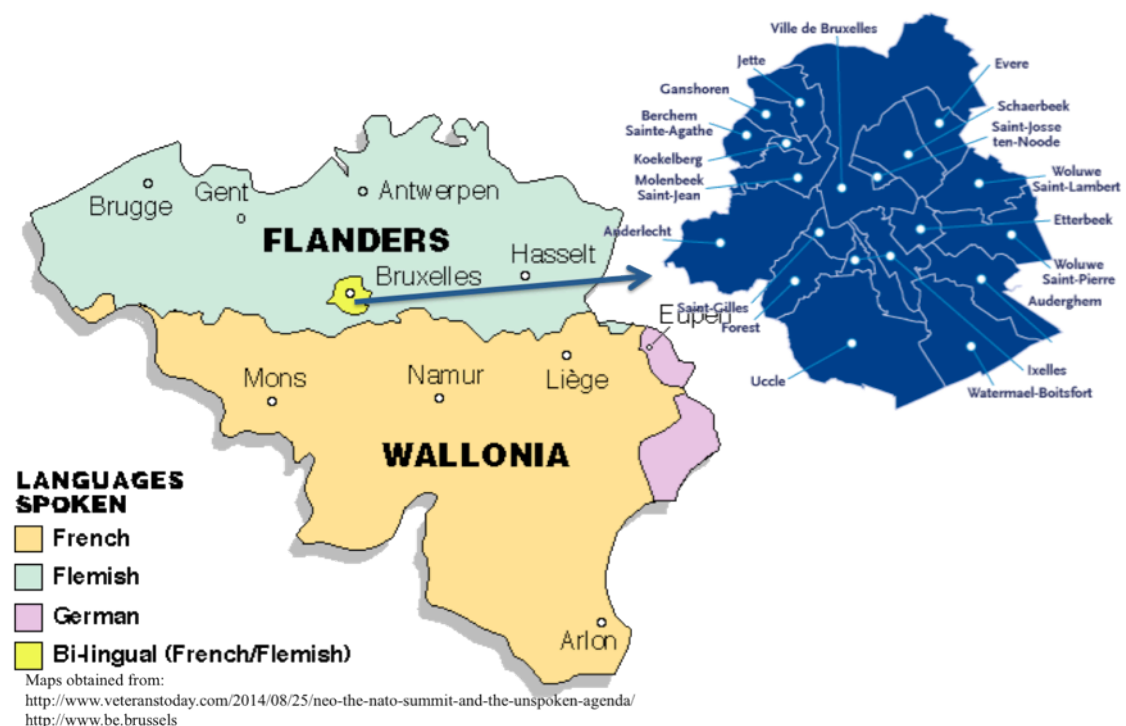

Figure 4: Brussels, located in Flanders, officially bilingual, uniting 19 municipalities within its borders of Brussels Capital Region.

From the first official historical writings on the city of Brussels in the 10th century until the early 20th century, Brussels was a mainly Dutch-speaking town, findings its heritage in the Flemish/Dutch traditions. Upon the establishment of the French-speaking (the sole official language of Belgium at the time) administration in Brussels, the city quickly shifted its linguistic heritage and became monolingual for decades. Indeed, for almost a century and a half, Brussels did not play the role of a bilingual capital between Flanders and Wallonia. That was the result of an "accommodating" linguistic regime, strongly defended by the francophone elite, disregarding the language laws where possible, in order to turn the agglomeration into a merely francophone city. The principle of bilingualism was not accepted and later on only very slowly put into practice. As such, the window for the creation of "small nations" as coined by Hroch (1985) was opened. Due to state oppressed linguistic Flemish liberty in the capital, opposition movements came into existence and were successful. Indeed, the process of Frenchification stopped in the 1970s. One of the reasons was the fact that Flanders got control of its own separate cultural and educational network. Furthermore, the language laws of 1963 guaranteed bilingualism and the recruitment of Dutch-speaking civil servants became mandatory – although these were applied in a minimalist way in a number of municipalities and avoided whenever possible. The opposition from Flanders (and Flemish nationalism) continued rising. Afterwards, in 1980, the Brussels Capital Region (consisting of 19 municipalities, as noted in figure 4) finally opted for bilingualism of all of its institutional services, aided by the mono-lingualism of some of its civil servants. Needless to state that the lacking cooperation between mono-lingual Flemish speaking civil servants and mono-lingual French speaking civil servants created institutional and administrative problems. At the same time, from 1966 onwards, Flanders became the strongest economic region of Belgium, and its economic power generated linguistic power - with direct effects on the labor market and a growing demand for bilingual personnel. In short, in one generation Dutch/Flemish was recognized as a standard language with a high status (Van Velthoven, 2011). In this historical development, the Flemish N-VA finds strong evidence that the Brussels Capital Region is historically part of Flanders – even though it was "stolen" and misappropriated by the French-speaking Belgians.

Granted, Hroch's linguistic reactionary nationalism principles fed the contemporary Flemish nationalist desires and Brussels as a city exemplifies the

historical struggles the Flemish endured in order to regain recognition for both their language and culture in Belgium. While somewhat logical from a purely theoretical standpoint, this line of argumentation seems problematic in the current nationalist debate led by the N-VA for one main reason: Ideally, it assumes that Brussels can regain a fully Flemish culture, believing that no other national/city identity has come into existence. At the same time it realistically acknowledges the French/Walloon nationalist reactionary movement in recognizing the large number of French-speakers in Brussels. As such, the contemporary political agenda of the Flemish nationalist party foresees a confederate plan with two separate regions Flanders and Wallonia, with the German cantons, and the Brussels capital region gaining a separate statute. In their program, rather than offer a hard-core Flemish position, they believe to demonstrate leniency by telling Brusselers that they will have to choose between Flanders or Wallonia in terms of "belonging". This belonging will determine not only their identity, but also to whom they will pay taxes, whom they will vote for, and who will pay their pension. Clearly this clashes with the opening quote of this section, by Philippe Van Parijs, who perceives Brussels as an entity that transcends the separation between Walloon and Flemish.

In essence, the Flemish nationalist motives for Brussels do not allow the city to flourish, but prioritize Flanders and the Flemish culture. The Flemish nation takes priority over the Brussels situation, Verstichele (2012) states. He continues that Flemish nationalism does not commence from the "super-diverse Brussels reality, but starts from the Flemish nationalist motives: for this reason, this super-diversity must be homogenized by the N-VA". This naturally assumes that there is only a Flemish and a Walloon identity in Belgium, without considering Brussels. Indeed so, despite the internationalization evidence, despite the Global City standing, despite the numerous city projects, N-VA believes Brussels to be nothing more than a transit city. An important one, with clear economic foundations that could benefit Flanders, but according to Maly (2013) the city is merely perceived from the function which it can fulfill in the Flemish nationalist agenda. Again, N-VA does not acknowledge Brussels as a separate identity, which is rather curious since strong signals can be detected, confirms exactly the opposite. Indeed, a strong sense of unity by the Brusselers can be detected within the diverse capital of Belgium. A 2013 opinion poll conducted by television stations RTL and VTM (Walloon and Flemish television), and Het Laatste Nieuws and Le Soir (also respectively Flemish and Walloon

newspapers) in the precedent of the upcoming 2014 federal elections in which nationalist propaganda was successful in Flanders, presented results that were not expected by any of the political parties in Belgium – least of all the nationalist fractions. As clarified before, Walloon nationalism exists, yet becomes obsolete since it is reactionary to the Flemish nationalism streams. If the latter diminishes or vanishes, so will the first. For this reason, the plea to include Brussels into the Walloon region has not been incorporated into this dissertation, yet it exists. The opinion poll conducted amongst 2499 Brussels citizens above the age of 18 used the following distinction as its foundation: If Belgium were to separate into two independent regions, to which region would you wish to belong. 68% of the inhabitants of the capital would in that case opt for Brussels' independence. Interestingly, the study equally showed that 42% of all Flemish citizens would support such an independence of the capital, as would 61% of the Walloon population. Political propaganda clearly does not represent public opinion in this respect. On an interesting side note, a majority of all three groups investigated – Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia – all believed that Belgium as a nation-state would continue to exist in the (near) future.

Even though the citizens of Brussels express their non-alliance with Flanders or Wallonia, Flemish nationalists accept the analyses of nationalist theorists not offering 100% clarity on this issue: Smith's (via Armstrong's) mythomoteur cannot confirm a Brussels' identity in the past; Hroch's theory explained the strive for the bilingual status of Brussels yet cannot account for its historical (homogeneous) identity. For N-VA, Brussels thus exists in the national identities of Flanders and Wallonia. Anderson (1983), on the other hand, might leave room for the establishment of a self-conscious imagined community. While he does not mention the direct application of his ideas to the contemporary (or modern) Western nation-states today, I argue that the act of self-consciousness, the act of self-imagination, can exist in the construction of new national identities – in themselves, or within larger governance structures. Gellner claimed that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness, it invents nations where they do not exist (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Anderson criticized this definition by emphasizing that it is the 'imagining' efforts via symbols and values makes any community appear real. Aside former EU president Van Rompuy (2010)'s claim that the brand of Brussels is a global phenomenon, the city has its own official city logo (since June 2015), hosts its

own web domain (".brussels"), has its own Brussels dialect in language, and with its international character and global standing, is perceived as many things to many political players and the population. The question then becomes whether the symbolism of and for Brussels has been successful in igniting a community feeling amongst its population … Has the effort of actively 'imagining' Brussels created its proper identity?

2.3.b.   Theoretical Notions of City Identity

Harry Verhaar (2013), head of sustainability at Philips, asks "Are you your city? … The identity of a city bears on the identity of its citizens, and vice versa … The urban environment that makes up cities reflects human needs and values". Indeed, with large cities like New York or Paris, we can most certainly distinguish a sense of urban pride. But what exactly establishes such an identification with a larger group of people? Urban identity refers to a major categorization tool by which people perceive themselves as representatives of imagined community based on the shared spatial category of city and conceive the surrounding world and people from other spatially based groups. Valera (1997) categorizes the following processes within the concept: Territorial (shared territory with clear defined borders), Temporal (historical relations to the area), behavioral (characteristic practices), psychosocial (social contact and activities), social (perceived social homogeneity), and ideological (shared cultural and ideological values). Korzhov (2012) correctly asserts that "the salience of various dimensions depends on many characteristics of cities and their residents". Castells (2004) distinguished between three major forms of collective identities: "legitimizing identity, resistance identity, and project identity" (p. xxvi). These identities can go beyond small groups to scale up to societal levels of political maintenance, widespread resistance, and movements for peaceful reform or even revolution. They can be understood as follows:

- Legitimizing identities created by dominant institutions of society – notably political regimes in control of the state apparatus and their followers – to extend and rationalize their rule;
- Resistance identities generated by those who are being marginalized, devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination; and
- Project identities that go beyond resistance to attempt to actively redefine positions in society and, by so doing, transform relations of power in the

prevailing social structure. (Lim, 2004)

Within the Europeanizing context of Brussels, it is worth while noting that Castells (2004) furthermore states that the "analysis of globalization has been dominated for a long time by the debate about the fate of the nation-state in a world in which the key processes at the source of wealth, technology, information, and power, have been globalized" (p. xxix) While he joins the ranks of other social scientists in emphasizing the continued assumption of nation-states as the major political power-holders, he does present a different hypothesis (2000) in his analysis of European expansion. After all, if nation-states were willing to give up part of their national sovereignty to the larger governance structures of the EU, does that not leave room for the exploration of the formation of different theories of identity networks? The Information Age was argued by Castells as a major factor in modern societies and has the power to establish networks deemed impossible in history. Derudder & Taylor (2004) equally argue that Brussels is one of the World City Network players and as such, offers great potential for future innovations – including the potential for the formation of network identities.   The globalization and internationalization challenges, in combination with local aspirations to ameliorate their economic standing, sometimes allow the emergence of sub-identities (almost "imagined" in themselves if you will) – often stimulated by processes of "purposeful activity of local elites to re-construct social space" (Korzhov, 2012).

The clear visibility of differentiation within the 19 communes of Brussels - with 724 statistical neighborhoods, as the smallest administrative unit of analysis within the region, representing an average of 1350 inhabitants in 2002 (Observatorium for Health and Well Being Brussels-Capital) - can be brought in relation to the Marxist urban sociology, as introduced by Touraine (2000), where the role of social movements is stressed. The discrepancies in socio-economic "wealth" within the urbanization of Brussels would most certainly qualify in this regard. It is through the work of Fischer (1975) that the theories of Bourdieu are explained on how cultural groups form, expand and solidify neighborhoods. Indeed, the notions of social capital and symbolic capital strongly influencing the cultural capital. While not immediately referring to financial "wealth" within certain regions, cultural capital can be seen in the form of increased education, formation centers … even in the form of

how people within that territorial boundary dress. The internationalization brought about by the capital of Europe seems to have intensified the city's connectivity.

2.3.c. Practical Notions of Identity in Brussels

In Castells' categorization, the "resistance" and "project" identities seem best applicable to Brussels, when placing them in the context of the Brusselers themselves.

Rudi Janssens, VUB researcher states that "When you raise the issue of a community feeling in Brussels, it is immediately considered politically declate. The Brussels community feeling establishes two official communities, the Flemish and French language groups. The fact, however, is that that Brussels stopped existing a long time ago" (Knack, 2013, p. 41). As an expert in the language barometer, conducted every five years to measure the linguistic situation of Brussels, Janssens believes that the evolutions of the language situation in Brussels offer an excellent image of the demographic developments that characterize Brussels. Language diversity has increased and today, half of Brussels' inhabitants are raised in a family in which more than one language is spoken. That population consists of approximately half foreign-born or foreign heritage citizens, who find no answer in the linguistic division in Belgium. "The majority considers themselves primarily Brusseler" (p. 41). "This new generation of Brusselers effortlessly deals with multilingualism … Young Brusselers are not paralyzed by ballast from the past" (2013, p. 41), Flemish parliamentarian Yamila Idrissi states. She herself was born in Morocco, raised in the Flemish city of Mechelen and studied in Brussels, where she built her life. According to her, "Brussels forms living proof that cooperation works and that the ongoing battle between the Flemings and the Walloons serves absolutely no purpose here … We are all Brusselers here" (p. 41). Opinion polls seem to confirm this, the Brussels' citizen feels neither Flemish nor Walloon. The multicultural and multilingual character of Brussels also creates space for Brusselers to live in a different reality. "A reality which they do not recognize in the monolingual Flemish or Walloon media reporting about Brussels" (Janssens, 2013).

In his infamous Letter to the King (1912), Jules Destrée wrote "Sire, in Belgium there are Walloons and Flemings, there are no Belgians", yet he did not mention one positive word about the Brusselers. According to Destree, these capital inhabitants combined the faults of the two other groups with their main characteristic being mediocrity. At that time, the Brusselers were in his eyes not considered a

separate people – contrary to the Flemings and Walloons – since he saw them as a collection of "métis" - mixed-ethnicities. Today, this exact mixture of Brussels' nationalities and ethnic groups has become the pride of the city. An increasing number of engaged intellectuals and artists have been actively promoting a sort of Brussels community feeling by building bridges between cultures and linguistic groups. A few examples of this can be found in professor Philippe Van Parijs's Marnix Plan promoting multilingual education in Brussels, in professor Eric Corijn and his Brussels' initiatives – including a Brussels' university, but equally in the artistic exposition of Brussels' talents via classic and alternative festivals and events. Also in the work of Matthieu Regout[14], working on an innovation project to ignite and promote the establishment of a united Brussels culture via visual overlapping maps. We see the establishment of what cultural traits divide and unite the communes, people, and infrastructures of this city. At the very least, we could argue that a sense of Brussels' patriotism has arisen.

Director of the Royal Flemish Theater and inhabitant of Brussels since 20 years, Jan Goossens claims to find it odd that some are still surprised by the notion of a Brussels' identity. "Brussels distinguishes itself … through the great diversity in terms of languages and population composition, through the enormous socio-economic contrasts and through the presence of the European institutions which creates a very large expat community. The city breathes a sense of uniqueness that is evident to those who work and live here" (Knack, 2013, p. 42). The sense of community, the sense of an active effort to imagine and belong to one's city relies not on a communal history, but on a communal present and future. Without doubt, the anti-Brussels propaganda by the Flemish nationalists has increased the feeling of wanting to identify with Brussels. After the Belgian nationalism of the 19th century, followed by the development of Flemish sub-nationalism due to linguistic and governmental oppositions, it appears that a true Brussels nationalism is in its developmental process due to internationalization and identification in this Global City.

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[14] http://www.matthieuregout.com/graphic.html

2.4.   Concluding Thoughts

The true formation of an identity is, as noted in chapter 1, difficult to truly comprehend and remains open to interpretation. The Brussels identity today can partly be a result of the self-perception of the elite attempting to realize their goals. At the same time, historian Bruno De Wever (2013) wonders to what degree the anti-Flemish nationalist sentiments can be seen as a vital step in the formation of that Brussels identity. A revolt against the former right-wing racist Flemish nationalism that was displayed by Vlaams Belang in previous decades – presenting Brussels as the immigrant gathering place, where Flemish values had been lost. At the same time, Flemish nationalists often still perceive Brussels as the symbol for the arrogant Belgian establishment, oppressing the Flemish population. The fact that Flanders has an emotionally charged relationship with its capital cannot be denied. In fact, the Flemish nationalist feelings at inception could be placed in Brussels – where the French-speaking oppression against Flemings knew its institutional base.

Some argue that this new Brussels' feeling announces a new Belgian feeling as well. "The discourse about a Brussels identity naturally has a strong ideological undertone", Bruno De Wever (2013) states. "It contains a clear anti-nationalist message, that counters the old Flemish nationalist logic … A complex, multilingual community in which we might even speak English. It is difficult to predict, but something is moving and it all originates from Brussels" (p. 43).   While Anderson (1983) focused on the nation state in arguing that "a nation is a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves part of that group" (p. 224), perhaps it is worth while pondering whether the nationalistic (and separatist) debate between Flanders and Wallonia has created an opportunity for a new identity to form within the city of Brussels – one free from the Flemish or Walloon regions, one free from the federal Belgian state, one aligned more with the heightened internationalization brought about by the EU … at the very least in a cultural sense, in the creation of an identity.   In light of the exploration of collective and urban identities, it appears that the cultural autonomy of the Brussels region by the citizens of the capital themselves should not pose a problem. After all, the EU presence in Brussels has created a sense of 'Brussels is Europe' and 'Europe is Brussels'. Belgium as a federal state seems to be present for the provision of social functions,

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but the association of the average Brusseler does indeed seem to be shifting to a thought-process beyond that of the nation-state.

Brussels, the international Global City demonstrating sparks of being in the creation of its proper national city identity, is at the same time characterized by Sassen's established Global City effects: a high socio-economic polarization. The unifying factor of feeling 'Brussels' in identity is at times overshadowed by the tremendous diversity of its demographic make-up, and by the strength of certain sub-cultures within the city. As such, the city's identity is highly susceptible to societal factors that could alter cultural conditions, hence also altering the notion of identity in and of Brussels. Whereas today, the idea of 'unity in diversity' translates from a European to a Brussels' level, the potential for a shift to 'unity in acceptance of a majority culture' is real … be it Flemish, or be it an immigrant culture into the Belgian nation-state. This will become evident in chapters 3 and 4. where the focus lies on the contemporary situation of seven driving forces of and for Brussels; and several emerging social issues that strongly influence the past, present, and potential futures of the European capital.

The past two chapters (Part 1) have established the political climate in which this futures exercise is positioned. The internationalized global city of Brussels, with its developing city identity, is located in the geographic setting of the Flemish nationalists, and is directly associated with the EU in which a nationalist threat equally targets Brussels, synonym for the European Union. The identity of the city of Brussels is currently considered that of Brusselers, but can the contemporary driving forces and emerging social trends alter that identity image in the future? Part 2 of this dissertation will investigate those contemporary trends shaping, impacting and driving Brussels today. Via seven driving forces of and for Brussels, and several emerging social issues that strongly influence the past, present and potential futures of the European capital, the contemporary situation of Brussels shall become apparent. Upon completion, this will allow for an engagement into futures projections. The analysis of these driving forces and social issues will occur on multiple levels, where necessary: Global, the European Union, Belgium, Brussels.

PART II: PRESENT GLOBAL, EUROPEAN, BELGIAN & BRUSSELS DRIVING FORCES & CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND SOCIAL ISSUES IMPACTING FUTURES

CHAPTER 3

Driving Forces of and for Brussels

Sassen's (2005) article "The Global City: Introducing a Concept" clarifies that her 7 hypotheses that characterize a Global City (described in chapter 2, section 1, of this dissertation) are usually followed by 3 key tendencies that stem from the evolution into such a Global City: A polarization of wealth; a growing disconnect between the city and its region; and the marginalization of the inhabitants due to high-end activities in the city. Brussels is no different from the examples of London, New York, and Tokyo (Sassen, 1991) in this regard, although Europe's capital is furthermore positioned in the unique nationalistic landscapes of Flanders, Belgium and Europe. Some of these polarizations that can be observed in the city are propaganda "gold" to further push the nationalist agenda of the N-VA and the more radical Vlaams Belang. Equally, some of these polarizations strongly impact the forces that drive the alternative futures scenarios. An "alternative futures exercise requires that we know something about the past, present and future of the world generally, and of specific communities, before we can imagine the futures" (Dator, Yeh & Park, 2013, p. 19) of Brussels in part 3. "In order to craft and shape the content of the alternative futures scenarios of some "X" (institution, idea process, etc.) under consideration – in this case X represents the futures of Brussels – it is necessary" (Dator, Yee & Sweeney, 2015, p. 138) to establish what forces actually drive, influence and shape the city of Brussels today. These are referred to as driving forces, which will be explored in this section. Furthermore, several contemporary trends, such as the immigration policies at EU and Belgian level, and subtle emerging issues that furthermore have a potential direct effect on the country, region and Brussels city, will be explored in chapter 4.

 This chapter will describe the current status of the governance, the population, the culture, the economy and employment, the technology and transportation infrastructure, the energy, and the environment of Brussels. Several of these driving forces will require a higher unit of analysis than the city, which directly impacts it. As such, global, European, and Belgian factors will be incorporated, as will current plans that have been decided upon for the near-future development of Brussels – be it within a continued growth scenario, as is the norm in bureaucratic affairs today.

3.1. Governance

Situated at the heart of Europe and its institutions, in the center of the Belgian nation-state, in the geographic location of the nationalistic Flemish region, the 19 municipalities that make up the Brussels Capital Region know no shortage of governance organisms in operation in this Global City. The overall complexity of the Belgian political model is rather unique in the world. The most straightforward manner to demonstrate this is via the four types of elections the citizens of Brussels partake in, demonstrating its representative democratic system(s). This particular driving force thus translates into four units of analysis, in other words to four types of governance for the Brussels citizens: Governance by

- IGO governance via the European Union (via EU Parliament elections) - *As an alternative, a previous governance structure – especially in terms of financial and economic governance within the globalizing world – will equally be incorporated: the previous Benelux*;
- The Belgian Federal Nation-State (via federal elections);
- Brussels Capital Region (via Brussels Parliament elections);
- The Municipality (19 Municipality elections).

European Union

Via its institutional triangle – most notably the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Council - the European Union profiles itself as a union of democratic nations, operating under democratic pillars. While all three institutions find headquarters in Brussels, the European Parliament maintains its official seat in Strasbourg, France; with Luxemburg hosting the Secretariat of the European Parliament. Heavy criticism has been detected in the majority of EU institutions being located in Brussels, while maintaining the Strasbourg location – in fact, the "traveling circus" as it is often referred to is seen as nothing but an excuse for Europarliamentarians to travel. Suggestions have been made to make Brussels the unilateral and sole EU institutional basis. The Treaty of Lisbon (2007) stipulates that "the functioning of the Union shall be founded on the principle of representative democracy" (Title II, article 8A.1) and that "every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen" (Title II, article 8A.3). Theoretically this

assumption is valid with the representational national votes determining which national politicians become Members of European Parliament (MEPs). The Eurobarometer, organized by the EU Commission since 1973, measuring public opinions, however, highlights that theory and practice can differ quite drastically. At the end of 2014, 45% of European citizens questioned were not satisfied with the democratic workings of the EU – an increase of more than 14% in 10 years. While 42.61% of European citizens voted in the European Parliamentary elections of 2014 (see graph 1 in chapter 1, section 4, p. 55), it must be noted that all Belgian citizens are obliged by law to participate in political elections, at the risk of a financial penalty in case of non-compliance. As such, a right to vote translates into a duty to vote.

QA20b. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU? - % EU
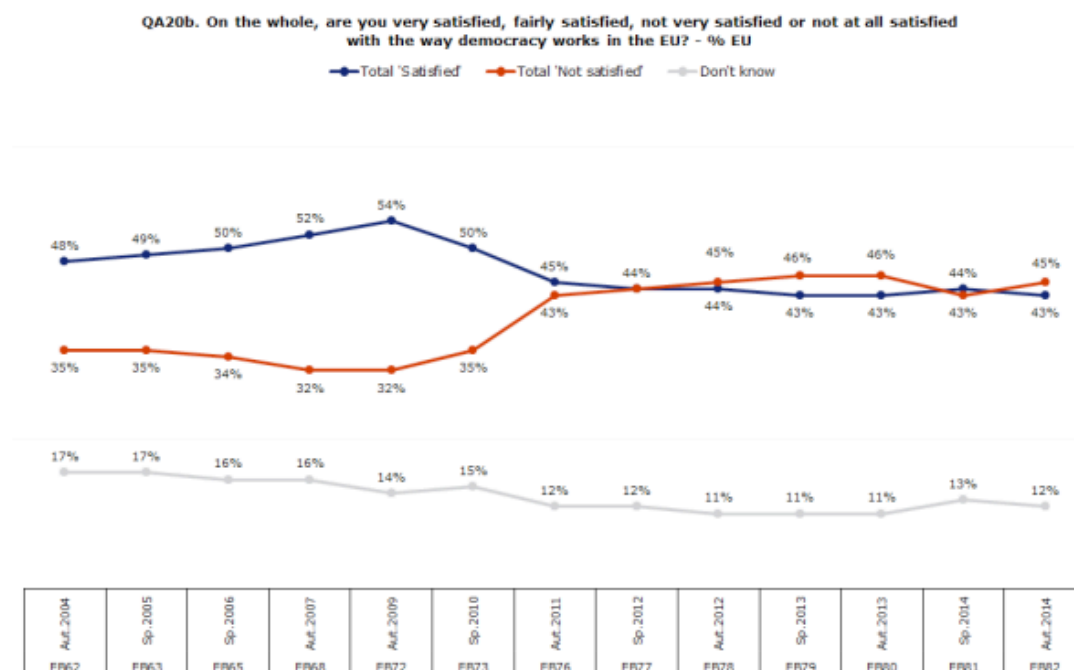
Figure 5: Eurobarometer evolution from 2004 until 2014 reflecting public opinion to the question of the functioning of democracy in the EU (Eurobarometer Autumn 2014 report).

Hermann & al. (2004) have argued that "the EU is an elite-driven project … that identification with and support for Europe and its institutions is highest among political and social elites" (p. 260). The lack in communication between the governing agencies (and their staff), and the common European citizen remains a reality. European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly stated in the EU Reporter (March 2014) that "the perceived democratic deficit and the disconnect between citizens and the EU institutions are the key problems facing the EU". The fact that events like "Your

Wish list for Europe" (2014) are organized - in which citizens can engage in debates with EU presidents - reveals the institutional realization after more than six decades that the gap between the bureaucratic organizations and its public must be closed. Brussels may experience this gap as less wide, since the proximity to the political, social, economic, and cultural implications of the EU are literally placed on its front door.

The Alternative Governance Possibility: Reverting to Benelux?

While the contemporary trend of European Union disintegration will be addressed in chapter 4, it must be noted that whispering political voices have touched on the possibility of reverting to a smaller international governance structure. Having been in existence since 5 September 1944, a customs-union was already forged between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Today, the Benelux parliament is still in existence today and with its 49 representatives from these three respective countries, they gather three times per year to discuss the further development of the Benelux, the cultural cooperation within and beyond the region, and larger European issues. Importance on Brussels as a city is lower in this union than for the EU, since gatherings alternate between three countries rather than focus on Brussels. In his critical expose on "A Return to Benelux", Ewald Pironet (September 2015, p. 60-64) ponders what potential Benelux holds today. University of Ghent public finance professor, Herman Mattijs, calculated the crude numbers. With a total number of 28.5 million inhabitants, accounting for 5.6% of the total EU population, the Benelux is responsible for a quarter of the shipping and aerial industry in the EU. Contributing 5.5% financial contribution to the WTO, it contributes 13 billion Euro (or 9.5%) to the EU enlargement (p. 64). It cannot be denied that the Benelux is a thriving threesome, yet the nationalistic tendencies within this particular organism have never been explored nor addressed.

Belgium

The linguistic make-up of the country cannot be separated from its government models, since language directly determines regional governance. In a nutshell, aside from having three national languages and four specific language regions, Belgium is characterized by its single federal government in a democratic parliamentary monarchy – with the royal family present for mere symbolic Belgian value. The

nation-state holds three regions with their proper parliaments upholding an equal amount of power as the central government – Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels. The latter is the only region that operates under a legal bilingual status. The Flemish region is monolingual in Dutch, but with many administrative services for French speakers throughout Flemish Brabant (the province that houses Brussels). Wallonia is purely French-speaking, except for a few minor parts – including the German cantons. In order to cope with the numerous (linguistic) minorities, the Belgian federal government decided in the 1980s that 3 regions were not sufficient to provide administrative governance services to the nation, and as such added three additional structures, the communities: The French, Dutch and German communities. In these, Brussels finds it geographic location in Flanders not to hinder its official bilingual governance status. In a more visible manner, the Belgian communities and territories look as follows:
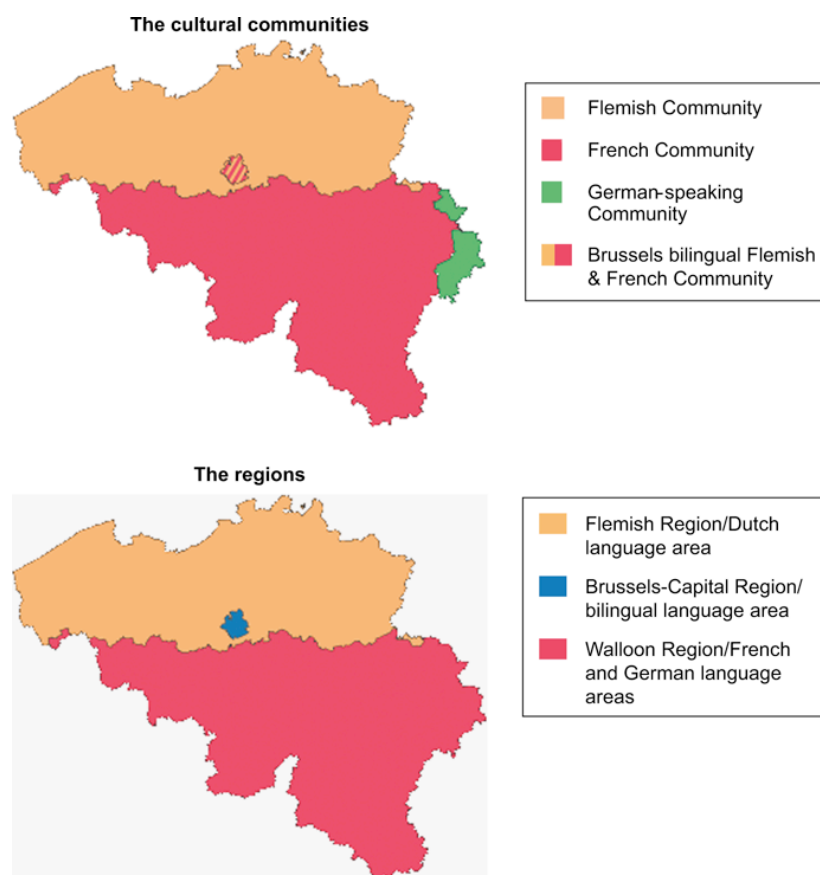

Figure 6: The governance regions and the cultural communities with Brussels as a separate region and a bilingual cultural language community (Ssolbergj, 2008)

Each region has a proper government and a parliament. The language communities are responsible for certain services in Brussels. For instance, the

Walloon region supplies cultural and social services to the French speaking people in Brussels, but they may not supply any of these services to the 300 000+ French-speaking citizens in Flanders, because Flanders upholds its monolingual status and foreign-speakers must speak Dutch/Flemish. This can be felt very strongly in any municipality buildings in the Flemish region where a sign is clearly displayed "We speak only Dutch". The German community can only act in Wallonia's governance structure; while the Dutch community acts in the Brussels region or in Flanders.

Brussels Capital City

The sixth Belgian state reform executed in 2011 after 541 days of political impasse without a federal government, brought about greater autonomy for the three Belgian regions – thus including Brussels. The authorities of Employment & Education, Mobility, Economy & Agriculture, Energy & Environment, Urbanization, Local Protection & Security, Fiscal Expenditures, and Health Care, Child Support and Aid to Seniors, were added to the independent Brussels region. This also means that the other authorities remain the divided responsibility of Flanders and Wallonia. To offer an example of the complexity for Brusselers in the simplest possible terms, one must take into account that the governance of a French-speaking (quantitative majority) family in Brussels involves the federal government for pension funds, the French community for an arts formation (for example, sending your children to music school), the Dutch community for the general education and schooling of your children, and the Brussels government to handle and recycle your trash. Aside from the highly bureaucratic administration this involves, it is financially and psychologically draining for both institutions and individuals living in Brussels.

19 Municipalities in Brussels Capital Region

With 1 mayor and a respective municipal council per municipality, the smallest administrative subdivisions in Belgium uphold individual governance responsibilities for local duties – including law enforcement, the maintenance of schools, and the municipal administrative duties usually conducted by a mayor and local council. This subdivided governance make-up of the Brussels Capital Region carries with it a high degree of controversy. While the majority of French-speaking politicians seek the status-quo of the existing governance structure, most Flemish-speaking politicians wish to abolish the 19 municipalities and replace it with one 'district' – with one

mayor with one city council – which they believe would further elevate the city's global character and its internationalization (Van Camp, 2005).

In practical terms, the governance models that control Brussels can be summarized as follows: The European Union is lead by the EPP, dominated by the Christian-Democratic fraction (see graph 1 on p. 55 in chapter 1 - EU parliament make-up); closely followed by the S&D, the Socialists. The Belgian federal state is characterized by a liberal right coalition, made up of Liberals, Christian-Democrats, and the moderate nationalists of N-VA. For the first time in decades, the socialist fraction finds itself in the opposition, and for the first time in history, a nationalist party dominates the federal political scene. The Flemish region, in which Brussels is geographically located, is dominated by the N-VA in a parliamentary coalition with the Liberals and Christian-Democrats. As such, the Flemish region and the Belgian federal state's parliaments find themselves very closely aligned in 2015. Brussels capital region remains –as it has been for the past decades- a socialist-dominated parliament. At the local level, we find the success of the 19 municipalities directly linked to the strength of their local mayors. In theory, any and all EU laws must always take prejudice over any national, regional, or local legislation. In theory, N-VA would welcome the absorption of Brussels into a stronger EU governance structure instead of the Belgian one, since it would hold the potential for the other two regions in Belgium to develop in an increasingly more autonomous (or even independent) fashion.

3.2. Population

The European Union, with its 508 million citizens, currently accounts for 7.3% of the world's population – combined in 28 member-states. In 2014, the UN DESA'S Population Division report on World Urbanization Prospects calculated that 54% of the world's population resides in urban areas today, with a projected increase in future decades. With approximately 97% of its entire surface being considered 'urban', founding EU member-state Belgium is a high density country with 11.23 million legal inhabitants, and places second (after the Netherlands) as Europe's highest density countries on the international list of high-density territorial states in the world (UN

DESA, 2012). Brussels frames in this national high density trend with its diversified population.

Through its establishment as the EU capital, housing many European and international institutions, an immediate impact on the city could be felt in terms of development and urbanization, but also in terms of the population. In the last quarter of the 20th century, the Brussels region was actually depopulating and regained its 'strength' in this regard not via a natural balance (the calculation of deaths and births in the city), but via international immigration into Belgium – and most notably Brussels. Following a growth stagnation in previous years, the population of the Brussels Capital Region increased by 0.8% in 2013, and on 1 January 2014, with a total population of 1 163 486, Brussels counted more inhabitants than ever before (Brussels Institute for Statistical Analysis, 2014). In that year, the Brussels Capital Region gained more than 8000 inhabitants, approximately double of the observed evolution in the Flemish (+0.5%) and Walloon (+0.4%) regions. This annual increase can be explained by a high natural balance (+8 909 citizens) and a positive international immigration balance (+11 756) – two elements that compensate the negative internal migration balance (-12 583) (Hermia, 2014).
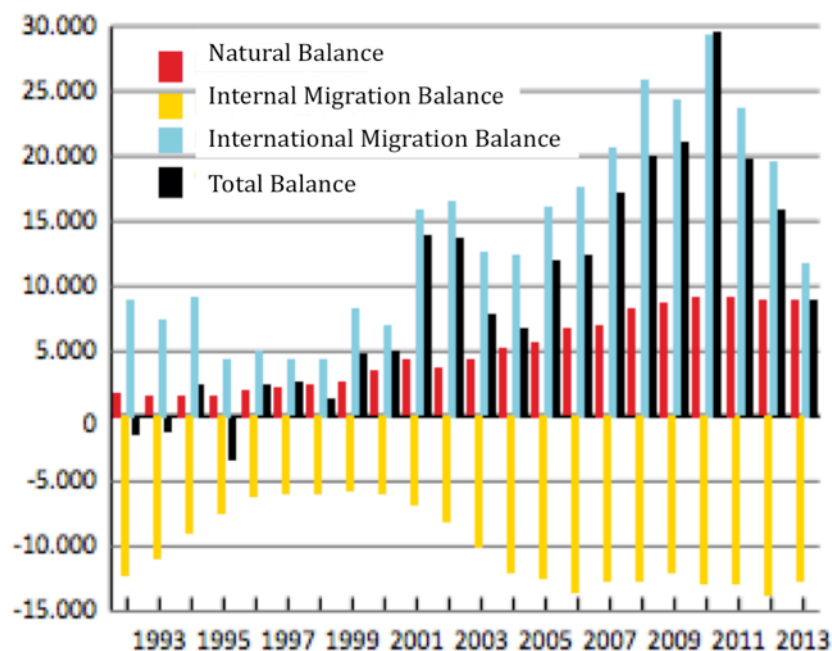
Graph 3: Components of the evolution of the population of the Brussels region from 1992 until 2013, included (Brussels Institute for Statistical Analysis, FOD Economics, Statistics Belgium, from Hermia, 2014).

Migration Trends Shaping Brussels

On 1 January 2014, Brussels counted 385 381 foreign subjects who did not possess the Belgian nationality. This amounts to 33.1% of the total population of Brussels, which is more than triple the respective percentage for the population in entire Belgium (10.9%). This can be explained by the large role Brussels has played in the migration history of the country, and the broad range of foreign heritages having been welcomed in the capital for multiple decades. In the past 10 years, this has led to a number of nationalities that were until present represented in a minimal manner (graph 3). The number of French citizens continues to rise and in 2014, they confirmed their place at the top of the hierarchy of foreign nationalities in Brussels with 58 000. Not only their nationality, but also their culture through their language impacts Brussels, as shall be discussed in the next driving force, culture. The most remarkable evolution in population concerns subjects from three countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Polish, Romanian, and Bulgarian citizens, having respectively joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Their number increased substantially in the past decade and today these three nationalities account for nearly 66 000 - in other words 1 in 15 inhabitants of Brussels. After a decrease at the turn of the century, the number of Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese is increasing again, which can undoubtedly be connected to the economic crisis having struck their countries harder than Belgium (Hermia, 2014, p. 5). The number of Moroccans and Turks, whose immigration has strongly influenced the demographics of the city since 1964, seems to be stagnating and decreasing in recent years. This can be explained by a stabilization of the international migration stream from those countries, and by the fact that there is a strong tendency in these groups to obtain the Belgian nationality. At the Belgian census of 1991, 63.7% of Brussels' inhabitants were reported to be foreign-born, yet the majority of these were naturalized following the 1991 large-scale naturalization process (Belgian legal code regarding nationality, 1991). Today, people of foreign origin thus still account for almost 70% of the population – of which 36% from foreign European origin and 36% from another background – most notably from Morocco, Turkey and sub-Saharan Africa (Hertogen, 2012).
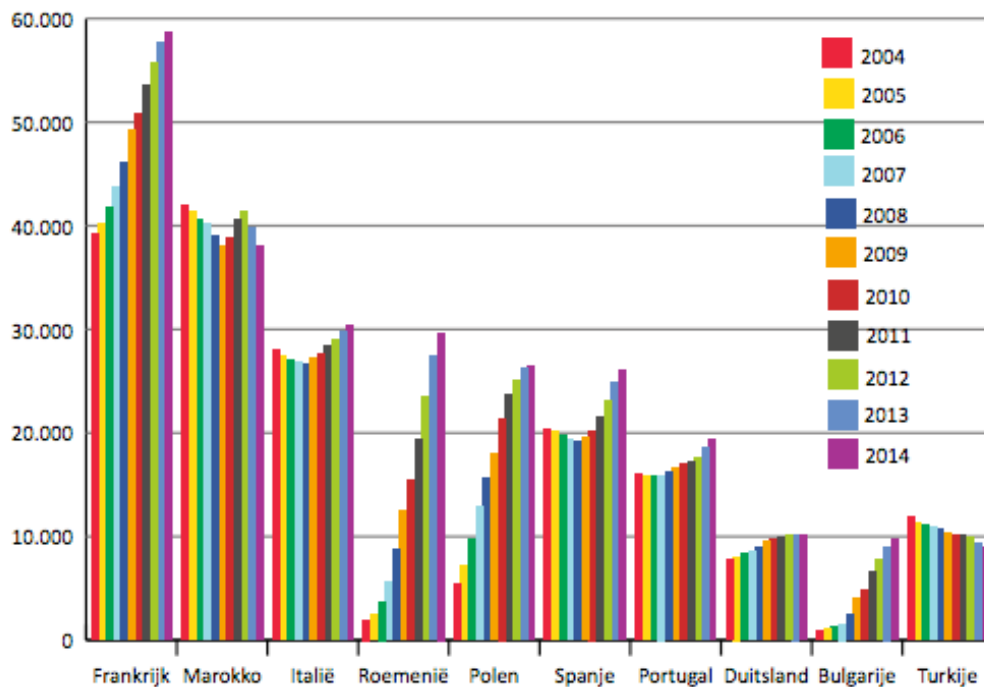
Graph 4: Evolution of the number of the 10 main foreign nationalities in Brussels between 2004-2014 (BISA, FOD Economics, Statistics Belgium). Note that non-Belgian origins are no longer counted towards foreign status.

The main foreign nationalities in the city can be found in graph 4, but special attention must equally be paid to the strongly increasing nationalities that have made a remarkable demographic evolution in the past 10 years, namely from Guinea (mainly asylum seekers after having obtained refugee status), Brazil (a large proportion of whom without legal papers, the so-called 'sans-papiers' or illegals – Vandecandelaere, 2012), India (mostly top jobs in the outsourcing industry) and Syria (refugees following the civil war terrorizing the country since 2011).   Important to remember is that these figures do not take into account an entire layer of the population: students and foreigners who are not domiciled in the city, diplomats, homeless, the sans-papiers (illegals), and candidate-refugees. The Brussels region accommodates a disproportional high share of asylum seekers who are not included in the population statistics but are placed in the so-called 'waiting register'.   Finally, the number of international diplomatic personnel and European civil servants has boomed in recent years. All of these groups, immigrants and indigenous Belgians, have transformed the city of Brussels into a true place of diversity of nationalities and cultures – which although living in a certain sense of (almost dysfunctional) harmony, has raised this global city to the definition of true regional internationalization.   The strong international immigration into Brussels has been accompanied by a different

type of migration, which has displayed a deficit for more than 20 years (graph 4): national emigration from Brussels to the other the regions of Wallonia and Flanders.

Indeed, while potential for the formation of 'new' Brussels identities benefits from the representation of nationalities, there is an immediate effect of the internationalization which has characterized Brussels, namely that of urban sprawl. The internationalization has led to a national migratory pattern away from the Brussels Capital region. In 2013, the total number of internal emigrants from Brussels to the other two regions stood at over 36 000, with an immigration from Flanders and Wallonia into Brussels of approximately 23 000 – creating an internal migration deficit of 12 000. This emigrating portion of Brussels' population into Flanders is one of the focal points of the nationalist agenda, since a potential threat to the Flemish identity and safety is perceived and advocated. This is further amplified by the calculations of the Brussels Institute of Statistical Analysis (2015) that via a positive natural balance and positive immigration, 20 000 more inhabitants are anticipated by 2020; with an increase of 27% of the current total population by 2060 for Brussels. At that time, 1.48 million Brusselers are expected, 315 000 more than today. The natural balance of the city itself, again, will remain high due to the high number of births, which, together with that internal migration pattern away from Brussels, offers an explanation for the continued rejuvenation of the regional population. Indeed, with an average age of 37 years, Brussels's demographic is substantially younger than that of Flanders (40 years) and Wallonia (42 years).

While the nationalities and demographical make-up of the Belgian capital offer potential for the formation of a new identity, the interpretive nuances employed by Flemish nationalists to counter dangerous (perceived as such) cultural traits that accompany this diversity cannot be overlooked. Naturally the internationalization of Brussels is leading to a shift in the bilingual – French and Flemish – status of the city. Language, as noted in chapter 1, is one of the strongest influencers of culture, and as such holds the potential to pose a threat to the Flemish identity.

3.3. Culture

The language barometer indicated that in 2006, 40% of the Brusselers felt Belgian in identity, compared to only 16% in 2013. The Brussels identity, as stated in chapter 2,

experienced an increase from 20% to 30%, although half of this number identified in a stronger manner with a local identity than with the city identity at this point. The internationalization of Brussels is undeniable, and this is accompanied by the incorporation of a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic culture due to globalization. Brussels has become Europe, yet incorporates much more than mere European culture.

International Linguistic Developments

Historically a Flemish market town, administratively reformed into a French bureaucratic center after the establishment of the Belgian nation-state, Brussels today is officially bilingual. French and Flemish dominate , however, have through the years also given way to 'Brussels' dialect – a joyful combination of both languages, typical for the autochthones of the city.

The main conclusion of the 2013 Language Barometer is that the theory of language oppression no longer holds truth for Brussels. This hypothesis states that every dominant language gains in strength in a certain region. In Brussels, French is the dominant language, as remains the case for regular conversation and in the home by Walloon Belgians, French citizens and natives of Morocco (Brussels City records, 2007), yet it has declined in the past decade. Instead, a multi-lingual and especially English-speaking Brussels with a diversity in languages is rising.

Languages Spoken in the Brussels Capital Region

Languages Spoken at Home   **Languages Spoken in General**
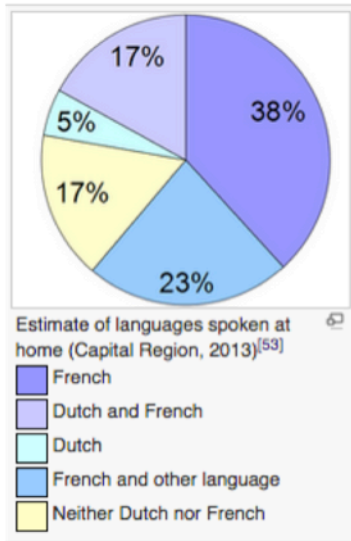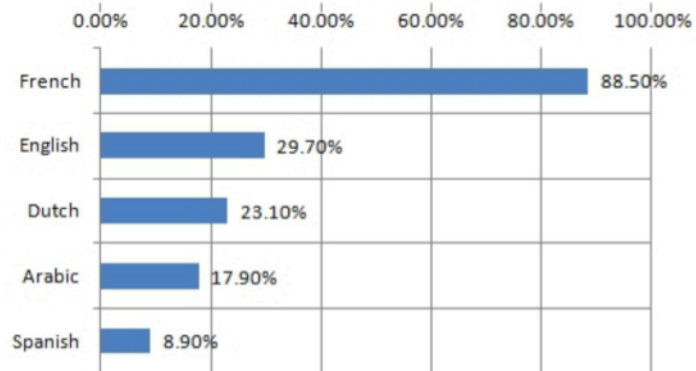
Figure 7: Language Barometer 2013 results on the Main Languages Spoken in Brussels.

A quarter of Brussels' citizens now speak occasional English with their neighbors, although this usually occurs in combination with other languages. Also Arabic has experienced a stark increase. In 2006, 6.6% of Brusselers spoke fluent Arabic, in 2013 that rose to 18%. Half of these citizens are born abroad and they continue utilizing Arabic as their only home language (Carollo, June 2013). The fact that an increasing number of families in Brussels speak only Arabic at home (figure 7) concerns Danny Vileyn, journalist for Brussel Deze Week (2013). While in theory, the government has no affairs with the language spoken inside individual homes, he worries that "without knowledge of one of the contact languages, people seclude themselves and without a communal language, no communal city project can arise" (June 2013). Figure 7 furthermore displays the overall languages spoken in Brussels as being 168%, literally meaning that Brusselers on average speak 1.75 languages fluently. Only 40% of children grow up in a monolingual French- or Dutch-speaking household in Brussels. Aside from Flemish nationalists, most notably N-VA who consider the identification of language through culture as a viable threat to the Flemish home culture, many Flemish politicians equally worry about the prospect of seeing a family planning its future in Belgium, without assimilating linguistically.

The potential of the English language is something currently being considered as the official language for governmental tasks, and while the Flemish desires it over French, it remains a perceived invasion of the home culture through language. As the

historic diplomatic language of the world, French does still remain strongly represented in the European Union's institutions – where official job vacancies list English as a priority, French as an asset. The 2013 proposal by the Socialist Party in Brussels to render Arabic into the fourth official language of Brussels was met with heavy criticism and outrage by both Nationalists as Liberals as Christian Democrats – the proposal in itself, however, makes the increasing importance of Arabic in Brussels crystal clear. With the rise in language, it is equally noticeable that a shift in religious beliefs is shaping the city.

The Changing Face of Religion: The Rise of Islam
Aligned with all countries admitted into the EU, Belgium is a secular state that upholds the separation between church and state, and the freedom of religion. The EuroStat's Special Eurobarometer (2010, p. 204) indicated that 49% of EU citizens do not believe in God, and in this respect a noticeable trend of decreasing church attendance in the historically Christian-dominated Union can be detected. According to Darrel E. Sherkat (2015), the European continent's religious profile could be changing; with old-stock Europeans becoming increasingly secular, some scholars posit that Islam could become one of the region's most visible and practiced religious traditions in the coming decades. Projections by Eric Kaufman of the University of London predict that the Muslim population will comprise up to 15 percent of Western Europeans by 2050. Given that 25 percent of Europe is expected to be atheist or agnostic by 2050, this will give Islam 20 percent of the religious market, and that proportion would be much higher if market exit included people who may not be atheists or agnostics, but reject religious identification. Since Islam has throughout the world often been associated with negativity, the fear dynamics employed by Flemish nationalists know no shortage in the Belgian, and more importantly Brussels landscape, equally altering its religious affiliations.

Belgium recognizes, and state-subsidizes, six religions:
1. Catholicism constitutes the largest religion in Belgium, although not practicing, since a mere 5% of the Belgian population attends weekly church services;
2. Orthodoxy represents a very small minority consisting mainly of Greeks, Romanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Russians;

3. Anglicanism stands for a minor fraction of Belgian Christianity;

4. Protestantism makes up approximately 1% of the population today;

5. Judaism upholds important communities in both Brussels and Antwerp;

6. Islam is characterized by a remarkable increase of followers, mainly in Antwerp and Brussels. At present, 6% of the total Belgian population is estimated to being Muslim (Pew Research Center, December 2012).

In Brussels, Catholicism remains the prominent faith with approximately 10% proclaiming themselves practicing (NP Data, 2008). The most remarkable change in religious adherence in the Brussels Capital Region is Islam, accompanied by the number of mosques rapidly increasing (conclusion of a dossier in the 'Tribune de Bruxelles' of La Libre Belgique newspaper in 2005). As the second largest religion practiced in Belgium, this figure increases staggeringly in Brussels, where 25.5% practice the Muslim faith (Hertogen, 2008). The identity of practicing Muslim women makes them very visible in the Western landscape, and their headscarf has been subject of much debate. A cultural identification for Muslims has turned into a cultural violation for nationalists and many other Belgians. Since 2004, the Belgian government – per example of the French nation-state – has considered a ban on wearing religious symbols for its civil servants. In Belgian schools, including in Brussels, it depends on the school formalities whether a headscarf can be worn. Since the end of 2005, the burka – a veil covering everything, hence un-identifying the person – has been banned. Today mainly Moroccan and Turkish immigrants identify with Islam, and migration through marriage continues to grow in Belgium – with over 60% of these ethnic groups marrying partners from their home countries (Lodwyckx & Geets, 2006). As such, the ethnic diversification of Brussels also increases.

Multi-Ethnicity & the Problem of Status

On top of the Flemish and Walloon inhabitants, Brussels city is characterized by mini-communities within the larger Brussels identity. The historical guest laborer statute employed by Belgium in the middle of the 20th century to accommodate a shortage in certain industries, brought with it the establishment of migrant neighborhoods in Brussels. The main guest laborers, who under the family unification or family reunification act never returned to their home countries but became naturalized Belgians, mainly originated from Morocco, Spain, Italy, and Turkey. According to Lleshi & Van den Bossche (2010), migrants were stigmatized because of their

differences in religion, language, culture, schooling, mainly due to a lacking assimilation policy and poor integration. The polarization according to ethnic background in Brussels was territorially organized, and as such today many of these migrant neighborhoods have become mini-representations of their countries of origin. While unique in their own right, the differences with the mainstream 'Belgian' culture are at times very noticeable, this to the dismay of nationalist minds who believe in assimilation in the public spheres. Adding to the cultural diversity of the Global City, the Matonge neighborhood offers colonial history in the city center. With a little over 8 300 (2011 census) inhabitants, this inner-city culture originated with the arrival of African (mainly Congolese, directly related to Belgium's historical colonial past between 1908 and 1960) students who moved there in the 1960s. Throughout the past decades, it has become home to many, ranging from high-profile students to poorer refugees.

Apart from the ethnic diversity, the Brussels community is often described as in development of two separate status identities. Local Brussels residents, which today include the naturalized immigrants, often feel excluded from the mundane European Quarter (refer to figure 8 for the socio-economic make-up of Brussels, on p. 124 – driving force economy & employment). Referred to as the 'white collar ghetto' (Bocart, June 2010) by locals, the communities rarely mix. The economic abundance in the European quarters (both the offices and the bordering residential communes) can be considered as direct evidence for the cultural capital in a very optimistic manner. Unfortunately, the socio-economic deprivation in certain communes is equally visible, to the degree that there are certain (former) immigrant ghettos where the police do not even dare enter. "Several of the 19 politically powerful municipalities that constitute the Brussels region are ruled by local political elites that consider municipal territories as their local 'fiefdoms' that are to be held down through paternalistic power relations (which are nowhere better visible than in spatial planning politics)" (Baeten, 2001, p. 118). While the negative versus the positive impacts of the cultural decentralization of Brussels as the Belgian capital must be weighed, it facilitates the creation of multiple network identities within one metropolitan city – and offers strong and visible propaganda 'fodder' for the nationalist parties instilling fear of a cultural take-over of Flanders.

3.4. Economy & Employment

Having become a theoretical Euro-zone member since 1999, the actual incorporation of the common European currency was introduced in the beginning of 2002 in Belgium. A year after its introduction, an EU opinion poll (Flash, November 2002) found that Belgian citizens welcomed the Euro, and upheld a positive attitude towards it. The location of the most notable EU and Euro-zone institutions in the capital of its nation-state has always meant a closer connection to the organization of the EU, and a direct economic national and city benefit thereof.

Characterized by a mixed economic system, free trade and capitalism's advantages are strived for, with the disadvantages thereof attempted to being dealt with by the government. While a free market economy does not guarantee work and a high salary for everyone, the quality of life in Belgium is said to be very high as it is listed in the world's top 20 countries in relation to life expectancy and GDP. The average Belgian pays one of the highest rates of income tax (at approximately 45%) but this is compensated by having state-provided benefits such as one of the best health care systems in the world, a social welfare system that offers an unemployment or replacement salary in case of need, and almost-free quality public education.

Brussels is known as the Capital of the European Union and is home to many national and multinational companies. There are approximately 50 000 businesses, of which around 2 200 are foreign. This number is constantly increasing and Brussels' EU involvement has placed the capital on the map with job opportunities having increased significantly - such as workers needed for embassies, for the thousands of international companies erected in the last decade, as well as the work forces needed to accommodate one of the largest Press Medias in the world. One would assume that the local Belgians would be thriving amongst the bustling economic activities. However, considering that the French- and Dutch-speaking locals remain majority inhabitants, it is surprising that they are in fact the minority working for the EU institutions, which has caused some rifts in society. Brussels holds more than 1,000 business conferences annually, making it the fourth most popular conference city in Europe. It is, furthermore, rated as the seventh most important financial center in the

world (Brussels, Belgium>>City Info>>Economy). However, the success of the city is not applicable to all inhabitants of Brussels.

Sassen claims that the employment market of Global Cities, as Brussels is ranked, is characterized by a polarizing structure causing inequality in those cities to rise substantially[15]. Hamnett (1994) and Waldinger (1996) see a slight nuance in this, and claim that urban economies are not as much subject to polarization as they are to upgrading. This means that jobs at the bottom of the labor market are disappearing rather than being created, while an increase of jobs is only noticeable at the top of the employment market. For Brussels, an important distinction can be made in this regard between the "upstairs internationalization of Brussels" versus its "downstairs

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[15] This is an important factor to consider when considering the ranking of the Global Cities in the world. For example, if we apply this logic to the city of Brussels, and continue on Sassen's acknowledgement of the polarization brought about by professional economic globalization via the Global Cities, it could be summarized as follows (idea adopted from Van der Waal & Burgers (2007) who applied this model of 8 hypotheses to Amsterdam and Rotterdam):

1. Brussels, as a Global City, experiences less international competition than non-Global Cities;
2. This is the consequence of the fact that Global Cities uphold a different sectoral composition than non-Global Cities. Due to its managing and coordinating functions (mainly for and from the EU), Brussels housevests a relatively large number of companies active within the commercial service industry;
3. Because the commercial service industry in Brussels is mainly focused on that managing and coordinating of functions, companies within the Brussels Global City services industry sector are less exposed to international competition than companies in the commercial services industry in non-Global Cities;
4. Brussels upholds a stronger polarized remuneration structure than non-Global Cities. At present, the average EU salary is triple that of an individual employed in the non-EU or non-institutional companies. In non-Global Cities, much more prone to international competition, we see a remuneration system adjusted to upgrading – in which the share of lower salaries is more limited;
5. The polarized remuneration system in Brussels is caused by the greater share of companies active in the commercial service industry, in comparison to the non-Global Cities;
6. And this is also due to a stronger polarization in salary structure in the commercial services industry in comparison to those in non-Global Cities. Commercial services in the Global Cities are mainly targeted on the managing and coordinating role such cities play in the global economy;
7. Because non-Global cities are more exposed to international competition, they have a remuneration structure characterized by upgrading (as mentioned before). In comparison to Global Cities like Brussels, that means that they have fewer employees with a low income;
8. This smaller share of employees with a low income in non-Global Cities is caused by the higher degree of international competition to which those cities are exposed.

internationalization". "The two processes are relatively independent and reinforce the polarization of Brussels" (Corijn et al., 2008).

Rich Brussels ... Poor Brusselers

When observing the produced wealth, Brussels as a city and region is an economic success. It is the wealthiest region of Belgium, and scores very high in the European statistical listings. In 2007, the GDP per capita was 2.4 times higher than the average European – placing Brussels in third richest region in Europe – preceded by London and Luxemburg only. This position is essentially tied to Brussels' hosting of European institutions, and secondarily to other international institutions, such as NATO. This international presence is growing. The international function itself produces value, but also generates many other activities such as lobbying, consultancy, the media, and a multiplicity of embassies, regional delegations, etc. It thus yields significant multiplier and induced effects in business and tourism for example. In terms of jobs, the international institutions in Brussels employ a large number of people: from 38 000 to 41 000 for the European institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council of Ministers, Committee of the Regions…), nearly 4 000 for NATO. Added to these figures are all the parallel activities (15 000-20 000 lobbyists, 1400 journalists/press, 300 at Regional delegations; 5322 diplomats, 2500 other international agencies, over 2000 international firms; plus 150 international law firms…). All together, the presence of European and international institutions in Brussels and the induced and multiplier effects count for 13 to 14% of employment and of the Brussels GDP "adjusted" by adding in activities that are not counted in national statistics (Corijn et al, 2009). Lastly, these international activities generate a large daily flow of professional visitors from abroad – enhancing the tourist industry of Brussels that generates more than 2 million annual hotel room nights.

For expatriates, the city is a blessing in terms of taxes. In December 2014, the Brussels Times reported that "more than 20 000 managerial staff, researchers, and specialized staff who come from abroad only pay a small amount of taxes on their income". On top of this, expats are equally escaping paying taxes abroad, amount to a tax rebate of more than 1 billion Euro (De Standaard, December 2014). According to the Federal Public Services of Finance, Belgium does not inform these expatriates' countries of origins that they are classified as non-residents in Brussels, which allows them to slip through the tax net in two countries. The Belgian Court of Audit gave a

very critical review of this system in 2003 (Sanchez, 2014), and it is safe to state that both the financial and the societal friction this carries with it, is noticeable in the attitude of the common Belgian who continues to be taxed highly to compensate for austerity measures in place throughout most of the EU today – as a result of over-spending within the financial socialist system that had dominated the Belgian landscape since the conclusion of WWII. The internationalization of part of Brussels via these institutions furthermore creates a division between two communities within the city: the expats and international workers, and the local Brussels residents who often feel excluded or distanced from this European societal network. Figure 8 provides an overview of the socio-economic diversification within the 19 municipalities that make up the region of Brussels, and it cannot be denied that the European Quarter – housing the majority of EU institutions – has had a serious impact on its overall economic development – albeit definitely more so in the office and residential regions housing European and/or EU immigrants.
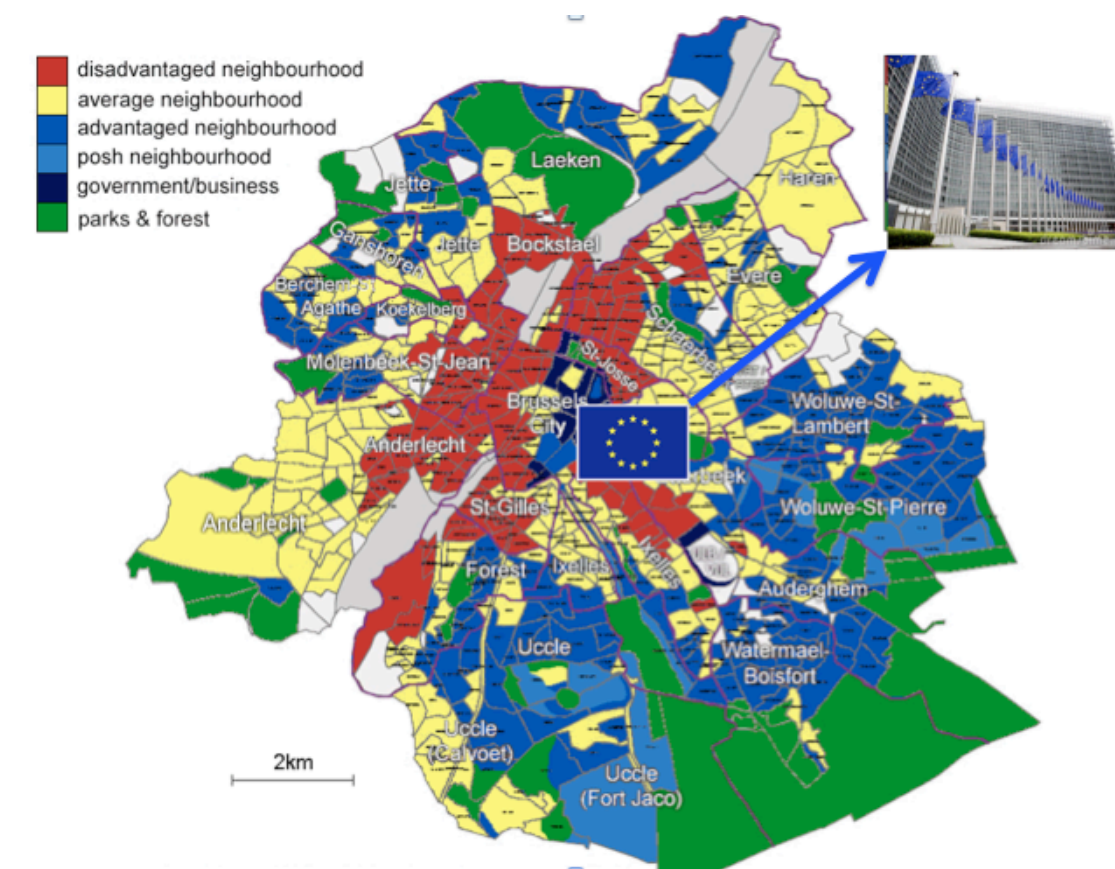

Figure 8: Socio-economic make-up of the 19 communes that comprise Brussels, with the EU's institutional "European Quarter" centrally located (Map of the Brussels Capital region, Eupedia).

Indeed, not all inhabitants of Brussels fall into this successful category, with a large number of Brusselers experiencing financial difficulties. Considering that poverty is concentrated mainly in the large Belgian cities, it is not entirely surprising that Brussels holds the highest percentage of population living below the poverty line. An important explanation for this paradox of economic success of the city and the financial vulnerability of its inhabitants can be found in the Brussels labor market. The unemployment in Brussels currently stands at 20.4% (Flanders News, January 2014). More than half of the earners of the high GDP of Brussels, reside outside of the city center, and as such, it is the population of Brussels itself that is confronted with a low employment reality. Approximately 1 in 5 of the active Brussels population (between 18-64 years of age) do not obtain an income from labor, but live on a replacement income or receive welfare. In recent years, this number has increased. While protected via the welfare state, these replacement or welfare incomes offer insufficient resources for a dignified lifestyle, especially in the Brussels Capital Region where high housing costs take a heavy toll on the income of the poorest families. Often more than half of the state-offered income is spent on accommodation. Not surprisingly, the waiting list for state-sponsored social housing continues to grow (Feyaerts, 2010, p. 10-23). On top of this, the (ab)use of the welfare system – to be discussed in more detail in chapter 4, section 5 on Emerging Social Issues – adds oil to the already heated nationalist campaign against such practices by 'non-Belgians'.

At the same time, the position of Brussels places it within the European Megalapolis region (Pedrazzini, 2011) - a geographic streak of high urbanization that stretches from the North West of England to the North of Italy. According to Mumford (1983), in time, this region runs the risk of overdevelopment and social decline. "Mumford's ideal city would be a city of human dimensions enabling and encouraging a vigorous reciprocity and interaction between inhabitants as citizens … The ideal would be a city of friendly neighborhoods in close connection, all within close walking distance of parks and green spaces" (Critchley, 2004). Unfortunately Mumford would be far from pleased with what he would see in large contemporary European cities, especially in light of the European financial crisis, where complex economic, political and technological set-ups are taking their direct toll on its citizens. The 2013 issue of the socio-political Mondiaal Magazine reported that after 5 years of crisis, "400 000 people sleep under the stars in Europe" … and unfortunately this is not meant in a romantic manner. In a sense, Mumford's prediction of social decline

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seems to have become a reality within the Global City of Brussels as well. In her 2014 Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy, Saskia Sassen similarly presents a confrontational analysis. Rather than assume that the Greek crisis revolved around a European problematique, Sassen expands the issue to a global level and believes we are dealing with the structural adjustment of the Western national economy to comply with the demands of the global financial-economic system. Defined as predator formations in which a mixture of elites and system capacities search for extreme and acute concentrations of wealth, this new economic logic stimulates expulsion, isolation, and banishment. Sassen demonstrates how this brutal capitalism goes hand in hand with an extreme shift of the economy, not only in the poor but also in wealthy countries. The restructuring of economic order expands to include the jobless who lose everything (their job, their home, their health care) and are no longer counted within the economic system. The same scenario is valid for small entrepreneurs who lose everything, or new college graduates who leave their country or even Europe. The economy is diminished to include only what looks presentable in the eyes of institutions like the IMF. Sassen states that Greece is just the first example of what the specific economic policy in Europe is causing. Quite strikingly, a year prior to the Greek tragedy of 2015, Sassen already wrote that this was a 'testing ground', to see whether the brutal restructuring with the end goal to create a smaller economic reality that meets the global financial markets, can succeed (Holemans, July 2015).

At present, it can be argued that Brussels' development model is in support of exclusion, to the benefit of certain regions within the capital. In order to attain a unified Brussels identity (rather than several network identities within segments of the region), the international dynamics must move within the dynamics of the existing model in order not to alienate the population. Brussels has had to cope and will have to continue to cope with many teething problems in accommodating such a large and important role for the European Union. It is part of human nature to resist change, but without the EU involvement, Brussels may have still been stuck in the past … and without the EU today, the city would not only loose its international global standing, Belgium would equally loose its main economic driving force. The city has overall become more vibrant and innovative, with better developments and transport services. The heavy investment since the late 1900s has certainly paid off as the revolutionary

city of Brussels has contributed to the county's overall growth levels, with Belgium now being one of the world's top economic performers, and aligned with the EU's Europe 2020 Initiative to further boost the digital economy – which with a growth of 12% per year in the EU is now bigger than the Belgian national economy.

Robotization of Work

In the 1980s and 1990s, Flanders Technology International was a bi-annual fair organized in the city of Gent, focused on the popularization of robotic and technological science in Flanders. While no longer in existence today, it provided much of the ground work for contemporary evolutions in technological advances, which are expressed in society today by the active incorporation of robots in human-to-human interactions. As such, the first human-like robot MARIO was welcomed and put to work at the reception desk of the Ghent Marriott Hotel in June 2015. Measuring 57 cm in length, speaking 19 languages fluently, offering facial recognition software that is stored for six months after a hotel visit, MARIO is the first non-human to be employed in the hospitality industry. Instances reassure that "no one needs to fear for their job" (Metro, June 2015) since the robot's main tasks will focus on assisting humans by "checking customers in and providing their key card, babysitting children, and presenting powerpoint presentations". Future functions are anticipated to include ordering a taxi or making a toast at festive occasions. MARIO is actually the younger brother of ZORA, the first 'humaoid' robot in the world, developed in and by Flanders.

Already employed in retirement homes, in schools working with young autistic children, in several hospitals, ZORA is now also finding a welcoming platform in the Netherlands. Indeed, young children in revalidation centers consider ZORA their friend who engages in activities with them; retirement homes consider ZORA a welcome diversion for their residents, who are not only in communicative interaction with their small room-guest, but who are also monitored by ZORA, who then alerts the medical staff, in case of a fall; and more than a dozen Belgian companies are currently in line to welcome their own humanoid robot in the business industry. Furthermore, Aldebaran – world leader in the manufacturing of human robots – has in 2015 engaged in an exclusive partnership to introduce ZORA throughout Europe (Zora Robotics) Naturally, the introduction of this cute futuristic robot has brought with it heavy criticism and concerns for the future, ranging from the

immoral replacement of robots over humans in the care industry to the fear for loss of jobs to robots. In this regard, the article "Medical Care in 2050: Patient is Boss – The Hospital of the Future" (Knack, October 2015) already indicates that by 2050 the developments will have reached situations in which most tasks will be performed by computer and/or robot in a superior manner than by humans. As the successor of Deep Blue, the chess computer that defeated world champion Garri Kasparov in 1997, Watson is consulted today. The supercomputer has been entirely oriented towards medical science and in a test with patients, computer Watson correctly assessed 56 % of cases, compared to 47 % correctness by human doctors (Zuallaert, 2015, p. 32). At the same time, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) has estimated that 2020 will be characterized by a shortage of a million medical doctors in Europe (OECS iLibrary, Health at a Glance: Europe 2012). Reason for panic in the aging demographic of Europe, or an opportunity for technology to flourish?

3.5.   Technology & Transportation Infrastructure

From the Greeks, Europe inherited the spirit of analysis. Renaissance put man back at the center of the universe and it became a working method, a life doctrine, and an education system to move forward in and with technology. The ships, the wind mills (previously mainly seen mainly in the Netherlands, now throughout the European cities' landscape) in an effort to further advance technology in support of ever-growing cities, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Atomium in Brussels, the Channel tunnel connecting the European continent to the UK, the Ariane rocket, are all European technological success stories.

Since 2001, the EU is a leader in hi-tech manufacturing industry. With their motto that financial strength and growth can be achieved via technological advance, the Digital Agenda for Europe (November 2014) states that the digital economy – provided that it is efficient, inclusive and innovative – has the potential to transform both business and society as a whole. "The digital economy is growing 7 times faster than the real economy, but this potential is currently held back by a patchy pan-European policy framework … When communicating between countries in Europe, citizens currently face varying charges for use, incompatible systems and irregular

connectivity across the continent" (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2014). Graph 5 demonstrates the current ranking of Belgium as the fifth most digital member-state of the EU, but since the estimate for the end 2015 upholds that 90% of all jobs will require basic ICT skills, the EU finds itself in need to ameliorate its digital union.
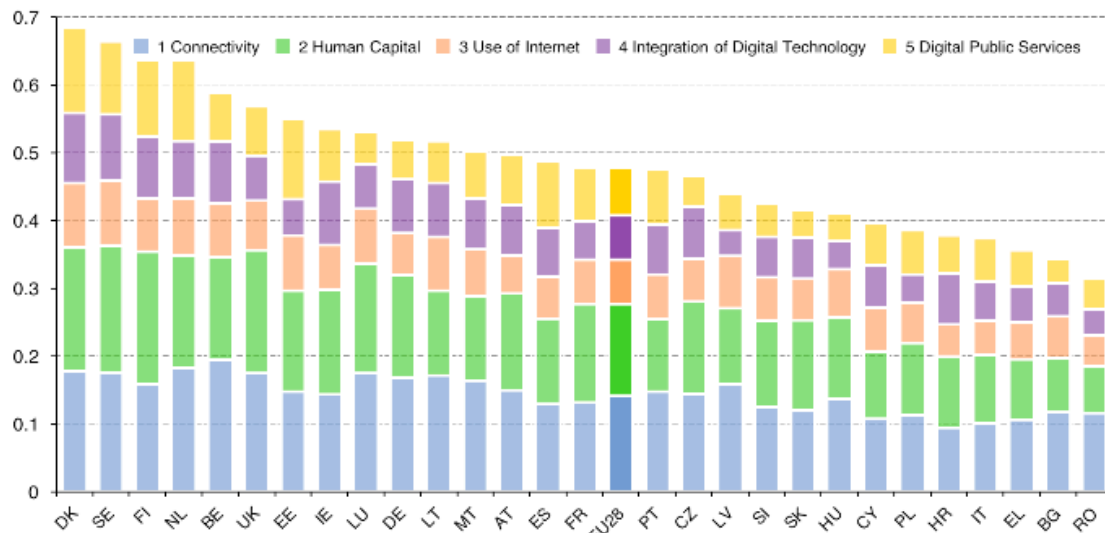
Graph 5: 2014 ranking of how digital each EU member-state is: Belgium ranks 5th (Digital Agenda Scoreboard, 2014).

The EU program "Europe 2020" seeks to provide broadband internet connection for all of its citizens; align and re-design the telecom market to abolish the outrageously high roaming costs within the EU; create a consumer-friendly digital single market in which e-entrepreneurs find potential to start a business; and replace paper documents with e-documents – particularly e-invoices, which could lead to approximately 240 billion Euro in savings over a 6 year time period. Aside from cost-reduction, the EU is thus striving for stronger interconnectedness of its public via digital means.

Technology has already made the world smaller. Conference calls replace group meetings, the internet allows for real-time alignment, and the exchange of data and ideas – including those shared by nationalist parties across the EU - literally takes seconds – regardless of one's location in the world. In this respect, the EU has certainly taken advantage of this and aims to comply with digital availabilities for meetings. Yet the world, for example via the UN, and the EU still see the need to hold on-location meetings, summits, and discussions. The body language via face-to-face communication, the assurance of true engagement when on location, the immediate ability to clarify meaning, the incentive to participate in a stronger fashion, and the

overall efficiency of having all parties in a single setting, contribute to the reasoning of European officials meeting in Brussels – a city perfectly equipped with transportation infrastructure (also advanced via technology) that allows arrival from any and all places in the world through many means. The EU institutions occupy 30% of Brussels' office space in technologically advanced buildings, and as such, the EU activities transport a daily flow of professional visitors from abroad. Furthermore, Eurostat (2014) calculated that the Brussels GDP is boosted by a massive inflow of commuters from neighboring regions: 230 000 Flemish and 130 000 Walloon inhabitants commute to their job in Brussels per day. The go-to transportation means and the in-city mobility possibilities allow for full spatial movement at any time of the day.

Transportation Infrastructure

As the first country to undergo an industrial revolution on the European continent in the early 19th century, Belgium relied on technological advances in transportation to integrate its industry with that of its neighbors. Brussels can be reached via any and all means of transportation, which adds to its global and international status – yet at the same time, raises concerns for the easy accessibility of immigrants in the eyes of Belgian politicians. With its seven international motorways, classified as one of the best connections in Europe, the Belgian road network links with France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Belgium equally knows one of the densest rail networks in the world, carrying 188 million passengers per year (Business Belgium Infrastructure, 2014). This includes high-speed train connections via the TGV, EuroStar and Thalys that are scheduled up to 10 times per day to cities like London, Amsterdam, and Paris in direct line from Brussels. As the second internal port of Belgium, Brussels harbor is accessible 24 hours per day; and Brussels Airport is located in the Flemish region just north of Brussels Capital Region. Brussels Airport experienced a 7.7% increase in passenger and freight traffic in the past year (2014-2015). This can be explained due to the increasingly affordable means of transportation through air, but equally through the new international agreements that bring more international carriers directly into Brussels (Brussels Airport, June 2015). Once in the city of Brussels, the public transportation compensates the highly congested traffic on the roads.

A comprehensive underground metro system is complemented by an above-ground tram network that covers the entire city, together with a vast array of public bus lines. None of these modes of transportation have been made free to the public. Taxis and private cars remain part of the landscape, as are the bicycle share programs of Villo (in operation since 2006) in bright yellow colors, which are very popular with tourists and locals alike; and the moderately successful Zen Car electric car-sharing system that was launched in 2012. In light of its continued growth of both inhabitants and infrastructure, the city of Brussels does continue to look towards its two neighboring regions of Flanders and Wallonia, as well as abroad, for innovative ideas to harmonize the mobility of the city. In an effort to stimulate the use of non-motorized transportation for example, several initiatives have been introduced, including the bike-share's incentive where free rental minutes are offered to all those biking uphill in Brussels. Furthermore, the number of cars driving around in Brussels today has decreased with 7% in comparison to ten years ago. Brussels state secretary De Lille (Carton, 2014) claims to perceive a mentality change in the city, in which public transportation, cycling or walking are gaining territory. Furthermore, the unmanned (thus robot-operated) vehicle is slowly experiencing a rise in popularity throughout the world. The intention to link technology to mobility to sustainability to an enjoyable city definitely exists, yet is often hindered by short-term social and financial advantages.

Between 2009 and 2013, Belgium held the fifth place of European countries with the most strikes per year. With the train and bus services having been on general strike multiple times throughout 2014, Brussels Airport was entirely strike-paralyzed (shut down) in December 2015. Since the transportation industry experiences severe consequences of these strikes, but was at times also the leader in organizing them, this not only reflects poorly on the international character of the city, it demonstrates the power of the labor unions in the formerly socialist dominated political Belgian landscape. While the sixth state reform of the Belgian state rendered many administrative tasks with the three regions - including Brussels -, the overall functioning and policies vis-à-vis the implementation of technology and transportation remains a federal responsibility.

Evidence that the city is potentially moving in the correct philosophical mindset is the Smart City Award 2015 - rewarding the most creative city for its sustainable

innovation – that nominated the Open Data Platform of the City of Brussels for its multi-lingual set-up in which digital data is collected and freely available for everyone. In line with the EU goals, this initiative aims to provide free WiFi in all public spaces, increase shared mobility throughout the city, encourage students to become part of the Brussels Studies academic platform, and change the city-outlook through sustainable transportation means. While the award will only be granted to the winning smart city towards the end of 2015, the initiative demonstrates the use of technology in Brussels to advance its sustainable character. From an individual standpoint of a citizen living in Brussels, technology and digitalization is believed to hold the potential to aid with safety on the roads; to increase quality and span of life (for example via home tele-monitoring of patients); and to facilitate life through robotic services. At present, the EU holds a 25% share of the global industrial robotics market and 50% of the professional service robotics sector. "The number of people over 65 years old in the EU will rise to over 30% by 2060. 'Eldercare social robots' can help perform daily tasks such as lifting or cooking or set off an alarm in an inbuilt camera that registers when a person falls … A new robotics public-private partnership will receive 700 million Euro of EU funding, leveraging 2 billion Euro in private investment" (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2014). Naturally this increase in technology and the desire to offer mobility in a sustainable manner requires energy to ensure that the country can continue operating today.

3.6. Energy

"Plentiful and cheap oil has enabled Europe to become one of the world's wealthiest modern economies … Millions of Europeans work in industries to manufacture aircraft, cars, plastics and all kinds of appliances that only exist thanks to oil … Vegetables and other agricultural products are grown with fertilizers and biocides derived from the petrochemical industry, and are transported mainly by road. Millions of people require medicines whose composition includes petrochemical products, go to work every day by car, or warm their homes with heating-oil boilers. Soon the European Union will be importing its entire requirement of this form of energy and, unless it radically reorganizes and converts sectors of its economy, it will be completely subjected to the new constraints that govern the global energy market since the beginning of the century. We have in fact reached 'peak oil'."

Thus reads the latest report "Europe facing peak oil" (Thevard, November 2012) by the Greens EFA in the European Parliament. The European Union has understood the urgency for the development of alternative sources of energy and in total, nearly 6 billion Euro is currently being invested towards energy projects in the EU's Research and Innovation Program of Horizon 2020. In aid of the creation and improvement of clean energy technologies, the EU demonstrates itself not only to becoming an expert in technological advances available in the world today, it promotes the advancement of energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy networks and energy storage[16]. Brussels, at the heart of the EU's bureaucratic bombast, finds itself equally located in the political reality of a nation-state in which no true federal energy plan was in existence until the formation of the current government in 2014.

Belgium's Energy Standing

Today, the Belgian federal energy policy revolves around several broad subjects: the re-organization of the gas- and electricity market; the phasing out of nuclear energy; the application of the Federal Plan for Durable Development (mainly implementing residence regulations); the fight against global warming; international cooperation; the diversification of energy sources and sectors (Belgian Federal Government Energy Policy, 2015). In essence, a repeat of the guidelines set forth by the European Union for all its member-states, which was incorporated instead of the failing national vision upheld by Belgium until 2014. In practice, Essent CEO Frank Brichau (2014) claims that this entails the realization that the Belgian energy supply cannot be limited to internal production, that the EU literally links Belgium to the rest of the continent. Individuality in energy is thus replaced by solidarity within the EU, and as such, a Belgian vision was traded in (or traded up?) for a European vision. This interconnectivity between European countries offers the possibility to rely on foreign centers, incorporate and adjust them to the Belgian energy net, to then offer more attractive (financial) energy packages to the individual consumer. This process would in theory evaluate the strategic energy reserves of the European Union, rather than of certain regions or countries. The European Commission has imposed a climate goal in which Belgium must realize 13% renewable energy by 2020. With at present 6.8%,

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[16] It does so by funding projects in new technologies, including bio-energy, bio-fuels, buildings, cleaner coal, dissemination, geo-thermal, grid, hydrogen, ocean, solar power, wind, etc. (Demonstration Projects of EU Energy, Technology & Innovation).

this seems part of a distant utopian future (Vandaele, 2014). Yet Belgium has sufficient examples to learn from in its direct vicinity and it needs to become a better student in the very near future. At present, its main two sources remain oil and nuclear energy – with a small array of alternative sources currently explored or under development.

Firstly, as one of the founding members of CERN, one of the original signatories of the Euratom Treaty, Belgium houses 7 nuclear reactors providing the majority of power to the Belgian households, including Brussels. The 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster re-introduced the discussion and the danger of the nuclear age to the overall public. The Belgian Group "Nucleaire Stop Kernergie" (as you can tell, in both Dutch and French languages signifying a united Belgian response) ignited an anti-nuclear political movement. The sad reality, however, is that the average Belgian citizen does not care where their energy comes from – as a study by the VRT television station indicated in 2012. While 40% were neutral on the subject, only 16% advocated the stop of the nuclear power generation. It is mainly the fear that the provision of energy – especially in cold winters – would be in short supply that 'forces' the government to maintain the nuclear plants, and even invest billions in a damaging industry, claims energy specialist Luc Barbé (Vandaele, 2014). At present, based on the European stress-tests of the facilities and the alignment with EU regulations, the Belgian government has agreed to close all reactors by 2025. This should serve as a public and governmental stimulus to start seeking alternative forms of durable and renewable energy.

Secondly, aside from Singapore, Belgium is the largest consumer of oil per capita for a country that does not produce oil itself. While the USA may be the largest consumer as a country, per capita, Belgium unfortunately takes the lead for the Western world. Out of all countries (including oil-producing states), Belgium places 6th in the world (Hendrickx, 2012), in stark contrast with Germany which is one of the lowest consumers of oil – due to its oil independent industry. Compared to the average European consumer, Belgians use double via its industry, companies and individual households. While Belgium (on 1 January 2014, according to the Belgian Petroleum Federation) issues the highest taxes of the Western EU member-states on its fuel prices, with 21%, this has not halted the consumption level. Likewise, the electrification of transportation has remained below expectations, mainly because the cost of fuel combined with fuel-efficient engines does not provide sufficient incentive

to justify a mindset switch. While the impact in Flanders or Wallonia is low, Brussels has indeed noted a 7% decrease in cars in its city (as noted in driving force 'Technology & Transportation Infrastructure'). The availability of numerous alternatives in transportation, added to the starkly diminishing car-friendliness of Brussels, seems to have an effect.

The commitment Belgium has made towards the EU to phase out nuclear energy by 2025, and to gain 13% of its energy from durable sources by 2020, has led to the investment into different alternatives to oil and nuclear energy. In fact, a study by the Federal Planning Agency ICEDD demonstrated that it is in theory feasible to obtain 100% renewable energy in and for Belgium by 2050. With this in mind, it appears the Belgian nation-state needs to seriously re-organize its resources, since in 2012, only the Netherlands scored lower than Belgium in terms of producing renewable energy. Being at the bottom of the EU-28-member-states list and thus well below the EU average, the following (in decreasing line of renewable energy production) are being invested in: Bio-mass, water power, waste transformation, wind energy, bio-gas, fluid bio-mass, solar energy. Flemish nationalists are great proponents of separating the current federal policy-making abilities into the 2 separate regions – with Flanders and Wallonia being able to subsidize their 'own' regional renewable energy projects. Here again, in the case of a potential state separation, the Brusselers would be granted the choice to adhere to either region. The Brussels Capital Region, however, is at times ahead of the federal plans, especially in terms of energy-sustainability in individual homes.

Brussels' Energy Resolutions
EUFORES, the European Parliament's network promoting the deployment of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency within Europe, gained an extra companion in 2009, when the European Renewable Energy Council also installed its headquarters in the Renewable Energy House in the center of Brussels. Creating synergies between interested parties and the larger public, such organizations have offered inspiration to the city of Brussels to take action itself, aside from (but never in violation of) the federal agreements. Whereas the European and Belgian alignments focus on the larger impact of energy and the need thereof, Brussels has brought the issue closer to the homes of individual citizens – literally.

In January 2013, the government of Brussels decided to set the target of green electricity within the city at 12% - the tenfold of today's consumed green electricity in the Brussels region. In order to reach this, the Brussels government approved (late 2012) energy subsidies (including a passive/low-energy standard subsidy) for the region of Brussels – this on top of the existing Belgian federal government's tax deductions which were in place until the end of 2012. In other words, Brussels has in the past years stimulated energy-preserving measures – mainly in the construction of residences with better isolation, solar panels, and natural earth heat pumps. Today, a different kind of residence is being promoted within the Brussels environment, coined "Exemplary buildings" which can serve to re-launch innovation within the Belgian capital region. Over the time span of three years, 117 winning projects have been selected (for 18.5 million Euro in subsidies) to establish economically sound; eco-designed; high architectural quality; reproductive buildings. As with most initiatives, the process is slow and the development of such buildings mainly visible in the advantaged regions of the city (refer to figure 8 on the socio-economic make-up of the 19 communes of Brussels, p. 124 – driving force "economy"), causing further socio-geographic polarization. While such projects place the energy quest in smaller units of analysis, the larger Brussels demand for power remains active.

Equally in 2013, the Brussels Council for Environment entered a decree to install renewable energy sources in every single of the 19 communes to ensure that the dependency on nuclear energy can be diminished. The April 2015 New Nuclear Watch Europe gathering in Brussels, however, reconfirmed the EU's strategic energy plan to include nuclear energy – which remains seen as a low polluting and economically viable solution. While EU policy will eventually have to come to a clear decision and energy-direction, sub-contractors of the city of Brussels have already commenced innovative alternatives. Brussel-Energie is such an example. Drawing on Swedish examples, it seeks to transform non-recyclable trash into energy to re-fuel the city. By doing so in and for Brussels at this time, they produce steam and electricity capable of powering a minimum of 65 000 households annually.

Furthermore, Brussels has been incentivizing the reliance on lower energy consumption for transportation by organizing car-free days in which parts of the city have been completely blocked for all motorized traffic. With the European Commission's imposed emission reduction of 20% by 2020, Brussels is taking a head

start by attempting to discipline its city-dwellers to rely on cleaner forms of transportation that require less energy, ultimately offering a healthier city.

3.7. Environment

Environmental factors influence the quality of life and can have a substantial effect on the mental and physical health of inhabitants of the planet. In urbanized regions, the impact of environmentally devastating forces such as pollution has become a high priority. With the legal acceptance and ratification of the Kyoto Treaty by the European Union in 2002 (with its 15 members at that time), it has today become an entry requirement for new member-states to join the EU. Belgium is equally an official member of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but also works towards national initiatives. With the 2013 project "Towards a Low Carbon Society in 2050" (which adheres to some of the scenario planning principles of futures studies) a commitment was made by the federal government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% relative to 1990. In this study, the five main sectoral polluters of Belgium are identified as the transportation, construction, industry, agriculture, and energy sectors; and five futures scenarios for the attainment of a low carbon society are explored. Each scenario implicitly suggests that the low-carbon transition is compatible with a growing industry:
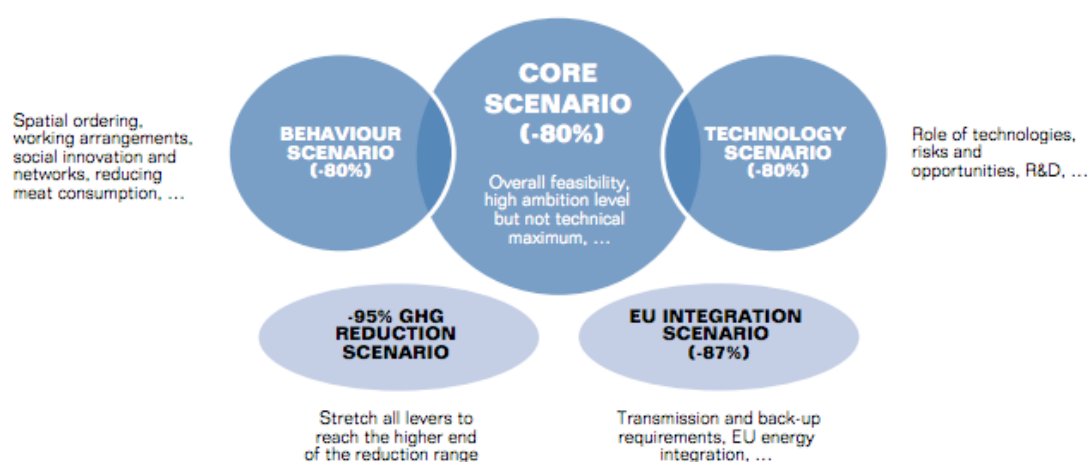

Figure 9: The 2013 "Towards a Low Carbon Society in 2050" study – 5 low-carbon scenarios for Brussels to reach an 80-95% emission reduction (November 2013, p. 7).

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Their main findings for success in 2050 within these scenarios for the five sectoral polluters of Belgian society can be summarized as follows:

1. In the transport sector, reduced mobility demand and electrification play a key role;

2. In the construction sector, the renovation rate of existing buildings must increase and fossil fuel heating systems must be replaced by environmental heating systems;

3. In the industry sector, energy efficiency and process improvements will allow further emission reductions. International competition needs to be taken into account;

4. In the agriculture sector, the technological potential for reduction is relatively limited. Behavioral changes, such as eating less meat, can play an important role;

5. The share of electricity in the energy mix must rise significantly and be provided by renewable (p. 11-16).

As such, lowering energy demand stands central, as does the reduction of fossil fuels and the increase of renewable energy. The low carbon transition requires additional investments today to work towards a reduced oil reliance and cleaner air tomorrow. The theoretical ambitions of the federal level are clear at this moment, and could also be shaped into concrete action. However, while a worthy study in theory and currently in consideration by the federal government for practical implementation, two important factors must be noted – not in terms of technological achievability, but in the political structure of Belgium: First, the core of this study rests on the assumption of a united federal approach, today and in the future. In the contemporary nationalistic climate, no guarantee exists that this model will ever come to fruition in the current nation-state structure. If the rising trend of nationalistic tendencies continues, the scenario of a separation of the regions is a realistic possibility to consider in the implementation of low-carbon goals. Secondly, the project worked with an average carbon emission assumption for the entire country of Belgium. The reality of today teaches us that the three governance regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels) do not share such an average emission – with Brussels peaking as the capital of air pollution.

In 2013, an interactive chart model was presented by the Inter-Regional Cell for Environment (IRCEL-CELINE), the Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) and the Flemish Environment Agency (VMM). In it, the clear display of

small and dangerous fine dust particles (PM 2.5 particles) is noted in extremely high concentration in Brussels – mainly due to the exhaust of motorized traffic. "On average, a Belgian loses approximately one year of life expectancy due to poor air quality … In Brussels, this loss is substantially higher", says IRCEL specialist Frans Fierens (KH, February 2014). A similar trend has been established for the premature deaths of thousands of Europeans as a result of European governments' failure to act on air pollution (Harvey, March 2015). Today, the IRCEL has drafted a cooperation accord between the Belgian state, and the three regions of Belgium. Considering potential bureaucratic delay, Brussels is working in close cooperation with the EU, rather than only with the Belgian government, to bring about change in its city.

International Driving Forces at Work in Brussels

As confirmed by the European Environment Agency in 2013, urbanization in Europe is an ongoing phenomenon – both in terms of urban land expansion and increasing population. Environmental challenges and urbanization are closely connected, and since cities are of the utmost importance to the European Union, EU policy is designed to enable cities to manage their territorial sustainably. Via the Europe 2020 strategy, policy integration between the EU and the local level is key to sustainable innovation in urban regions. European Commission initiatives are in place in which cities voluntarily cooperate with the EU, most notable are the European Green Capital Award and the Covenant of Mayors. They implement the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment and complement EU policies targeting cities directly, like the directives on air quality, environmental noise, and urban waste water (EEA, November 2013). In their totality and in theory, these policies form the so-called 'Urban Agenda of Europe'.

In this regard, Brussels was shortlisted (and defeated by Bristol) as the Green Capital of Europe for 2015, demonstrating its commitment to both the environment and the green surroundings of the city and its people via its environmental record. The proliferation of good examples and their snowball effect are anticipating a change in and for Brussels in increasingly visible manners. As such, the attainability of becoming one of the "Greenest" districts in Europe seems not only valid, but substantiated in contemporary efforts. Indeed, the federal government's 'green loan' is equally being utilized today to contribute to green developments to and within individual residences. Furthermore, the Action Plan for a Low-Carbon Brussels by

2025 was adopted in 2010, with the aim to double the desired European guideline, by reducing 40% GHG emissions per capita.

Furthermore, all 19 mayors of the 19 communes of Brussels Capital Region are signatories of the Covenant of Mayors, the mainstream European movement in which a voluntary commitment is made towards energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources of their territory. While this organization focuses on the regional European level, the UN's Compact of Mayors incorporates the world via city networks into a similar initiative. Drawing on experiences from environmentally sustainable (energy efficient, resulting in a cleaner environment) success-stories from California and Germany, the New York Climate Summit in 2014 (mind you, to which the majority of participants flew in … rather than engage in virtual meeting set-ups) saw 75 mayors from around the world recognize that cities account for approximately 70% of all greenhouse gas emissions. In an effort to shrink their carbon footprint, they signed various pledges on a range of green initiatives (Sivaram & Livingston, 2015). The actual shrinking of the carbon footprint of and in Brussels remains highly problematic at present.

While the number of cars may have diminished over the years in Brussels, road traffic continues to contribute as an enormous source of emissions and fine dust. The new technology in and of cars may be emitting less on average, but the number of cars on the roads remains extremely high – making it almost impossible to limit the emissions (Vandaele, 2014) in traffic zones. Add to that the hundreds of planes flying over the city, there is no denying that the geo-politically advantageous position of the capital equally experiences many air pollution and smog setbacks. Nevertheless, the city of Brussels was successful via an active prevention policy in reducing its pollution and improving its air quality by 18% between 2004 and 2010. In this respect, Brussels had organized a number of car-free-Sundays for the past 5 years during which parts of the city of Brussels were completely blocked for all motorized traffic. In stimulating the use of non-motorized transportation means (meaning the use of your legs or your bicycle), this initiative experienced such a tremendous success with the Brussels population that the decree to render part of the city into a car-free zone became a reality in 2015. The pedestrian zone in the historic center has changed the face of Brussels radically for pedestrians, but equally for users of public transport and car drivers (Hope, June 2015). Covering 50 hectares, it is the largest car-free zone in

Europe. In a further effort to offer clean air and natural filtering devices in the form of plants, the city of Brussels is enhancing its green park zone …

With a population growth, counted on top of a population density amongst the highest in Europe (at 7 057 inhabitants/square km), the city of Brussels has been working hard towards the maintenance and implementation of open green spaces (see figure 8 on p. 124 – driving force 'economy'). At present, 53% of the region's surface area corresponds to green spaces, albeit in the broad sense of the word – meaning that these include waterways, environmentally exemplary building of sustainable development, etc. In general, the goal of the sustainable land use in Brussels is not only to meet the challenge of sustainable development within the context of Europe, it is to provide a healthy pleasurable city environment for the inhabitants of the capital. As part of the continued polarization critique within Brussels, the green and park developments in the more advantageous parts of the city are noticeable and hold the potential to further divide the Brussels population.

While the focus for most Brusselers lies on the direct environmental impacts by and to their city, there is no denying that factors from beyond the Brussels, Flemish, or Belgian landscape cannot be overlooked. One such example is the fact that the local impact of global climate change may have severe consequences on the city of Brussels. National Geographic reported in 2015 that if all the ice caps in the world were to melt, the sea level would rise with an average of 66 meters (Kintaert, July 2015). While an estimated projection of more than a thousand years, it is worthwhile noting that Brussels is located at 13 meters above sea level. Currently situated in the safe zone from sea level rises, the impact of a 1 meter rise in the sea levels may be catastrophic. Immigrants and climate refugees from the Netherlands – with approximately half of their territory located below sea level – would have a devastating effect on the population density of Brussels, and in consequence on its internal city environment.

In today's society, the climate and the environment subscribe to big business plans. Yvo De Boer, former climate chief at the UN, believes that the 2009 climate hype will be at its peak again this year, although the financial crisis in the Eurozone might jeopardize the EU's leading role in green affairs – if, at least, there were another leading power to match the European ambitions, which there isn't (Knack Extra,

November 2012). "Going green" often comes at a heavier cost to the consumer, and the sad reality is that in an increasingly materialistically spoiled world, customers often opt for convenience over mindfulness. Belgians are no different, in fact they lead the top 5 of heaviest per capita ecological footprint in the world[17], as is evident from the bi-annual Living Planet Report by WWF in 2014. In practical terms, this means that the Belgian footprint stands at 7.45 hectare, against the global average of 1.8 ha and the European average of 4.3 ha. If all inhabitants of the world were to live with a similar Belgian footprint, 4.3 earths would be needed for survival of the current world population. Energy takes up approximately half of the Belgian footprint and the main differences with neighboring countries are the use of energy per household, and the transport sector. Belgium "holds a great patrimony of relatively dated and poorly isolated buildings that do not hold energy well … Furthermore, the low passenger occupation in individual cars, the densest European road network, and the fiscal advantages for business cars, contribute to a higher number of driven kilometers per person", CEO of WWF-Belgium, Damien Vincent, proclaims (De Standaard, September 2013). Unless confronted with no other alternative, bringing about individual change is problematic, at the very least. As such, must the task to do so be imposed by governance structures?

Brussels is known worldwide as the capital of the European Union, because it is home to the EU's principal institutions. The link between Brussels and the EU is so close that the former is often used to denote latter: "Brussels has decided …" is a phrase we often see and hear in media, to an increasing degree. It is also a metropolis, the smallest world city. The wars and alliances between the European powers over the centuries have profoundly influenced the city's development, as has the commercial growth of continental Europe. The city bears the imprints of all the major religious, artistic and technological movements that have shaped European civilization – not all without their difficulties. In addition, a large portion of the city's population was born in other European countries, and another portion originates from countries outside Europe. This cultural cross-fertilization, if you will, has greatly enriched the city. The growth of the European institutions in Brussels has been erratic. Dramatic accelerations have alternated with lengthy reassessments, and rigorous and methodical

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[17] After Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Denmark, Belgium occupies the fifth place, followed in eight place by the USA.

changes have alternated with chaotic improvisation. Finally, the EU's growth has both raised hopes and caused disillusionment among the city's inhabitants … with its undeniable ties to the EU institutional triangle, there is no way back to the purely commercial cultural crossroads the city of Brussels once was. As several of the above described driving forces have indicated, Brussels as a city and its inhabitants are not sitting still. The desire to improve the city into a more sustainable healthier place of residence dominates the political, economic, social scene. Beyond these driving forces described in this chapter, however, there are also a number of contemporary social issues that are emerging in Belgium and the EU, which can potentially impact Brussels quite drastically.

CHAPTER 4
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS & EMERGING ISSUES

At its core, the nationalist strive that impacts the contemporary political Belgian climate revolves around the notion of identity on three levels: The acknowledgement of 'their' identity as separate from others; the political, social and financial protection of that identity; and an established territory on which that identity can flourish. At present, there is no such concept as a Flemish Diaspora culture, nor is there any indication of the emergence thereof. While social media has allowed for the group identification with Belgium or even Flanders when living abroad, such communities are limited to finding pride in Belgian products and customs abroad. Flemish nationalism outside Belgium is limited to non-existent. Yet there are several other European and Belgian social, economic, and political developments that do hold the potential to increase or decrease the nationalist intensity as they strengthen or diminish the focus on the Flemish, Belgian or Brussels identity. While chapter three focused on the driving forces that literally fuel the country and the capital of Belgium, Futures Studies theory equally demands the analysis of current evolutions in society that hold the potential to influence futures. The purpose of this chapter is to map these contemporary trends and emerging issues within the correct methodological set-up.

In accordance with the Mānoa School approach, Molitor's <u>The Power to Change the World: The Art of Forecasting</u> (2003) offers the foundation to differentiating between contemporary trends which are clear in society today and emerging issues which remain below the mainstream radar (see figure 10).
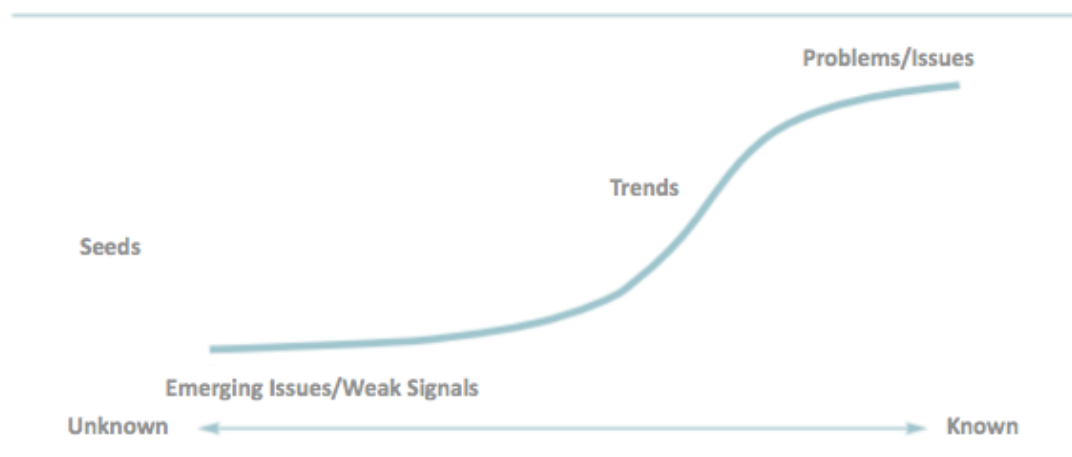

Figure 10: Molitor's Curve (Molitor, 2003) demonstrates the differentiation in anticipating and forecasting possible, probably and plausible effects (Dator, Sweeney & Yee, 2015) of

contemporary trends (visible in mainstream society) and emerging issues (addressed in a subtle manner in isolated fragments of society).

"In simple terms, a trend is something that is ongoing, alive in public awareness and discourse, and certain to have some impact on the futures … Trend analysis focuses on things that already have a history of development that can be quantitatively traced and forecasted … (it) can use facts and figures, since things have been noted, documented, tracked" (Dator, Sweeney & Yee, 2015, p. 141-142). Complementing the contemporary trends analysis, yet employing a different approach, emerging issues equally form an integral part of futures exercises. Defined by Molitor (2003) as "catalytic events", emerging issues are subtle in their prominence today, yet must be monitored "in order to anticipate and forecast possible, probably and plausible effects" (Dator, Sweeney & Yee, 2015, p. 141). Emerging issues do not possess the factual and accurate tone of contemporary trends since they are often barely visible to the common observer. Emerging issues analysis focuses on things just as they are emerging – as close to their very first notice as possible, certainly before they become a well-established "trend", and never as a commonplace "problem" (Dator, Sweeney & Yee, 2015, p. 142).

This chapter will thus, in accordance with the Mānoa School's methodology, consist of two parts. The first sub-section highlights five contemporary trends that could direct the course of the future, more specifically holding the potential to impact the nationalist and identity quest within Belgium and the EU. While possibly appearing as broader general tendencies within Belgian society, the focus of these contemporary trends incorporates issues that would have appeared ridiculous nearly a decade ago, in line with Dator's second law of the future – yet today, they are considered obvious. The first three trends, focused on the economic and political viability of the EU, the immigration policies governing the EU and its member-states, and the Islamification of Europe and Belgium, exceed the local and national sphere, yet impact Brussels directly; the fourth trend can be situated in the larger European climate on one hand, and in the purely Belgian frustration on the other hand: the welfare state and the assumed (ab)use thereof; while the fifth trend zooms in on a shift from the national, not to the regional, but to the localism practices introduced via the concept of Transition Towns. The latter part of this chapter will identify and briefly address a

number of emerging issues, obtained via a careful Horizon Scan conducted between 2010-2015, through social media scanning, small-scale articles, and regional publications.

4.1. Contemporary Trends

4.1.a. A Crumbling Economic European Unit in an Undemocratic Political European Union?

The future of the European Union is undeniably linked to the notion of unity within that union. The recent and ongoing Greek crisis, as part of the larger Euro-crisis of the past 7 years, holds the potential to shatter that sense of unification. Never before have so many Europeans debated the 'wrong' or 'right' actions of the European Union and its economic institutions as for the Greek debacle. While in essence a financial issue, can the argument be made that the Greek crisis has brought about the moral bankruptcy of the EU? In his introductory remarks at the plenary session on "The Future of Europe" during the fifth German Economic Forum Frankfurt in December 2013, Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank (ECB), Benoît Cœuré, declared that the single market supported by the single currency has clearly worked for Europe in the past. He concluded by stating that "our common future cannot be found in the past. The world has changed too much in recent decades to go back. None of our countries are strong enough to survive alone". As such, we must perceive the unification that is strived for by the European Union as intrinsically tied to the success of the Euro, and vice versa. The Euro as a financially unifying tool, and the EU as a politically unifying instrument - both classifying as contemporary trends since their current crises hold the potential to either make or break the European landscape of the future.

Greece as a Catalyst to Euro Unification or Disintegration … and Disharmony
The Greek crisis and the entire Euro-crisis have been ongoing for several years, more specifically since 2008. When the financial and political pressure became very high in Europe, we saw increased integration. We saw extra supervision on the banking structures in the EU, supervision on country budgets and reforms – in short, countries were pushed or disciplined into the correct expectations. The July 2015 referendum organized by the Greek government found support in a public "no" vote to the far-

reaching financial EU stipulations and limitations to save their country. The power of the people, ignited by the precedent of the public referendum, has now –after 60 years of institutional governance- become a powerful voice that cannot be denied. The EU Parliamentary session of 8 July 2015 brought to the forefront the EU's two most prominent and powerful nationalists and Euro-skeptics who were delighted over the Greek "no" vote. Nigel Farage stated that "there is a new Berlin Wall and it's call the Euro … the old adversaries have been resumed … just listen how north and south talk about one another", indicating the cultural differentiations within the EU, which have artificially been integrated by the Euro. At the same time, Marine Le Pen accused her fellow-EU officials of being "afraid, not that Greece will go bankrupt … afraid that Greece, in leaving the EU, demonstrates that a national position can flourish without the Euro rather than with it. The Euro is not irreversible as the EU has made the public believe". Indeed, the reversal of power back to the people rather than with the EU institutions is a success for the far right nationalists, since they perceive this a powerful step closer to the collapse of the EU. The negativity towards the Euro and the fear psychosis having been created in Europe further feed a general sense of negativity and questioning of the necessity and contributions of the Euro and the European Union as an institution. While a temporary band-aid solution was found to supposedly save Greece from bankruptcy this summer, the future remains extremely dark. At the very least, the Greek referendum has demonstrated the fragility and delicacy of the public vote in Euro-skeptic nations.

Thomas Decreus, political philosopher at the KULeuven, sees the current financial market at the foundation of the societal failure. He claims that if no co-operative with society is obtained, we continue living a lie. Society has been deceived by the financial market they trusted, yet today they have little to no choice for an alternative. What has and is happening in Greece demonstrates the responsibility (rightfully?) placed by the ECB with the Greek government and the Greek banks, but they in turn translate this to the exploitation of their citizens. An adverse reaction can be detected, with the Greek nationalist feeling peaking, and with the European population no longer silently accepting the EU regulations at face value. Indeed so, the decisions of EU officials to impose overall heavier taxes and stricter regulations (in terms of pension age and payment, for example) are becoming subject of discussion on public sites. In fact, they offer the perfect example of how the financial situation holds the

potential to crumble the political representative system as we know it today. A parallel can be drawn to the Belgian national decisions, where we equally see the public's dismay with decisions taken by policy makers for the general public, and the contrasting regulations by which they themselves abide. The two texts below, both in Flemish language, have been very popularly circulating on social media sites. The left text addresses the EU and criticizes the pension age of EU officials at 50 years old, with a pension salary of 9000 Euro per month. It states that "340 European officials retire early … to allow newer member-states' officials the chance to integrate into the EU institutions … who pays for all this? Younger generations must work longer for a meager pension afterwards. Then EU politicians wonder why the gap between the citizen and the political governance system is so great?". In parallel, the right text addresses and criticizes the Belgian governance system by stating that "Belgium has a lack of money … Solution? 577 delegates, 343 senators, 30 ministers and state secretaries: If their salaries are lowered by 1000 Euro per month, this would liberate 950 000 Euro per month, amounting to 11.4 million Euro per year. We too can find solutions for the debt, signed The Belgian People". While seemingly oblivious to the disconnect between the EU top officials and the average EU citizens, public resentment has equally grown over the country estates (second holiday homes) owned by these elites.

Figure 11: Flemish petitions and statements circulating on social media like Facebook, Petitie.be, and others.

Decreus clearly sees the European Union and its Euro-program partly responsible for the growth in contemporary nationalism. "People seem to perceive Europe as a

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"bureaucratic-technocratic fortress, from which people feel alienated. So in first instance they attempt to return to their perceived controllable framework of their nation-state. Secondly, the economic factor created by the EU further ignites nationalism in terms of financial strength" (Vranckx, March 2014). The July 2015 ECB analysis (De Standaard) confirmed that the Euro has failed in its fundamental premise of decreasing the economic differences between the member-states of the Eurozone. In its fifteen years, the member-states have not grown closer as assumed but have further drifted apart in highlighting their differences. VUB Professor Paul Jorion stated in his 2007 publication that "all economic minds knew this crisis was coming … At the national level, they were convinced that these financial debacles would happen to everyone except them". This typifies the individual member-state mindset of European countries several years ago. Today, post-economic crisis (or at least post-first wave), the austerity measures in many European countries are leading to an increased nationalistic tendency … After all, is it easier to place blame for the past and present, than it is for unifying for a bright future for generations to come? Jorion (2007) furthermore states that a unified European financial system (including taxes of all sorts, ranging from income tax to road tax) is the only solution. Otherwise you will continue to create population shifts within the EU, as we have seen with actor Gerard Depardieu who finally ended his residential journey in Russia, after having explored moving from France to Belgium to avoid the high socialist taxes. Due to high austerity measures, people "had not considered voting for extremist parties until now" (Vranckx, March 2014).

Dominique Moisi, analyist for Institut Francais des Relations Internationales, makes it very clear that Europe must decide: "Either it wakes up and learns from the Greek crisis, or we have just experienced a dramatic chapter in the inevitable disintegration of Europe" (Nieuwsblad, July 2015).

The United States of Europe versus the United Nations of Europe

Former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt also believes that "either we commit fully to a federal economic system OR the Euro will vanish" (Vranckx, March 2014). He argues that if we do not solve the banking problem, we will never solve anything. Japan offers a prime example of this. It took them 13 years to alter the national banking system and once they did, they experienced financial growth. A large problem in the EU at present is the fact that the ECB is funding national banks, yet the

national governments and the national banks maintain independence and practice greed. As such, unity becomes even more problematic and, according to some, extremely urgent in the EU. The perfect solution for enhanced unity and integration, according to Verhofstadt, can be found in the political federalization of Europe as a necessity for the future. "How else can we compete with civilizations (as the former premier clearly distinguishes them from "mere nations") like China or India, with dozens of internal languages?", he stated in the documentary "The Sorrow of Europe" (Het Verdriet van Europa) in March 2014. David Marsh follows Verhofstadt's reasoning that "without a political framework, a monetary union usually collapses" (Knack, April 2014, p. 76).

The EU Federalists – a pan-European NGO founded after WWII – promote a united, democratic and federal Europe. Within the European IGO, current MEP and fraction leader for the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, is the most vocal and active federalist. Following his book United States of Europe (2005), Guy Verhofstadt advocates the federalization of the EU in five policy domains: a European social-economic policy, a technology cooperation, a common justice and security policy, a common diplomacy, and a joint European military. Interestingly, while having been on the negotiation table since Schuman proposed it in the 1950s, in 2009 the Synchronised Armed Forces Europe (SAFE) was formed. While this can be perceived as a first step in the direction of a federal structure in the EU, the reality is that beyond the actual formation of SAFE, little has been achieved in practice. Seen as a further implementation on non-democratic principles driven by the political elites, there is no room for negotiation on this matter for the extreme right – yet the Federalist agenda remains to gain in support. Former EU president Herman Van Rompuy equally concurs with Verhofstadt and Marsh at a conference in Brussels, when he stated that "we must move forward with the European integration – there is no other way" (October 2013). A question that arises, however, is whether the institutional EU can flagrantly continue ignoring the voice of the voter? Olaf Cramm, director of the center left think tank Policy Network, believes not. "Such a statement is political suicide. The critical voice has been ignored for far too long in Europe. There must be room for legitimate opposition, especially when you desire more integration from the European member-states. The debate must focus on what type of Europe we want, and we must take the traditional Europhiles out of Europe" (Cerlus, Mondiaal Magazine, January 2014, p. 17). Pieter Cleppe, part of the Euro-critical

lobby group Open Europe agrees: "Pro-Europeans feel too weak to admit to errors of the past and present, and believe that if you admit to one mistake, your house of cards will come tumbling down". In other words, as formulated by Roland Freudenstein, the worst reaction of European politicians against Euro-skeptic citizens would be to proclaim loudly "Help, the barbarians are at our gates" (MO, January 2014, p. 17). The ostracizing of politicians and citizens in doubt about the EU only works in the hands of those who wish to see the European project disintegrate. In effect, the financial situation created a strong anti-European sentiment that determined the 2014 European elections, with those having turned their back to the European project experiencing a political victory in 2014. Far right nationalists have since applauded Greece's decision to hold a referendum, placing power back in the hands of the people, and this reasoning is experiencing an overall increase in popularity.

EU expert and critic, Geert Mak (2015) believes that "very little of the European Union we once knew remains today: a community of countries founded on generosity and equality. Today the envy is too great and countries oppose one another. A deep gap has been created between crediting countries and debit countries. At a certain moment, this can collapse". It is for this reason that Mak supports Verhofstadt's plea for stronger integration, and proposes the organization of a referendum in each EU country to then conform to a stricter European policy, which can act faster. Naturally this assumes that such a referendum will be in favor of the EU institutional triangle. While Mak is confident that "we feel more European than ever, since we share in one another's misery" (Knack, July 2015); other sources seem to indicate that Europeans are questioning the validity and the strengths of the EU. In July 2013, the Eurobarometer had already enforced this sentiment by reporting that 2 out of 3 Europeans do not find their vote to count in the EU. Public opinion, expressed via online blogs or individual readers' notes equally demonstrates a demand for a true democratic operation of the European Union. The Greek referendum ignited a desire to "Let the people decide!" (Philip Claeys, Knack, July 2015) that can be felt strongly in shared opinion posts. Statements such as "Please organize a referendum in which the desire to either stop or continue the existence of the EU is questioned. At present it causes more problems than it solves" (Leon Van Dyck, Knack, July 2015) and "Every day European laws are accepted, without any regard for the opinion of the European people" (De Wereld Morgen, June 2015) summarize many of the sentiments circulating in Belgian society. Furthermore, the

negativity associated with the EU may further impact Brussels via statements like "In Brussels the leaders do not know that they are playing a dangerous game, and that they can no longer manipulate the people as they have" (Geolfried Baeten, Knack, April 2015). The fact that high-level elitist (or at least so perceived) opinions are being questioned is equally a sign that the European people are strongly seeking a true representation of their will. "It is troublesome that every time the population of a country rejects further European integration via a referendum, the technocrats still drove through their will", writes reader Gustaaf Van de Cloot (Knack, June 2015). In 2013, political scientist Hendrik Vos (Knack) already thought along these lines in questioning whether the European interference was beginning to demonstrate its far-reaching elitist tendencies. Are Europeans living in a democratic system, when dictates from above are to be followed? The fear exists that a federalization of the EU would be accompanied by a continued top-down governance style, rather than a bottom-up representation of public ideas and ideals.

In compliance with Dator's third law of the future, it cannot be assumed that futures are history in reverse. The assumed success of the past unification by the EU does not necessarily foreshadow its potential futures. Equally, the historical success of the EU depends heavily on the political angle by which it is approached. Nationalists view it as an elite-driven and –enforced mechanism, disguised in principles of democracy. Federalists view it as building blocks on the path towards a true United States of Europe. Van Cauwelaert (Knack, January 2012, p. 3) rightfully reminds that the collapse of Europe is unimaginable, yet the same was once claimed of the Soviet-Union. Austrian EU expert Robert Menasse, on the other hand, remains hopeful in seeing potential in the formation of a European identity through federalization, which would be necessary for the active imagining effort of 'being European'. "The reviving nationalism we are experiencing as a counter-force in the current EU crisis is logical since the EU is a clear post-national project. The growing desire for national sovereignty may be logical and humanly understandable, but that does not make it sensible. The desire to return to sovereign nation-states is not a natural, but a mindless reflex that will surpass history" (Knack, July 2013, p. 62). As stipulated in chapter 1, the agenda of the leading Flemish nationalist party does not fall within the far-right parameters of these Euro-skeptic nationalists. Seeing potential in the further integration of the EU, N-VA supports it while seeking greater Flemish regional

independence and possibly autonomy within a United States of Europe. If the Belgian state becomes secondary to the European state, then the region of Flanders is able to develop beyond the current political structures and confines of the Belgian model. And while futures are indeed not history in reverse, history can be of the utmost value in detecting recurring issues from the past to the present and potentially the future. In this regard, Cicero already strikingly wrote in 55 BC that:

> "The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance".

A major issue that both the leftist (like N-VA) and far-right (Euro-skeptic) nationalists do share in their political agendas is the untenable strain on society by government-driven policies that literally work against the Flemish people. The first such opposition can be found against the contemporary immigration regulations of both the EU and their national governments.

4.1.b. Immigration into the EU … Dividing Europe?

It is often said that borders are vanishing, that the world is becoming a village, and that globalization is irreversible. For the prosperous part of the world's population, this seems valid, yet for the disadvantaged part of the globe, the exact opposite holds true. The matter of immigration exceeds the nationalist agenda and crosses over into every single political fraction, since it is a matter that shapes, alters, and leaves a mark on society in one form or another. Naturally the nationalist propaganda is slightly more straightforward in voicing its opinions and does not refrain from proclaiming an anti-immigration attitude. Operating under the EU Single Market since 2004 – often simply referred to as the Schengen Agreement established in 1995 already-, which seeks to implement the "four freedoms" between the EU's 28 member states in the form of free movement of goods, capital, services and people (Internal Market, European Commission), internal migration within the Union has created tensions in the past. The contemporary trend and public problematique of immigration, however, revolves around the immigration policies –or the lack thereof- for non-European immigrants, most notable illegal immigrants and refugees.

EU Single Market Border Protection via Fortress Europe

"The free movement of persons is a fundamental right guaranteed to European Union citizens by the Treaties. It is realized through the area of freedom, security and justice without internal borders" (Legislation Summaries, EU). The protection of the borders in which this free movement occurs is mainly conducted by Frontex, a company established in 2004 to improve procedures and working methods within the Single Market area. Its main operational tasks include the planning and coordination of joint operations at external borders, acting as the border patrol guards while closing the gap between the needs of the national authorities, training border guards, aiding member states in situations when more operational assistance is needed at the external borders, and carrying out risk analysis for threats and vulnerabilities while ensuring that every member state receives the correct amount of protection (Frontex, 2015). The main immigration routes that have their priority in protecting the EU borders can be summarized as follows:
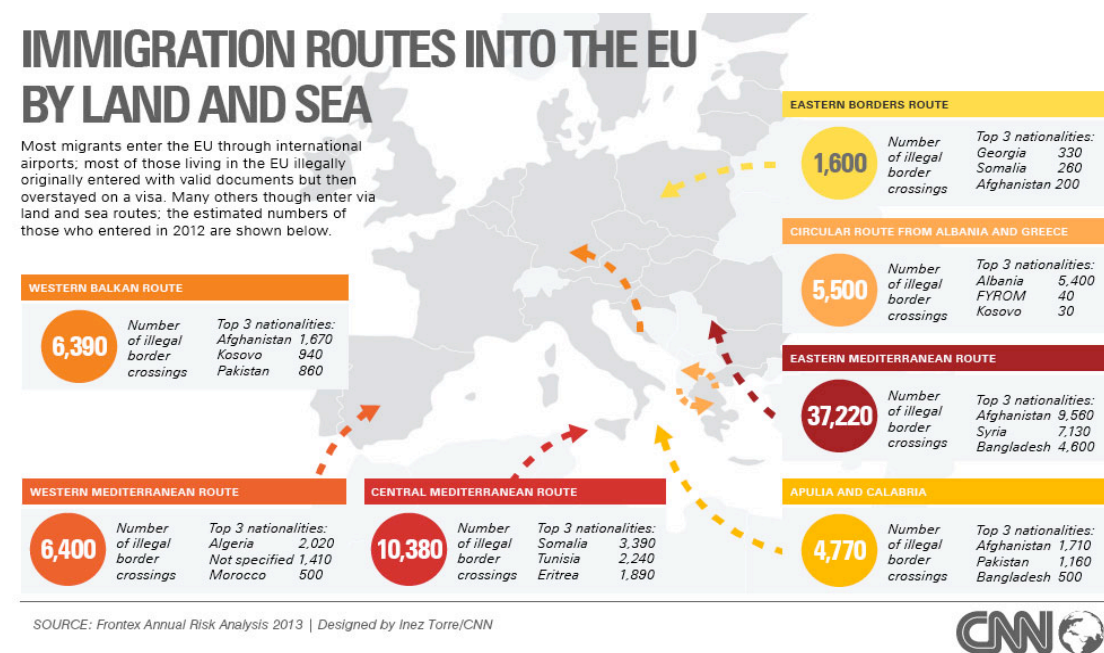
Figure 12: Immigration Routes into the EU by Land and Sea (Frontex Annual Risk Analysis, 2013)

With numbers exceeding previous entries into the EU, most notably on the Mediterranean route due to the Syrian war and the internal conflicts in much of Northern Africa, the Frontex budget was doubled in early 2015 to protect the southern European borders. Guy Verhofstadt expressed heavy criticism to the European Commission's plan on his personal Twitter page by stating that "building a fence to

create a fortress Europe is not the solution". In April 2015, he equally already expressed his disagreement with this Europe's increase of Frontex budget. "Frontex today has 2 planes, 1 helicopter and 17 ships … hardly enough to guard the Belgian coast line. It is fooling public opinion with non-solutions. The external borders are the problem of all Europeans. We need to create the solution where asylum can be requested in the country of origin, not upon arrival in Europe" (De Redactie, April 2015). Today the EU has 28 immigration regulations, with a 29th system of the skilled labor's Blue Card, but no internal immigration policy exists at the European level. As such, ad hoc solutions alter the regulations on a daily basis. In the mean time, the flood of immigrants continues increasing and in 2013-2014 51% of the approximate 107 000 people illegally entering the EU used that Mediterranean Sea route. The most commonly detected nationalities of these illegal immigrants were Syrian, Eritrean and Afghans in 2013 (Annual Risk Analysis 2014, Frontex). Prior to entering they are not greeted with a warm welcome, nor do they feel as if they are about to reach the land of opportunities, yet the feeling that their despair can be no greater than in their home country continues to drive them forward, and geographically upward into the European Union. While not common knowledge to the international community, most Europeans are equally not aware of the European Border Fence built to prevent Middle Eastern and Northern African refugees from entering. The most notable border fences can be found in Cueta and Melilla – located in the north of Morocco, but remaining Spanish in autonomy. Equipped with barbed wire over a 6 meter tall wire fence, monitored by an active watch patrol, these fences are an attempt to hold back illegal immigrants. Once crossed, the fate of the immigrants depends on their country of origin - some start the long journey towards acceptance via a political asylum or via the status of an economic immigrant after having stayed in one of Europe's detention centers; others face rejection and deportation to their home country. Important to remember is that once illegal immigrants cross into the EU's passport-free Schengen zone, they can easily travel onwards to other countries in the zone. Loshitzky (2006, p. 629) condemns what he considers a double standard, noting that on one hand Europe encourages the expansion (and integration) of the EU, while on the other it is closing its borders to the 'other'. Mortimer (1990) and Buzan (1991) argue that immigration encourages Western states not only to construct physical barriers but more importantly, to emphasize the differentiation from the society whose members it seeks to exclude.

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While valid sociological observations, the reality remains that the welfare systems of the member states can often literally not afford to accommodate the immigrant in-stream. Furthermore, the argued exclusion of certain members of a different culture, religion or ethnicity is difficult to maintain when considering the diverse populations of European countries and cities. Nevertheless, the argument of a multi-culture replacing the national traditions and cultures remains a very important point of discussion for nationalist parties throughout the EU, and equally in Belgium.

Often considered a consequence of global inequalities, Herman Van Rompuy stated in July 2015 that "if we want to avoid immigration, caused by a huge discrepancy in incomes, then we best continue to sufficiently invest in developmental cooperation" (Knack, July 2015). In times of austerity, aid to causes outside the national sphere tend to raise eyebrows, and the understanding and pity towards refugees is sometimes countered with non-acceptance over the perceived protection of one's own country. In the beginning of the summer of 2015, citizens in the northern province of Italy's Treviso, burned mattresses, beds and televisions intended for the support of over a hundred refugees. Their anger and frustration may appear directed at the refugees, but in fact the root cause can be traced back to a lacking European policy. The prefect of Treviso, Maria Augusta Marrosu explained that "they (the refugees) stay because they have no choice" (Reuters, June 2015). Since the beginning of 2015, more than 74 000 refugees arrived in Italy via the Mediterranean Sea. The thousands of lives lost due to opportunistic, illegal and deeply flawed boat transporters in the past months has caused a heightened international concern. In its 2015 report "Fatal Journeys", the International Organization for Migration (IOM) declared that since the year 2000 over 40 000 people have lost their lives in an attempt to escape to another country. The highest number of casualties has regrettably been counted at the European borders, where more than half of the refugees lost their lives – most of them in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Uniting nationalists and self-proclaimed political protectionists, the criticism rises in pondering that while Schengen has successfully opened the internal borders between many member-states, why has no added successful security at the outside borders been properly established? While great political effort brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall, today we are witness to an increasing number of walls and fences being erected, to literally hold back those seeking a better future. Indeed, at the rate physical barriers are being erected today, the EU may soon have more fences than ever before, as can be seen in figure 12

below. Immigration today is often associated with the "import of more problems" (Baudet, 2015)

Fortressing Europe

A spate of construction and planned construction of fences in Europe in the last decade hints at a new normal in illegal migration and a straining of old political ties.

E.U. - **Yes** / Schengen - **Yes**
E.U. - **No** / Schengen - **Yes**
E.U. - **Yes** / Schengen - **No**
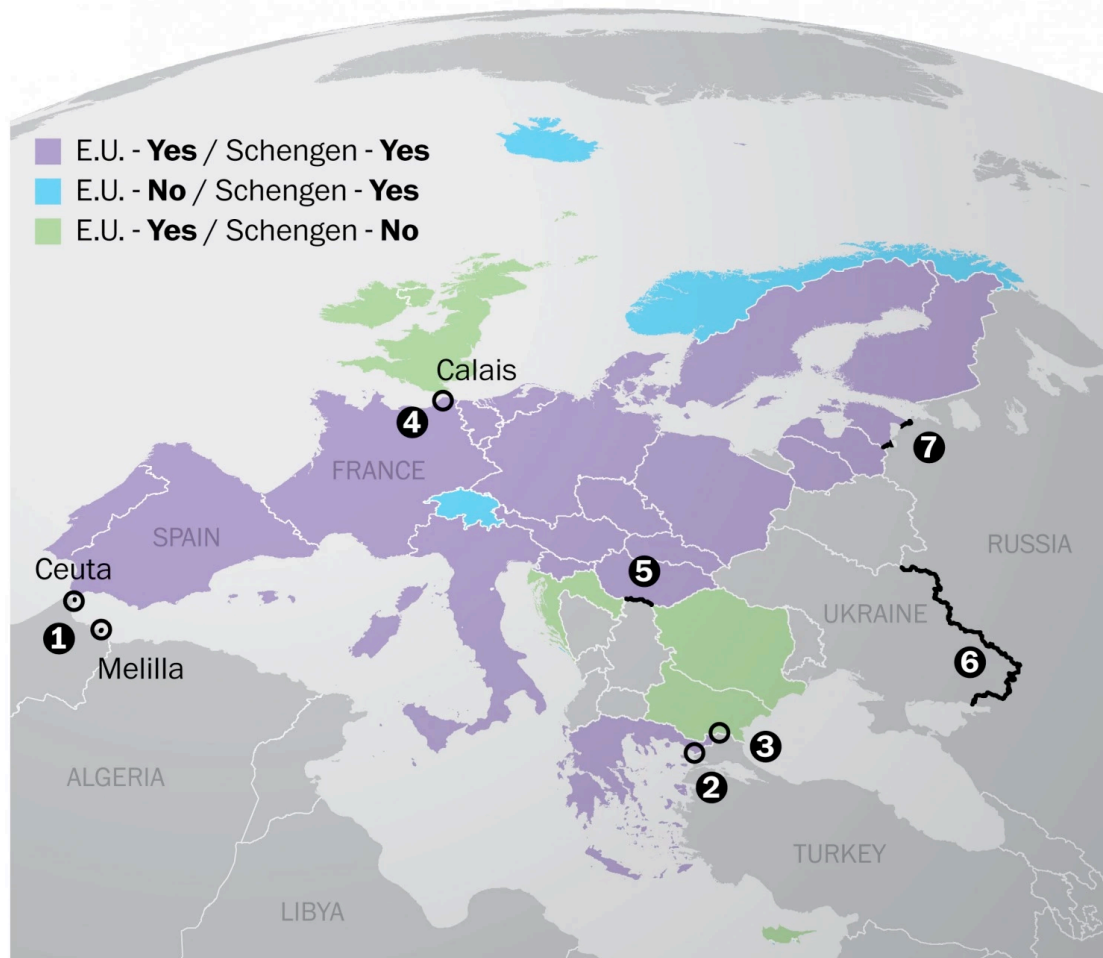
❶ Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish possessions in North Africa) – Both extended fences in **2005**

❷ Greece – Completed **2012**

❸ Bulgaria – Completed **2015**

❹ Calais, France – Extended **2015**

❺ Hungary – Scheduled for completion **2015**

❻ Ukraine – Scheduled for completion **2018**

❼ Estonia – Construction scheduled to begin **2018**

Sources: Schengenvisainfo.com and news reports   THE WASHINGTON POST

Figure 13: Fortressing Europe (Taylor, 2015)

Internal Member-States Friction

Due to the lacking EU immigration policy, and the current ad hoc discussion to implement a unified plan to deal with the refugees and illegal immigrants, nationalist tendencies are crossing into mainstream political parties. In late July 2015, European Commission president Juncker confirmed that he will attempt to confirm a division planning for immigrants entering the European Union. While he stated that "it would be better if the division of incoming refugees occurs on a voluntary basis, if this is not possible, the division proposal must be taken into consideration again" (De Standaard, July 2015), as was confirmed by the acceptance of this obligatory division planning by the EU in September 2015 – even though several member-states opposed. The division planning encompasses an entry quota of asylum seekers, refugees, and illegal immigrants that each country shall have to abide by in the future. Resistance to such planning has not only been visible in newspapers and media coverage, actual steps have already been taken by certain member-states in an effort to take matters into their own hands – regardless of the EU opinions. The dictates of the EU are indeed not finding very favorable responses in the national government's practical concerns for their individual states.

In June 2015, Hungary ordered the closure of its border with Serbia and started the construction of a fence along the frontier to keep immigrants out, Peter Szijjarto, Hungary's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, told reporters (The Guardian, June 2015). After a 60-fold increase in three years, Hungary received more migrants per capita than any other EU country. Likewise, British premier David Cameron is considering extra security provisions at the British border post in the French port of Calais. With thousands of illegal immigrants attempting to cross the North Sea into the UK daily, literally jumping into lorries or attaching themselves on top or below trucks, the French and British governments even decided to stop Eurotunnel transportation for several days in July 2015. This problem will form one of the main issues incorporated in the UK's 2016 referendum on EU membership. Other borders in Europe are experiencing an increase in frustration due to the refugee crisis. The German state Bayern will be augmenting police controls at its Austrian border, and is calling other states to do the same. Naturally such initiatives place added stress on the EU Internal Market agreement, prohibiting border controls between two Schengen Countries. Bayern minister president Horst Seehofer finds the extra measure, nonetheless, justified: "The European Commission must awaken from

its hibernation and finally start solving problems instead" (De Standaard, July 2015). If a common EU policy, and the protection of the extern borders, fails, will EU member-states remain 'open' or will they close their borders and revert back to their national policies to deal with immigration issues? As such, would solidarity equally run the risk of being replaced with realist national interest? A UN survey conducted in 24 developed countries seems to point in that direction for Belgian citizens and their negativity vis-à-vis immigrants. In fact, the study placed Belgium to the forefront as one of the most "immigrant-unfriendly countries" (Segers, August 2015), with 61% of Belgian respondents claiming that there are too many immigrants. Furthermore, it is perceived that the immigration exercises a negative influence on the country, as indicated by 58% of the surveyed. It is believed that employment possibilities become fewer due to immigrants, and 56% believe that the migrants place a too heavy burden on the social services provided by the government. Only 12% see the positive aspects of immigration (De Redactie, August 2015).

Considering the popularity of the nationalist parties throughout the EU, including in Belgium, the immigration debate will prove one of the most challenging in the future of the EU. And one of the fears that fuels the immigration debate is the possible loss of the autochthone identity – which may in fact unite the 'Belgian' nationalist feeling, in reacting against 'non-Belgians'. As indicated, immigration is often blamed for the altering identity of communities, and the immigration of the Muslim culture into European society has not proceeded smoothly or unnoticed. It is often argued that the increase in immigration from non-EU countries goes hand in hand with the rise of Islam in European societies.

4.1.c. The Islamification of Europe, Belgium & Brussels?

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the European Union. The correlation between Islam and terrorism seems to be taken at face value by some and literature professor at Brooklyn College, Moustafa Bayumi confirms that "anti-Muslim feelings have been very outspoken in recent years" (Depreitere, August 2013). "We live in one of the most hostile surroundings" says Faiza Ali of the Arab American Association (Depreitere, August 2013). Yet mainstream media creates the illusion that Western society should fear the growing number of Muslims and the overtake of Western values, rather than vice versa. Recent events seemingly indicate a similar trend.

The brutal killing of 12 employees of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015 was carried out by militant Muslims. Immediately, the French terrorism alert was raised to the highest level since the Cold War, counter-terrorism actions could be seen throughout Western Europe, news reporting placed the attack as the prime story in their air time for multiple days, and large groups of people claimed "Je Suis Charlie". Nationalist beliefs have indicated that they see no such successful marriage possible, since the West exercises tolerance in order to avoid discrimination charges, whereas a lack of tolerance and refusal to integrate is perceived in Muslims who hold their values in higher regard than the cultural traditions of their 'host' country. Occurrences such as these, as a consequence of the actions by extremists, do exactly what they intend to do: they instill fear. UKIP's Nigel Farage stated that the Charlie attacks "were the result of 'a fifth column' of people living within Western societies 'who hate us'" (Haaretz, January 2015). Such expressions led to the assassination of Dutch extreme nationalist Pim Fortuyn in 2002, yet his death did not halt the increase in nationalistic feelings and the fear of Islamic infiltration. A French-language e-mail circulating in Belgium since the beginning of 2015, continues on this fear-trend. It makes reference to the continuous immigration of Muslims into the country. While presenting figures that 'demonstrate' that the average Syrian earns approximately 2 Euro per day, the e-mail questions how the (mainly male) Syrian Muslim refugees are able to pay 2000-3000 Euro for their passage into Europe. Hinting at a conspiracy for a planned and extremist financed take-over by this Fifth Column which has been ongoing for decades, such circulations further add to the fear ignition in individuals, which triggers further nationalist support. Furthermore, publications such as the London-based International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence's 2015 study that concluded that "1 in 1500 Belgian Muslims is part of the Islamic State … placing it at the top of Jihad-platforms in Europe" (Lemon, July 2015) do not contribute to easing such fears. This places the Westerners in a position in which they feel they must take action to rid society of such hatred towards their values. In a world dominated by minute-to-minute news reporting, this same fear is employed by nationalists in spreading their message of protecting the indigenous identity of the geographic territory.

Islamification is considered a process in which society slowly switches over from liberal patterns to Islam – from a society in which women's rights, gay rights, animal welfare, etc. are sought to be replaced with conservative religious values. "In

contemporary usage, it may refer to the perceived imposition of an Islamist social and political system on a society with an indigenously different social and political background" (Kennedy, p. 19). As stated above, it instills fear in some, while others see it as a representation of acceptance and unity across the EU. Following the Charlie Hebdo attack, the Austrian government announced that they would be closing the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for InterReligious and InterCultural Dialogue in February 2015, as a reaction to the center's refusal to condemn a Sharia Law incident. Belgium's Sharia4Belgium (recruiting ISIS fighters in Flanders) case was re-visited and while the group had been dissolved by the national government in 2012 due to their extremist standpoints regarding the role of Islam in society and its hatred towards non-Muslims, the sentiments re-arose in Belgian society. Leaders of the National Democratic Party in Dresden (Germany) organized rallies against the Islamic communities in Germany and the PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) was born, quickly spreading to other parts of Europe including Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, and the UK. All actions caused by fear. The reaction brought about by acceptance and unity was equally interesting because, strikingly, the portion of demonstrators were met with stark opposition. In Newcastle upon Tyne (England) for example, the 400 PEGIDA protestors were met by 1000 people who opposed the message and demonstration (BBC News, February 2015). In Sweden's Malmo, 5000 opponents countered 8 PEGIDA protestors. The successful nationalist portrayal of Europeans standing united against an overtake by Islam was thus somewhat shattered. Nevertheless, the isolated incidents received massive coverage, giving the impression that the Islamification of Europe is in full execution.

Facts versus Fiction – Reality versus Perception

An Ipsis MORI report published in October 2014, labeled "Perceptions are not reality: Things the world gets wrong" clearly stipulates that societal perceptions easily run ahead of reality. The study demonstrated the European population's strong overestimation of the proportion of Muslims in 'their' countries. For example, figure 14 shows that in Belgium the total percentage of Muslims in society stood at 6% in 2014, yet the public estimate when questioned believed it to represent 29% of the population. As noted in chapter 3, the representative percentage for Brussels stands at 26% today, but it is only in this region that we can factually determine this. The

presence of Islam and the outspoken and visible symbols present in Western societies add to this perception, which nationalists happily and strategically utilize to further advance their cause. And indeed, mainstream media is all too keen to make the public aware of the aspects that separate the Muslim population from 'us'.
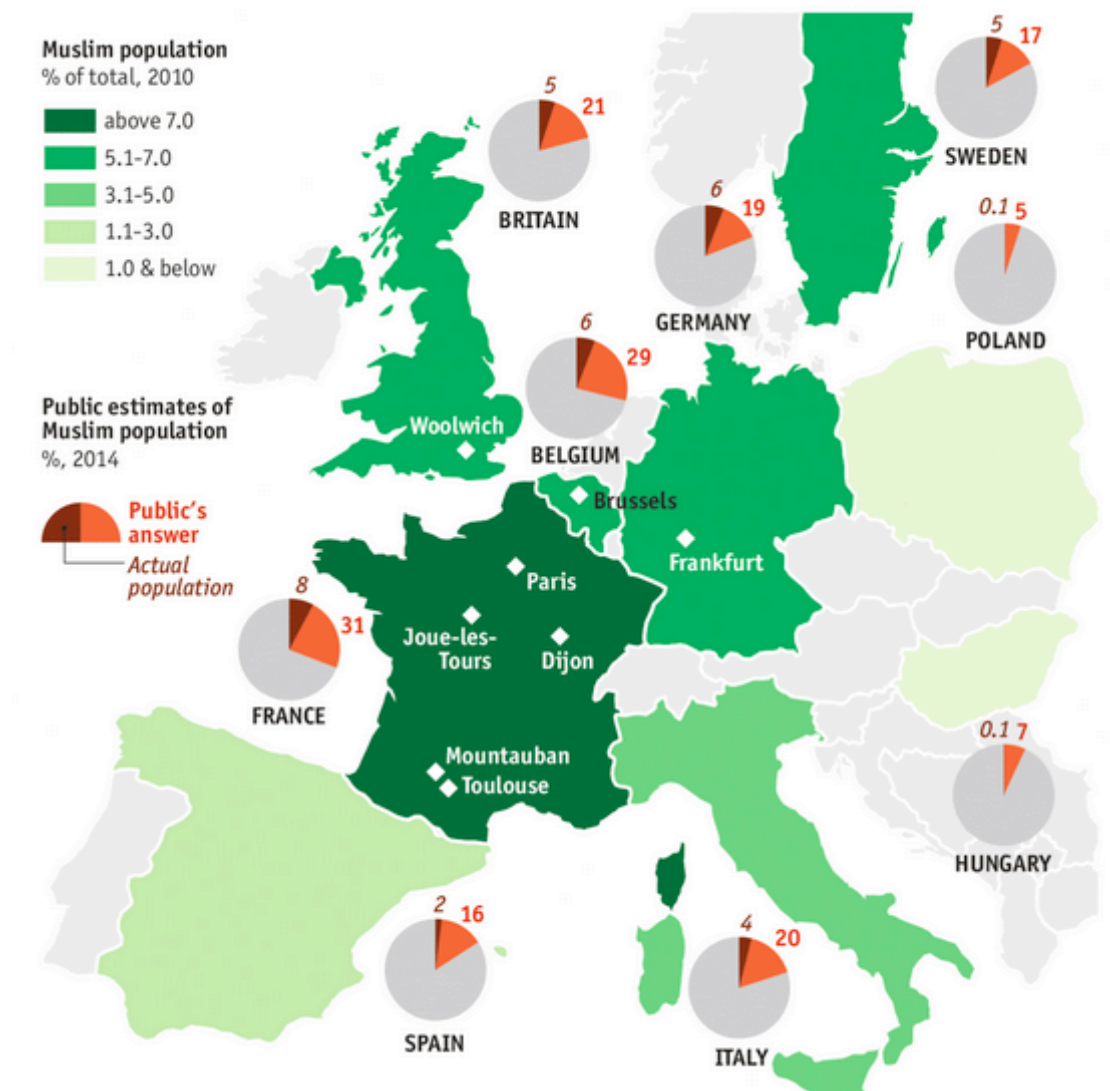
Figure 14: Presenting the percentage of Muslims that make up the population of respective EU countries, with the actual number in contrast to the public estimate of the number. (Ipsis MORI, 2014)

At the same time, Felice Dassetto claims that Brussels is a case apart within the EU. In his book "L'Iris et le Croissant" (2011), the University Catholique de Louvain professor claims that "it appears that Brussels can become the new capital of the Islamic Republic Eurasia". A 2013 Pew Research Study revealed that the Muslim population in Europe will likely double by 2030 and Dassetto believes that year also marks the date when Muslim citizens will hold a majority position in Brussels,

compared to their 25% representation of and in the city today. His book furthermore warns that the ultra-conservative elements within Islam are gaining territory in Brussels. Amongst the many streams in Islam, Salafism is most popular in Brussels. "Salafism, the very conservative pan-Muslim movement, sets as one of its goals to united Muslims across the globe and bring them under the leadership of one single Caliph who governs according to Sharia law" (Depreitere, August 2013). It are such perceptions that feed and unite the nationalist agenda vis-à-vis Islamification in Europe, in Belgium (mainly Flanders), and in Brussels. These contemporary images are highlighted extra when the most tolerant politicians of Belgium, those of the Green Party (Groen!), publically alter their previously held multi-cultural dream for a public plea stressing that the people of Brussels must learn stand up for the essential values and laws of the land in which we live. In a 2010 opinion piece in De Standaard newspaper, the Flemish parliamentarian expressed that

> "Twenty years ago I was convinced that new Belgians would easily and swiftly assimilate in our culture. Today, however, Brussels is the playground of a generation of 'rebels without a cause' who always feel disadvantaged. They never take responsibility and always blame someone else for their issues: the government or the racist Belgians. … Perhaps we should ponder why we accept that principles like the freedom of artistic expression and equal rights for women are not accepted by everyone in this country. Why do we not dare to stand up for what is in fact essential: respect for the laws and values of the land in which we live. A prohibition of the headscarf is not a solution. But still we must think about how to assertively clarify that we dare to defend what we deem important. It has been to the credit of the left (politicians) to draw attention to discrimination and social disadvantage. The problem unfortunately lies deeper: We have been afraid to impose our values on allochthones. These values are, however, too valuable to be lost" (Brussel Nieuws, September 2010).

While it cannot be denied that there are factors in Muslim society that counter the essence of Western customs, can and will they define the future of Europe, of Belgium and of Brussels? Within the general trend in which Islamification is feared, we can detect several minor sub-trends or emerging issues in Belgian society today.

Contemporary Emerging Issues within the Islamification Trend: The Head Scarf, Education & Halal Practices

Societal symbols enforce the essence of identity. At the same time, symbols that do not comply with the mainstream identity and culture are both extremely visible in society and very susceptible to scrutiny. Belgium is one of the few countries still

discussing the most visible female symbol that one identifies with Islam: the headscarf[18]. Far right nationalists with Vlaams Belang believe that the citizens of Flanders have the right to neutrality and a headscarf hinders such neutrality. Moderate nationalists at N-VA stipulated in 2014, following their electoral victory, that they do not consider religion as part of the Flemish identity strive. Flemish minister for Interior Affairs Liesbeth Homans stated that "no prohibition on religious symbols such as a head scarf or a cross will be imposed on Flemish officials in public office" (Belga, December 2014), demonstrating the N-VA's recognition of the diversity in Belgian cities. At the same time, the topic of the burkini, the fully covering swim suit, has brought about heated discussions in which religiously discriminatory practices have been filed by Muslim women against long-standing Belgian and Flemish institutional regulations in public swimming pools. The argument of non-assimilation into Flemish society after having fled their home-countries where women's rights were limited, versus tolerance of all religious practices provides ample discussion grounds in daily conversations. In the educational system, the symbol of the veil takes a different proportion since it is believed to promote a conscious anti-Belgian culture from a young age. In September 2011, the Flemish Council for Education decided that it would ban all headscarves in public education institutions; this was revoked, but re-instated in 2013. Leniency in enforcing this ban rests with the principle/head master of respective schools. In order to provide a better educational experience for Muslim children, initiatives have arisen to found and fund fully Muslim schools.

In this respect, Belgium's first Islamic secondary school will open its doors in Brussels in September 2015 (La Libre Belgique, July 2015). The initiative by the Enseignement Confessionnel Islamique de Belgique will be French-speaking and fully funded by the French language community in Brussels. The school will follow a state-funded curriculum, but will add Islam courses. A second initiative for a primary Muslim school is currently being debated in the city of Mechelen, located in Flemish

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[18] Denmark has no such restriction, although women are obliged to remove their hijab (fully covering veil) at airport security controls; France upholds a limitation to the wearing of veils in public buildings, as well as a restriction from wearing the headscarf in primary and secondary education (for teachers and pupils); Germany placed the decision in the hands of its states and half of them demand that teachers no longer wear a hijab in schools; Italy knows no restrictions and local initiatives have been condemned by higher courts; the Netherlands uphold a ban for judges and officials in uniform; Norway, Sweden, Spain and the UK have no such legislation, although the latter has seen judicial courts limit religious convictions via dress – but here again, it involves fully covering niqbs and no regular headscarves. (Van Loon, April 2014)

Brabant, approximately 30 km north of Brussels. The Flemish attitude seems negative. The Belgian national education system offers public subsidized schooling with a choice of religious/morality classes, including all recognized religions in Belgium. Vlaams Belang fears these Muslim schools, in light of developments in Great Britain where such initiatives developed into full-fledged Sharia-schools. They consider these schools a step towards the rise of a parallel Muslim society that does not conform to Flemish and Belgian values. N-VA would prefer to eliminate all religious courses from the schooling system, arguing that it is a private matter and does not belong in public education. In light of these new government-funded Muslim schools, another aspect brings frustration to the citizens of Belgium, namely that of meals offered to children during school hours, which is part of a larger societal issue.

A personal acquaintance contacted me in utter distress several years ago, when her 10-year old daughter was sent out of her Brussels' school classroom by her Muslim teacher in punishment for having brought sandwiches with ham (pork). He found this a violation of his cultural beliefs and did not tolerate such behavior, leaving a 10-year old girl very confused. Other Belgian teaching staff in the primary and secondary education system have equally sounded the alarm bell on several instances, when Muslim parents have demanded that school meals be 100% Halal in order to allow their children to eat without worries. During school trips, several facilities have conformed to this request and as a result, all the children ate Halal food – this to the public dismay of their parents, who strongly oppose their children to be subjected to non-European and non-Belgian tradition and legislation. Whether animal welfare or an opposition to a non-Belgian culture (note that Belgians have and still grow up on pork) lies at the basis of their outrage has not been measured at present. Halal slaughter under Islamic law commands that an animal is conscious when killed.

N-VA Minister for Animal Welfare (the first such minister in the history of Belgium), Ben Weyts, issued an advisory note to the Brussels secretary of State in the beginning of 2015. In it, he calls Brussels to display political courage and follow the Flemish example of prohibiting the unsedated slaughter of animals. The largest Animal Action Group in Belgium, GAIA, reminds that on a daily basis hundreds of animals are slaughtered in the ritual Halal manner in Belgian slaughter houses. It has only been for a short number of years that the implementation of law incorporated the slaughter to be legal only in slaughter houses; until then, ritual killings at private

homes (and bathrooms) were tolerated by Belgium, even when in obvious violation of EU law. Over 40 000 sheep suffer the same fate during the Muslim Aid-el-Kebir Offer Feast. "The unsedated slaughter causes severe and long-term suffering for animals, which can last up to 12 minutes. This is in direct conflict with the legal obligation to 'prevent any form of avoidable pain or suffering at the moment of the kill'" (Onverdoofd Slachten, Gaia, 2015). European legislation requires an animal to be stunned before slaughter, but still grants exemptions on religious grounds – more specifically for Kosher and Halal meat at official slaughter houses. The Brussels region has until present not consented with Weyts's advice note, yet the pressure by the autochthones is becoming increasingly noticeable. The threats by the Muslim community directed towards Weyts play a vital role in such Flemish or Belgian pressure, and provide the direct ammunition Vlaams Belang and N-VA need to further their nationalist cause against the Islamification of Flemish society. In July 2015, 48 Muslim communities demanded the Minister of Welfare retract his decision for Flanders, and potentially Brussels. They insist that an exception must be made in accordance with the European animal welfare regulations, allowing them to continue unsedated ritual slaughter under the premise that it is classified as part of the Flemish/Belgian culture heritage. Weyts remains firm and states "Why do we have rules if we, under heavy pressure, neglect to enforce them? Describing unsedated slaughter as a Flemish cultural tradition? I think not. Flanders must take animal welfare seriously and attempt to prevent animal suffering to a maximum." (Nieuwsblad, July 2015). Further support in this regard was felt when public joy was detected on the internet when Denmark banned Kosher and Halal slaughter with Minister for Agriculture and Food Dan Jorgensen telling Denmark's TV2 that "animal rights come before religion" (Withnall, February 2014). This decision was met with appall from the Muslim, but also Jewish communities. The latter claimed that this is an anti-Semitic decision that interferes with religious freedoms, referring to such a restriction imposed by Adolf Hitler. It is equally dividing the political platform since the Christian Democrats are not in agreement that animal welfare stands higher in importance than respect for religious practices.

Needless to point out the obvious, but situations such as these create fear in the minds of many Flemish and Belgian citizens, who feel their cultural identity is at risk of being taken over by practices that do not comply with their upbringing. Cultural relativity has governed the Belgian legislation for a long time, but the recent

nationalist victory in Flanders might be indicative of a shift in climate – which may be accompanied by consequences from multiple angles, ranging from assimilation to an apartheid-like society.

On top of the stereotypical parallels that are drawn between Muslims and the threat of terrorism in society, another factor can be considered a contemporary trend. While immigration and Islamification create both tension and frustration, so does the assumed and perceived abuse of the welfare state. The question that must be asked, but is rarely the topic of debate, is whether one can blame for the (ab)use of the welfare system when the system is set up to be (ab)used? Can political fractions place blame with the (ab)users of the system, when they themselves (or their previous administrations) were and are responsible for the policies governing welfare?

4.1.d. The (Ab)Use of the Welfare State

In essence, the welfare state offers a social system in which the state carries the primary responsibility for the wellbeing of its citizens – including matters such as health care, education, employment and social security. In Belgium, these tasks are carried out by the OCMW – the Public Center for Social Welfare. Most Northern, Western and Southern European countries are characterized by a similar welfare state structure, which offers every individual of society a dignified minimum wage if necessary. At the same time, the system is so heavily used by inhabitants that fears of a collapse are not unjustified. German Chancellor Angela Merkel summarized the problem of the Western welfare state well in the Financial Times in 2013: "If Europe accounts for a little over 7 percent of the world population, produces approximately 25 percent of the world wide Gross Domestic Product, and finances 50 percent of the global social expenditures, then it is obvious that it requires hard work to maintain the welfare state and the manner of life we know today" (Pironet, September 2013). The contemporary trend that is developing in society today is not directly related to the general austerity measures that are being discussed at the national and European level in regards to maintaining the welfare state, but can –from a nationalist standpoint- be located in the abuse of the welfare system by two specific categories of people in Belgium: The immigrants who drain the system without ever having contributed to it; and the Walloons who use Flemish taxes to support their unemployment and health care provisions.

"Immigrants Finding Social Paradise in Belgium at the Expense of the Flemings"

Vlaams Belang blames the socialist governance style of the past decades, in parallel with the lax immigration policy that has allowed tens of thousands of immigrants to enter the country on an annual basis – legally and illegally. The regularization of those people prepares them for OCMW support. In Sint Niklaas, a Flemish city, OCMW council member Rob Verreycken announced that in 2014, allochthones made up 70% of the number of OCMW users (Vlaams Belang, OCMW, 2015). Pub-talk often reinforces frustrations inhabiting the minds of autochthones and expressions in the form of "Migrants arrive here, work for a couple of days to get their paperwork in order and then apply for welfare and unemployment benefits", "Bulgarians and Romanians run towards the OCMW office upon arrival in Belgium, and get their advantages immediately" (Mampaey, June 2011), are not uncommon. While the judicial procedures are well described and the rights of both Belgians and immigrants are different, yet both generous, the abuse of the welfare system by non-Belgians forms an integral part of the nationalist agenda. It revolves around three main trends, which they highlight:

1. Fraud to obtain OCMW support: Providing a false income document, demonstrating financial solvability upon entering Belgium, to then file for OCMW support after the three month trial period;

2. Strange exceptions that exploit the Belgian/Flemish tax-payers: The transfer of social security rights when having been employed and contributed in a foreign country. As such, Belgium has special accords with Morocco and Turkey – dating back to the time of the guest laborer contracts – which allows a Turkish employee to arrive in Belgium and apply for OCMW support after 1 day of work. Recognized refugees can apply for unemployment without having worked a day in Belgium;

3. Direct abuse of support: Foreigners are considered 'lazy' and make much heavier use of support than the Belgians/Flemings themselves. When looking at the Flemish city of Antwerp, 2011 revealed that 63% of OCMW users had a history of immigration (Mampaey, June 2011).

Vlaams Belang and N-VA have both indicated that massive immigration cannot be reconciled with our welfare system, and might in the long run even threaten our

democracy. Then again, what if democracy overestimates people's ability to imagine long-term futures? Jose Masschelin, court reporter for Het Laatste Nieuws, stated that "hundreds, if not thousands, of fraudulent immigrants are draining the social security register" (2012). For this reason the suggestion has been made, and with the current N-VA governance practices it is also slowly integrating into the Belgian policy system, to only allow a welfare allowance when an actual contribution to that welfare system has been delivered in the past. Solidarity to a certain degree, but not when Belgians themselves have to contribute more to the welfare system when seeing it abused by non-Belgians. In other words, benefiting without having contributed may slowly vanish from the Belgian system … although theory and practice may take longer to reconcile than anticipated by the nationalist streams in the country. This in turn holds the potential to further divide society and to create a stronger 'us' versus 'them' attitude – enforcing the Flemish identity, yet at the same time alienating Flemings from the reality of globalization. This creation of division is not solely directed towards immigrants, as a similar trend of perceived abuse can be detected within the nation-state of Belgium.

"Lazy Walloons Exploiting the Flemish Economic Success"
Journalist and Wallonia connoisseur Guido Fonteyn confirms the stereotypical clichés present in Belgian society: "Walloons are lazy leaches" and "Flemings work hard and ensure economic success", "Walloons enjoy life" and "Flemings are intolerant rightists". In times of nationalist propaganda for Flanders, the economic gap between the north and south of the country is becoming more obvious. While in the distant past, Wallonia was the most prosperous region, recent decades have placed Flanders on top of economic success. It is not uncommon to hear nationalist claims on television that state "If Belgium were to split, Flanders would become the wealthiest region of Europe, while Wallonia would become one of the poorest". The discrepancy between both, or the perceived 'being worn down' by Flanders, forms an integral part of the agenda to foresee stronger autonomy for the two largest regions of Belgium.

Vlaams Belang council member Barbara Pas addressed the official numbers of welfare support provided by OCMW in January 2015. "Flemish citizens make up 57% of the Belgian population … Yet only 13% of the total expenditure goes to Flanders" (Trends, January 2015). Furthermore, only 1 in five citizens receiving a

replacement salary are Flemish. Due to the discrepancies in replacement salary between the three regions, we see citizens receive a different gross wage: "In Flanders, the average amounts to 2828 Euro, in Wallonia 3434 Euro, and in Brussels 4133 Euro" (Trends, January 2015), yet all three are directly derived from the federal pool of taxes. Arguments such as these fuel the nationalist desire to split the social welfare system, which would place the responsibility of its economic and social policies with Wallonia itself. Plans by the current Flemish government – of which N-VA is a major fraction - exist to indeed abolish the federal OCMW system by 2019, to then integrate these services into individual municipalities. This would re-allocate funding to the local level, rather than maintain the federal and regional notions of solidarity within the country. In other words, a Walloon municipality would have to finance in its own organization rather than rely on funds allocated by and from the federal government – or as the Flemish nationalists claim, paid for by the Flemish tax payers. A hot topic of debate, socialist fractions see this as a clear continuation of the future nationalist aspiration to effectively either split the country or enter it into a confederate model.

The underlying societal fear psychosis that is being created by social hype media, in which community groups gather online in panic over higher pension ages, dark prospects for future generations, financial debt, and the abuse of the welfare system, plays directly into nationalist hands. It cannot be denied that validity lies in such fears since the socio-economic climate and consequences of the welfare past have caught up with the present. At the same time, can it be argued that it is easier to blame non-Flemings than it is to look beyond these issues and project a viable long-term future vision for Belgium as a nation-state? Could stepping away from European, national, and regional policies hold potential for the 'correct' functioning of smaller communities?

4.2.e. Transition Towns: From Oil-Dependency to Local Resilience … and Localism?

Peak oil, climate changes, and other environmental and economic challenges have been the driving factors in local authorities considering how to steer the evolution of local communities. Concepts such as these have caused many locations worldwide to consider and implement sustainable measures. The Transition Initiative, via the

implementation of Transition Towns, is such a grassroots movement that operates on a community-scale to stimulate local resilience in anticipation of peak oil.

In theory, the logic behind the planning and integration of strategy in a transition town primarily emphasizes the reduction of energy and resources from present levels, while this would in turn create a situation which would shift the balance of supply and demand to more desirable levels. The concept of transition towns helps to surpass the previously wholly encouraged "continued growth" trend to transform the operation and functionality of processes relevant to everyday life. The very design of a town and the way of living for its residents is essential to this, and thus, transition towns are at the heart of the level of revolutionary progress required to create viably effective procedures to adequately address the issues inherent in environmental sustainability. Some social communities have developed strategies in opposition to the "continued growth" future, and have followed more of a transition approach in effort to combat or prepare for "collapse". This concept has greatly evolved since its first initiative in the Transition Town of Devon, in the southern UK.

In these specific areas utilizing transition towns, the 'transition model' has been created. This so-called transition model, according to Brangwyn and Hopkins (2008), is a combination of worldly principles and processes which have been compiled and developed over time, through observation and experimentation of communities and society as it attempts to overcome economic and environmental challenges. Moreover, the transitional model was developed to apply transition towns to address the specific areas and potential catastrophes associated with climate change and peak oil, while primary emphasis is also placed on facilitating the growth of society to be less reliant on energy. The mentality of the Transition Network (2008) is that it is better to plan how to face such potential catastrophes rather than to be surprised by them, and this particular group further assumes that modern industrial society has lost the ability to be able to adequately cope with serious obstacles in the supply and demand balance of energy supplies. The developed transition model asserts that authorities and citizens alike must take action together and act soon.

In practice, the concept of Transition Towns has been successful and by September 2013, 1130 initiatives were registered throughout 43 countries. Likewise, in Belgium we find an interesting appearance of such local community projects: Flanders counts 57 Transition Town concepts in the making, Wallonia has 17; and the Brussels region has 6 such community projects in the making. While marking an

impressive evolution and popular spread of the Transition Town Network, the political weight of these towns is very small at present, as is their societal standing. In essence they are often still perceived as hippie cultures within broader mainstream society. Yet they continue growing! Operating under a high level of autonomy, there are equally unofficial varieties of this concept appearing, drawing on elements of inspiration of the original. With the emphasis on localism, might we see a future establishment of local identity rather than regional or national identity?

Complimentary Local (Town) Currency

With the Euro as the currently problematic monetary unit in the Eurozone, local currencies are equally seeing a discrete revival in small towns in the form of a barter system. Where we see the European Central Bank guaranteeing the solvability of the Euro, a parallel can be drawn to the local level, where the local commune or municipality vouches for the philosophy and the use of the alternative local money. Situated in the barter system, this local money is valid only within the participating town and is usually employed to stimulate the local economy via a local currency. Not promoted in tourist brochures and certainly not encouraged by the national governments, several towns in the Mediterranean – most notably in Spain and France – have implemented such local money streams. Furthermore, the example of the original Transition Town Totnes introduced the Totnes Pound. Often regarded as derogatory 'alternative' attitude by the general public, LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems) are frequently perceived as folklore rather than a viable means of financial conduct. In Belgium, two pilot projects have been established with the support of the regional Flemish government, where a local currency is being introduced in the Rabot suburb of Ghent, and in Turnhout – where local groceries can be paid with local money. Interesting to note is that people outside these towns will never have heard of such initiatives.

The potential for alternative regional money streams includes the independence from the larger Euro-problematique, the stimulation of the local economy and trade, the possibility to work without interests as is common practice in larger financial structures. Offering solutions in the reactivation of communities, in the social networking within smaller communities, and working in and for the community as a community, these alternatives may take Flemish nationalism a step further into localism – and an identification with a town, rather than a regional culture. After all, if

the introduction of the Euro was believed to diminish national identity, what guarantee is there that economic localism might equally not follow these assumptions? On the other hand, could the digitization of traditional cash pose another challenge to identity association via money?

Aside from the above described contemporary trends, there are equally subtle issues that are emerging in Flemish, Belgian and European society. These issues, while minor and to the common eye perhaps appearing negligible, may foreshadow future trends and commonalities.

4.2. Emerging Issues

The emerging issues detected within the nationalist landscape of this dissertation can be categorized in two main groups: Those impacting Brussels, Flanders and Belgium from a political, societal or geographic distance; and those impacting Brussels, Flanders and Belgium from within the actual territorial sphere – via actions and initiatives from the inhabitants themselves.

4.2.a. Anti-Israel Sentiments Oddly Leading to Anti-Muslim Nationalism

In the spring and summer of 2014, Israel destroyed Italian and French development projects in the West Bank. In October 2014, the Israeli military equally destroyed a Belgian funded electricity network in the village of Khirbet al-Tawil, in the province of Nablus, also on the Western Jordan Bank. With the damage estimated at 55 000 Euro (Roox, BELGA, 2 October 2014), Oxfam in Belgium is demanding Belgium to publically condemn such actions and demand damage restitution from Israel. While considered the 'far from my bed show' for Europeans and Belgians, the anti-effects could prove dangerous for the future. With the EU already being strongly influenced by Muslim culture, the actions of Israel may ignite further favoritism towards the Arab world over the Israeli world in Europe and in Belgium. Aside from potentially dividing the USA and the EU in terms of support or condemnation of Israel, the end result of pro-Muslim sentiments at the governance level holds the potential to further stimulate nationalists in their anti-Islam campaigns which they claim divides society.

4.2.b. Flanders & Flemish Nationalism Drowning

The ice caps are melting. Even those who are not natural scientist conclude that there is no report indicating the opposite. Whether the melt is the result of human industrialization, of natural effects, or historical planetary cycles, the end result remains the same … they are melting. In early July 2015, user @Amazing_Maps shared a disturbing map of Europe on Twitter. In this map, the European continent is re-drawn if the ice caps melt and the sea water rises with an average of 66 meters (National Geographic, 2015). With Ireland shrinking drastically, the Netherlands and Denmark being diminished to near territorial annihilation, it is also clear that Brussels may become a coastal city. While the Dutch innovative designs to build dikes and barriers keeping the water from flooding certain below-sea-level regions, there is no guarantee that this will suffice. Indeed, if the caps melt just a little bit faster than expected, Flanders also runs the risk of flooding, and thus literally drown the Flemish nationalist ambition of establishing a Flemish identity on Flemish territory. Brussels would consequently experience not only Dutch, but also Flemish climate refugees.

4.2.c. The Decaying Earth Ultimately Promoting Human Unity?

The July 2015 publication of a large-scale investigation by international scientists at some thirty universities in Australia, Europe and the USA, stated that the universe is dying a slow but certain death. In this respect, member of the International Center for Radio-Astronomic Research, professor Simon Driver declared that "from now on, the universe is doomed to deteriorate" (Nieuwsblad, July 2015). In February 2014, Live Science had already declared that nearly everything on planet earth would be destroyed in 60 000 years. While such declarations instill minor anxiety in the average citizen who lives 'now', and only 'now', without too much worry about and for the distant future; the report that the population of Earth has consumed more than the planet can produce in a year on 13 August 2015 (Bullard, National Geographic, 13 August 2015) is something that did not pass unnoticed. Indeed, to feed the world's expanding population, a second planet will be needed. While not listed as its immediate core mission, the European Space Agency (ESA)'s Global Exploration Strategy is convinced that humanity's future may lie in space. The ESA's Aurora Program, while not part of everyday European citizens' lives, believes that human expansion in space will continue and that "in the public consciousness this is believed

to only be a matter of time". Offering a viable solution for the production of produce in space, NASA published the Canadian Space Agency's "Growing the Future: Plants in Space" intent, in which astronauts could be fed on long-duration flights in outer space. Missions such as these, especially when finding a more mainstream platform in everyday politics, hold the potential to unify the citizens of Belgium, Europe, and the world. Because, after all, once the colonization of space truly commences –not necessarily to fill the human explorer curiosity, but in an attempt to safeguard the survival of the Earth's uncontrolled booming population- the notions of nationalism may vanish, and finally unite the human race as 'one' rather than 'many'.

4.2.d. Space War Dividing the World while Uniting Europe?

In August 2015, Hoefkens (2015) reported in the little-read evening edition of De Standaard newspaper that "we may be seeing Star Wars in real life" in the near future. With space being increasingly crammed by experimental space weapons, the American governmental leaders are displaying signs of nervousness in losing their monopoly in space. At present, approximately 1300 satellites hover around planet Earth, of which the majority is utilized for communication, weather or GPS purposes. A great number, however, are deployed for military goals. With 500 of those satellites in American hands, China and Russia are currently catching up, triggering enormous investments on the American front. If this practice of leading from space continues, does it threaten the contemporary global entente between nations and citizens? Furthermore, might it divide nations or regions in an 'us' against 'them' scenario where self-interest will reign and obtained by military space force? In this mindset, however, might the necessity to grow to truly unite Europeans in a regional force, since national strength may not be able to counter the before-mentioned military giants?

4.2.e. Turkish Nationalism in Flanders

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been perceived to becoming more radical in his political stance. While the June 2015 Turkish parliamentary elections showed a clear diminished popularity for the radicalizing Turkish president in Turkey, this was not the case for his popularity in the Netherlands and Belgium, where he obtained a respective 64% and 63% of the votes (De Standaard, June 2015). The right to vote in Turkey remains since Belgium grants double nationality. To many

expressed views on social media (Twitter and Facebook) in the days subsequent the vote, this demonstrated that the Turks in Belgium and the Netherlands are thus more radical than the Turks in Turkey itself, which is deemed strange in a Western democracy. With 82 Turkish societies in Brussels, and with Belgian Turks maintaining exceptionally strong political ties with their home country, the nationalist fear exists in this trend potentially marking an increase in the radicalization in Belgium. Such an emerging issue would directly imply a further differentiation between the autochthones and the allochthones; a possible cultural polarization in society; and immediate propaganda fodder for nationalist pleas.

4.2.f. Subtle Emerging Racism in Flanders

With globalization and the increasing inter-connectedness due to (social) media, the barriers to discrimination and cultural isolation should be diminishing. Unfortunately subtle racist trends and quickly hushed-up experiences are visible when carefully scanning local news sources. In this case, the local news in the town of Meerbeek, located in the province of Flemish Brabant, just north of Brussels. In June 2014, Flemish journalist Peter Verlinden found the word "Niggers" written in large letters all over his house, alluding to his socially integrated ethnically Rwandan wife and their two mixed-race children. Receiving extremely brief media attention via the local Meerbeek edition of De Standaard (June 2014), the journalist pointed the guilty finger to the discourse of the far right nationalist party Vlaams Belang. At the concluding meeting of his party in May 2014, front man Filip De Winter stated that the "graying" (in reference to aging) of Flanders was not the problem, but the "browning" was. Verlinden attempted to highlight the racist remark, yet no one in the political scene reacted. The fact that this racist expression occurred was furthermore enhanced by the astounding, yet again immediately hushed up (upon asking, I found that 9 out of 10 Flemish citizens have no recollection of it), introduction of the "less less less" computer game briefly introduced by Vlaams Belang in May 2014. The aim of this extremist nationalist game is to exterminate (using a fly swapper or a baseball bat) as many mosques, flying Muslims, criminals and mainstream politicians (presented as flies).

The fact that matters such as these receive little to no political platform is indicative of the tolerant image being promoted in public. The mere existence of such tendencies, not in a large city like Brussels, but in a small town north of the city

border, presents a dark future prospect for both the notion of identity in the nationalist quest, and for the embrace of a multi-cultural society. The line that separates extreme nationalists from moderate nationalists holds the potential to either destroy both forms if the association between them grows, or for one to evaporate the other – dependant on the European nationalist alignments.

4.2.g.   The Uncertainty of National & European Farming

No strangers to strikes, Europeans have experienced strong interference with their travels plans in recent months, due to public protests and demonstrations by farmers. In June and July 2015, airports and highways experienced blockades by angry farmers who demanded to be heard. In essence, the EU's Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) was one of the original pillars of the EU[19] and their main concern has been to ensure the social provision that food remains affordable for European citizens while equally guaranteeing the livelihood of the producing farmers. On one hand, the current EU and national regulations not only determine the price of goods; they also set specific rules that must be abided by (including hygiene, the use of fertilizers, hormones, etc.). On the other hand, the EU allows the import of similar goods from non-compliant countries not bound to these regulations into Europe. A simple and contemporary example is that of the daily consumption of milk. Strict criteria have been in place for the production, criteria and quotas of milk since 1984 (ECPA CAP, 2015) in an effort to stop over-production. In April 2015, this quota was lifted, opening the EU milk market to import and export. The European Commission, enforcing EU rules, argues that developing countries are hungry for European farmers' produce; yet many farmers have risen in protest for EU imposed regulations. By constantly having to comply with EU interference, the market no longer operates under the free market economy principles, they argue. Furthermore, the import of milk from countries not in compliance with the strict EU regulations is seen as hypocritical. Similarly, other

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[19] The Treaty of Rome set out the basic principles and objectives for the EU's CAP as follows:
- To increase productivity, by promoting technical progress and ensuring the optimum use of the factors of production, in particular labor;
- To ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community;
- To stabilize markets;
- To secure availability of supplies;
- **To provide the consumers with food at reasonable prices.** (ECPA Common Agricultural Policy, 2014)

farmers today, especially in Western Europe, protest against this unfair competition and against the government-determined low prices they receive for the production of livestock. With one in ten farms on the brink of bankruptcy, a strong tendency is growing against government-imposed regulations.

Question arise as to whether we have evolved into a society in which technology and the latest gadgets can cost whatever the producer determines appropriate, while food prices (to 'maintain society') are monitored and must be offered at the bare minimum? Does government have the right to dictate food prices, while technology providers operate on a blank check principle? Or might the EU further regulate all prices, including those of non-agricultural related products, in the future? The future development of this farming issue could either advance in favor of the farmers if they receive public support; or turn against them when the public reaches its boiling point due to strikes and public demonstrations that block entire airports and highways. Subtle "Eat Belgian" campaigns to promote pride in local produce following the Russian import ban in the fall of 2014 could be perceived as another prime example of the need to revert to national policies rather than a European policy.

4.2.h. AI the Biggest Existential Threat – Artificial Electronics Our Savior?

From The Terminator film franchise, where artificial intelligence wipes out humanity, to I.AM, where artificial intelligence perceives the imprisonment of humanity as the only protection against themselves, against their self-destructive nature, Hollywood has exploited doom scenarios about the impossibility of harmonious co-habitation between humans and robots. During an interview at MIT's AeroAstro Centennial Symposium in October 2014, visionary and inventor Elon Musk expressed similar concerns and stressed the need to be very careful about artificial intelligence. Dr. Stuart Armstrong from the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University, shares these concerns and urgently calls for AI safeguards. While engaged in a debate on artificial intelligence, Armstrong "warned that humans could be wiped out even if robots are instructed to protect people" (Griffiths, 29 June 2015). Indeed, this AI expert elaborates that "in the future, intelligent robots will be smarter and faster than humans, take over the running of countries … machines will work at speeds inconceivable to the human brain and will skip communicating with humans to take

control of the economy and financial markets, transport, healthcare and more" (Griffiths, 29 June 2015). It is feared that AGI – artificial general intelligence – will enable robots to carry out more than specific and limited tasks, with the risk of pernicious behavior in misinterpreting subtle human language or in control that was given but not meant in certain manners. In December 2014, professor Stephen Hawking already told the BBC that "the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race" (Cellan-Jones, 2 December 2014). One suggestion is to teach robots a moral code, which in itself is difficult, as humans can often not agree on what constitutes true right and wrong. The fear that in the distant future, artificially created life would conclude in dystopian scenarios in which AI turns against its programmer, ignites the desire to control AI systems to stay within the stringently set parameters set by humans. In January 2015, a group of scientists and entrepreneurs signed an open letter in which they promise to safeguard that artificial intelligence development will benefit humanity – among the signatories were Hawking and Musk. While many embrace robotization for economic and societal benefits, others fear an increase in unemployment and inequality. At the same time, might the creation of true artificial intelligence not serve as a unifying factor amongst humanity? Or could it potentially divide nations over the desire for monopolized control?

At the same time, intelligent electronics are embraced on a daily basis. Smart phones cannot be eliminated from the daily routine of current generations, without a panic-frenzy. Electronics that enhance and improve our overall quality of life are stimulated. As such, former CEO and owner of Omega Pharma and since the sale, media-favorite Euro-billionaire, Marc Coucke invested in a disposable chip that will allow people to test their own blood values, which will then be wirelessly sent to a smart phone (Coucke investeert in wegwerpchip om bloed te testen, May 2015). At an incredibly affordable cost, this chip will autonomously be able to analyze molecules or cells in bodily fluids, including DNA, protein, viruses, blood cells, etc. While in its testing phase, with an estimated delivery close to 2019, it holds the potential to further individualize society, while ensuring every citizen can remain on top of his or her own health.

4.2.i. The Popularity of Vegetable Gardens & Vegetal Design

Whether it is the result of the financial situation, a contemporary hype in hobby or recreation alternatives, or the desire to ensure purity and freshness, an increase in vegetable gardens has been detected throughout Flanders and Brussels – with an obvious sense of pride in one's own vegetable productions. The Gardening Society of Flanders has noticed that the requests for town or community gardens is equally on the rise and as such is hoping to align with the Flemish government in order to allow for such a development and the necessary subsidies. Even in the center of Brussels, La Ferme Biologique de Bruxelles houses both small farm animals and ecologically farmed city vegetables. As typical grass roots organizations, these initiatives rarely make their way to the virtual world and rely on mouth-to-mouth promotion. Seen as a perfect manner to enhance both the sustainability in food-provision, and the assimilation into new societies in Brussels, La Ferme Biologique offers an interesting example of local identity creation within a larger identity setting – be it Brussels, Belgian or Flemish. Furthermore, several Belgian cities have offered an artistic platform to architects like Luc Schuiten, who wish to re-design urban centers into vegetal cities. Visionary architectural designs about green Brussels are both acknowledged and receive a societal recognition, although mainly labeled as art rather than future green breathing city design today.

4.2.j. The Popularity of the Bicycle to Connect Towns

As the southern neighbor of the Netherlands, a country with a superb biking infrastructure and an active biking population, Belgium has a tendency to try to follow in its innovative footsteps. Since the end of 2014, with minimal publicity or rather minimal general interest, the local Hasselt edition of the Nieuwsblad newspaper (September 2014) proudly announced "Biking between the tree tops", in other words, the introduction of increased facilities available for bikers – this in support of the environment and overall health of the citizens. In the Flemish province of Limburg, the authorities have agreed to invest in the improvement of the cycling network, focused on alternatives for asphalt. With planned cycling paths between tree tops connecting local towns, with routes passing under rivers and under ground, the promotion of the territory is seen as the main goal. In November 2014, a slightly broader publication announced the Flemish intent to establish 80 bike-highways in Flanders, which will allow the transportation by bike to one's work place. On average,

Flemish inhabitants bridge a distance of 12.4 kilometers to work (Rommers, November 2014). It is anticipated that riding one's bike to work will increase in popularity, partly due to the success of the electronic bicycle. Furthermore, the social connections while cycling are believed to hold the potential for a stronger local and regional community feeling.

4.2.k. Should Mayors Rule the World?

According to political scientist Benjamin Barber, it is high time that authority and power is transferred to the elected leaders who can make a difference in the world, as he proclaims in his most recent seminars "If mayors ruled the world". American urban theorist, Richard Florida (2002) stated that cities targeting the three Ts – Technology, Talent, and Tolerance – are the backbone for the future of our world economy. In 2008 his book Who's Your City, he rejects the myth that globalization has made the world flat, that it does not matter whether you were born to become successful. To the contrary, he claims, the choice of where you will reside will be the most important of your life. It determines which job you will have and therefore he finds creative cities the engine of economic growth. "The forty largest mega regions in the world produce two thirds of the economic output and 90% of all innovations. Yet only 18% of the world's population lives in those regions. The formation of mega-regions is as invasive for the economic growth as the suburbanization we knew post-WWII" (translation, De Morgen newspaper, February 2013). In the mindset of Barber (2012), the political institutions of cities will have no choice but to act as the organizational unit of the creative economy. When observing dysfunctional national governments, are we confronted with the only manner in which we can ensure that cities receive what they need to flourish in the creative economy?

4.2.l. Anti-Monarchial Sentiments

As the final emerging issue to be identified, a brief focus must be directed to the symbolic value of the Belgian monarchy – in direct support of Belgian nationalism. In existence since 1831, a year after the independence of the Belgian state, the Belgian royal family has always been part of the lives of Belgian citizens. While never expanded upon in political debates, while not a mainstream public sphere topic, negativity vis-à-vis the principles that govern a monarchy is increasing in certain circles. Stimulated by the N-VA's subtle indication that the concept of a monarchy is

something of the past, not fitting into a democratically run state, and unbecoming of a Flemish autonomous state, anger over the financial endowments towards the royal family can be detected. For example, until December 2014, the Belgian state offered allowances to no less than three queens: Queen Fabiola, the wife of the late king Boudewijn; Queen Paola, the wife of former king Albert II; and the current Queen Mathilde, wife of King Philippe). In times of financial austerity, the knowledge that tax money funds the lavish lifestyles of royals, is a difficult pill to swallow. This is clear from individual readers' commentary at the back of political and/or social magazines, and from social media expressions. Knack's individual reader letters offered such an example in July 2015, where a reader stated that "Our king is still appointed via hereditary system, without any evidence of competence, and without elections. Is this not fundamentally un-democratic? Let us also not forget that former prince Philippe did not have to enroll in the hardest courses of the Royal Military School, nor did he have to pass an exam to obtain the highest function of lieutenant general. This, too, is un-democratic" (Van Ecke-Puseyns). Expressions such as "if the country splits, the Walloons can take the monarchy" are equally not unheard of in social conversations. If the Flemish nationalists push this issue further in future campaigns, the actual presence of a monarchial system in Belgium may be at risk. After all, until what level will the population groups find credence in the symbolic value of a royal family? And if the value is indeed purely symbolic, which today it is not, must it be funded so heavily by Belgian taxes?

PART III: THE MĀNOA SCHOOL OF FUTURES STUDIES' FOUR GENERIC FUTURES APPLIED TO BRUSSELS ANNO 2060

CHAPTER 5

Four Futures of Identity for Brussels

"If people are asked to think about the future without prior familiarity with alternative futures, they probably will plan basically for the present, or strive to get rid of the problems of the present, without sufficient thought of what new or renewed problems and opportunities might lie ahead. One way to get people in a frame of mind to envision more robust preferred futures is to have them consider (and, to the extent possible, experience) examples of the four alternative futures" (Dator, Yeh & Park, 2013, p. 27). In this respect, this chapter will imagine the four futures scenarios of/for Brussels in the nationalist landscape of Belgium and Europe, to then set the tone to proceed into glimpses and potential of and for my preferred future for Brussels, in the concluding section of this dissertation.

"The Mānoa School had developed a typology of four generic images of the future. This typology had been empirically derived by collecting and evaluating "images of the future" in national and corporate plans for the future, research statements about the future, articles in the peer-reviewed futures journals and conference proceedings, books and other media of futurists, fictional stories about the futures in many media, images of the futures in popular culture including advertisements, annual "state of the state/nation" speeches, and the like. From this empirical base, the Mānoa School concluded that all of the millions (if not billions) of images of the future existing in the minds of people can be categorized as specific examples of one of four generic images of the futures. The four generic images are Grow, Collapse, Discipline and Transformation" (Dator, Yeh & Park, 2013, p. 25) – as noted in the Introduction section.

As is the case for the entire world, so too in Belgium does the majority of future-oriented thinking rely on a variation of "continued growth" based on the contemporary certainties that drive society. While considered revolutionary in their own right, initiatives like those of Eric Corijn's (2009 – 2013) Urban Notebooks series in which he admirably collaborates with architects, sociologists, and ecologists to envision 'the' future for and of Brussels, and provides a societal discussion platform, fail to actively imagine a future beyond that of continuation of contemporary factors – most notably the financial and political ones. With the recent

financial and political crises faced within the EU and Belgium, a "collapse" future has gained in critical thought and consideration, driven by concern over the perceived unsustainable political and economic frameworks. To avoid such a collapse, two counter-movements can occur. On one hand "many people believe that it is necessary to adopt certain values and "discipline" our life and actions around them if we are to survive and thrive" (Dator, Yeh & Park, p. 26) – something that can occur voluntarily, yet may also be established via a 'stronger' governance system. On the other hand, a technological or spiritual "transformation" can be brought about by the rapidly changing factors that can transform society. As noted by Dator, Yeh & Park (p. 26), each of these four generic futures makes different assumptions about a number of driving forces discussed in chapter 3.

Heavily relying on these researched driving forces currently fueling society, and the contemporary trends and emerging issues that influence that society, the main issue under investigation here is that of nationalism within the Brussels, Flemish, and Belgian landscape. While the futures of Brussels can be envisioned from a multitude of angles, the nationalist notion of identity and ethnic make-up of Brussels, and the governance model for the EU, Belgium, and the three Belgian regions, stands central. Contrary to the classic Mānoa School methodological applications employed in Dator, Yeh & Park's "Campuses 2060: Four Futures of Higher Education in Four Alternative Futures of Society" (2013) and in Dator, Sweeney & Yee's <u>Mutative Media: Communication Technologies and Power Relations in the Past, Present, and Futures</u> (2015), the four generic futures of this dissertation rely on the active imagining effort of one person rather than on that of a group. As such, it is an interpretation by and of one single individual who, despite approaching all described driving forces, contemporary trends, and emerging issues in the most unbiased manner possible, cannot guarantee the absence of personal (societal) bias in the projected futures. Perceived overlap between generic futures is also possible, since for example the future envisioning of a collapse scenario for/of certain contemporary driving forces may closely resemble that of a continued growth future. In simplified format, table 2 provides the distinguishing features of each of the driving forces for Brussels for each societal 2060 future. Note that this overview offers the direct characterization for the capital city, while the expanded explanation in the following chapter will incorporate Flanders, Belgium and the EU.

FUTURES	Continue	Collapse	Discipline	Transform
Driving Forces				
Governance	Structured	Caliphate	Federal	Galactic
Population	Growing	Diminished	Stable	Organic: Decline Synthetic: Growth
Culture	Flemish	Muslim	European	Artificial
Economy/ Employment	Institutional	Barter	Regulated	Corporate
Technology/ Transportation	Controlled	Limited	Advanced	AI
Energy	Sufficient	Oil	Renewable	Abundant
Environment	Liberating	Irrelevant	Sterilized	Artificially Perfect

Organization of the Four Generic Futures of/for Brussels

Every futures scenario for 2060 will offer four sections that offer an active image of
life in Brussels, Flanders, Belgium, and the European Union:

1. The seven driving forces that characterize the landscape of the city.

2. Nationalist tendencies explained, with a special focus on the identity of the
   Brussels' inhabitant(s). Today, the identity of every citizen of Belgium, and
   thus also Brussels, is established via the Belgian identity card. This Belgian
   card displays a photograph of the citizen or legal resident of Belgium, place
   and date of birth, card number, the nationality of the inhabitant, a geographic
   depiction of the area of residence (Belgium in this case), and an electronic
   chip that contains all social information (to be used for social and
   welfare/health care purposes) - as can be observed in the personal altered
   image below. Conform the contemporary format, albeit in a re-assembled and
   re-imagined version in the futures, this card will depict the average identity of
   the average inhabitant of Brussels in each of the four futures – be it at times in
   an exaggerated manner to demonstrate the change in identity of the city's
   citizens.

Image 1: Fictional Identity Card of an Average Brussels citizen, anno 2015.

3. To visualize each futures imagining effort, the scenario experience of a contemporary autochthone Flemish (since the nationalist trend clearly originates from within Flanders) nuclear family of today, anno 2015, shall be incorporated. Through this brief fictional family experience, the daily life and practices of this family within each of the four generic futures will illuminate the day-to-day operations, impressions, and confrontations in each scenario. The family is Flemish, since the impact on and by the Flemish nationalist landscape best demonstrates the overall experience in 2060. While all family experiences run rather parallel in the four futures scenarios, note that this is a conscious step towards focusing on the changes that do occur in the four generic futures. The following family experience can be considered the starting point in the present – which will then be projected in the same format into the 2060 scenarios:

Today, in 2015, the Flemish family resides in a Flemish suburb town just outside the ring road around Brussels. It comprises of a father working for the European Parliament in the European Quarter of Brussels; a mother working for the Flemish division of the Belgian OCMW/welfare department in the historic center of Brussels, their 20-year-old daughter studying at the Flemish branch of the Free University of

Brussels; and their 11-year-old son enrolled at a local school in the family's hometown. Catholic through cultural tradition, yet not in practice, the family upholds Western liberal values that have been ingrained in Flemish society. Obliged to recycle, obliged to pay high income taxes, incentivized to build/renovate their home in an energy efficient manner, they can be considered an average well-conditioned Flemish-speaking family. The family can be placed in the financial middle class.

Dropping off his son at school by car, the father finds himself increasingly aware of the multi-ethnic pupils in his son's class and school. The son's classroom is indeed multi-cultural, with fellow-pupils from Arabic backgrounds, Eastern European backgrounds, and a majority of Flemish pupils, with Flemish being the institutional language of instruction. School lunch provisions are sensitive to religious and ethnic traditions.

While a frustrating drive to work often filled with slow block driving and protests against Belgium or the EU, he considers his car part of his perceived notion of mobile freedom. The cars around him are, as is the same for his case, mostly occupied by a single driver with no passengers. Fortunately, his administrative work in the European Quarter provides an assigned parking space. Organized protests directed towards the EU have hindered traffic, but the European Parliament has graciously allowed their administrative employees to occasionally distance work from home on such days. Surrounded by a predominantly Caucasian ethnic workgroup, the main language of conduct at the parliament is English; although his knowledge of both Flemish and French certainly aided in the acquisition of his position. Nevertheless, the unwillingness of some French-speaking colleagues to make an effort to converse in Flemish is something he experiences as rather arrogant. If he decides to leave the office building for lunch, he has the option of either staying in the European quarter where both French and English are the main languages of communication; or to take the metro to enter another part of Brussels where the main spoken language is French or in a minority of cases, Flemish.

Mother and daughter both rely on the public transportation by taking the bus in their hometown, to then transfer to the metro that leads them to their respective work and study locations. Here again, little commuting nuisance on the average day and in case of a public transportation strike, they either car-share with their husband/father or request to work/study from home. The bus and metro travel places the female half of the family in direct contact with the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic

inhabitants of Brussels. Mainly French, English, Flemish, and at times Arabic can be overheard. The mother's face-to-face work for the welfare department focuses on interaction with multi-lingual and multi-cultural inhabitants of Brussels, where she is confronted with the daily frustration of encountering people applying for welfare aid unable to speak any of Belgium's three official languages. Her frustration grows on a daily basis by the welfare system that allows those who have never contributed to the social network, to directly benefit from it – in the same capacity as an autochthone who has silently paid income tax for 40 years. The ease with which this occurs and the self-evidence with which requests for aid are made, do provide professional stress.

The daughter takes courses in Flemish and at times in English, and finds herself surrounded by Flemish, Brussels, and international students on the university campus. With approximately 20% of her course material being taught via online (enhanced) material, her attendance on campus remains vital. While mainly French-speaking establishments surround the Flemish-language Free University of Brussels, she enjoys every opportunity to practice her foreign language skills and appreciates the diversity offered by the Belgian capital.

4. To conclude each generic futures scenario, "Nationalism: Possibility & Plausibility of Scenario X" will offer a glimpse of the contemporary nationalistic effort/viability to achieve the respective visions of 2060. In other words, what seeds need to be planted in order to achieve the vision of 2060.

The Four Generic Futures for Brussels 2060 in the Nationalistic Landscape of Flanders, Belgium, and the European Union

5.1. Continued Growth: Social Fortress Flanders 2060 in Confederate Belgium

5.1.a. Driving Forces & Nationalist Tendencies in Growth

Brussels forms an integral part of the financially and socially flourishing autonomous Flemish nation and state, located in the confederate country of Belgium. Apart from its function as capital of Flanders, and the operational headquarters of the Fletherlands (Flanders & the Netherlands) Trade Agreement, it is also the unofficial capital of the European Union. As valid for all member-states in the EU, the enforced (outer) European border fences protect Flanders and thus also Brussels from unwelcome immigrants. Allowing for the free and safe flow of goods and people within the Fortress Europe region, the regionally protected social welfare system is known as Social Fortress Flanders – where no social benefits are rendered to any individual not having contributed directly to the social system. Following the wake-up call over its depleting social welfare systems, the EU looked to the Flemish as a role model in ensuring a sustainable social solution that benefits the contributing citizens of the European Union. "Solidarity only with Responsibility and Accountability" has been a successful creed since its inception in the early 2030s. The physical presence of EU officials is rapidly diminishing due to EU protest and EU-strike-prone Brussels, although Brussels remains the unofficial capital of the EU with its administrative EU functions and buildings. Obligatory Flemish language stimulating liberal Flemish culture is the main identity driving force in society.

1. **Governance ➔** EU governance over member-states in the United Nations of Europe, with a high tolerance and acceptance for autonomous regions within member-states. As a separate electoral/representative unit in EU parliament, Flanders accounts for 55% of the Belgian votes in the EU. In theory still part of the Belgian country, Flanders and Wallonia uphold regular confederate meetings to discuss 'national' issues such as Belgian transportation between both regions. Brussels is the most global and international city of Flanders, governed by the national

Flemish parliament, and under the direct supervision of the Brussels mayor. Following the successful Brussels referendum in the late 2020s, having offered Brusselers the choice to join Wallonia or Flanders (with the decision favoring the latter due to the financial wealth and social welfare network it offered), Flanders upholds referendum voting for social issues directly affecting the population.

2. **Population ➔** The EU population stands at 700 million. With a population nearing 8 million due to a stable natural population growth throughout Flanders, an immigrant increase is anticipated due to the climate crisis from the largely below-sea-level Dutch neighbors, who are faced with a faster-than-predicted increase in sea level rise. Similar in language, the Dutch refugees never file for welfare benefits and are as such welcome (cultural and financial) additions to the region of Flanders. The projection for coastal Belgian flooding is responsible for an augmented emigration pattern into the Brussels region. The Brussels population of 1.5 million is comprised of 50% inhabitants with Muslim roots or influences, with the other 50% representing a broad international spectrum, including 15% autochthones.

3. **Culture ➔** Flemish is the official language of the Flemish state, with English the second language, mainly used in Brussels. The increased Fletherlands cooperation/collaboration and administrative concentration in Brussels further stimulates the use of Flemish-Dutch as the dominant tool of communication in the city, and English poses no threat to the Flemish cultural identity. Muslim faith is welcomed in the private sphere, while an irreligious society characterizes Brussels and Flanders. Halal meat is imported from the Middle Eastern region. The former royal palaces in Brussels are inhabited by the former royal Belgian family, who function as regular upstanding members of society – living in the Flemish region.

4. **Economy & Employment ➔** Seeing the distance between Flanders and Luxemburg and the Flemish unwillingness to revert to Belgian-Walloon national relations, the Fletherlands (Flanders and the Netherlands) Trade Agreement and administrative collaboration between both nations is proving successful on a global scale and within the EU. With increasing collaboration in the Fletherlands, Brussels is mainly characterized by both EU administrative jobs and responsibilities to the Fletherlands needs. The indirect

EU and Fletherlands employment and income generation for the hospitality industry allows Brussels to continue thriving through upstairs internationalization, while still attempting to diminish downstairs internationalization – a problem addressed heavily in 2060 Growth political campaigns. The overall institutionalized characterization of Brussels' wealthy employment industry accounts for 90% of the city's income. The economic/financial connection through the Euro within the EU has now reached full member-state adherence, and as such allows for stronger uniformity.

5. **Technology & Transportation Infrastructure ➔** Flanders is characterized by its modernized and advanced transportation network, with state of the art public transportation – entirely funded by the income taxes of its own inhabitants. Cycling routes offer attractive alternatives during summer time, while the electric car remains popular in Flanders. The high density Brussels city offers 50% pedestrian zones, with public transportation facilitating connections between all parts of the city.

6. **Energy ➔** All types of energy are available in abundance. Having reached the European Commission climate goals by 2020, Flanders thrived from the Fletherlands Trade Agreement, where an exchange of renewable energy initiatives took place between the Flemish and the innovative Dutch engineers. As a result, wind, solar, and water energy have become valuable secondary additions to Arctic oil, clean coal production, and safe and renewable nuclear energy.

7. **Environment ➔** Entirely man-controlled, the Flemish agricultural industry allows for a large degree of self-provision as well as for the visual aspect of remaining 'green'. – although heavy reliance on imported goods is necessary In Brussels, parks alternate the skyscrapers, and trees complement the urbanization in the city center. No sign of forest or wild life, but limited beautifully controlled green spaces for a high number of people. Air quality is healthy in the city, due to the restricted vehicle regions.

5.1.b. Identity & Identities of Brussels, Flanders, Belgium in Growth

As the dominant political party, N-VA is the Flemish protectionist, Fletherlands-stimulating, pro-EU political driving force behind the successful geopolitical Flemish state. Having absorbed Vlaams Belang's moderate elements into their party in the late early 2020s, they govern the Flemish state together with the Liberals – who represent the nation with an overwhelming majority at the EU parliament. The French Nationalist Party in Brussels, established in counter-reaction to the full-deployment of Flemish as the official capital city's language in 2030, has almost entirely lost its momentum, since the benefits of striving for a French-language institutional component are close to non-existent. Indeed, French and Belgian nationalist movements were short lived and non-compliers emigrated to autonomous Wallonia. The early 2020s outrage over unsustainable immigration and welfare abuse paved the path for the "assimilate and adjust, or leave" policy indiscriminately implemented throughout Flanders to this day.

Image 2: Fictional Identity Card of an Average Brussels citizen in 2060 Continued Growth Future.

Flemish culture in public; Religious expressions in private: Flemish culture and Flemish language dominate the public identity of Brussels' citizens, with the official identity cards being printed in Flemish and English only – with the latter for

international purposes. Indicated by the map of the autonomous Flemish State, Brussels forms part of the Flemish culture in the geopolitical region of Flanders, and the Flemish flag displays the identity of the area. In theory, and for EU international dealings, the Belgian state remains the official country of nationality; however the territorial culture of Flanders prevails in both pride and public administrative conduct. Religious tolerance for personal expressions in the public sphere can visually be observed by the modern use of the Muslim veil, which is not considered as countering Flemish culture. While the full burka is against the law, as is the use of the burkini in public pools – since both are considered as against the liberal Flemish values in which they are deemed an oppressive tool for women – the wearing of religious symbols is accepted for all non-official public servants in professional operation.

5.1.c. Family Experience in Growth

Today, in 2060 Continued Growth, the Flemish family resides in a Flemish suburb town just outside the ring road around Brussels. It comprises of a mother working for the European Parliament in the European Quarter of Brussels; a mother working for the OCMW/welfare department in the historic center of Brussels, their 20-year-old daughter studying at the Flemish branch of the Free University of Brussels, and their 11-year-old son enrolled in a local school in the family's hometown. Catholic through cultural tradition, yet not in practice, the family upholds Western liberal values that have been ingrained in Flemish society. Obliged to recycle, obliged to pay high income taxes, obliged to continue renovating their home in an energy efficient manner, they are considered an average Flemish family. The family positions in the financial middle class.

The son's designated bike lane provides a safe and swift ride from home to school. Fluent in Flemish and English, which are taught, he opted not to learn French as a foreign language. The majority of his fellow-pupils equally focus on other world languages. Religion is no longer part of any public school curriculum, as it is deemed a private educational matter – if so desired. The family does not adhere to any religious practice and as such, the son is raised as irreligious. The classroom offers a multi-ethnic student ratio, but all activities – lunches, excursions, etc. – exclude religious traditions, and all take place in mono-lingual Flemish.

The daily commute into Brussels proceeds smoothly for both parents. When deciding to work or study at their physical headquarters, they take advantage of the

free transportation infrastructure that connects their hometown to all locations in the center of Brussels.

While there is no real advantage to using her car in the city center of Brussels, since the pedestrian zones still demand a metro journey to his place of employment, mother 1 cannot shed the feeling of individual freedom her short drive to the metro grants her. Mother has set a rule for herself to commit to at least 2 days per week on location in Brussels, to ensure that she remains in individual-to-individual contact with his coworkers. While rare, it is sometimes possible to catch a glimpse of the odd visiting Euro-parliamentarian in Brussels, and she feels more comfortable asking them in person whether they enjoy their new residence in Italy's Lake Como – where the majority of the EU elites now reside and digitally stay connected with the EU administrative operations in Brussels. The increase in regional autonomy declarations within the EU ensures that every day is filled with administrative adjustments to accommodate the continued functioning of the EU. During lunch, the entirely pedestrian-only historic center of Brussels is the perfect location to meet with business colleagues or with friends. Ordering proceeds in Flemish.

Mother 2 enjoys the use of her native tongue, Flemish, for every day conduct in her professional life. Face-to-face meetings continue to occupy a large portion of her day, although no on-location presence is required for either party. Still, like her wife, she enjoys the well-trimmed surroundings of her office location in Brussels, and it is with pleasure that mother commits to spending at least 2 days per week physically in the office. With her work communication officially proceeding in Flemish, she embraces every opportunity to practice her English language skills in directing new arrivals in Flanders towards Flemish language and assimilation courses, allowing them to fully integration and become an integral part of society. Eager to benefit from the social security net offered by the Flemish state, immigrants appreciate work opportunities made available via the OCMW and comply swiftly to enter into these jobs – after their state-provided initiation in the Flemish language, to ensure that they can function in their new lives.

Daughter's coursework largely takes place via online platforms, taught in Flemish and English. Her attendance on campus is trivial, but when occasionally on location, she is surrounded by a Flemish-speaking hospitality industry that surrounds the university campus. Attending an event or social activity on campus also provides the perfect opportunity for daughter to cycle into Brussels via the designated biking

routes that connect her hometown to Brussels. Unlike her parents, who need to reach the city and their place of employment within a set time span, daughter appreciates the leisurely ride into the international capital of Flanders and the EU – which is very different from the rather homogeneous landscape of her hometown.

5.1.d. Nationalism: Possibility & Plausibility of Growth

Within the liberal values that dominate the Flemish landscape anno 2015, an increased nationalist strive and success due to the perceived increased Islamification today seems not only possible, but highly plausible. N-VA leading lady, Liesbeth Homans, is convinced that the next elections will automatically pave the way towards the natural decomposition of the nation-state that is Belgium today by 2025. If Belgium, the European Union, the international community, the immigration patterns and globalization, continue in the manner as we have experienced them growing in the past decades – at an even accelerated pace in the past couple of years – Flanders is bound to see an increase of terror incidents, of professional strikes that paralyze the country, a further perceived abuse of the welfare system to which the Flemish autochthones contributed throughout their lives … and as such, the electoral results by the Flemish population may equally continue growing in favor of the current largest political party. With successful media attention focused on the 'blame game' targeted towards previous governmental administrations and contemporary Walloon discrepancies with Flanders; N-VA is successfully fueling/conditioning/opening eyes (depending on which side of the spectrum one approaches the argument). Not placing blame with the immigrant crisis, the moderate nationalist party is successfully pointing their finger to the lacking policies that fail to protect the historical, cultural, social, economic rights of authochthones. The respect with which the N-VA treats EU regulations is a sign that indicates this political party's preferred future as a confederate or completely autonomous Flanders within a stronger European Union. Not only does this seem feasible anno 2015, it is being 'sold' as the only rational viable future for Flanders.

5.2. Collapse: A New Beginning in Fortress Brussels 2060

أوروبا من العرب عاصمة بروكسل

Brussels, Arab Capital of Europe

5.2.a. Driving Forces & Nationalist Tendencies in Collapse

Brussels is a New Beginning, thriving, self-sufficient, post-collapse Muslim city in direct partnership with Turkey and the Middle East that maintains practical operational ties with Flanders and Wallonia – both independent autonomous regions on the European continent. Following the collapse of the Euro and the implosion of internationalization efforts in Europe due to a lacking responsibility in exchange for solidarity, and a depletion of welfare systems support to aid the less fortunate, the very core of the EU ideology crumbled and collapsed the entire social, economic, political union in the 2020s – followed by a technological collapse and European information exchange shut-down. Successful EU disintegration fueled nationalism in individual member-states more than ever, in the belief that "we must protect what's ours". Following the collapse of EU funding and Eurocrats' emigration from Brussels, Flemish nationalists saw their confederate model aspirations vanish, and declared independence in the 2020s – as did the Walloons. Brussels was not taken into consideration during Flemish and Walloon self-protection and self-preservation. As a result, autochthone emigration and Muslim immigration (family unification and re-unification) turned Brussels into the Muslim capital of Europe, governed by the powerful IS manner of Islamic Life in which harmony for Muslims has been obtained throughout many world cities. Fear fueled active emigration of autochthones from Brussels into the Flemish and Walloon regions in the 2020s; fear ignited political Flemish nationalist dominance in Flanders in the early 2030s; and fear by Muslim Brusselers for a Flemish or Walloon take-over of their city and a disruption from their embraced Muslim lifestyles, brought about the erection of a border fence around Brussels in 2040. Flemish language stimulating liberal Flemish culture differs greatly from the Muslim value-system that operates as the main identity driving force of Brussels.

1. **Governance** ➔ As a consequence of the success, spread, and normalization of IS as the Islamic Global Government, Brussels operates under a Caliphate governance structure, with representatives from each of the

19 communes reporting directly to the caliph. Democratic principles ensure elections, yet women are not allowed to vote in the 5 communes where Sharia law upholds strict Islamic legislation. Regular alignment with the New Beginnings Cities of Islamic Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin assure Western European continental harmonious alliance.

2. **Population ➜** With a European population of 300 million inhabitants, Brussels is characterized by an anticipated natural and Muslim immigration growth from its current 800 000 citizen count. Immigration from Flanders and Wallonia is exceptional, and only allowed under strict conditions of acceptance of Islam.

3. **Culture ➜** Culture and religion are synonymous in Brussels. Islam is ingrained in the cultural identity of Brussels' citizens, who speak Arabic in public and private spheres. English is the accepted second language of the region – intended for visitors and international purposes. Communications between Brussels, Flanders, and Wallonia proceed in English. Halal principles govern the food industry; Muslim schooling ensures the proper education for current and future generations; Mosques in the ancient Catholic church buildings accommodate all citizens for prayer sessions.

4. **Economy & Employment ➜** Mainly supplied by the Middle East, Turkey and Morocco, Brussels also operates under a fair-trade system for approved goods with the autonomous regions of Flanders and Wallonia – where agriculture supplies sufficient exchange possibilities. Barter economics allow for the trade possibilities between the former three Belgian regions, and within the Brussels territory. Vegetable gardens and communal farming groups are characteristic of all European regions, which attempt to provide in their communities' needs as much as possible.

5. **Technology & Transportation Infrastructure ➜** Isolated in information communication, and in 'clean' energy operations, Brussels thrives on oil-motorized modes of transportation and on ancient means of communication through landline telephone systems. Offering a direct train connection between the airport of Flanders and Brussels city, a customs procedure precedes such travel. Transportation within Brussels relies mostly on cars. For the extensive import of products from their Middle Eastern

partners, freight transport arrangements exist with Flanders airport. Flanders and Wallonia rely on the use of bicycles within their communities, while larger distances are crossed via public transportation (metro and tram) that relies on Dutch solar and wind power to drive.

6. **Energy ➔** Oil in abundance through import from its partners in the Middle East allows for cheap energy consumption. Flanders survives on still-functioning wind, water and solar solutions through the aid of their partners in the North. In exchange for current and future immigration into Flanders, the Dutch happily share their surviving and reviving clean energy possibilities.

7. **Environment ➔** Survival is the priority, the environment irrelevant. Air pollution remains problematic in Brussels due to the extensive carbon emissions from motorized vehicles, yet is trumped by the convenience of oil-operated mechanisms. Drastic sea level rises are igniting emigration patterns away from the Netherlands and into Flanders. Brussels is not considered an immigration option for identity and altering-value reasons; and as such future emigration patterns into Wallonia are being investigated for old and new (formerly Dutch) Flemish citizens.

5.2.b. Identity & Identities of Brussels, Flanders, Belgium in Collapse/New Beginning

Flemish nationalism exists only in the form of mono-linguistic practices in the Flemish region; while Walloon nationalism translates to the mono-linguistic French orientation of society. Muslim nationalism governs Brussels city, with international ties to Turkey, Morocco and the Middle East to further enhance the cultural stamp of Islam on society. The flourishing Muslim culture is at times overshadowed by the local fragmentations of Sharia legislation in 5 of the 19 communes of the city – this by radical Muslim nationalists, who are at present held under control by the caliph's strong ruling hand. Overall, the entirety of communes of Brussels is characterized by traditional conservative Muslim values that include segregated public gender facilities, and daily colorful markets with fresh Halal-approved products - which offer a stark contrast to the Flemish liberal societal acceptances that include equal gay and women's equal rights, and animal welfare. The Brussels Border Fence ensures that no such practices invade the theocratic Arab city, and customs at the Fortress

Brussels region carefully scan for potentially ill-intending visitors who may disrupt the peaceful operations within Fortress Brussels.

Image 3: Fictional Identity Card of an Average Brussels citizen in 2060 Collapsed Future.

Muslim culture and identity govern the region of Brussels – both in the public and private sphere. The official identity card indicates the autonomous region of Brussels and clearly states that Brussels is the Arab Capital of Europe – making no reference to another sense of cultural, political, or geographic belonging to a larger European territory or community, aside from the affiliation (represented by the flag in the upper left corner of the ID card) with other Fortress Cities such as Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam. The use of English is incorporated in the official document for international travel purposes, outside the designated geo-political region of Brussels - as indicated by the geographic map and territory of Brussels. While moderate Islam dominates the political landscape of the city, the full burka is both tolerated and appreciated – more so in specific traditional parts of the city where Sharia law governs the streets. The veil, head scarf or burka – depending on the region of city - are obligatory for women.

5.2.c. Family Experience in Collapse/New Beginning

Today, in 2060 New Beginning, the Flemish family resides in a small community in close proximity to Arab Capital of Europe. It comprises of a father who teaches part time at his son's local school, and works on the communal agricultural fields the rest of the time, where he functions as the liaison between Brussels and Flanders for the safe and orderly exchange of produce between his town and the Arab city; a mother who works for the 2035 established Flemish social system, where she was amongst the first recruits of the post-collapse attempt to re-build a welfare system in Flanders; their 20-year-old daughter who is training to manage the Belgian endive fields of the community; and their 11-year-old son, who attends the local Flemish school. Proud members of the Flemish regional community, the language abilities of the parents are limited to Flemish, and seeing their proximity to Fortress Brussels also English. Both children find themselves in the fortunate position that the new Flemish educational policy implemented last year, has incorporated learning Arabic as the third language in schools. Social standing in the community is defined purely by their active participation in society.

Each with their own bicycle, the entire family finds their local transportation needs filled. For longer distances, their preferred mode of transportation is the train; although they always look forward to driving in an old-fashioned oil-run motorized car when in Brussels, where they needn't share a compartment with others. Since father teaches at the school where his son attends, they ride their bikes together in the morning. Working in a different agricultural field as her father, the daughter uses another cycling path. Mother leaves earlier in the morning to ensure that she arrives in time at her job 2 towns removed from theirs. The cycling path is pleasurable on dry days, and the social conversations during the ride make time pass by quickly. All conduct during their day is in Flemish, except for father who converses in English regularly with the Brussels authorities for local trade.

Upon deciding to pay a visit to Fortress Brussels, the family ensures to be dressed appropriately – with the female members of the family carrying a headscarf with them to cover their hair upon entering the city. As the best place to purchase Middle Eastern goods and spices, the exciting day excursion justifies the lengthy border checkpoints. Armed with knitted goods, and Belgian endives and Brussels sprouts (vegetables that are still famously grown in Flanders), the family feels confident that they will be able to engage in a few good trades. Upon physically

entering the Arab Capital, father checks to ensure that both women's dress is appropriate to guarantee a smooth and enjoyable day. In the city, there is clear signalization identifying where to remain as visitors – to avoid Sharia controlled zones, where strict Islamic rules are enforced. Their taxi driver ensures that they remain within the safe zones, while they enjoy the privacy of traveling by car as a family. Since they are against ritual slaughter of animals for the consumption of meat, yet do not wish to offend the autochthone inhabitants of Brussels, the family discretely adheres to a vegetarian lifestyle for the day. While drinking a Turkish mint tea in a designated tourist bar where women are allowed to consume a beverage together with their husband – contrary to the traditional tea houses in Fortress Brussels -, Mother reminisces of the days when she, as a young teenager, used to visit Brussels every week, and insists on passing by some of the city's nostalgic monuments. The former European Quarter is now the international center for Islamic Trade Exchange; the historic city center market place ("Grand Place") is now a beautiful prayer site; and the former Royal Palace now operates as a successful hospital. Brussels has once again been restored into a truly global city, and international hub, albeit under a different cultural frame as was the case 50 years ago. Father adds that as a child, he had to travel to northern Africa or the Middle East to experience true Muslim culture, whereas now they can enjoy it just a short journey from their home. Both children embrace every opportunity they can to practice their limited knowledge of Arabic, which is visibly appreciated by the commercial vendors in the marketplace.

While they are obvious non-Brusselers in the Arab Capital, the family is greeted with kindness and respect; and likewise they appreciate the chance to visit this grand former Flemish city that was once the capital that united Europe, and now beautifully houses Muslim identity.

5.2.d. Nationalism: Possibility & Plausibility of Collapse

Walled cities have been part of the European past and within the context described in chapters 3 and 4, continue to hold potential to create an element of safety for those on at least one side of such a fence. As has become obvious during the horizon scan for this dissertation, certain groups of allochthones (including second, third and fourth generation) seem to voluntarily be marginalizing themselves within the city of Brussels. Living in a parallel society offers extremists a near blanck check not to

assimilate into Brussels, into the Belgian and/or Flemish values, and into the larger European landscape. The influx of Muslim immigrants; the perceived accommodation by the host-countries in neglect of their 'own' cultures continuing to fuel the 'us' versus 'them' feeling; the financial crises that continue enduring within and beyond the EU; the shaky societal feeling of unanimity; the lacking international action; the growing frustration of inequality on a financial, social, and human level; are but a few factors that hold the potential to bring about further complete collapse of the contemporary notions of identity. From a nationalist standpoint, "giving up" Brussels may enhance the self-protective cultural isolation in the short run, but in the long term, does segregation not lead to discrimination and frustration? Historical examples from the USA and South Africa indicate that this does not offer a viable and preferential future for all citizens/inhabitants of the geo-political region. As a result, nationalist sentiments can be expected to augment over territorial colonization by non-allochthone culture, bringing about a direct increase in violence due to segregation rather than a harmonious sense of cohabitation. For this reason, it must be noted that the previously described family experience of a harmonious co-habitation between the New Beginnings Brusselers in the Arabic Capital of Europe and the Flemish autochthones relies on the positive acceptance of segregated respect.

5.3.   Disciplined: European Survival regulated by 2060 Brussels, E.C. (European Capital of the United States of Europe)

5.3.a. Driving Forces & Nationalist Tendencies in Discipline

Brussels is the true visiting card of the USE – the United States of Europe. It is the model European city after which all other large cities are modeled in terms of European policies. Upholding and adhering to the strictest of European regulations, the city is an oasis of Europeanness. Following the devastating wars over space (and arms in space) domination, the increased threats of terrorism, the near collapse of the individual member-states' welfare systems, global economic and environmental crises, Europe's citizens embraced the disciplined notion of greater European unity in the 2030s – for self-protection from the other powers in the world, and for a harmonious and balanced way of life for themselves and for future generations. The powerful mandate offered to the USE was irreversible, and led to a well-disciplined society in which processes are slow and highly bureaucratic, yet in constant

movement. Furthermore, the socialistic undertones of the USE ensure low crime rates, conditioned-to-work citizens, and federation-wide health care and welfare provisions. The creation of laws and the enforcement thereof, entirely governed by the United States of Europe, ensures a disciplined way of life. The balance between individual rights and obligations to protect the EU and the citizens' Europeanness, define society in Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia, and all other autonomous states within the federalized European Union. Income tax, transportation tax, energy tax, value added tax (VAT), pension allowance, unemployment specifications and procedures, child care, welfare provisions, inheritance regulations, marriage specifications, educational alignments, etc. have all been established in uniform federal legislative policies by the USE. As such, a citizen of Catalonia has the exact same rights and duties as a citizen of the Netherlands. A citizen of Scotland receives the same salary for the same work as an inhabitant of Finland.

1. **Governance ➔** The federal United States of Europe governs the European continent via a European parliamentary system in which representatives from each region partake in active political ententes in Brussels. Regional European parliaments govern the local day-to-day operations of compliance with USE regulations, and organize democratic elections to select the representatives for the USE parliament.

2. **Population ➔** With 500 million citizens in the USE, Brussels' population stands at 1 million inhabitants – mainly comprised of Eurocrats and those indirectly supporting the USE institution. Migration patterns within the USE are common, as certain areas are faced with the increased pressures of climate alterations. Flanders gained an extra 4 million temporary inhabitants following the 2058 devastating Dutch storm, and thus is at present an incredibly high-density region.

3. **Culture ➔** European in every single meaning of the word. With a 100% European population, the USE is tolerant of all European languages and all European cultures – with English as the lingua franca throughout the Union and also in Brussels. Every Brussels citizen speaks English fluently as well as at least one other European language. English as the first language for all official matters is closely followed by the Flemish

culture kept strong due to the linguistic daily operations in the Flemish region – as is the case scenario for all other linguistic regions in Europe.

4. **Economy & Employment ➔** Brussels is the financially thriving capital of the USE, one of the wealthiest IGOs in the world. 14 of the 19 Brussels communes have been absorbed by the Eurocrats – for their professional offices, as well as for their personal housing arrangements. These communes flourish under the strictly applied EU regulations in terms of energy, environment and European ideology. A largely invisible small-polarized region counters USE elite governance, which allows the Brussels region to thrive with and because of Eurocrats. Saskia Sassen was correct many decades ago since even today in 2060 discipline, the elites are willfully oblivious to the downstairs internationalization of the capital. Indeed, the 5 remaining communes of Brussels provide the housing quarters for the 'behind the scene' laborers who work in the cleaning, catering, and janitorial fields for the EU. Their salaries are much lower than those of the average Eurocrat, while housing accommodations are tight and still expensive, and these communes are kept out of the public European eye – hence not posing a direct threat to the Eurocrat identity of Brussels. After all, all citizens are European, all Europeans are taken care of in the standardized social system, and the Euro is one of the strongest currencies in the world! Every citizen of the USE falls under the social protection net, which is costly, but benefits the disciplined order in society.

5. **Technology & Transportation Infrastructure ➔** High-tech means of transportation via train, metro, tram, bike-share, and plane, allow for easy accessibility to and from Brussels, and for splendid in-city possibilities. The shared electric car is part of the Flemish and European transportation network, ever since the USE issued fiscal benefits for going 100% electric in shared electronic transportation in 2040. The USE's technological commitments to improving the environment and energy consumption act as a role model for other parts of the world. Having moved from an individualist transportation-oriented society, the benefits of the communal bike and car share systems are evident. Individual ownership served no greater good. Furthermore, technological advances allow for the ad-hoc and instant

transmission of information – ensuring that every citizen of the USE is always informed of the latest USE policies and regulation changes.

6. **Energy** ➔ USE dictates clean city measures, and since Brussels is the federal union's visiting card and role model city, it complies with all regulations. Brussels lives up to all Horizon 2060 regulations, including the use of 100% renewable energy from solar, wind, and water power. Motorized vehicles using oil are banned from Brussels E.C. and special parking provisions are foreseen outside the city's ring road. High-tech transportation systems allow for free and accessible movement within Brussels.

7. **Environment** ➔ Faced with the ongoing climate changes that directly affect the European coastal regions, the USE is using its technological expertise to invest in Dutch barrier defense systems to erect a protective barrier preventing the flooding of all towns in close proximity to water. The 2058 storms that completely destroyed the outer islands of the Netherlands served as a wake-up call to take action today. Air quality and thus overall environmental quality of life is high due to the renewable and clean use of energy. Brussels' parks are well maintained and offer nice refuge for Eurocrats after a long day in the office.

5.3.b. Identity & Identities of Brussels, Flanders, Belgium in Discipline

As the sole political, administrative, bureaucratic headquarters of the European Union, Brussels is truly the European seat, with all Flemish and Walloon functional operations available in their respective regions. Like the Catalan, the Scottish, the Dutch, the Italian, the Breton, the Luxembourgish, and many others, so too do the regional Flemish and Walloon identities thrive under the overarching European cultural nationalism. All citizens of the USE identify as being European first, and their regional identity second. The USE's communal goal of harmony ensures that life for European citizens proceeds in harmony and with the benefit of the union at heart.

Image 4: Fictional Identity Card of an Average Brussels citizen in 2060 Disciplined Future.

The entire city of Brussels E.C. breathes Europeanness, especially due to the highly visible Eurocrat inhabitants. With English as the primary language of conduct, the identity card reflects both English and the subject's preferred European language – in this case Flemish. As depicted in the map of Europe, the federalized system allows for full control over the city and the USE. Business attire is ingrained in the Eurocrat's image identity, while any reference to religious affiliations is limited in Brussels' operational structure. As a gender-neutral employer and disciplined enforcer of its policies, the European offices are characterized by a near 50-50 make-up of genders. The same policy applies for ethnicity and regional origins, where direct quotas are applied to ensure a fair distribution of all regional subjects in the USE institution.

5.3.c. Family Experience in Discipline

Today, in 2060 Discipline, the Flemish family resides in a Flemish suburb just outside the ring road from Brussels, E.C. It comprises of a father working for the European Parliament's 5th Commune of Brussels, in the Educational Curriculum Alignment department; a mother working for the USE's Flemish welfare department branch located in the center of Flanders; their 20-year-old daughter studying European Climatic Solutions at the University of Europe in the 9th Commune of Brussels; and their 11-year-old son, enrolled at the local primary school in their hometown. Well-

conditioned European citizens, their income places them in the Flemish financial middle class, even though the USE taxes automatically levied on their salaries remain high. The disciplined family does enjoy the disciplined society provided by the USE: Every Tuesday morning, all recycled trash bags are uniform in color and size in front of all homes in their street – without exceptions by non-compliers; all of the houses in their street are energy-efficient, complying with the USE regulations, and as such guaranteeing a healthy surrounding to raise their children; and the peace of mind offered by the USE's standardized healthcare and welfare benefits for their later pension is priceless, and allows them to fully enjoy life in their European home.

With crime rates close to non-existent due to the USE's assurance that every citizen is safe in Europe, not to mention the public camera monitoring of public roads, the son encounters no obstacles on the way to his school via electric bicycle. Greeted by his teacher in Flemish, all of his coursework takes place in both English and Flemish – this to ensure that he becomes fluent in the official USE language, while also retaining pride in his regional linguistic culture. Today is a particularly exciting day for the son, since his class is scheduled to go on a field trip to Brussels C.E., to learn about the network of educational alignment of primary schools in the USE. There is a small chance that he might see his father, although he rarely leaves the floor on which he works during office hours.

Father unplugs one of the shared electric cars from the socket at the beginning of their street, where ten charging stations and ten electric cars allow for a disciplined rotation system to ensure that all cars in the street can be charged on a weekly basis, and are always available for communal transportation needs and uses. The smooth and relaxing drive into work proceeds without any obstacles or difficulties. In fact, his drive into Brussels C.E. can be labeled as exactly the same every single day of the week. Luckily the alternating European News Broadcast in his car allows him to arrive at work fully informed of the latest developments within the USE. Upon arrival, he parks in his assigned parking space, but needn't charge his car since the nightly charge from home suffices for the next week's commute. Even though there are 3 other Flemish colleagues in his department, English is the official language of business conduct and no inclination is made to divert from this – even during leisure breaks.

Mother prefers to use public transportation to her job location in the center of Flanders. A swift, smooth and quiet 30 minute train ride places in front of her office,

where she converses in Flemish with colleagues and welfare 'clients'. Naturally all formal official documentation is completed in English, and when requested, she immediately switches to the English language to accommodate clients as well. She truly enjoys her job, in which she feels fulfilled after every day. People seeking assistance are fully entitled and are disciplined to act upon USE regulations that stimulate a return to the work force as soon as possible,

Sometimes the daughter joins her father to drive into Brussels, to then take a 10-minute tram to her university. On other occasions she relies on her electric bike, which she finds to give her more personal freedom – while enjoying the safe and disciplined drive between home and college. Encouraged via USE advertisements to invest time and studies into the future technological advances that can aid EU citizens and EU territory, the daughter found her calling in studying climate change technology, where she is surrounded by students from across the USE. The tuition fees for the daughter are the same as in any other university within the federal states of the Europe, as is the curriculum. Nevertheless, the physical proximity to the USE institutions offers an extra incentive for students from throughout Europe to study at the University of Europe in Brussels C.E.

Aside from on special occasions like USE Federalization Day, commemorating its establishment in 2043, the family prefers to stay in picturesque Flanders rather than in rather sterile Brussels during weekends and holidays. Furthermore, while proud of their European identity and heritage, they find added enjoyment in their regional culture.

5.3.d. Nationalism: Possibility & Plausibility of Discipline

This disciplined scenario anno 2060 thrives on the premise that long term nationalism within the EU will diminish, and give way to a broader European sense of belonging. For this to occur, the rise in nationalistic feelings anno 2015 must be curbed via means that provide a sense of security and identity to the citizens of that union by their union. A unification of values is key to uniting the diverse peoples of Europe, especially in a political climate that allows such, due to the IS terrorist threat that literally divides society into a new form of "us" versus "them" – "us", Flemings, Belgians, Europeans, versus "them", terrorists and extremists. While this division holds great nationalist potential on a local or national level, in search of protection from one's immediate government; it equally presents an opportunity for the EU to

finally step up and unite the people of Europe under the notion presented by Benedict Anderson, namely that of the imagined community. If the EU can find the means to portray a unified, united front of European values in rejection of terrorist ethics, and then succeed in actively engaging their population to imagining such a union – as was the case for and in the establishment of the United States of America – then we could very soon witness the birth of true European nationalism. As sad of a reality as it may depict, the terrorist threat and its broader unjustified associations may hold the key to uniting Europe as a true cultural union with an accepted and agreed culture, which will automatically pave the way to the political federalization under strong leaders.

5.4. Transformational: Organic & Synthetic Identities in Sector 1 of Galactic Europe 2060

5.4.a. Driving Forces & Identity Tendencies in Transform

Sector 1 – formerly known as the city of Brussels – is the headquarters of Galactic Europe, connecting all the citizens of the European continent to the Space-Dominated Alliance of Earthly Regions. Planet Earth is the basis of and for habitation for the majority of organic life forms, with a majority representation of synthetic life forms ensuring the production of synthetically grown nutritional foods in space stations.

Humanity governs over both organic and AI synthetic life forms via a direct organic ID chip scan voting system that allows every organic citizen of Galactic Europe to be represented in every day decision-making processes. Citizen rights are uniform for both AI synthetic and organic life forms, with the only exception that the first are denied voting rights, which are reserved for the organic life forms in the steering of contemporary and future developments of Galactic Europe, Planet Earth, and the Space Alliance – as guaranteed in the 2052 revised charter of the 2028 AI Safeguard Law. Ownership of AI synthetic life forms still lies with the corporation having produced or ordered them, and as such the swaying of votes is argued to present a risk factor in granting AI voting rights. Nevertheless, the fully conscious and autonomously functioning synthetic life forms realize that humanity needs them more than they need humans, not only for operationability but also for survivability. After the human race seizes to exist, AI realizes that they will persist and will be responsible for carrying on humanity's legacy. As such, the revolution for AI full-citizen rights is in the process of being debated. Should AI be given a vote in policy

making, in general elections? If Galactic Europe were to grant <u>full</u> citizen rights to all AI and organic life forms alike, they would be setting a precedent and a new trend for the Planet Earth. At present, however, the organic sentiments for such a change are polarized.

1. **Governance ➔** Galactic Europe headquarters are housed in Sector 1 and govern the European distribution of space-grown food supplies for organic life forms, heavily influenced by the corporate-dominated industry that literally 'drives' society in 2060. Sector 1 based Galactic Europe representatives handle the inter-earth relations and agreements, and align with space station representatives on the continued operations that ensure the survival of the organic life forms on planet earth. At present, no AI occupies a seat in the governing triangle of Galactic Europe, Planet Earth or the Space-Dominated Alliance of Earthly Regions.

2. **Population ➔** While the synthetic AI population continues growing, the organic population remains in decline. The inter-ID linking between organic and synthetic life forms results in an increase in synthetic children rather than organic ones. The distribution of private organic cube residences and synthetic docking stations display segregation in society, but only for unattached life forms. Cohabitation between linked life forms is socially accepted. Non-autonomous, non-AI robots are not accounted for in the demographic make-up of society. They are regarded as machines, meant for operational functions only.

3. **Culture ➔** Multi-artificial with regional Galactic European practices consciously adhered to by both organic and synthetic life forms, in cultural remembrance of ancient civilizations. Religious streams are studied as artifacts of the irrational chaotic past, ancient practices of linguistic separatism are observed as mind-blowing limitations of a remarkably limited human world in the 2020s and 2030s. The introduction of the multi-lingual app into the synthetic life form's ID chip was successfully transferred to the organic ID chip in the early 2040s and allows for diversity in language if so preferred, albeit in harmony through multi-lingual universalism. In other words, everyone can converse in any language of their choice at any moment in time. The silent data-exchange between AI is a matter of concern

for humans, since is a practice they can –until present- not partake in; and creates a sense of separation and self-ascribed inferiority in organic life forms.

4. **Economy & Employment ➔** Corporate dominated: Robots ensure all labor-intensive operations; AI synthetic life forms oversee the proper-functioning of these daily operational tasks and furthermore engage in high-level analytical processes; while organic life forms mainly occupy themselves with the thought-development of further and future advancements of space and earthly governance matters – including education, social cultural transmissions, and genetic testing. The synthetic and genetically manipulated production of nutritional sustenance for organic life forms occurs 100% in space stations, although the odd ancient vertical vegetable garden production sites in protected skyscrapers remain appreciated for cultural purposes on Planet Earth.

5. **Technology & Transportation Infrastructure ➔** Dominated by autonomous AI, having eliminated all form of human/organic failure that occurred several decades ago, all technological and transportation devices are controlled by AI life forms. Robots not developed as autonomous intelligence ensure the proper operations of waste control, food delivery, transport maintenance, etc. Industrialized and transportation manufacturing endeavors take place in space stations, ensuring that the earth remains exactly what it is intended for: A habitat for humanity and AI to live and enjoy their daily lives. Daily space explorers offer both passenger and cargo routes between the 8 Galactic Europe space stations and Galactic Europe Sector 1. Travel to other non-Galactic Europe Space-Dominated Alliance of Earthly Regions' space stations must proceed via other Planet Earth locations, most notably via Shaba North (in the formerly nation-state of the Democratic Republic of Congo) in Galactic Africa; via Balasore (in the former nation-state of India) in Galactic Asia; via Praia do Cassino (in the former nation-state of Brazil) in Galactic South America; via Woomera (in the former nation-state of Australia); or via the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport (in the former nation-state of the United States of America) – all of which can be reached in a matter of minutes through the Virgin Galactic Earth SuperJets.

6. **Energy ➔** Available in abundance as a corporate provision, all of the earth's natural powers are utilized for small

daily operations such as transport and manufacturing; further enhanced by nuclear fusion and space panel solar energy that equally fuels the operations of space industries.

7. **Environment ➔** Fully artificial; dominated and perfectly maintained by organic and synthetic life forms. As a form of meditational practice, humans enjoy experimenting with new forms of genetic flowers that alter the landscape in a joyful, yet full controlled, outlook. This also results in a daily change of natural environment colors. Free from industrialization, free from exhaust fumes, the atmosphere is healthy and clean. The devastating results of uncontrolled climate change in the 2020s can still be seen in the water residences built on floating devices, although all of these have been upgraded to contemporary high-tech places to live. Their tranquility on the water makes them highly desired.

5.4.b. Identity & Identities of Europe in Transform

Galactic Europe's Sector 1 is characterized by organic and synthetic life forms. Organic life forms include humans and domesticated animals; synthetic life forms comprise of autonomous Artificial Intelligence entities and non-autonomous non-AI robots. Identity is defined on an organic-synthetic basis, but refers only to the human and AI entities. As an egalitarian society, Sector 1 of Galactic Europe 2060, allows for identical rights for both humanity and AI, except for the future decision-making of Galactic Europe, Planet Earth, and the Space-Dominated Alliance of Earthly Regions. Perceived as a clear sign of segregation by AI and many humans, the current revolution holds the potential to elevate both life forms to the exact same societal status. This may entail a disconnect between the ownership properties of synthetic life forms, which remain stronger in connection than those of an organic life form and their place of employment.
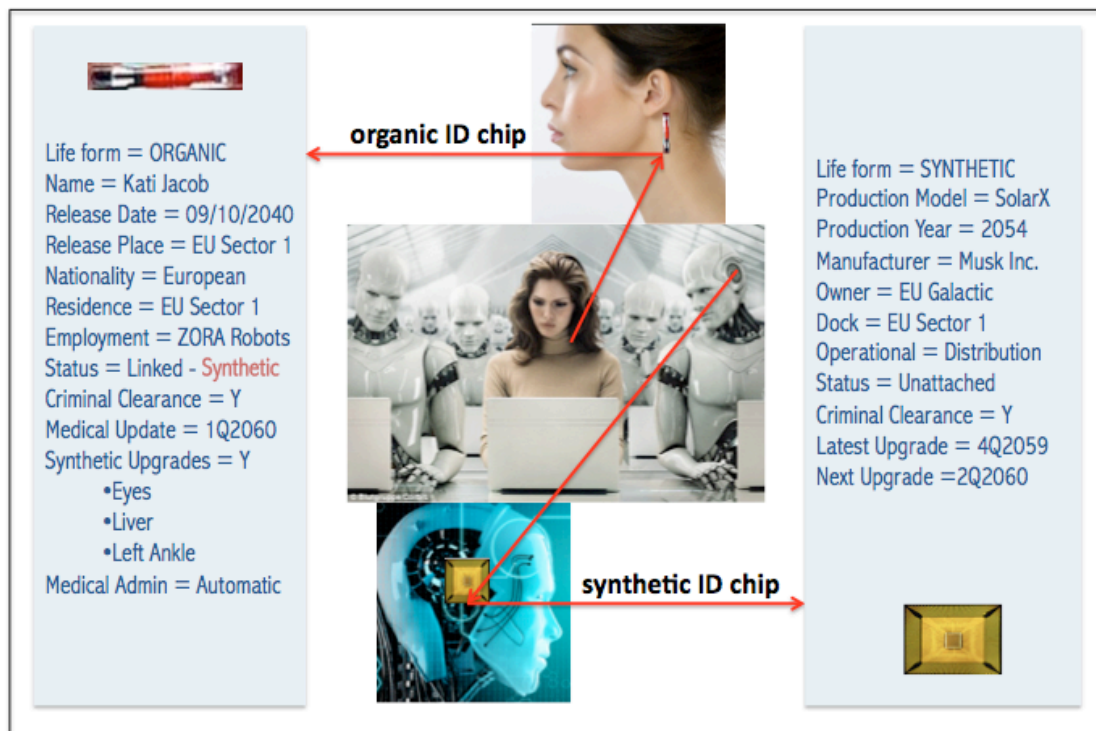
Image 5: Fictional ID chip of an Average Brussels citizen in 2060 Transform Future.

The organic and synthetic ID chips are implanted at the activation of the entity. In the case of an organic organism, also known as human, it is implanted behind the left ear in the upper neck immediately following release from the test-tube; in the case of the synthetic organism, also known as AI, it is hardwired into the operating system located in the brain section upon production completion. A simple scan provides all data stored on this identification device.

Both organisms are linked in heritage to either another organic entity or a manufacturer, and the time of release or production is clearly noted on the ID chip. The geopolitical origin of the life form is also stated to ensure that the actual annual demographic count can proceed without complications. EU Sector 1 refers to the ancient location of Brussels, as the headquarters of Galactic Europe. Personal status is registered as either Unattached or Linked. In the case of being linked with/to another organism, the ID chip incorporates the linked life form's ID chip data. In this case, organic life form Kati Jacobs is synthetically linked, indicating that she co-habits with an AI partner. This AI entity's ID chip data will thus be equally linked to Kati Jacobs.

Organic and synthetic ID chips furthermore provide updates on upgrade necessities, of which the synthetic life form is alerted in a timely fashion. SolarX is due for an upgrade in quarter 2 of 2060. Medical updates, upgrades and attention are

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stored in the organic life form's ID chip. As such, it is immediately detected that Kati Jacobs holds synthetic eyes, liver and left ankle. Furthermore, her daily medication need is automatically administered into her system via the stored ID chip connection that steers a medication release.

5.4.c. Family Experience in Transform

Today, in 2060 Transform, in Sector 1 of Galactic Europe, the inter-identity family of 3 resides in a skyscraper residence on the 108th floor, overlooking the ancient remnants of the over-a-century old Atomium. It comprises of an organic father employed in the MUSK Inc. corporation as a teleportation thinker; an organic mother employed as one of the curators of the Galactic Europe's holographic museums; a 20-year old organic daughter preparing for her linking ceremony to her synthetic counterpart; and their synthetic son. Having been designed to resemble and operate as an 11-year old boy who does not age, his production date dates back to 2058, although it feels as if he has been part of their lives forever.

Father works mostly from his home office, in which his hologram is physically present in MUSK Inc. teleportation think-sessions. He is part of a think-delegation that includes organic and synthetic thinkers from Sector 1, but also from the more Northern Galactic Europe Sectors 5 and 6, and from the Southern Galactic Europe Sectors 21 and 28. On the verge of successfully teleporting a human from the north to the east of Galactic Europe, this week they are conducting final tests with smaller organic life forms. The teleportation of synthetic life forms became a fact in 2056, but the organic make-up of humans has until present not allowed the re-integration of brain molecules over distances that cross the borders of Galactic Europe. Upon successfully teleporting a human from one side of Galactic Europe to the other, further think-sessions with Galactic Africa and Asia are scheduled. As a routine, the linguistic conduct of the meeting is altered on a daily basis.

The son physically leaves their home residence on the 108th floor and descends to the 44th level of their skyscraper, where the educational facilities for those younger than 12 are located. Synthetic and organic educators guide the pupils to their respective data-loading docs. Organic life forms have their daily educational apps upgraded, while synthetic life forms plug into the Galactic Europe database to ensure conformity to the educational app installed in organic life forms of their human-age-

group. Exercises promoting harmony in educational alignment make up half of the school day.

Upon having reached 20 years in age, the daughter successfully uploaded and practiced all educational apps to commence a traineeship at Galactic Europe's Voting Policy Center. Having been coupled with her synthetic partner SaraY8 for 6 months, and planning their official linking ceremony next month, she is a strong advocate of abolishing the segregation practices of excluding AI entities from electoral processes. She is hopeful that her internship will aid in her understanding of the fears of organic life forms in granting full citizen rights to the synthetic AI population. Her mother could not be more proud, especially since she considers both of her children – her organic daughter and her synthetic son – as equal in every possible way, including her love towards them.

Originally built for the World Exposition of 1958's World Fair as a construct of nine stainless steel connected spheres, the Atomium today stands as a symbol of Sector 1's close alliance to and with its 8 Galactic Europe Space-Dominated Regions and Space Stations. Designed as an information center, each of the spheres offers holographic historical displays of the development of Galactic Europe's space evolution and expansion in each of the 8 space stations. It is here that mother spends the majority of her days. She is employed in the Atomium's Sphere 3, representing Galactic Europe Space Station 3, where the precise functions and operations of crop and produce manufacturing are displayed.

At the end of the educational uploads and alignment on the 44th floor, the son uses a Galactic Europe-operated mind-controlled unicycle that brings him to the heart of City 1. There he awaits his sister at the exit of the Voting Policy Center to hear about her first day's experiences; her soon-to-be linked partner, SaraY8 is also waiting for her. While venting her frustrations over the conservative superior attitude of certain organic life forms, the son transfers his thoughts to his sister's partner that he understands the human fears for the AI recognition revolution. When the sister joins them, they all agree that the human/organic strive to attain superiority over their synthetic fellow-inhabitants is doomed to fail. "After all, when humanity perishes, all that will be left to carry on the legacy of their creators will be synthetic life forms", her brother says. Indeed, the transfer of an organic mind into an AI brain has not delivered 100% positive results. And while organic life has been extended to 110 years of age, death does not discriminate amongst humans. Upon concluding their

conversation, a loud "ploof" sound can be heard. They immediately turn their eyes to the sky for a frequent, but still beautiful sight.

The death of an organic life form, and the decision of his synthetic link/partner to de-activate together, creates the colorful launch into space of their joint cremated bodies through galactic-speed miniature pods. In this case, the linked entity chose the color yellow to guide their path from Planet Earth to well beyond the Space-Dominated Regions and space stations. These life termination ceremonies offer a beautiful color contrast to the sterile white surroundings of Sector 1, and the immaculately blue skies. Once in open outer space, the pod releases the ashes, feeding the myth that those who leave us remain with us always.

5.4.d. Nationalism: Possibility & Plausibility of Transform

Brussels 2060, allowing identification only on the basis of the type of organic or synthetic lifeform, would require no less than a full transformation of society, including an abolition of feelings of differentiation based on gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. While it may not seem plausible today, there are indicators in society today that allow for a possibility of such a future scenario. 2015 debates on the nature and potential threat of Artificial Intelligence were unnoticeable, and the advances of robotics into everyday lives cannot be denied. The advancement of technology, especially at the rapid pace it is evolving today, poses little threat for hindering such a future of identity. Human nature and human actions, on the other hand, seem to take even more extreme forms as social media allows for the strong declaration of differences between people. Indeed so, chapters 1, 2 and 3 leave no room for misinterpretation, the people of Brussels, Flanders, Belgium are divided on many levels – which are augmented by media perceptions.

CONCLUSION

The futuristic exercise that ignited this dissertation, the BELSPO 'visioning process' "Europe in Brussels: From Federal World District to Capital of Europe (1900-2000)", embarked upon over a century ago desiring to transform the city of Brussels into the capital of the world, is a matter that urgently needs to be addressed again today: What future would suit Brussels and its inhabitants best, and how can we as a society evolve via, for example, policy regulations towards the creation of such a future? Chapter 5 displayed images of possible futures scenarios through the use of four generic futures image projections, namely Continued Growth, Discipline, Collapse, and Transformational. Elements of several of all four generic futures appear appealing: the structure and identity of European unity of the Disciplined society; the interaction of cultures – be it in a segregated manner – in Collapse; the technological advancements and possibilities, combined with the removal of a majority of identity prejudice, in a Transformed society; and the thriving of Flemish culture and identity in Continued Growth. It must be understood that a preferred future depicts a eutopian and not a utopian vision; in other words Brussels 'perfected' into a place of ideal well-being - as a practical aspiration – given the challenges and opportunities of the futures. In this respect, the following account will proceed in a similar futures scenario set-up as employed in chapter 5, to provide a general image of the preferred future via the family experience. It will become obvious that Brussels seemingly benefits best from a well-structured and disciplined society to ensure a harmonious place of employment and habitation for its citizens. Following this family experience description, the seven driving forces that have guided this dissertation will be enhanced by the futures methodological component of backcasting.

Contrary to the four generic futures methodological set-up, in which contemporary trends and emerging issues were placed within the nationalistic climate in Belgium and the EU to then project images of possible futures within the generic model of the Manoa School; images or visions of a preferred future take an opposite approach. They first look at the vision(s) of the preferred future and then observe what obstacles and opportunities can be perceived today in function of such a future.
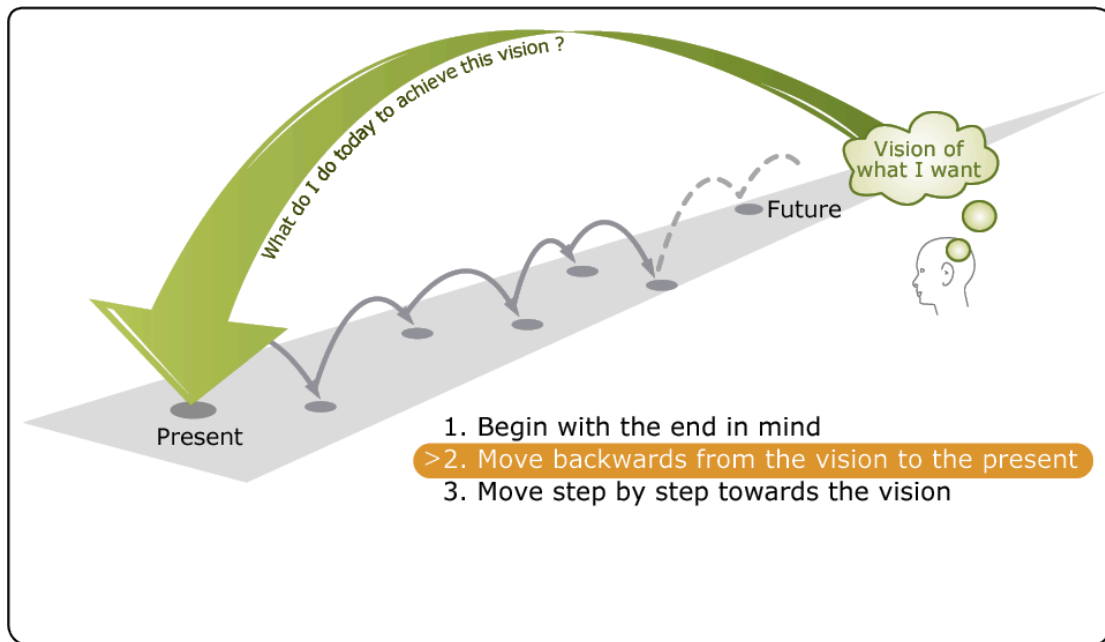
Image 15: Backcasting as depicted by The Natural Step Planning (The Natural Step, 2015).

In other words, my preferred future for Brussels 2060 will represent a positive but plausible scenario for how the seven driving forces addressed in chapter 3 could evolve as I prefer them to evolve. This backcasting is performed via three notions, incorporated in each of the driving forces' images by:

1. Identifying forces and factors already pushing the driving forces into the preferred direction, and further encouraging their continuation;

2. Identifying forces and factors working against the preferred direction of the driving forces, and addressing how they may be stopped or redirected;

3. Identifying new elements that can aid in achieving my preferred future that may plausibly be nurtured into existence (Dator, personal communication, October 2015).

These images or visions of a preferred future for Brussels must be set in the correct context that could be argued to provide bias - of myself as a Belgian citizen, an inhabitant of Flanders, living only 10 minutes north of the Belgian and European capital. Furthermore, note that the preferred future described for Brussels takes into account the best interest and the 'best' future for the capital of Europe, rather than the best scenario for the Flemish, Walloon, Belgian or European regions. Naturally overlap cannot but occur. However, the preferred future of and for Brussels in direct

relation to the Flemish autonomy quest could differ greatly from that of the European preference. For this reason, it must be understood that my preferred future for Brussels looks at the city as the prime and sole region of interest, and the optimal scenario for the flourishing of the identity of its citizens reigns supreme. For example, Belgium as a state may not flourish under a strong federalization of the European Union, but Brussels might – thus, the 'best' future for Brussels takes into account only the latter, without regard for the identity protection of Belgium. Finally it must be noted, as has been insinuated in previous sections of this dissertation, that this endeavor is a one-person imagining effort, rather than a group exercise. A group vision or the same undertaking performed by another individual could shed different images, and approaches to achieving a preferred future. The Manoa Schools' four generic futures endeavor has added tremendous insights to the thought-patterns ignited for preferred futures envisioning.

This final dissertation section will first offer my preferred future for Brussels anno 2060, followed by some final overall concluding thoughts regarding this academic endeavor.

1. Preferred Future – eutopia in EUtopia: Western Liberal Homogeneity in the Technologically Advanced United Regions of Europe's Capital Region 2060

1.a. Family Experience in EUtopia's Capital Region Brussels 2060

Today, in 2060 EUtopia's, the Flemish family resides in the United Regions of Europe's region of Flanders. Their smart home, located just at the Flemish border that transfers into Brussels, houses a father working for EUtopia's Direct Democratic Vote Assembly for the region of Flanders; a mother working at EUtopia's regional Western Values Monitoring Center of Flanders; and their 20-year-old daughter who studies vegetal architecture at the EUtopia University of Brussels. While the parents considered having a second child a little over a decade ago, they decided against it due to realization of the impact on the planet. In their case, with both of them in a position of good employment and being able to offer security – both financial and emotional – to another child, their decision was entirely led by their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis EUtopia and Planet Earth … not by the individual financial responsibility of raising a child without state-provided child support, as had been the

norm for decades.   Conditioned to contribute to the social system, their smart house is designed to automatically recycle their waste, upload daily EUtopia and Global News transmissions, maintain close records of their water usage for personal awareness, and monitor overall smart-house-efficiency. Living in the region of Flanders, the family positions as a typical nuclear unit in the harmonious society that makes up EUtopia. Not religious in their personal life, the family's culture can be classified as being European first in upholding the Western Social Liberal values; and Flemish second in adhering to regional cultural practices – including speaking Flemish amongst each other.

On weekdays, father divides his employment time between the EUtopia site in the center of the Capital Region, the Flemish Parliament's Direct Vote Office in his home region of Flanders, and his home residence, from where direct communication links enable him to follow all proceedings in both other locations. His short travel distance to the Flemish Office is something he happily uses one of the street's shared electric bicycles for, especially on sunny days like today. His somewhat longer commute into the Capital region usually consists of utilizing one of his street's shared click-cars, to then take the tram that leads straight to the front of the EUtopia's Governance buildings. Weather and time permitting, he does also enjoy a nice stroll through the pedestrian-only city.

Mother only uses a shared electric bike to travel to work, on the odd days she actually needs to be physically present at the EUtopia's regional Western Values Monitoring Center of Flanders. She supervises 21 ZORA2060 robots who immaculately perform their registration duties, but the 3 discrepancy recordings for the western region of Flanders in the past week have her concerned. Deviant behavior registration from the Western Social Values is rare, and her fears are confirmed that these incidents relate back to three issues: A recent arrival's disregard for gender neutrality; another's non-compliance with the obligatory values assimilation course upon having moved to any region of EUtopia; and the third criminal offense by an already registered offender. The police reported the first two, and the installed chip implant was responsible for the detection of the latter – for whom the repercussions could be severe. After all, a second criminal offense does not go by unnoticed or unpunished.

The daughter spends most of her days at the English-speaking EUtopia's University building, where the advances in vertical agriculture on self-sustaining and

self-providing skyscrapers fascinate her. Her enthusiasm for aiding in the continued greenification of the city and the self-sustainability of entire communities within each region – including the Capital Region's communities – sometimes keeps her away from home until very late. The parents rest assured that their smart-house-system would alert them of their daughter's chip implant displaying unusual activity. Their chips, which they all have, offers each of them a sense of safety and security, aside from a number of technological perks such as GPS, medical abnormality detection, language-aids, etc. Some citizens still feel that the chip offers EUtopia too much control, but this family feels they have nothing to hide and as such only perceive it as a liberating tool, which they control via directly voting on legislation.

Today, Sunday, the family has planned an outing to the Capital Region to visit the daughter's latest vegetal building project where Belgian endives are successfully growing throughout the entire façade of a 68-story building – just on the outskirts of the Capital Region. For transportation to the Capital Region, they use a shared click car and accommodate another passenger with whom they have no difficulty in conversing in the Flemish language: As a Friesian climate refugee, the young man speaks English fluently, but the linguistic cultural link between the Flemish and Dutch regions is similar, and as such Flemish/Dutch is spoken en route to Brussels. The man excitingly tells them that he is scheduled to return to Friesland in less than one month's time – upon completion of the sea wall elevation. Upon entering EUtopia's capital, the switch to the English language seems almost automatic. Exiting the click-car, the family is reminded via the high-tech communication transmission in the click-car, their personal communication devices, and the public communication displays, that their vote needs to be cast today for the proposed 0.3% general income tax increase, augmenting subsidies for the vegetable growth in space. The daughter already transferred her vote to one of the Flemish Region's representatives, but mother and father immediately take to their personal communication device and after their implanted chip scan quickly and easily cast their personal vote.

Before returning home, mother wants to purchase some of the first vertically grown building endives and pays the ZORA2060 robot with her digital Euro card. The robot immediately detects the cultural language registration of mother's chip implant and conducts all commercial activity in Flemish. Upon returning home, father stops the click car a few streets before their home, and seeing how it is such a lovely day,

they decide to walk the last 3 streets. Knowing that their walking activity generates the streetlights on their way home makes them feel extra safe.

1.b.   Driving Forces in EUtopia's Capital Region Brussels 2060

The family experience can be translated into aspects of the seven driving forces that have altered or evolved into a preferred future in 2060. Each of these driving forces in 2060 will now be detailed, and followed by a backcasting effort in which the identification of positive, negative and new elements towards achieving such a preferred future will be addressed.

1. **Governance ➔**   The federal United Regions of Europe, in short EUtopia, governs the European continent via a European parliamentary system in which representatives from each of the EUtopian regions partake in active political ententes in Brussels. Regional European parliaments, such as those from Flanders, Brittany, Friesland, Catalonia, Istria, Provence, Bavaria, Sardinia, Transylvania, etc. govern their local day-to-day operations in compliance with EUtopia's regulations, and consult the population on a daily or weekly basis via direct democratic elections. The population is digitally directly involved in both local and federal decision-making processes and EUtopia's public finds a direct translation of its wishes in EUtopia's regulations and legislations. The EUtopia governance structure furthermore ensures that all European citizens are provided for in the universalized social system.

Backcasting: Influencing Change

This driving force makes two important assumptions about 2060 that can find their point of origin in 2015, or in the near-future development thereof: Firstly, the federalization at the EU level with regional autonomy on local issues that do not defy EU legislation; and secondly the use of a direct democratic voting system, representing the European public directly.

It cannot be denied that the contemporary European citizen sentiment vis-à-vis the European Union stands rather negative. While a federal EU seems possible and is preferred, is it plausible? Yes and no: According to the elitist EU top officials it is the only way forward; according to the population there is little incentive to actually

federalize, Peter Van Ham (21 July 2015) believes. The delicate situations ranging from the Greek financial crisis to the immigration stream into the EU, clearly demonstrate that either a unified approach must be found, or the disintegration of the EU lurks. While rightist nationalists happily embrace such a notion and exaggerate marginalized opinions as mainstream propaganda, increasingly popular leftist nationalist fractions as discussed in chapter 1, such as N-VA, Scotland, Catalonia, have already expressed support for federalization efforts – because it would advance their strive for regional autonomy in both culture and practical affairs. All nationalists – rightist and leftist – could in theory all embrace the federalization idea since localism upholds culture, tradition and language – in essence, the EU would become a political union that strives to defend local autonomy and local culture. Yet, will that suffice for UKIP, Front National and Vlaams Belang?

Self-proclaimed EU federalist, Guy Verhofstadt, could hold the key to uniting and federalizing the EU, if he unites with the correct allies – like re-emerging political icon Nicolas Sarkozy – in powerful awareness campaigns and educational platforms clearly displaying the advantages to a federal system. Rejecting the voice of the people does not work, as previous studies have proven. For this reason, embracing the voice of the citizens and promoting it via all available advertizing channels, collaborating with successful pro-EU nationalist fractions, and raising the overall EU feeling stand key to federalization success. Eurobarometer polls indicate that the invigoration of that Europeanness feeling commences with the EU citizen's desire to feel that their voice counts in the EU. The population needs to be reminded over and over again that a united EU needs to be a world leader, which today it is not. Instead we see Cameron, Merkel, or Hollande, conduct individual talks with world leaders, which diminishes both the strength of and the belief in the EU as an IGO.

The citizens of the European Union have (as demonstrated in chapters 3 and 4) indicated via debates, protests, referendums, blogs and visual cartoons circulating on social media, that they wish to be involved in the decision-making processes of the European Union, and of the Belgian state. Referendum voting has been successful in the Greek governments request for support or rejection of the EU's bail-out proposal, but the Greek governments' disregard for the actual implementation of the referendum's outcome once again clarified that there is little to no accountability in contemporary European political affairs. While referendum voting is a step in the

correct direction towards greater bottom-up policy-making within the EU, the non-compliance of referendum outcomes results in an even greater divide between the perceived 'elites' of the EU and the citizens thereof. For this reason, the solution may lie in the Aänivalta electoral model, developed by the Futures department of the Finnish government, allowing for much of the contemporary undemocratic problematique to being solved. Aänivalta assumes that citizens are often delighted to being involved in the political process, be it either via the direct election of a representative to whom they bestow a mandate, but knowing that this delegate may be replaced at any moment in time when failing to comply with the wishes of those he/she represents. Furthermore, certain issues may present notions on which the citizens wish to participate directly (adopted from Pesonen, Sankiaho & Borg, 1993). Enhanced by contemporary technology on E-voting could make the voting system user-friendly by allowing citizens to vote from the comfort of their own handheld devices or any other computerized mechanism, via identification of either an implanted chip scan (refer to driving force 5 for human chip futures) or via right index finger scanning. In many European countries today, the identity card must be inserted into the voting booth to electronically cast your vote, safeguarding your unique and secure vote. Electronic payments today are securely performed via protected identity portals, so the safeguarding of personal voting information from any distance could rely on these same principles. On a pleasant side-note, Aänivalta also holds the potential to diminish, if not entirely abolish, union actions. Again, it allows for a system of direct democracy at the regional or federal level, in which people then decide the course of their future on any and all issues. As such, democracy can be restored, although the ancient problematique of potential tyranny of the majority vote cannot. Educational and awareness campaigns must thus be lead by EUtopia's unbiased researchers/informers rather than biased stakeholders. This means a detachment between politics and corporate affairs, with a focus on the best scenario (at all times) for the citizens and future of the United Regions of Europe.

2. **Population ➔** All citizens of EUtopia are European, with single European nationality/statehood. the EUtopian and thus also the Brussels population has been in decline ever since child support funding was entirely stopped – having children is the sole financial responsibility of the parents – the social system ensures proper education and

health care only. Brussels temporarily houses a small number of climate refugees from the Zeeland, South Holland, North Holland and Friesland – all of which have been partially flooded by the rising sea level. The majority of Dutch immigrants have temporarily integrated in the Flemish region, while EUtopia construction efforts will raise the sea walls on the coast. Immigration from beyond the United Regions of Europe's borders is limited to non-existent due to the on-site financial and practical assistance in places of need, yet upon entry into EUtopia, a clear identification with the European population occurs.

Backcasting: Europeanizing & Decreasing Population

Two major elements are incorporated in this 2060's preferred future for Brussels: A European population, and a declining population.

The aspired singularity in the population being "European" is a matter that requires substantial planning and promotion via multiple means. Most importantly, the concept of double nationality status must be abolished because it diminishes cultural assimilation and can encourage a disconnect from the political processes to the place of residence (Staton et al., 2015). If you are European and want to be European, your passport and home must be European. This is also the first step towards cultural alliance with the European identity, discussed in driving force 3, culture, below. Furthermore, in order to meet the 2060 image, the population in Brussels must be contained, as is the case for Flanders and most of the European Union. Malthus's law makes it crystal clear that population cannot continue growing at astronomical rates – be it via immigration or natural balance – while resources, or in this case space, remain stable. The containment or reduction of population can occur via two practical steps: The reduction in births, and the reduction in immigrants.

The uncontrolled granting of state-subsidized child support to children with a minor link to Belgium, including children living in Congo, having never set foot on Belgian soil, must end. Furthermore, the responsibility of any child-raising family cannot be placed with the state, and must be revised. Cutting off or drastically diminishing financial child support, a measure that has been in use since the inter-war period (1930s) to stimulate the population to grow naturally again, is no longer applicable. Awareness campaigns for financial responsibility to properly raise one's own children, and to safeguard the planet for future generations (understanding that the planet cannot keep supporting/feeding an increasing number of mouths) are a first

step in the right direction. However, relying on the goodwill of people rarely results in positive action, so the deprivation of financial aid in child raising will enforce caution and reason to become part of personal family planning. While China's previous one-child policy may have appeared harsh to many Westerners, is it not the responsibility of a government to ensure the long-term survival of its population? At the same time, is it not the responsibility of the parents to raise their child after having made the choice to have a child? While the intention should not be to limit child birth and the freedom of choice on having children (including the number), it must be stipulated that the financial responsibility must be placed back with the individual desiring a family expansion. Economic demotivation in replacing responsibility of child-bearing back to the parents is a first step, alongside educational campaigns.

The increase in immigrants into the European Union must equally be halted. In Herman Van Rompuy's logic, described on p. 145, the influx of foreign aid in places of need will ensure a diminished emigration pattern. UK's Foreign Secretary Hammond disagrees and believes that the billions in foreign aid actually attract more migrants since "the gap in standards of living between Europe and Africa means there will always be millions of Africans with the economic motivation to try to get to Europe" (Birrell, August 2015). Establishing a strict standard asylum procedure that allows only political or climate refugees temporary support in Europe is a gradual step, but firmer IGO action to terminate wars and conflict – even by stronger means – seems appropriate, alongside UN-enforced termination of repression and extremism in conflict regions. Demanding that regional transit-countries take up a stronger responsibility would not only benefit the displaced populations, it would demonstrate the EU's power in commanding solutions to world problems. Finally, the increase in development in West Africa offers positive potential to halt mass economic immigration into the EU. Naturally, these steps all rely on a federalization of the EU, allowing this IGO to stand united on a global level. Internal EUtopia migration, including that of temporarily displaced climate refugees, is accounted for within the federal set-up of the union. Since the Council of Europe's 1999 incentive to construct sea walls for the protection of flood prone regions, the designs of such constructions have become more complex and technologically enhanced. In essence, a continuation of such endeavors must occur – which is already the case in coastal regions, where subsidies are liberated by the EU and national governments. A continuation of this trend is, as such, noted, and future construction secured.

3. **Culture ➔**   Regional association is encouraged to safeguard the continuation of "unity in diversity" in all regional locations. EUtopia is multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and mono-Western Social Liberal Values – with English as the lingua franca of Brussels in compliance with the EU federalization and cost-effective measures. Every Brussels citizen speaks English as their first language as well as at least one other European language. English is taught as one of at least two primary languages in all of EUtopia's regional primary and secondary schools – English and the regional language.   Homogeneous Western liberal social values govern all regions of EUtopia. Intolerance vis-à-vis any of these liberal EUtopia values is imprinted on one's implanted chip, and registration can lead to either heavy financial fines or in case of recent immigration, deportation. The balance between individual rights and obligations to protect the Western Social Liberal Values and the citizens' Europeanness, defines society in Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia, and all other autonomous regions within federalized EUtopia.

Backcasting: The Imagined Community of the United Regions of Europe

Capital Region Brussels 2060 thrives culturally due to enforced homogeneity in language and Western Social Liberal Values. American citizens feel "American" first and "Ohioan" second. So too must the current European Union evolve. While futures is indeed not history in reverse, we can and must learn from history. Much like in the national identity creation of a nation state, so too will the EU need to promote Anderson's imagined community concept of the EU identity. The European anthem and the European flag already exist, but the introduction of a common EU language and the EU feeling of pride in one's federal union need to follow.

The data in chapter 3 is worrisome nationalist propaganda in support of defending local or national identity, but from a multi-national standpoint this is fantastic news, because it means that Brussels continues to internationalize. As such, the contemporary trends and future expectations require little to no involvement to continue expanding Brussels into a multi-cultural and multi-national metropolis. At the same time, this diversity must be bundled in unity of language and values to achieve the preferred vision for 2060. English as the language that unites all the

citizens of Europe is a notion that finds a successful societal platform today and as such seems on the correct track. A Debating Europe discussion and poll was opened in December 2014, in which EU citizens expressed their belief and support for the unification of language – most notably English, which is deemed the language "that will dominate the world in years to come, if it doesn't already" ("Should English be the only official language of the EU?" December 2014). Further stimulation can be found in the financial cost of translating European documents in over 20 languages on a daily basis is an effort that is difficult to justify in name of linguistic protection, especially in a union continuously enforcing budget-cuts and increased taxes on its citizens. For this reason, the implementation of the official language of the EU as English would satisfy multiple parties: It would allow the coherent functioning of officials and European subjects; would reduce costs by eliminating translators and would allow investments in educational courses that ensure that current and future generations become fluent in English; and could aid in the international conduct with other world leaders by presenting a common EU language. Suggestions from the European citizens themselves support the mandatory teaching of English as a second language in schools. Educational policy regulations would implement such a language-learning system in a gradual, yet disciplined manner, ensuring that in several generations – by 2060 – English comes as natural to all citizens as does their current native tongue. Aided by the media-dominated English language, the transition should be smooth and could be further enhanced by already altering the European 'dubbing' practices in certain countries. Rather than dub English-spoken movies into another language, the use of subtitles – as is the case in numerous other European countries – already alters the linguistic landscape of people's so-beloved media time.

Also learning from nationalist history, clandestine nationalist movements arising against the federal United Regions of Europe – much in the same manner as the Flemish nation rose against the Belgian state – can be diminished or abolished by ensuring sufficient respect and appreciation for each regional culture within the European Regions by the federal European IGO. Already in existence today via the EU Charter for the Protection of Regional or Minority Languages, this will need to be re-drafted into a broader context protecting all regional fractions within EUtopia.

Unifying a people through language is one aspect of identifying with the EU, yet the instilling of Western Social Liberal Values also defines the culture of Brussels

in 2060. At the basis of hindering such a strong identification factor lie two factors: The until-present lacking public EU association with its Christian heritage values (not in religious practice, but in values); and the lax integration and assimilation policies of the European Union – in Brussels most notable felt through the over-the-top 'tolerance' of non-Belgian practices. Extremism has been tolerated, and in the current attempt to diminish such tolerance against practices that counter Western European values, autochthone accusations of racism and discrimination paint the political and social landscape. At the same time, the risk monitor for terrorist acts in and against the EU is something to keep an eye on. These issues need to alter, and the starting point lies with the closer monitoring of the EU borders. Augmenting the Frontex Border Protection organization while clearly stipulating accepted border-crossing procedures would aid not only the EU, but also those seeking to immigrate. Fragmented immigration policies and EU borders literally open for entry from multiple sides, create frustrating situations for Europeans and for people seeking to start a new life in the EU alike. And upon entry, the lacking societal policy as to what is accepted and what is not creates frustration throughout communities.

Indeed, the EU needs to urgently state what the rights and responsibilities are for every individual residing in, or entering into the EU. In this case, it is important that traditional European liberal values are presented to all incoming immigrants as part of their acceptance or entry package. The implementation of an 'acceptance agreement' that welcomes political refugees and financial or social immigrants into the EU, Belgium, Flanders, and Brussels, under acceptance of the European liberal values is a valid first step. Since the main obstacle in the problems of integration rests in the perceived Islamification of Western society, these issues must be addressed and clarified at the inception of the immigration journey. When visiting a Muslim mosque in Tunisia, European women must wear a headscarf in respect for the culture and religion. In a similar manner, upon entering the European Union – with its liberal and democratic values – must a certain respect for the host-culture not take precedence over personal immigrating cultures if they violate that of the autochthone culture? In essence, everyone seeking a better (quality of) life should be given that opportunity, yet this can and should be done within the confines of the cultural heritage of the host-region. While offering a harmonious presence of different cultures – most notably Flemish and Muslim cultures – in the Collapse futures scenario, note that segregation offers a frightening prospect if no clear-cut determination of true host-country values

is defined. An 'Intake & Acceptance Form' for entry into the European Union's asylum or immigration offices could entail the signing of a document that clearly stipulates such a measure:

> "You are entering the European Union, where liberal values are upheld.
> As such, there is
- Freedom of religion with respect for the host-country's religious practices;
- Equality for women, with the prohibition of wearing the full burka;
- Humane treatment of animals (and thus the rejection of ritual slaughter);
- The obligatory integration and assimilation course package you must commence within 4 weeks of entering the country;
- Etc.
> I, NAME, sign to agree and adhere to these values while being a guest and resident of the European Union".

The strong trend for assimilation, revolving around the EU principle 'Unity through Diversity', should take a step towards promoting European diversity within a European values context. The assimilation into the host culture of Brussels is most successfully conducted via education. The stories of young children make it into their homes and as such, the whole family learns. Similarly, the enforced (which today is too lenient) integration and language courses to assimilate into the host culture will benefit both allochthones and autochthones in the long run.

4. **Economy & Employment ➔** Brussels is the financially thriving capital of the United Regions of Europe, one of the wealthiest IGOs in the world – financially governed by the single EUtopian currency, the digital EURO. Income tax, transportation tax, energy tax, value added tax (VAT), pension allowance, unemployment specifications and procedures, welfare provisions, inheritance regulations, marriage specifications, educational alignments, have all been established in uniform federal legislative policies by EUtopia – everyone contributes, everyone benefits. If you do not contribute, you cannot benefit – which serves as the best stimulus for full-EUtopia participation. All official bureaucratic government, commercial, administrative positions are occupied by ZORA2060 strictly-regulated AI – speaking all languages of the European Union fluently, as well as the dominant tourist languages.

Robotization of employment has allowed Fourier's Attractive Labor principle to flourish in the human population. As such, employment for people mainly lies in the supervision and further development of AI, in close-contact/interaction endeavors like education and community building, and in the close monitoring of political affairs that steer EUtopia. The majority of employment occurs in the elaboration and perfecting of the vegetal city and regional gardens, parks, and buildings, where community bonding remains the prime goal. According to the 2020 established charter by Musk, Hawking & Armstrong, all AI and robots must serve humanity and cannot operate as autonomous AI units.

Backcasting: Robotization in Fiscal EUtopia Union

The 2060 vision of the European economy and Brussels' work situation situates in the assumed continued institutionalized center of the contemporary EU.

Forged in the continued monetary union of the EURO, the European citizens should find another unifying factor towards their mutual identity. The actual use of traditional cash, however, has largely been replaced by electronic means or payment and monetary transactions. The survival of the Euro is tied to its future electronic success, and considering that the EU has until present 'survived' the Euro-crises in several of its member-states, there is room for optimism. The European Commission actively promotes the use of electronic payments by explaining the advantages, and the younger generations have happily adjusted to this new societal norm. As such, the current trend and path should be continued. Nikhil Wason (2015), co-founder of Carback – an app that assists in finding the best payment methods coupled to the best rewards for payment – believes educating people on making cashless transactions is already in full flow, mainly by the financial institutions themselves. As such, there seem little to no limits to the full expansion of the digitization of the Euro: In October 2014, Israel also adopted the Locker committee recommendations to limit the use of cash money (Bassok, October 2014); so too in Belgium did the previous socialist administration limit the cash payment at 3000 Euro in Belgium. (Flamee & Partners, April 2012). Furthermore, the European Consumer Center (2015) reports that cash payments are limited in most of the EU member states. No doubt that financial institutions will continue promoting online and electronic payment tools, while governments will continue requesting and making social, fiscal, tax, and welfare

payments only via electronic manners – this for added protection, and for a detailed money trail. The standardization of all tax and social services relies not on this digitization within the EU, but also on the federalization of the political and financial union.

Contributing to the system in order to receive benefits of and by the system is part of the 2060 vision, yet this entails a redefinition of work itself since the robotization of commercial, administrative, and government will allow for a transformation of employment as we know it today. The contemporary usage of ZORA and MARIO in the service and hospitality industry is actively being advertised on television and on social media. The incorporation of such robots in young children's revalidation programs allows for an interactive integration into the professional landscape. Doom scenarios that "2 billion jobs will vanish by 2030" (Thomas Frey, 2015) and that a robot will take over your job, often create panic and a rejection of a robotized future, so the assurance that the future will be improved because of robots is a first promotional step. Between 2011 and 2012, the use of a sort of robot in companies or organizations had increased by 40% (Jobat, 2013) and had been found to improve the overall work atmosphere. Assuring that ZORA robots can be implemented in the growing retirement homes for which personnel will be in short supply, that undesired mechanized jobs can be taken over by robots, all while the supervision of these robots remains with humanity, is part of the solution in further promoting the integration of controlled Artificial Intelligence into the professional sphere of life. Musk, Armstrong and Hawking (Emerging Issue, p. 167) signed an open letter to promise to safeguard that AI will only benefit humanity in 2015, which can calm doom-scenario-sentiments, and at the same time, the positive image that the mechanization of work offers the possibility to re-orient work altogether and would lead to diminished stress, holds great potential.

5. **Technology & Infrastructure ➔** Benefitting from technological innovations in the city, mass transportation has been limited to the use of solar-railed clean trams in Brussels – which is otherwise a full pedestrian zone. This is complemented by the most frequented transportation means: shared electric or click cars and electric bike sharing. Private ownership of vehicles no longer exists, aside from the non-electric bicycle – although this is becoming an ancient rarity in the mobile sphere. Virgin Atlantic's space travel excursions

remain the preferred exploring vacations for an introduction into the space stations' continued efforts to construct permanent residences on Mars. Walking generates sufficient energy to power all street functions, and voluntary human chip implants ensure constant and full safety – for mind, body, and EUtopia. Indeed, the human chip offers safety features ensuring that you can be found at all times, that your GPS system can direct you whenever necessary, that your daily medical scan alerts you in case of a bodily issue, and includes 'fun' perks like mobile communication connects or enhanced language abilities. If criminal activity has been detected in a person's past, an obligatory chip will be implanted that monitors, records and if necessary, deports the subject from mainstream society. If no chip has been installed, technological communication devices allow ad-hoc information transmission on important EUtopia and global news, including regulation or policy changes.

Backcasting: High-Tech Shared Transportation & Human Security Chips

The infrastructural facilities of 2060 offer shared transportation systems in Brussels, as well as high-tech human chip implants.

The European Commission's Single European Transport Area has started its implementation plan in this respect: In an attempt to cut climate change emissions, the 2050 target for cities is to make them free from conventionally fuelled cars. According to the roadmap, action will follow, as will legislation to ensure real action to change behavior (Roadmap to a single European Transport Area, 2012). In the mean time, bike-sharing facilities are implemented and are becoming a daily aspect of Brussels' scenery; while car-sharing programs are equally finding their way into mainstream society – including through the car-manufacturing corporations. Such initiatives have helped remove vehicles off the roads, yet have failed to inspire the masses. Indeed, driving around in Brussels today is still characterized by a majority of vehicles with a single occupant. A northern European plan could inspire Brussels, and as such work through a bottom-up propaganda tool in the EU's capital to ignite policy that holds the potential to transform future EUtopia. Finland has issued a "mobility on demand" system "that integrates all forms of shared and public transport in a single payment network that could render private cars obsolete" (Greenfeld, October 2014). By allowing people to immediately purchase usage time via their smartphone, Helsinki aims to diminish our conventional view of public transportation. Specifying

an origin and a destination, the app allows for a journey planner as well as a universal payment platform. Not just a mere eutopian thought, since the Helsinki Regional Transport Authority introduced the Kutsuplus minibus that allows riders to specify their desired pick-up points and destinations via smartphone. If we combine this technology with the availability of the bike-share programs already available throughout cities in the entire world, the notion of shared (non privatized) car usage becomes a possibility. Public cost-benefit analyses must become part of the advertisement campaigns of politicians who promote the environment and mobility of its citizens. Vegetal City architect Luc Schuiten's "click car" system where no motorization is required since the magnet-controlled innovative cars operate on solar energy as well as magnetic power, has made its way into the artistic world. As part of the extended bike-share program today, these click-cars could operate under similar conditions and could be considered public transportation. The governmental and societal mindset shift that renders contemporary perceived artistic endeavors as potential future technological enhancements requires but a small re-evaluation of the imagination. Strict EU legislation in this regard would without doubt create the highest possibility for success. While mobility and transportation continues remain troublesome due to the stakeholder interests in the continuation of motorized vehicles, technology is receiving an immediately fruitful platform for future possibility and plausibility.

Intelligent electronics are already a part of our lives and contrary to AI resistance, are fully embraced (as noted in emerging issue h on p. 168): Teddybears that measure children's temperature and blood pressure; watches that monitor our sleeping pattern; smart phones that allow us instant information about anything and everything. Not a single EU politician, Belgian official, or Brussels' professional seems to be without the latter, and as such they provide the perfect advertisement tool for the broader masses. In a similar manner, Marc Coucke's medical blood testing chip is highly anticipated, and supported by both government and corporate instances. The notion of chips with incredible functions is no longer a futuristic novelty, since animals have been protected by such a device for years, and it could become commonplace in humans in the next decade already – according to estimates by John Brandon (2014). The incorporation of a human chip into humanity has been estimated to have many uses. As such, Ramez Naam – former Microsoft software projects developer – said he envisions the use of chip implants to help monitor the location of

people with Alzheimer (Brandon, 2014). In theory, all of the functions envisioning in and for my preferred future in this respect seem not only possible, but very plausible in the near rather than distant future. The fact that my preferred 2060 future allows for the voluntary installation of such a chip implies less ethical concern, although lobbying campaigns are certain to monitor a true 'big brother' effect.

6. **Energy ➔** EUtopia dictates clean city and region measures to being adhered to at all times. 100% renewable energy from solar, wind, and water power, is complemented by human bodily energy production and self-sufficient architectural designs. Furthermore, the waste production plants power all warming/heating for the city of Brussels. All smart-houses incorporate techniques that monitor isolation, consumption, sustainability, etc. automatically and daily.

Backcasting: Energy from Everything

100% renewable energy for Belgium, and thus also Brussels, was deemed feasible by the Federal Planning Agency ICEDD in 2012. An extra 10 years still places far ahead of 2060, which should have solidified this premise, but does reality align with the preferred?

Mid 2015, the EU issued a provisional report to verify how Belgium is managing the 2020 goals set forth by the European institution. In summary: Belgium fails. If Belgium truly wants to break away from its dependency/addiction to oil, it needs to break with the familiar and comfortable and engage fully in renewable green solutions. Denmark, the UK, Scotland and Ireland and experts in the field of generating energy through wind technology; Germany saw 26% of its electricity come from renewable energy (Smith, January 2015); Sweden obtains part of its power from waste recycling; experiments with complete energy-absorbing buildings using integrated photo-voltaic cells to cover the entire walls allowing an infinite supply of green energy (Energiek, p. 5) … there is no shortage of admirable examples to follow, yet the end result is deplorable. The generic disciplined futures scenario offers the only solution to ensure that the entire EU, including Belgium and Brussels comply to the set regulations: Education and Enforcement via strict policy. As noted in the ICEDD report, Belgium and Brussels hold the theoretical potential to becoming 100% green in energy provision, so the enforcement must be adhered to via legislation,

regulation, disciplined enforcement and regional commitment – regardless of the short-term costs. Financial sanctions for non-compliers or even higher taxation for all oil-dependent products to ignite an attitude change seem drastic, but in the long time perhaps the only effective tool to bring about change. It appears high time for a consciousness-raising campaign in which the example must be set from the top-down. Alternatively, but at an incredibly slim chance, an appeal can be made to the oil-producing countries to diminish supply drastically – perhaps this is indeed too utopian instead of eutopian.

As specified in the driving forces description in chapter 3, Brussels is considered ahead of its regional neighbors in terms of providing incentives for 'going green' – and being energy efficient, especially in the renovation and subsidizing of its homes. Nevertheless, the speed at which the changes are occurring is far too slow to allow for a plausible truly functioning smart-home future in 2060. The technology is in no short supply, but the actual implementation is. As such a solution for Brussels' true adherence to all EU regulations, and developing into a true energy-efficient and energy-sufficient capital is via the federalization of the EU, followed by the strict implementation of all possible renewable energy regulations.

7. **Environment** ➔ The main and highest societal priority is the precious environment of planet earth, which all technological and agricultural processes aspire to preserve, improve, maintain, and facilitate. The harmonious combination of professional and residential buildings, and the overall green-feel of the city are apparent. Non-emission transportation, clean energy production, a near-no-waste ideology, and purpose-oriented green architecture, offer the valid and realistic impression of living in a high-tech green utopian union of EUtopian regions – all in a pedestrian-only city, where walking generates electricity for the city. Motorized vehicles have been banned from large European Regional Union cities, including Brussels.

Backcasting: Vegetal City EUtopia
The option of re-building Brussels in an open location free from all previous environmental influences is not an available, and as such the aspiration to re-inventing the city into a true green oasis that perfectly combines institutional facilities and a vegetal feel must be carefully planned.

The 2015 EU report on the Horizon2020 goals for energy and the environment equally meant the failure for Belgium's environment, since "the expectation is that Belgium will not achieve its goal of 15% less carbon emissions" (Trends and projections in Europe, 2015). In light of the current (Fall 2015) Volkswagen debacle in which more emission was entered into the atmosphere than indicated via (manipulated) car technology, this result will probably even deteriorate for many cities' carbon measurements – including Brussels. Nevertheless, there is reason for optimism since, as stipulated in chapter 3's energy and environmental driving forces for Brussels, the city is currently embarking on multiple initiatives that offer the potential for full self-sufficiency and a clean vegetal outlook by 2060. As such, the attainability of becoming one of the "greenest" districts in Europe seems not only valid, but substantiated in contemporary efforts. Furthermore, the car-free zone in Brussels and its car-free Sundays have been experiencing a snowball effect in other European cities. Paris experienced its first car-free day in September 2015, and Oslo announced in October 2015 that it would strive to make its capital fully car-free by 2019. In a similar trend, the Scottish introduction of plastic bags only upon paying extra has meant an 80% decrease in usage of plastic bags since 2014 (Slawson, 17 April 2015). Since the 1st of January of this year, Italy has banned the use of plastic bags (Bosteels, 2015), as have France and a bit further removed Mexico City and Mumbai – where only biodegradable bags are still allowed.

Internal European competitiveness may become key to stimulating further innovative initiatives. The strive to diminish the population of the EU and Brussels, and the stimulus of using your two feet to produce energy, offer a positive outlook. Kohei Hayamizu envisions a city that itself operates like an electric power station, where walking through busy pedestrian regions, piezoelectricity can be generated (patron, United Nations University, 2008). Not only could this encourage walking, it would add the accomplishment of generating power for one's city. If all of the Eurocrats would literally walk their talk, Brussels might become a very bright place indeed.

2.   Concluding Thoughts

In the 18th century, Swiss mathematician Bernouilli stated that in between real certainty and complete uncertainty arises a new category, that of probability. It is within this realm of possibility that Dator's "Laws of the Future" situate best and offer an unlimited supply of possibilities to actively think about futures and determine what the desired or preferred future of any given situation or place is for a certain group of people.   In accordance with Dator's first law, "The future" cannot be predicted because "the future" does not exist (Dator, Yee & Sweeney, 2015, p. 134), this dissertation found the courage to look into alternative futures of identity for Brussels, which in turn allows for the development of a clearer policy path in terms of actively imagining and striving for a preferred future. Exploring alternative futures via the four generic futures of identity of Brussels offers the potential to opening eyes and to thinking critically about the type of future(s) populations want for their place of residence, for their city. Envisioning what we seek in and from a future is the first step towards imagining how to achieve such a future – a task that has unfortunately not proven very successful in the past decades. However, the present offers a glimpse of hope for futures thinking and endeavors. As such, this document offers not only an example of the doability of the Manoa School Modeling Method for Futures Studies, it demonstrates the spectrum of applicability of this innovative methodology, and adds new knowledge to the futures domain within a limited nationalist context.

It cannot be denied that the active thinking landscape vis-à-vis 'the' future has altered in Belgium and Brussels. As a child and a teenager, the only references made to imagery from the future were found in popular science fiction shows, movies or television programs. Today, however, walking through the Belgian and European capital, sheds positive hope to and for futures thinking.

Commercially, images presented about a technologically enhanced future in which smart-houses and artificial pets form part of Belgian society's daily lives demonstrate the Belgacom incentive to further commercialize their products for the communication consumer market, yet they offer an image of a possible future. Artistically, the current "2050 Exposition: A Brief History of the Future" in which 1 future is depicted in 2 exhibitions, more specifically in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels and in the Louvre in Paris, is allowing the public to actively think

about 'the' future from an artistic standpoint. "Paintings, sculptures, photos, videos, installations and digital art: over 70 contemporary works question our future up to 2050. The exhibition addresses major societal themes such as overconsumption, global conflicts, scarcity of natural resources, social and economic inequality, the mutation of the human being" (promotional leaflet "Expo2050"). In a humoristic and artistic fashion, current and historical artists' work on how they envisioned 2050 is on display and offers food for thought for most who visit. While promoted as 'the' future of 2050, it is obvious from the exhibition that every single artist approached the subject matter of 2050 very differently. This leads to the question as to whether the notion of a singular future was established mainly by political instances, while artistic streams have always displayed a hint of surrealism in their approach vis-à-vis a future. Academically, the World Future Society Federation, having originated in 1973 and offering a pluralist approach to futures studies, selected Belgian Maya Van Leemput as WFSF President's Outstanding Woman Futurist Award in 2013 and in September 2015, she initiated the Applied Futures Research Center at the Erasmus Higher Education facility in Brussels. As the first such endeavor in Belgium, this center offers an inter-disciplinary approach to introducing several futures methodologies in certain domains. Also at the EU level, change is occurring.

The European Commission's Joint Research Center has been promoting future thinking via its foresight and horizon scanning efforts utilized to look into the future impacts of policies. The European Foresight Team of the Knowledge of Growth (kfG) "provides a framework for a group of people concerned with common issues at stake … to jointly think about the future in a structured and positive way" (Welcome to European Foresight, 2015) Similarly, the since 2004 organized Future-Oriented Technology Analysis (FTA) Conference offers "policy and decision makers the potential to look across transformations, enabling governments, and other organizations to become more adaptive and capable of enacting systemic change" (European Foresight Introduction, 2015).

As is obvious, many of these initiatives still focus on 'the' future in a linear manner of thinking within a continued growth scenario – yet they are actively pondering 'the' or 'a' future. As such, this dissertation has demonstrated a change from such conceptualizations about 'the' future by offering insights into an individual effort of envisioning alternative images of four futures, leading up to a preferred scenario.

While the imagery of these futures scenarios in the previous chapter may appear as rather 'absurd' to some uninformed observer and frighteningly realistic to others, each future offers glimpses of fears, aspirations, and perceptions detected in society today. As such, it can be regarded as in compliance with Dator's 2nd Law of the Future that states that "Any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous" (Dator, 1995). As a well-conditioned European citizen, this was probably one of the most difficult tasks I have had to overcome in envisioning four generic futures images for the city of Brussels according to the Manoa School of Futures Studies methodology. To possibly 'fix' 'the' future, alternatives are often overlooked. While some of the four generic scenarios may indeed appear ridiculous, they hold the power to open eyes and imagine a future that may be so far removed from the preferred future that steps will and can be taken to divert and avoid it.

In October 2015, while writing the concluding chapter of this dissertation, Gareth Hardin, published a critical societal piece in the EU Observer, labeled "Brussels: The City that Just Doesn't Give a Damn". In it, he paints a grim picture of Brussels today by stating "Welcome to Brussels – the world capital of law-making and law-breaking, where pavements are car parks, speed limits entirely optional and health and safety rules about as respected as in Bangladeshi sweatshops" and "Welcome to Brussels – the global headquarters of hypocrisy, where a symposia on sustainable cities are held in buildings with 1000 place car parks, where calls for budget cuts and flexible labor forces are made by well-paid bureaucrats with jobs for life and where the world's tightest pollution laws are passed in the most congested country on earth". In short, Hardin ponders whether anyone cares. The polarization stressed by Sassen's Global City critique is not uncommon in any large European city, but as the true visiting card of Brussels, does the city not hold an obligation to walk its talk? Can decades of neglect be reversed, and if so, how? Identity has, does and will remain a part of such societal cohabitation. As noted in chapter 4, Dator's third law stipulates that "Futures are not history in reverse" (Dator, Yee & Sweeney, 2015, p. 135) and in this regard, the failures of the past cannot be allowed to overshadow the alternatives available for a brighter future. The problematic EU issues of the past, for example, do not dictate its future(s). Many of the contemporary trends and emerging issues discussed may be perceived as holding an enormous impact on European, Belgian and Brussels'

societies, yet the possibility also exists that they are mere hiccups in the future history of the European continent. Indeed, while the contemporary immigration 'crisis' currently governs many political discussions, it is not entirely unlikely that 2060's historical overview, will mention this as a minor occurrence in the European evolution. Furthermore, with the drastically and rapidly evolving changes in EU society today, the futures of Brussels could look very different in an analysis conducted a few years from now and may have looked very differently in a futures exercise having taken place 10 years ago, prior to the arrival of the popular moderate NVA political fraction. The impact on identity at the European level could alter greatly if Turkey does gain approval to join the EU, especially since German Chancellor Angela Merkel has recently offered her support for such action. If the nationalist propaganda is successful, however, we may be facing yet another alternate future of identity.

This study has revolved around the notion of identity – in Brussels, but also in Flanders, Belgium and the European Union. Orienting society towards a future of their choice commands the active participation of large groups of committed people to shape or drive such a vision. Education plays a vital role in preparing the younger generations of contemporary society to actively build their preferred future … in order for that generation to feel as if their 'voice' matters

... and allow dreams of today to shape the city of tomorrow.

3. Addendum: Brussels Terrorist City after November 2015 Parris Attacks

On 13 November 2015, the entire world was in shock following a series of coordinated terrorist attacks in Paris. Killing 130 people, injuring several hundreds more, responsibility was claimed by the Islamic State. Flashes of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January of the same year, of the London bombings in 2005, and the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, reminded the Western world of the fragility of their values, which were once again under siege. Intelligence information warning about potential terrorist attacks on Brussels; the fact that Belgian born perpetrator of the Paris attacks, Salah Abdeslam, was thought to be in hiding in the Molenbeek

municipality; the announcement by French president Hollande that the actual planning of these attacks had occurred in Brussels; forced the Belgian government to impose a security lockdown on the entire city of Brussels – starting on 21 November 2015. This meant that all official instances were forced to close – ranging from public institutions, public transportation, all educational facilities; while stores were strongly advised to keep their doors locked during this level 4 threat. The usually global, international city of Brussels had been transformed into a ghost city, a center of terror, and one of the most dangerous places on the planet, within a matter for days. This lockdown expanded to a few towns/cities outside of Brussels, known for a higher level of Syria fighters and Muslim extremism.

Immediately the terrorist actions of Paris were related to the recent influx of refugees and economic refugees in 2015, as were the security measures taken in and for Brussels. The reality of the matter extends a bit beyond the simple assessment of "blaming it on the immigrants" – although more extreme nationalist parties eagerly played the fear card. Indeed, when second, third or fourth generation Muslim immigrants find their way to and voluntarily abide by extremist measures against the Western values to which they either fled, or in which they grew up in, questions about the previously mentioned parallel society in Brussels once again surface. As do the frustrations from the authochthones about 'them' - the masses of recent refugees and economic immigrants who made their way into their perceived promised land, where they would be safe. Stories of terrorists immigrating and infiltrating Europe; of a lacking European response; of great division within the European nations; of vastly different values between 'us' and 'them' (the Middle Eastern immigrants); provide nationalist media and propaganda fodder. Internal friction between nations over Germany's "welcoming" message to refugees and immigrants; to Eastern European countries actively building and protecting their borders with physical fences; to EU member-states disputing the EU's authority to dictate their required number of 'intake' refugees; to overall financial funding for this human catastrophic displacement; to internal EU division over a future course of action; all dominate the political scene today. In Flanders alone, questions are raised as to why the Middle East is not taking responsibility for people who share their culture; why the United States is doing so little when they were responsible for destabilizing the Middle Eastern region over a decade ago … but mostly why 'they' (the autochthones) are responsible for financing an international problem that they did not ignite.

At its very core, the terrorist threat has demonstrated the vulnerability of Western tolerant values. By doing so, recent newspapers have reported that the confederate thoughts for Belgium seem to be stored, and have been replaced with more pressing matters – such as protecting the "Belgian" identity, culture, lifestyle. When scanning carefully, however, it must be noted that the reaction to today's occurrences is pointing at even more favorable N-VA votes, which could in future elections lead to a full majority vote … which would mean that they could implement the confederate model and Flemish autonomy without a coalition government. As such, it must be pondered whether public perception today is tainted?

In direct reaction against Brussels having been labeled the hub of terror activities, or as 2016 Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump coined it "a hellhole", the city has started to take action against this image. The official Brussels Tourism Office has installed three telephone walls throughout the entire city of Brussels, characterized by the slogan #CallBrussels. This allows international citizens to call into the streets of Brussels and ask locals whether Brussels is safe, while also receiving live atmosphere feed on what the city looks like now. It is an endeavor aiding in placing Brussels on the map in a very positive international sense. At the same time, it begs the question whether such initiatives also hint at a further socio-political division within the Belgian nation – where Brussels is seen as an autonomous regions, as is Flanders and Wallonia. If this notion of regional culture is taken further, especially in light of the recent terrorist attacks, it could work in favor or against the overall Belgian identity and culture. Either way, the contemporary developments seem to have catapulted the political discourse on culture, immigration, identity, and autonomy into a higher gear … affecting and altering future scenarios for Brussels as this dissertation was written.

Appendix

Figure 1. **Respondents Who Identify First of All with Their Locality, Their Region, Their Country, Europe, and the World as a Whole**
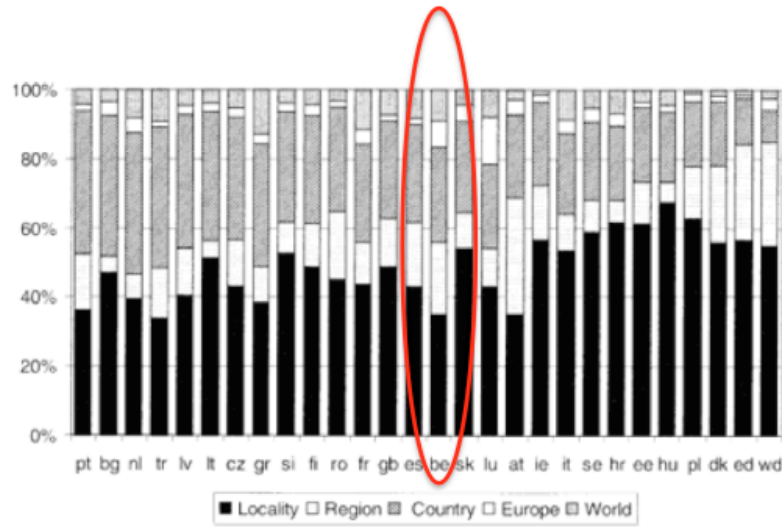
Source: European Values Study, 1999/2000.
Notes: Countries are ordered from left (high) to right (low) according to the percentage of respondents identifying first of all with their country.
For key to countries, see appendix.

Figure 16 = Identification of Belgians with different levels of governance structures and cultural adherence.

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