

CULTURAL IDENTITY CHALLENGED BY EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP?

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ABSTRACT:

THE EU CONTEXT PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORTS THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND COMMUNICATION, AND ENABLES THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TYPES OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AT LOCAL/REGIONAL LEVELS. IDEAS ABOUT CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALITY HAVE BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS A BASIS FOR THE EUROPEAN TYPE OF INTEGRATION. IS IT POSSIBLE TO REMAIN OPEN, TOLERANT, INVOLVED BUT STILL APPRECIATED AND RECOGNIZED AT THE SAME TIME IN ORDER TO KEEP YOURSELF DIFFERENT? LARGELY ENABLED BY THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF THE EU, IT SEEMS THAT THIS PARTICULAR CULTURAL SPACE, EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HAVE ENTERED IN A PROCESS OF STABILIZATION THROUGH THEIR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. THUS, BEING IN THIS TRANSITION PROCESS, HOW CAN WE PREVENT THIS NEW OPEN COMMUNICATION IN DILUTING THE NATIONAL CULTURAL VALUES? EUROPEAN CULTURAL POLICIES SHOULD CREATE THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS, WHILE USING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AS AN INSTRUMENT TO PROTECT PLURALITY AND DIFFERENTIATION, BUT STILL ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY, BY INCREASING INTERCONNECTIVITY AND BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES. IS THIS THE RIGHT PATH IN ENSURING THE ENVIRONMENT OF A EUROPEAN MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY, WHILE PRESERVING NATIONAL VALUES AND CULTURE?

KEY WORDS: MULTICULTURALISM, CULTURAL SPACE, EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP, CULTURAL IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

Ideas about cultural diversity and multiculturalism have been generally accepted as a basis for the European type of integration. The concept of culture and cultural communication within the EU has been the driving force of its integration. The European integration model has not been reduced to the common market only, and the discussions on the maintenance and encouragement of cultural diversity have been a part of all European integrative ideas and practices.¹

Linked to the exercise of rights in the single market, the European Union is presenting this bounded form of supranational membership, the EU citizenship, a right derived from the

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¹ Leonce Beckmans, *Culture: The Building-Stone of Europe* (Brussels: Presses Interuniversitaires, 1994), 15

nationality, priorly possessed, of a member state. In the EU, there are around 11 million legally resident third country nationals, plus an unestimated number of illegal immigrants. These migrants origins are from asylum seekers, labour migrants, clandestine migrants, family members, refugees to ethnic returnees. The Amsterdam Treaty of anti-discrimination provisions (Article 13)² and the subsequent anti-discrimination legislation, produces changes within the EU. The EU's core market-making purposes created Europeanised forms of inclusion, by removing and establishing some barriers, with the effect of exclusion of legally resident third country nationals from rights of EU citizenship and a tighter control at the external frontiers of the EU towards the „unwanted migration“. All this produced changes in the EU-15 and the surrounding states and regions, by focusing on the migration inclusion agenda and on the ways in which it shaped by the sources of material and symbolic power associated with European integration, creating a unique form of supranational integration with implications for politics and society³

According to the Euroenthusiasts, the united Europe was supposed to create a common European identity⁴. Euroenthusiasts argue that what is happening in Europe is the creation of a pan-European identity, others call it a transnational identity, and others still refer to it as a common identity.⁵ It is true that integration and the European Union have made a deep and binding impact in the lives of Europeans, but the implications for states and for identities is still unclear.⁶ Whether a transnational identity or pan-European identity (terms that are interchangeable) has developed in Europe? Scholars and practitioners such as Ernst Haas, Jean Monnet, and David Mitrany, starting in the 1950s advocated a new European super-state that deemphasized separate national identities in favor of a larger transnational identity.

National identity is an important element in explaining attitudes towards the European Union. A model of support for European integration is developed that suggests that feelings of national identity are highly important in an individual's choice to support the EU. The impacts of three alternative conceptualizations of national identity are involved. These relate to national identity as an intensity of feelings towards one's country, the level of attachment to the nation and other territorial entities, and the fear of other identities and cultures encroaching on the dominant national culture. The results of ordered legit analyses confirm that stronger feelings of national identity lead to lower levels of support for the EU.

Extracting some data from the latest Eurobarometer surveys, we can have a broader picture of how citizens of EU member states feel about the community and their attitudes towards their national and cultural identity. Six out of ten Europeans see themselves as citizens of the European Union, more or less unchanged since the spring 2011 (EB75) and the spring 2010 (EB73) surveys. Conversely, 38% of respondents do not feel that they are European citizens (+2 percentage points since the spring 2011 survey and +1 since spring

² The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) amended the Treaty of Rome (1957), inserting the Article 13, which empowered the EU to take action to combat discrimination on a number of grounds.

³ Andrew Geddes, "Integrating immigrants and minorities in a wider and deeper Europe" in *Europeanisation, National Identities and Migration Changes in boundary constructions between Western and Eastern Europe*, ed. Willfried Spohn and Anna Triandafyllidou, (London: Routledge, 2003), 84

⁴ Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950 – 1957*, (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, New Edition 2004)

⁵ Reid T.R., *The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the end of America Supremacy*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2004)

⁶ Clifford Carruba, "Courts and Compliance in International Regulatory Regimes", in the *Journal of Politics* (Vol 67, No.3, August 2005), 669 - 689

2010). The sense of European citizenship is shared equally by EU15 respondents (60%) and NMS12 respondents (61%). However, it is more widespread in the Eurozone countries (63%) than in the non-Eurozone countries (55%).⁷

Understanding just how identities are formed and how political and economic integration might change, shape, or create new identities has been the subject of both academic inquiry and policy-making efforts.⁸ The extent to which Europeans are attached to their national or regional identities might go a long way in determining how well integration would work. Finally understanding how the different components of integration either appealed to national identities or threatened them would inform policy makers about the specific steps that should be taken should proceed.⁹

In the early days, pro-European politicians and technocrats like Robert Schumann, hinted that the process of integration and the creation of the new Europe would take a step by step approach saying that “[t]he single Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single comprehensive plan. Rather, it will be built through a series of concrete achievements, each of which will create a de facto solidarity.”¹⁰ This strategy would serve to create inertia and diffuse support for institutions when these institutions could not provide immediate results.¹⁰ Common identities provide mass support when large institutions make decisions that require sacrifice by its members. The politicians of the day based much of their policies and actions on the belief that the identity component

From the 1970s to mid-1990s, there was a clear trend across Western democracies toward the increased recognition and accommodation of diversity through a range of multiculturalism policies (MCPs) and minority rights. These policies were endorsed both at the domestic level in some states and by international organizations, and involved a rejection of earlier ideas of unitary and homogeneous nationhood. Since the mid-1990s, however, we have seen a backlash and retreat from multiculturalism, and a reassertion of ideas of nation building, common values and identity, and unitary citizenship — even a call for the “return of assimilation.”

In much of the post-multiculturalist literature, multiculturalism is characterized as a feel-good celebration of ethnocultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine that exist in a multiethnic society.

Multiculturalism takes these familiar cultural markers of ethnic groups — clothing, cuisine, and music — and treats them as authentic practices to be preserved by their members and safely consumed by others. Under the banner of multiculturalism they are taught in school, performed in festivals, displayed in media and museums, and so on. This celebratory model of multiculturalism has been the focus of many critiques.

The unintended consequence happened in western Europe of strengthening national senses of community, of 'belonging' to a specific nation-state, and thus strengthening the impediments for achieving subjective citizenship on a pan-national scale. Promoting 'bringing together', has create a growing problem of 'holding together'. The policy of multiculturalism in Europe is experiencing a crisis.

Over the past decade the opponents of multiculturalism have multiplied. Leading politicians such as Angela Merkel, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy have all condemned

⁷ European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 77– TNS Opinion & Social, „European Citizenship”, Spring 2012

⁸ Rick Kosterman, Feshbach Seymour, “*Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes*”, in *Political Psychology*, vol.10, no.2, 1989, 257-273

⁹ Lauren M.McLaren, “*Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis or Perceived Cultural Threat?*” in the *Journal of Politics*, Vol.64, No.2, May 2002, 551-566

¹⁰ Reid, *United States of Europe*, 43

this Left wing strategy of integration that equates the ideals of other cultures with European traditional values. Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that multiculturalism has “utterly failed”. Thus, Germany’s approach was not actually implemented; its national official policy has been hostile to institutionalized populations. This critique towards multiculturalism might have a political purpose, as Karen Schonwalder says: “By creating an imaginary picture of a multicultural past” conservative political leaders “can present their own policies as innovative”.¹¹

When pride in one’s own traditional values is continuously suppressed and spurned, the result may be that Europeans feel discriminated against in their own culture. This becomes a “racism against whites” which in turn creates a growing environment of displeasure with “non-Western foreigners”. The unintended consequence happened in western Europe of strengthening national senses of community, of ‘belonging’ to a specific nation-state, and thus strengthening the impediments for achieving subjective citizenship on a pan-national scale. Promoting ‘bringing together’, has create a growing problem of ‘holding together’.

CONCLUSION

In this paper it is argued that the European Union (EU) cultural policies promoted and undertaken until now have difficulties and limitations as much as having successful multicultural integration. To help address these challenges, we have to take into consideration the nature of the issues at stake of the particular countries in which multiculturalism has failed. Variations have to be identified and analyzed in order to define a new and more sustainable model that will provide the diversity. Policymakers, scholars and even journalists are trying to explain the evolution of diversity and their work is revealing the need of creating an alternative framework for the so-called post-multiculturalism era, which we are starting to face.

Furthermore, it is necessary to analyse the relationship between nationality and identification with Europe. Is there a European identity, and does national identity stand in contrast to European identity? Does nationalism have destructive effects on the acceptance of European integration and on support for European ideals like democracy and freedom? We also have to ask the question the other way around. Is identification with Europe an important precondition for the acceptance of democracy, market economy, and other Western ideals? Does it have any impact on these values at all? Last but not least, what are the variables that influence national and European identity?

The founders of the European Union went out of their way to avoid the issue of identity, in the belief that European integration was best hitched to pragmatic, mainly economic, concerns and to the unassailable argument that efficient public decision-making demanded larger jurisdictions than existed in even the largest West European states (Hooghe and Marks forthcoming). They hoped to deepen European identity as a by-product of integration that could be led by elites with the implicit consent of publics. However, the European Union has become far more than a means to reduce barriers to trade, or even, more broadly, a means to produce certain public goods for citizens in member states. It conveys European citizenship; it prints its own money; it holds elections across its entire territory for a directly elected legislature with the power to veto most legislation. In short, the European Union is a polity—a self-governing community with authority over those who live in its

¹¹ Karen Schonwalder, *Germany: Integration Policy and Pluralism in a Self-Conscious Country of Immigration*. In *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*, trans. Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf, (London: Routledge, 2010), 162

territory. As such it engages the territorial identities of citizens. It is no longer possible to conceive of identity as an inert outcome of integration. As European integration has moved along a broad policy front, and as one national competence after the other has come to be shared with EU institutions, so territorial identity has become an obvious constraint on support for the European Union. I am fundamentally interested in testing the causal claims made that economic and political integration ultimately leads to a shift in loyalties and changes in identity. Scholars and practitioners such as Ernst Haas, Jean Monnet, and David Mitrany, starting in the 1950s advocated a new European super-state that deemphasized separate national identities in favor of a larger transnational identity.

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