

CHAPTER 8

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY BUILDING FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION



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Abstract

The study aims to formulate a thought experiment on how loyalty and attachment to the state can be created in a (future) federally structured Europe. At the core of the paper is the premise that the European Union is a culturally diverse entity, with different cultural units (dominant cultures, minority cultures, indigenous peoples, immigrants), all having different and sometimes not necessarily compatible needs. However, for the European Union to be able to function as a state (under any system) in the long term, these needs and interests must be balanced, and thus a European identity and, through it, a sense of attachment and loyalty to the European Union can be created. By all means, the diversity of the European Union is not only cultural, and it is not only these needs that need to be balanced in order to be able to function effectively. However, these cultural factors play a prominent role in the identity-based attachment necessary for harmonious coexistence. It is through this attachment, this bond, this identification, that a solid unity can be created, while without this, the individual components of the unit potentially become more difficult to hold together. To examine this question, the study reviews the role of culture within society and in the state, the European Union's cultural diversity, its connection to social peace, the connection between culture and identity, how identity can lead to loyalty and how a common European identity can be created in order to achieve this loyalty and through this, stability.

Keywords: European Union, diversity, cultural pluralism, identity-building, federalism, loyalty, cultural integration.

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1. Introduction

A federal political order's specificity is a political organisation with the combination of shared rule and self-rule where the decision-making bodies of member units may also participate in central decision-making bodies, and the member unit and the common government both have a direct effect on the citizens.

In the European Union, the common market is inherently federal. Still, as a result of the transformation of the European Union since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has embarked on a path of wider federalism, which now encompasses institutional, economic, and legal systems. At the same time, it is currently in an intermediate state, where national and European Union processes are from time to time in conflict, and where the impact of globalisation is also pervasive. This conflict has emerged along the lines of what, and to what extent, sovereignty is affected by the increasingly comprehensive changes in institutional, economic, and legal systems.

The question of concern for many is whether we can and should move towards federalism or embrace a system where central power exercises only the power delegated by its member units, is given power only for specific tasks, does not exercise power directly over citizens, and member units do not permanently cede power to the centre.

The research problem of "federalism or coexistence" also raises this dichotomy. It symbolises the difference between the two systems in terms of what is a stopgap: there is a unified system and you can put your own characteristics into it or vice versa, everybody takes their own characteristics and certain elements of it are ground together.

This intermediate state where the European Union lies now is different from the process of federation that we know from history, and the role of the actors – the Member States – is not equal either. Like a game of cat and a mouse, there is a difference between the aims and powers of the European Union institutions and the aims and powers of individual Member States. The creation of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, its relationship to subsidiarity, and the process of federalisation also creates tension. The future of the European Union, and the possibility of federation is not a new issue, but what is new is the increasingly polarised world order, which brings differences to the fore.

Our region has a particular experience of bringing together communities with such diverse and divergent goals into a polity. This experience makes the goal of peaceful and cooperative coexistence, cohabitation, rather than federalism, seem preferable.

The different forms of federalism are the result of historical changes – the historical situation, political culture, and the resulting necessities have created and shaped the way they function today. In this sense, each federalist order is specific, and it is undeniable that the development of the postmodern era itself requires and offers new solutions in relation to the historical specificities already known. As Rieker

pointed out, although in the nineteenth and twentieth century federations became a widely used constitutional form and are now approved, this was also an era of nationalism when the nation-state, the sovereign political organisation of the folk, was also approved. Thus a difficult problem for interpreting federalism is to explain the modern approval of this constitution in an era that simultaneously embraces the loyalties of nationalism.¹ It is from this contradiction that the present book illustrates the diversity of perceptions, the shift of emphasis, and the shifting conceptions of sovereignty, but also the lack of a clear answer as to where the European Union stands on the path of federal development. Therefore, the present study does not necessarily focus on these issues but rather aims to formulate a thought experiment on how loyalty and attachment to the state can be created in a (future) federally structured Europe.

2. Balancing diversity: The role of cultural identity in the European Union's cohesion and statehood

At the core of the paper is the premise that the European Union is a culturally diverse entity, with different cultural units having different and sometimes not necessarily compatible needs. However, for the European Union to be able to function as a state (under any system) in the long term, these needs and interests must be balanced, and thus a European identity and, through it, a sense of attachment and loyalty to the European Union can be created.

If we think of the European Union as a state, we can also think of it as a kind of postmodern entity. It is not a traditional nation-state, and its process of creation is different from that of the states that make it up. Not only is its history different, but it also has not gone through historical processes – in many cases lasting hundreds of years – which have given rise to the modern state, the particular organisation of each state and the attachment of its population to this entity. It was not shaped by an organic process of development, but by a thought experiment, an agreement, and at a time when conditions were very different from the 19th century, in that nation states were being created. By stretching and redefining traditional nation-state sovereignty, borders and governance, it operates in a way that is very different from the way the state operates and understands itself.

Ideas to unite the peoples of Europe were born at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries when movements began to emerge that sought to implement integration plans. Old state traditions also played an important role in this process together with ethnic and cultural relationships. During this period, ideas emerged for cooperation because small groups of peoples living in the grip of the great powers realised that they could

1 Rieker, 2007, p. 612.

not survive on their own. Later, between the two world wars, new state units emerged, the national principle came to the fore, a global international organisation, the League of Nations, was formed and another integration plan, the German Mitteleuropa plan, based on economic interests, was also formed.² However, as the European Union increasingly begins to function as a distinct, postmodern state, the question arises as to whether it can be understood through traditional concepts. What are the factors that unite a postmodern state, a federation of states? Are traditional concepts such as identity and loyalty to the state, which describe the traditional relations between the state and its population, and at the same time define the belonging of peoples, still relevant?

In the long term, a postmodern entity also needs factors that create cohesion and thus provide a basis for stable functioning. Such factors include shared values, traditions, a common identity and the identification of citizens with this entity, which gives it legitimacy. In federal arrangements both identity and loyalty are shared, but it is difficult to imagine that while people identify with the traditional state in terms of identity and loyalty, they do not identify with the federated state. This is a pattern much closer to separationist notions.

In the case of the European Union, diversity is a specific factor along which the sense of belonging can be described in a very complex way. In the initial loose arrangement based on economic relations, this was not yet a factor to be taken into account, but in the case of the entity taking shape after the Lisbon Treaty, in order to ensure long-term cohesion and stability, it is appropriate to establish closer links with the peoples living in the territory of the European Union (in addition to the States and government), which can give recognition to the functioning of this entity. In this case, there is a need for an identity-building, and identity-forming process.

Even in postmodern circumstances, cultural identity plays a key role in this identity-forming process, as it is a central part of human identity that can only be changed with great difficulty, but typically cannot be abandoned. Everyone identifies himself or herself by where he or she comes from, where he or she belongs, or, if he or she wants to become part of a new community, by where he or she wants to belong. These categories are typically described by cultural characteristics. If commands, rules of behaviour, frameworks of operation, institutions that influence everyday life are defined by an entity that is not part of this 'where I came from', then it can only aspire to be an entity that one wishes to become part of, which also requires these cultural patterns. This is not to say that these factors cannot change over time, but at the moment culture is an essential part of self-definition and therefore cannot be ignored in the federalisation process.

Naturally, the diversity of the European Union is not only cultural, and it is not only these needs that must be balanced in order to be able to function effectively. However, these cultural factors play a prominent role in the identity-based attachment necessary for harmonious coexistence. It is through this attachment, this bond, this identification, that a solid unity can be created, while without this, the

2 See in detail Gedeon and Halász, 2022, pp. 11–23.

individual components of the unit potentially become more difficult to hold together and ultimately the process of secession³ may also be set in motion.

3. Cultural determination in society and the state

Basically, neither the people nor the state are fully aware of their cultural determinants. Until societies were relatively homogeneous, this issue was not even raised, so the state did not even bother with it, and the diversity of societies came to the fore. The culture in which we grow up is deeply embedded in us and can lead to clashes in the smallest aspects of everyday life if the other person does things differently. However, the ability to be sensitive to differences can make it easier for cultures to adapt to each other.⁴

Culture and, related to it, identity and their diversity, have two dimensions from a state perspective: they can be private, which the state does not have to deal with, or public. Where diversity goes beyond the private sphere and individual interests, where it affects the whole or a significant part of the community or the functioning of the country, it becomes a matter of public concern,⁵ to which the state must respond. On the other hand, the state may also need to intervene if it is the divergence that it wants to protect. The practice of customs, the expression of identity, and the free exercise of identity depend in many respects on what the state considers to be the ideal society and what it wishes to promote, i.e. it is primarily a matter of political decision-making – the state can provide the framework within which it can be exercised, but it can also suppress it.

The state has traditionally favoured a certain degree of homogeneity in society, and it has actively contributed to achieving it (*homogenisation*). However, by the 20th century states had typically abandoned national homogenisation, partly as a consequence of the failure of forced assimilation.⁶

Looking at the side of the society, we can state, that every society tries to preserve its beliefs and customs, its language and religion, and its economic and political independence.⁷ Culture is an attribute of society, and therefore culture and society are interlinked, but at the same time there can be several cultures within a society and it is this culture or these cultures that define society.⁸ There is no need to explain that nowadays there is already a complex cultural diversity within most of

3 Gardner, 2018, pp. 53–532.

4 Boglár, 2007, pp. 130–131.

5 A public matter is a matter of general interest which affects the community, a matter which goes beyond individual interests and deserves to be pursued by the public authorities. Varga, 2017, p. 78.

6 Gulyás, 2018, pp. 21–25.

7 Frasin, 2012, p. 38.

8 Fikentscher, 2009, p. 108.

the Member States, while at the level of the European Union there is, certainly, even greater diversity. These mixture of cultures shapes the societies, but the presence of multiple cultures can also cause a society to fragment.

The emergence of a culture from the discreet, personal (private) sphere into the public typically occurs with its politicisation, when people belonging to a given cultural community perceive that their culture is being ignored. It is to their detriment when their culture is marginalised and they can largely do nothing about it. In these cases, ignoring culture is a denial of cultural integrity, so culture becomes strongly linked to identity and thus becomes a political issue.⁹ The significance of this issue is that, in the final analysis, this kind of marginalisation, which can be precipitated by repression and the absence of political freedoms, can even lead to a loss of loyalty to the state.¹⁰

There are countless factors that determine and influence culture and, through it, identity and ultimately human behaviour, and these factors are changing. However, not all of them are relevant to the state, which does not need to address all of them. Factors that remain in the private sphere are not subject to state intervention, whereas those that become a matter of public concern, i.e. which affect the community, may require intervention. What these relevant factors are, may vary considerably from one state to another, depending on the historical background, the state system, the society, and the importance of these factors may change over time – see for example the question of language and religion. The state needs to pay particular attention to cultural elements that may become or have already become a part of the political discourse.

At the same time, the decision-making and the use of different instruments by the state are not unlimited in a democratic system. State power is not absolute power, it is subject to constraints, such as constitutional limits, international relations, and political trends. Today, in a democratic system, it is no longer possible to forcibly assimilate culturally different communities into the majority by forcing them to assimilate, by forcing them to adopt a different language or religion, or by completely forbidding them to do so.

The instruments of intervention must keep in line with the dominant culture and must be chosen to reflect it, otherwise they will not be effective. It is useless for the state to introduce new rules of behaviour if they are fundamentally alien to the dominant culture, and will not be effectively enforced in society. On the other hand, the main characteristics of the cultural community seeking recognition must also be identified. This also limits the scope of political decision-making in that, although the political power players may change, and hence the objectives pursued, the social reality, the characteristics of society, which are largely the result of historical development, and its main elements cannot be ignored. This is also the reason why the role of the law as an instrument is ultimately limited: it is no use being a generally binding rule if it is not actually enforced or is not enforced in accordance with the legislator's objectives because of social resistance.

9 Cohen, 1993, p. 199.

10 James, 2016, p. 129.

For the European Union, this situation is more complex in the sense that there are several dominant cultures, none of which have a decisive influence upon the European Union as a whole and at the same time, their cultural dynamics also vary from state to state. This also means that the definition of a common European identity has to focus on the European culture, while at the same time, it has to be accompanied by dominant national or minority cultures and the identities they carry.

4. United in diversity

The European Union has a very attractive motto, which is “united in diversity”. According to the European Union, it signifies that Europeans have come together, in the form of the European Union, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent’s many different cultures, traditions, and languages.¹¹ The European Union, because it has become an identity-forming institution in its own right over time,¹² could initially be seen as an entity that poses a threat to cultural diversity. However, the motto has instead paved a different way forward, one in which diversity and its acceptance and recognition have emerged as some sort of humanitarian achievement.

4.1. Unity

There are two parts to the motto: unity and diversity. Let us first look into unity. If we are talking about cultural differences, to which the second element, diversity, refers (at least partially) and which is one of the contemporary challenges, why, in what way, is unity important?

In general, unity is not about uniformity. It is about finding common ground and shared values despite our differences. Behind the thought of unity lies an idea that

Europe can be conceived as an organic cultural structure despite disruptions that may occur between the elements making up its complex structure. Considering this approach, European culture is built on an intricate system of common values characterising the European cultural area. Just like islands making up an archipelago, despite some areas delimitating it, the European cultural area is made up of elements that can be characterised as organic structures with a certain composition in point of shape and expression.¹³

11 European Union, no date; The EU motto: United in Diversity.

12 Tekiner, 2020, p. 1.

13 Brie, 2010, p. 86.

However, the perception of unity is just a surface. What lies beneath this surface is one of the primary, one might say the most important, objectives of the existence of the state as an entity that is the ensuring of social peace. Ensuring social peace is the most important public issue. There is unity if we can create tranquillity and security, therefore the state must not seek solutions that would pull society apart and plunge it into chaos. If anything can create unity, it is that the realisation of this goal is ensured – whether at the state or pan-European level. However, it will not work without intervention, action, complex ideas, programs, and cooperation between the actors.

4.2. Cultural diversity

How does cultural diversity relate to all this? The European Union is indisputably culturally diverse in terms of its peoples. This term is nowadays used to refer to diversity due to immigrant communities, but it also has a broader concept. At the very narrowest level, European diversity is based on the dominant cultures of the Member States, the indigenous groups of Europe (like the Sami, the Inuit, maybe the Basques, and for the possible future there are the Crimean Tatars – but there is not even a consensus here in Europe as to which groups are indigenous and which are more national minorities), national and ethnic minorities and the different groups of immigrants.

To put it simply, the basis for diversity can be any cultural characteristic. The initial difficulty is that these groups all have different needs. The aim of unity should be to balance these needs.

National minorities have been present in Europe for centuries, mostly perceiving themselves as a kind of distinct society and wanting to establish some form of self-government or autonomy for themselves. In contrast, immigrant communities wish to be integrated into society as equal members of society, and their demands are not specifically aimed at acquiring self-government, but rather at creating a legal environment and institutions that will eliminate the economic and political disadvantages of these groups and ultimately help society to become more accommodating towards them. At the same time, there are some groups or individuals who are unable to integrate themselves into society. Whereas, in the case of Indigenous peoples around the world, we see that they are often viewed by states groups without the political development to be perceived as a nation, unable to govern themselves and in need of paternalistic protection, or even seen as an unfortunate ethnic group or racial minority to be integrated into society.¹⁴ At the same time, their demands may focus on historical justice or the restitution of land ownership, as the survival of the indigenous peoples' distinctive culture (often called pre-modern lifestyles) is closely linked to land and resources, which in fact requires a completely different perspective. In their case, for example, they have to be protected from various

¹⁴ Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 10–11, 22.

influences such as modernisation, westernisation, urbanisation, secularisation, etc.¹⁵ Furthermore, the dominant cultures are obviously concerned with maintaining this dominance culturally, politically, and in terms of resources. Naturally frictions can arise in any relationship.

What is our response to all this? Mostly some sort of non-discrimination politics, which allows groups to be recognised, and to exercise their rights. However, what this often fails to achieve is to create balance, to prevent social frictions, unrest. What risks are there in these frictions? It is also group-dependent.

Indigenous peoples, for example, are smaller in number and geographically isolated and therefore pose much less of a threat to the state¹⁶ from the state's perspective, which is why their needs have not been addressed for so long. For national minorities, there are well-developed support systems across Europe – or at least we see some good examples – but their need for self-government and autonomy and the state's need for sovereignty can be in sharp conflict. Maybe not in reality, only at the level of assumptions, out of mistrust, but this is enough to say that this is like a landmine in some regions of the European Union.

For immigrants, however, diversity has a much wider range. Some of the cultural differences are not relevant for the state and other groups in society, as long as it remains within the boundaries of private life. The state takes note of the diversity of immigrant groups when the different cultural groups become active in maintaining their culture. In other words, when the question of belonging to a particular culture is politicised, it then activates the community whose culture is perceived to have been ignored.¹⁷ When a community acts to defend its culture against those who ignore it, it can become a factor that triggers the need for a state response.

4.3. Creating social peace

The resulting conflict situations ultimately threaten social peace, which was one of the most powerful reasons for the creation of the state. In addition, the question is whether it is not too late for the state to take regulatory action, to intervene, or whether it has any chance at all in a situation where it has to create a balance not only between the majority and minority but also between different types of minority groups. At the same time, it is important to avoid, as far as possible, a situation in which national minorities are dissolved in the process of recognising immigrant groups and their needs, and the state itself loses control over this whole process.

This balance requires the creation of solidarity between communities and through this, loyalty to society and through it to the state, a cohesive society, and thus social peace can be ensured. These groups together form a nation, if they are

15 Kymlicka, 1999, pp. 286–287, 288–289.

16 Threats here refer to the process of incompatibility between the need for autonomy and the state's need for unity.

17 Cohen, 1993, p. 199.

not bound together by a certain level of solidarity, it can lead to the disintegration of society. Solidarity, loyalty, accommodation, and therefore social peace are the goals to be achieved, this is when we are truly united in diversity.

If there is tension, if there is a lack of loyalty, if there is a threat of social frictions, then we can talk about heterogeneity instead of diversity.¹⁸ Then, instead of co-existing cultures and nations, we have opposing cultural entities, each with its own nationally, ethnically, or religiously defined systems, which effectively act against the state and are a serious source of tension.

What can the state do? First, it recognises the need to intervene. For example, when the emphasis is not on the common cultural elements between culturally different groups, and thus on a sense of common belonging, but rather on cultural differences, those that divide rather than unite. The range of tools is diverse.

Migration policy is obviously one of them, and if it is not controlled by the state, it can only run after the outcome. Educational integration is a huge challenge too. If the state is to accommodate the needs of culturally diverse groups, it must take these elements into account and adapt its education. It is then, that the question of who should be at the centre of regulation can be answered, distinguishing a solution based on different needs. For example, the group of people who have been living in the country for centuries and the group of immigrants who do not speak the same language and/or who have significant cultural differences cannot be grouped together. Different needs arise along ethnic and linguistic, religious, or sexual lines. In some cases, these may even be mixed. The vector of regulation may also be completely different: reversing the assimilation process in the case of ethnic minorities or promoting integration in the case of immigrant groups. It is also not only about being sensitive to different races, cultures, social groups, and cultural values, but also about a paradigm shift that involves accepting different ways of thinking as values, and simply taking pluralism, and diversity of human thought and culture for granted.

Theoretically, federalism could also be a solution. At the very least, it is considered to be an ideal arrangement for nationalities striving for the widest possible autonomy, as it can be described as a constitutional instrument that balances the principles of unity and diversity: federalism can work well when territorial differences are combined with ethnic or cultural differences, as federalism allows for

18 The concepts of “diversity” and “heterogeneity” are used in the literature in a mixed way, usually without distinguishing between the two. If they do, there is also a difference in which of the two is the positive term. Some studies argue that heterogeneity has the capacity to integrate different people, identities, and perspectives, while diversity is simply a difference that cannot withstand social injustice. Columbus, Shavit and Ellison, 2016. The paper basically follows Bernhard Schlink’s distinction that diversity is when new forms and structures emerge in the social sphere of religion and culture without anyone questioning the legitimacy of social differentiation. This means a society that is open, diverse, and multi-voiced. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, involves coexisting and opposing cultural entities, each with its own ethnically or religiously defined educational, cultural, and economic system, and possibly even political autonomy. This arrangement is at odds with both social differentiation and social integration; Schlink, 1997, p. 33.

internal self-determination of constituent units.¹⁹ However, for it to work effectively, it is necessary to build basic trust and a consensus between the parties.²⁰ This is the way to avoid, for example in the case of national minorities, that minority demands are perceived by the majority as an attempt to secede, and the majority demands an attempt to assimilate.

In the European Union, however, such a solution would require a complete re-think of the division of powers and competencies. Some of the issues that arise are how to deal with education, language rights, what is our response to autonomy demands, what is the scope for more multicultural units, and those that are less culturally diverse. These must be discussed, objectives jointly set, and decisions taken by Member States and European Union institutions. If there is no consensus, no clarification of competencies, no clear margin of manoeuvre, and no due consideration of local specificities, this could lead to disintegration.

In addition to identifying the core values that must be protected, the management of specific frictions requires a state of accommodation and balance that counteracts heterogenisation. This is the result of a kind of reasoned reflection, in which the limits of accommodation are defined.

5. Identity and loyalty

Federalism is a special kind of agreement based on trust and common benefits. The agreement is permanent and its content is the division of functions among tiers which ensures that governments at the constituent and central tiers always exist and retain their assigned duties. The constituent units have agreed with each other that each will retain its identity and its unique functions, and they adopted this system because it was a way to accomplish some objective that was not feasible independently or in alliance.²¹ However, the agreement of the constituent actors is not enough for the durability of such a system in the long run, as the loyalty of the people is also necessary for its stable functioning. Without loyalty, and the emotional attachment that underpins it, it is much more difficult to hold together a highly diverse and, in some cases, conflicting entity.

5.1. The formation and construction of identity

Identity is one of the cornerstones of loyalty to the state: it is through identity that we belong, that we identify ourselves, and that we have an emotional attachment to

19 Adler, 2002, p. 147; Trudeau, 2015, pp. 37–39.

20 Manzinger, 2018, p. 78.

21 Rieker, 2007, p. 613.

a group, be it national, linguistic, cultural, gender, or other. National identity is the defining element of our identity, which is the challenge of an emerging federalism: are we French, German, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, etc., or are we European, or both? Identity can also be understood as being essentially a social construct that is both coherent and malleable, part of a group or community with a common culture and language.²² This is also difficult since such an identity would have to be accompanied by a sense of belonging to, identifying with, and loyalty to the federal state.

In the European Union, on the other hand, national-cultural identities based on cultural differences are extremely diverse, as discussed above. This is not even comparable to the culturally diverse Canadian system, which was originally created by a kind of agreement between the two founding nations, the British and the French.²³ Based on this the Canadian identity²⁴ was formed, and only then, in the second half of the 20th century, were broad rights granted to other culturally diverse groups, i.e. it can be seen as a kind of gradual development, whereas in the case of the European Union, a more complex basis for a common identity needs to be built.

Cultural diversity means diversity of identities. Huntington's theory is that in the post-Cold War world, world politics has become multipolar and multicultural and that the most important distinguishing features between peoples in this world are now cultural rather than ideological, political, or economic. In his most famous work, he argues that the deepest, most important, and most dangerous conflicts are between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. The most important groups of states are the seven or eight main civilisations of the world, and non-Western societies are increasingly asserting their own cultural values alongside Western societies and rejecting those previously imposed by the West, which ultimately leads to conflict.²⁵ This theory has since been partly disproved, since, although cultural conflicts exist, they are not exclusively civilisational (e.g. between the "West" and the Islamic world), and ideological, political, and economic conflicts are also significant. On the other hand, it is also true that cultural differences do not necessarily lead to conflicts, at least not for all cultures, nor do they necessarily have serious social or state-threatening consequences. Multiculturalism, the

22 Conway, 2017, p. 10.

23 The reception of the British North America Act (1867) was mixed on the French side: French Canadians were uncertain about the fact that Quebec would become part of a larger nation, but they were confident in the guarantees provided by the B.N.A. Act that they could preserve their language, religion, and cultural values. The French were also convinced that the B.N.A. Act was an agreement between the British and the French as two founding nations, even if this was not thought so by others and was not confirmed by judicial practice. Lavergne, 1993, p. 68.; Marchildon and Maxwell, 1992, p. 593.

24 In 1949, the Canadian government established the Massey Commission (Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences), whose purpose was to develop a national cultural policy, as Canada had no national culture of the same value as England or France. Report. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. 1949-1951. Library and Archives Canada, no date, The Massey Commission.

25 Huntington, 1998, pp. 49-50.

need for different cultural groups to preserve and live their specificities, and cultural differences within a country are existing facts, so the focus should rather be on how countries deal with the need for intervention, whether positive or negative, when these differences trigger a need for intervention.

Identity is on the one hand about the “self”, the individual’s self and his/her role in society, and on the other hand about the community, its self-definition. In both senses, culture is the determinant of identity.²⁶ Some of the elements of identity are individual, while others are collective. There are many different types of identity, including gender, religion, class, class stratification, and political or moral identity.²⁷ However, in the postmodern era, identities are less fixed, increasingly fluid, and can be influenced by several cultures at once.²⁸

The culture that determines individual and community identity is also linked to the nation-building process, the image of national unity,²⁹ the ability to influence the emotional consciousness relationship with the national community, the national-ethnic group, i.e. national identity.³⁰ Origin, mother tongue, and acceptance of cultural values and norms are the basis of cultural-national identity,³¹ in which the cultural unity of the community (in principle) has been linked over time to a political dimension, to political determination, and finally to determination through nationalism.³² The concept of nation can be defined as this intersection of culture and politics, typically linked to the territory of a state on the one hand, and to the unifying policies of the state on the other.³³ It is along these lines that the concepts of a majority and minority nation can be used, although the distinction here is also political, essentially symbolic, the result of a kind of struggle for classification.³⁴ There is no universally valid definition of the concept of a nation, but in addition to the political definition mentioned above, there is also a sense of belonging, which is the sense of a community’s cultural, origin, or political or institutional ties with the majority of the population living in a given area.³⁵ Each of these is in fact an element that the European Union does not have in this capacity, specifically linked to this capacity.

In broad terms, culture is a deeply embedded set of practices, beliefs, and meanings, while identity is the sense of belonging to a community.³⁶ It is motivated by the human need for community.³⁷ However, a community is woven through the

26 Bakk, 2008, pp. 25–27.

27 Koller, 2006, pp. 46–47.

28 Hall, 1992, p. 277.

29 Gheorghe and Acton, 1996, p. 207.

30 Gereben, no date, p. 1.

31 Gödri, 2010, p. 104.

32 Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 18.

33 Brubaker, 2004, pp. 390–392.

34 Kántor, 2004, pp. 276–277.

35 Koller, 2016, pp. 12, 19.

36 Grimson, 2010, p. 63.

37 Hódi, 1992, p. 23.

cultural web and thus plays an irreplaceable role in the survival of communities. As the basis of identity, it allows for self-definition and separation from others.³⁸ Culture can be seen as a kind of group identity, or rather as its defining factor, i.e. culture defines the identity of a community. However, culture can also be understood in terms of identity, i.e. as a result of identities. According to this understanding, culture is a pattern of learned understandings, accepted and expected by an identity group, which includes verbal and non-verbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief systems, and behaviours.³⁹

The link between culture and identity is established by the socialisation process, as a result of which the human personality, the identity of a person, is influenced by culture. Socialisation is the process of acquiring values and norms, through which individuals imitate certain patterns of behaviour and react to certain situations, learn to adapt to environmental challenges, seek understanding, and develop a set of values. Socialisation is a lifelong process. Most patterns are established in childhood and by adulthood the most important identity issues are clarified (but this does not mean that personality cannot change as a result of adult influences).⁴⁰ Thus, in the process of socialisation, individuals adapt their personality traits, tendencies, and characteristics to the social framework. In the society of which the individual is a member, the relationship between the individual and society is maintained and regulated by a sense of identity. It is this sense of identity that constitutes identity.⁴¹ When, in the course of socialisation, an individual becomes part of a group and develops an identity associated with it, he or she becomes part of the components of culture and society.⁴²

5.2. The development of loyalty

Belonging to a group is essentially a given, but it is subject to change and, to some extent, can be changed as a result of the individual's decision. If one wants to change one's group membership, one has to change one's habits and tastes, and adopt the culture of the other group, which is a lengthy and rarely completed process. This process may also come about because the individual is unable to socialise with his or her own culture or is not seen as part of the group. Ultimately culture deeply permeates one's identity. The most basic layer of identity is cultural belonging, which is a fairly solid factor, while performance (i.e. how one acts, what one is able to achieve, etc.) is only built on this layer of identity.⁴³

The European Union is a culturally plural entity, taking into account the nationalities, languages, religions, customs, etc. Cultural pluralism, in a very basic sense,

38 See Egedy, 2001.

39 Baldwin et al., 2006, pp. 156, 200, 205, 211.

40 Zsolt, 2005, pp. 35–37.

41 Papp, 2007, pp. 109–110.

42 Byron, 2002, p. 442.

43 Margalit and Raz, 1990, pp. 444, 446–447.

is about the interaction of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. Although the concept of cultural pluralism is dynamic itself, the point is that cultural pluralists advocate the ideal of a democratic society enriched by differences.⁴⁴ This idea is also reflected in the aforementioned motto of the European Union.

The point of this argument is that taking all this as a starting point, a European identity can in fact be constructed, and in this (otherwise slow) process, attachment to a new unity can be formed, and loyalty to that integrity can be built on the basis of this new unity. The requirement of loyalty to the state is not usually explicit in the constitutions of individual states, but it is an essential element of the functioning of a state and of the relationship between the state and its citizens.⁴⁵

Loyalty can be characterised as a practical disposition to persist in an intrinsically valued (though not necessarily valuable) associational attachment, one that involves a potentially costly commitment to secure or at least not to jeopardise the interests or well-being of the object of loyalty. For the most part, an association that we come to value for its own sake is also one with which we come to identify (as *mine* or *ours*).⁴⁶

An organisation, whether a state, a confederation, or a federal state if it is culturally plural, must ensure that the interaction of cultural communities is in reality an essentially peaceful coexistence. A peaceful coexistence that creates loyalty to the state and society, and solidarity between communities, thus leading to social peace as the most important goal of the state.

Loyalty is a commitment but it is not necessarily a patriotic commitment. Nationalists argue that citizens are loyal to their own state because it preserves and reflects their national culture, which is an important part of their identity, and ought to be morally respected. Meanwhile – according to e.g. Habermas – a citizen can be loyal to a particular democratic state on the grounds of principle, without reference to any shared culture or national identity.⁴⁷

In the case of the European Union, the cultural specificities already mentioned make it more likely to be the latter. This implies that in the process of building a common European identity, a looser attachment than national identities can also provide the basis for a sense of belonging and, through this, for loyalty at the European Union level.

44 Bernstein, 2015, pp. 347–356.

45 Basta Fleiner and Gaudreault-DesBiens, 2013, p. 151.

46 Small, 2022.

47 Stilz, 2009, pp. 24, 138.

6. Identity-building of the European Union, by the European Union, for the European Union

If we look at the question of the interconnection of culture and power, in reality, we see that there are one or more so-called dominant cultures. All societies are politically and economically organised, and it is through the possession of power that scarce resources are distributed. The leading group or groups that have power determine this distribution and also determine the traditions and disseminate them among the population, that is, they determine, so to speak, the culture that permeates and thus influences society. Defined in another form, a dominant culture is one that is able to impose its values, language, and patterns of behaviour on other cultures through its economic or political power, that is it can actually achieve acculturation.⁴⁸

Obviously, under democratic conditions, in the 21st century, it is not a question of a few dominant cultures dominating all the others in a culturally diverse space. Rather, it is a question of achieving a kind of compromised balance, in which the dominant group takes guaranteeing steps towards the minority groups in order to preserve the community, while the minority groups, if they consider this to be in line with their goals, cooperate with the majority group.

However, it should also be remembered that the dominant culture is the one that is linked to society and social institutions, which for minority cultures is only given if they have territorial autonomy (that is individuals belonging to a particular culture live in a specific area, with their own institutions and rights), but even then not equal power potential. In other cases, the minority culture can only rely on its own capacity to assert its interests. The majority culture also has political control, even if it chooses to adapt and relinquish some of its power in favour of minority groups. So the fact that in cultural pluralism cultures are equal, and none is better or worse than the other, does not mean that their political power and advocacy are or should be equal.

In an entity that is moving towards some form of federalisation, this means re-thinking existing power relations and institutional arrangements. What would be the basis of common existence, of unity, in a federation (or similar) arrangement? Is it simply the will, or is it language, culture, history, and geography? How can a federal system strike a balance in pluralism through compromise and agreement? Compromise can only be achieved when consensus cannot be reached on all issues. Then the issues on which consensus must be reached can be reduced by it. And agreement in the sense that the terms of compromise cannot be unilaterally changed.⁴⁹ In this way, federalism can ensure that the minority remains within the state because it offers greater benefits than secession would. It can also strengthen nationalism, which is more attractive than separatism. Ultimately, a shared identity can be created.

48 Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 190; Baldwin et al., 2006, p. 17.

49 See, e.g., Rossi, 2013; Bellamy and Hollins, 1998, pp. 54–78.

6.1. European culture, European identity

What does this mean for the European Union? In federal arrangements, we can see that, either naturally or with central “help”, a common identity has been created. For this to happen, European culture must be at the forefront of Europe’s identity – but European culture must be made the basis of identity in such a way that cultural pluralism, and hence pluralism of identities, is preserved. It is not, surely, a question of creating this European culture entirely from its foundations, since it is in practice a culture of the spirit and has lived with us since antiquity.

At the same time, it must grow up alongside our current national identity, so that it can become the basis of a sense of belonging and thus a basis of common loyalty. However, the development of a common European identity has been strained by certain contradictory processes since the 19th century. In Hungary, Ágnes Heller stated that Europe perceives itself as the “West”, which is democratic, progressive, and modern, but that on the other hand, it is not moving towards the creation of a common culture, but in the opposite direction. In this process, in the process of cultural relativism, European culture is becoming less and less. The problem is that the European identity is not present, neither in literature nor in philosophy. Even works created in a universal medium, such as opera, retain their national character. In this process, it makes no difference where European culture comes from, whether it is Latin or Greek because each people has their own culture and each is equally valuable. And even if there is a European culture, it does not derive from the European consciousness, because European culture is in fact a collection of national cultures.⁵⁰

It is also questionable whether Europeanism, as the basis of a common identity, is capable of transmitting values. Some critics argue, for example, that it does not offer a conceptual basis for dealing with the challenges posed by globalisation and integration processes, and the fragility of national identities. However, as an ideal, it is rooted in a general political and moral ideal that has defined the history and present of Europe, and it is a specific cultural entity that is the basis of a collective “European” identity. In other words, the idea of Europeaness is ultimately nothing other than a specific collective identity, based on a general political, moral, and cultural foundation, and lived in a context of autonomous cultures.⁵¹

Europe’s cultural identity is mainly a constructed identity, and this construction is essentially based on the activities of European intellectuals – clerics, scientists, artists – and is characterised by Christian religious faith, humanism, scientific rationalism, and Enlightenment ideas. Nevertheless, it is also a state of lawful civil coexistence. Indeed, the early ideas of federalism foreshadowed the emergence of a political culture based on the orderly resolution of conflicts, constitutional rule of law, power-sharing, and multi-centredness, and the creation of a European order

50 Heller, 1997.

51 Szécsi, 2001.

of peace. Thus, the democratic rule of law is also part of the common European tradition. It is on these cultural foundations that the institutional aspects of the European Union are built. Alongside the initial economic unity, a cultural and political consciousness has been and is being built up beyond it.⁵²

In terms of the formation and development of European identity, we can see contradictory processes, in which nationalism, sovereignism, globalism, and loss of identity are spreading simultaneously. The European Union, if it is to become a federation, or at least to centralise more power for itself, must confront these contradictory processes and promote the creation of an autonomous European culture and identity based on it, because, without this emotional attitude, loyalty is difficult to achieve. There is a limit to the extent to which interest can hold such an entity together because interests change and maintaining a balance of interests is not an easy task. To achieve the goal of united in diversity, unity must be based on a solid foundation that is natural for all.

What kind of identity-building can the European Union achieve? This is a question that has been around for decades, and there have been attempts, albeit on different (cultural, economic) grounds, to build some kind of European identity since the 1970s. These changes can be traced back in part to the indecisiveness of European elites, who waver between cultural Europeanism and a pan-European macro-economic model. Later the European identity promoted the agendas of globalisation and deregulation in the European context, and then the European cultural identity politics. The latter brought the introduction of many symbols, although ineffective. Since the Maastricht Treaty, the legal and constitutional dimensions have been put in the centre.⁵³

6.2. Sense of belonging through cultural means: the role of common symbols, common history, common language, and common institutions

The common, collective identity is constructed by the political authorities of the European Union (Karolewski calls them “identity producers”) which, in order to generate a collective identity, introduce various identity technologies including the promotion of positive self-images, the generation of common symbols, the enhancement of common values etc. This positive self-image does not necessarily mean that it is true, rather being a tool for the European Union to model itself as a better “Self”. According to Karolewski, there are three main types of self-images promoted by the European Union: the images of cosmopolitan Europe, civilian power, and normative power. Through these images, the European Union projects images of superiority, which serves as a moral underpinning for identity-making. At the same time, this symbolic identity draws on shared symbols of commonality such as common currency, a common anthem, common holidays, or even a common past. And the

52 Bayer, 2001.

53 Tekiner, 2020, pp. 5–6.

common values, which are democratic and liberal values, such as standards of democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law, create a European Union as a community of values. Thus at the core of this identification lie principles of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and “good governance”.⁵⁴

This paper advocates the cultural approach, as a basis of the sense of belonging. From this basis we approach the question of how this sense of belonging can be constructed and through this, how can we build a common European identity which is capable of being a fundament of loyalty to the European Union as a state.

One of the tools of identity building is the creation of common symbols. The use of symbols is a way of speaking culture. Symbols are crucial elements in the organisation of the culture of human communities. The symbolic system of any society plays a key role in expressing its values and goals, in creating community identity, and is one of the main means of passing on traditional experiences and transmitting culture. Symbolism embodies a sense of identity in that symbols are endowed with subjective meaning in addition to their universal objectivity.⁵⁵ This process of subjective meaning and the emotional attachment to it, the process of forming a sense of identity, is currently taking place in the European Union, where there is a common flag, a common anthem, a common motto, and a common currency. However, the impact of all this on identity is not yet at an advanced stage, and it is a well-known criticism that the symbols of the European Union do not have sufficient emotional content – at least compared to the symbols of national cultures.

Part of identity formation is the representation of history in the collective memory. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (historically derived and selected) ideas and, in particular, the values attached to them.⁵⁶ What culturally separates communities from each other is to a large extent the result of historical influences. Historical relationships have had an impact on a given culture.⁵⁷ Indeed, each cultural group has its own unique history, based partly on the particular internal development of the social group and partly on the external influences to which the group is exposed.⁵⁸ Thus history is an important element of culture and, through it, of identity. A common European identity therefore requires common elements of history. It is not a matter of facts from the past, but rather of the collective memory of those facts, which preserves a reconstructed version of the past and thus becomes part of cultural memory.⁵⁹ In fact, it is the emphasis on, the focus on, the events and stories that bind groups together that can form the basis of a sense of history and then of identity and thus of identity formation. It is a constructed memory that needs to be founded and then disseminated. In the case of the European Union, however, there is an inherent contradiction in that the European Union itself does not have

54 Karolewski, 2012.

55 Foster, 2003, pp. 366–367.

56 Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181.

57 Boas, 1896, pp. 905–907.

58 Boas, 1920, pp. 316–317.

59 Pataki, 2010, pp. 778–779.

a past that can in itself become the basis for such a memory, which requires going back to earlier periods, but which also requires serious work, responsibility and agreement to highlight events that can have a positive content for everyone.

Another element of a common identity is the common language which is one of the most, if not the most, powerful tools for identity building. Language is a complex, symbolic system for organising experience and one of the most important means of transmitting thought. Language and culture are interdependent, and language influences the way we think and the way we see the world.⁶⁰ The loss of the ability to preserve language is one of the most important causes of the loss of culture.⁶¹ This is also a sensitive issue since the loss of the mother tongue is the completion of the assimilation process.⁶² This is probably the reason why the European Union does not promote the introduction of a common language used by all. On the contrary, as Láncoş stated,

with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty, we are witnessing a proliferation of the guarantees of linguistic diversity: ranging from the negative obligation to safeguard linguistic diversity and the principle of non-discrimination to the positive obligation of the Union to promote its linguistic diversity.⁶³

Finally, another identity-building tool is the institutional system. The system of European Union citizenship, but above all the rights that go with it – freedom of movement, consular protection, and the right to vote – deserve a mention here. One of the elements of this was the adoption of the Charter or even the strengthening of the idea of solidarity. It should be noted, however, that there is a much stronger attachment to one's own nation, or to regional units or cultural groups.

Another issue of institution-building is state-building. Here, the basic historical experience is that successful state-building is usually part of some kind of post-war settlement and that the existence of an internal social demand is an important part of success. The existence of such internal, social demand for institutions is at least doubtful in the case of the European Union. There are few means to create such demand, and, according to Fukuyama, such attempts by the international community have been more destructive, for example in developing countries.⁶⁴ It is therefore very difficult to create a basis of legitimacy for central power.

60 Balázs and Takács, 2009, pp. 39, 45–47.

61 Boglár, 2003.

62 Assimilation stems from the modern state's desire to unify, to nationalise, linguistically, culturally, and ideologically, the population under its jurisdiction. At its root was the idea that cultural differences, i.e. customs that deviated from or did not conform to the cultural pattern promoted by the authorities, could be used to subvert national and political unity. In this process, political loyalty and trust were combined with cultural conformity, citizenship, and cultural conformity were merged, and culturally diverse groups gave up their original cultural habits in order to share in rights and goods (or, as Bauman puts it, to prove their excellence); Bauman, 1997, pp. 54–55.

63 Láncoş, 2013, p. 93.

64 Fukuyama, 2014, pp. 2, 11–12.

Beyond the creation of social demand, the greatest challenge is obviously the division of powers, especially since typical identity-building tools such as education in culturally very diverse units can rarely work if they are directed solely from the centre, and it is more justifiable to refer the issue to the territorial level, because of the need to adapt to territorial specificities. There is a tension between the territorial state model and the ethno-cultural state model too. There is also no consensus on how to deal with those who are culturally different (be they national minorities or immigrants), although the latter is something that a federalist system might be better able to deal with if it does not seek to dominate all aspects of the issue but allows room for territorial specificities.

7. Conclusions

The study explored the question of what cultural diversity means for nation-building in a culturally diverse Europe, what challenges it poses for the European Union, and how to build a stable European Union on this basis, by creating a common European identity and, through it, loyalty to the European Union.

Through the concepts of culture, identity, loyalty and cultural diversity, it was possible to explore how to create a bond with a pan-European entity alongside one's own national identity. The paper argued that this can be done on a cultural basis and that the various means of identity building are of paramount importance towards this. Obviously, there are many unifying factors beyond these, such as the promotion of democracy or liberal values. These are only touched upon in this study because their role in identity is not primarily cultural.

The federalisation process is not simply about a balance and division of powers between the centre and the territorial levels, centralisation or the opposite process, but must involve identity building, the emphasis on the specific elements that bind communities together, the development of loyalty and the creation of social peace as a result. Part of this process is deciding what we think of ourselves, what holds us together, and what the basis of a distinct European culture is. However, it is also part of defining ourselves not only for ourselves, but also against others – this is part of identity – of knowing who we are and who the “others” are. At European level, this definition of identity is necessary because it is crucial for the maintenance of a common statehood. This is true even if we approach the issue on a culturally relativist basis, or if the processes of identity loss are intensifying. These identity-building processes started in the European Union, but in many respects, they are in their infancy and by any means far from consensus. This is also a reflection of the fact that the European Union and its Member States are wavering in the process of federalisation, that the process is less conscious and more haphazard, and that, since the formulation of the question and the related debates and decisions are being

avoided for the time being, there is no clear methodology on how to promote the emergence of a European identity, although it is still naturally taking shape.

Martinelli's words in 2017 are still relevant today.

In a Europe that faces the challenges of the financial crisis, refugees from violence and hunger, fundamentalist terrorism, there is a risk of closure within national boundaries, disseminating national-populist rhetoric, affirming separate and diffident identities, by resigning or even abandoning the European project of political integration. To counteract these trends, the current European project of political unification needs to be re-emphasised, finding the way to a European collective identity, not contrasted but alongside the different national identities, which refers to loyalty and shared commitment to the whole of cultural values, social norms and common political institutions we have outlined: fundamental human rights, civil liberties, democratic political institutions, rule of law, freedom of movement of people, goods and capital, social justice and non-violent resolution of conflicts. (...) But these identity values must above all be practiced in everyday citizens' attitudes and respected in the decision-making process of European institutions, promoting a European citizenship. The European identity, made possible by the common cultural heritage which innervates in various forms and degrees different European ethnoi, can only be developed through the growth of a European demos defined in terms of a set of shared rights and duties, capable of consolidating the constraints of citizenship within democratically elected institutions.⁶⁵

65 Martinelli, 2017, pp. 33–34.

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