SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND EUROPEANIZATION:
THE MYTH OF CULTURAL COHESION[1]

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Abstract

Theories of social integration presuppose a model of cultural consensus which is very much based on the nation-state. This idea of culture as a unitary framework based on consensus on core values, which are supposed to be embodied in European cultural identity, is reflected in many debates on European integration which stress the need for a socio-cultural dimension. But this idea of cultural cohesion as a prerequisite for social integration fails to understand the nature of culture and social integration. Culture is becoming the site for new conflicts over identity politics and European integration is not leading to greater cohesion but to increased opportunities for contentious action. This paper examines conceptions of culture and social integration in particular with respect to the prospects of a Europeanization based on reflexivity and pluralization.

This essay is a critique of a deeply embedded myth: the notion that social integration requires cultural cohesion in order to secure public commitment. This myth has been perpetuated in sociological theory since Durk-

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heim and, despite widespread critical examinations of the role of culture in the social integration of society, it has more recently made its way into discourses on European integration. Thus one version of this myth is that European integration is suffering from a lack of cultural cohesion as a result of too much economic-bureaucratic steering. In this variant of the myth it is assumed that only the nation-state is able to provide the necessary cultural resources for social integration to be achieved. These cultural resources are seen to lie in a fit between community and public commitment. Consequently, if European integration is to be successful it must devise ways of bringing about cultural cohesion comparable to that allegedly operative on the national level. More fundamentally there is the assumption that cultural cohesion is a precondition of social integration. The focus of this article is on precisely this link between culture and society, between cultural and institutional Europeanization. I shall argue that social integration in advanced societies, in particular in something as societally complex as the European Union (EU), rests less on cultural cohesion than on cultural plurality. Consequently what is needed is the notion of Europeanization as cultural pluralization as opposed to a notion of Europeanization as cohesion or integration.

There are of course different schools of thought on the feasibility of a genuinely integrated European Union. The so-called 'Euro-sceptics' defend the nation-state against the false promises of a European polity and society while 'Euro-pessimists' believe European integration could combat social exclusion and the democratic deficit by enhanced socio-cultural integration adopted from the nation-state. This latter group is in principle in favour of European integration but is pessimistic of the chances that European integration will succeed without the help of the cultural resources of the nation-state in whom sovereignty resides in the final instance, while the former group are altogether dismissive of European integration itself as a viable social model. Thus for the Euro-pessimists European integration must simply remain on the level of intergovernmental co-operation. Others, the 'Euro-optimists' or the pan-Europeanists, believe there is a uniquely European culture which could be a basis for social integration and which is not merely modelled on the nation-state. For them Europe can transcend its divisions and make a virtue out of diversity in the articulation of a cosmopolitan European identity.

With the rapid progression of the European Community from being an intergovernmental confederation to a union of states, the EU is slowly embracing the model of a federation, even though there is widespread uncertainty as to what this entails. Inevitably the question of the social and cultural basis of this political entity will be raised. While this has clearly been a minor dimension to European integration, which has emphasized economic and political integration, there has been a significant increase in debates and policy issues relating to social integration since Maastricht. What is interesting about these debates from the perspective of sociology is the prevalence of a myth of culture constructed around the idea of community as a basis for social integration. Without cultural cohesion, it is believed, social integration will be fragile and democratic legitimation will be weak. This assumption lies behind the defenders of the nation-state as well as the champions of European integration. Culture as a system of consensual values – whether those of the nation-state or a transnational entity – is thought to be a prerequisite for successful social integration. The assumption, then, is that public commitment rests on a culturally integrated community whose political reference point is the state, be it the nation-state or the Euro-state that is now in the making.

In this article I am proposing that Europeanization be seen less as social integration and cultural cohesion than as institutional adaptation and cultural pluralization. The process by which institutions respond to EU regulation does not necessarily result in social integration. European integration – as was once the case with the nation-state – is not a product of some kind of purposeful agency but of diverse processes, which though stimulated by institutional designs have their own logics of development. As Gary Marks argues, there was no 'master plan', though there were of course goals. Both the state and the EU are goal oriented, they are not ends in themselves (Marks 1997). Thus integration is not an end itself but a means of achieving something else. European integration did not then begin with the Treaty of Rome (1957) but with the very formation of modernity itself. Thus the peace of Westphalia (1648), which brought to an end the Thirty Years War and signalled the beginning of the age of the sovereign nation-state, could be seen as the beginning of European integration in the sense of a process of Europeanization (Klausen and Tilly 1997; Borneman and Fowler 1997). But there is a

difference between the state project and the project of the Union: the former was based on the goal of a constitutionally constructed polity whereas it does not appear that the Union has any clear goal. Whatever goals are being set are likely to be set in the independent process of Europeanization, by which I mean the process of institutional and cultural adaptation to the EU's regulatory order.

Debates on European integration are generally dominated by political scientists. There is a noticeable lack of sociological interventions. This essay is such a sociological intervention and draws on sociological theories of culture, which I believe are of relevance in matters relating to European social integration. In the following discussion I argue that while policy-making on European integration in the key areas of economic and social policy has been informed by a neo-liberal agenda (Levitas 1996), debates on cultural cohesion have been influenced by a predominantly neo-communitarian bias which is typical of much of neo-conservative discourse, but which can also be found in social democratic discourse. The old functionalist concepts of integration and cohesion, previously part of the theoretical vocabulary of modernization theory, is resurfacing today in a new communitarian ideology and is rapidly becoming a key idea in the perception of the social and cultural deficit in European integration. One manifestation of this is the great myth of a European cultural community, which, I am arguing, is a reification of culture and consequently fails to address more important issues that are at stake in social integration, namely the expression of, to use William Connolly's term, 'an ethos of pluralization' (Connolly 1995).

The Communitarian Myth of Culture

The myth of culture and community in discussions of European integration is reflected in at least three different, but closely related, uses of the notion of culture: culture as value consensus, culture as political community and culture as a meta-narrative of heritage (see Berger 1995; Schudson 1994; Smelser 1992).

In the first case culture is seen as a belief system composed of values which provide meaningful orientations to social groups, classes and individuals. This Durkheimian-Parsonian notion of culture typically looks to community as an example of value consensus. Without a coherent set of cultural values to motivate public commitment social integra-

tion is crisis-prone and anomic. With respect to European integration this notion of culture is prevalent in arguments which counter-oppose the sparse cultural landscape of Europe with the allegedly familiar and culturally cohesive world of nation-states. Thus European integration must recreate what exists on the level of the nation-state, but this is impossible because Europe is devoid of a cultural framework independent of the nation-state. It is thus taken for granted that cultural cohesion exits in national societies and that European integration must be confined to mere inter-governmental co-operation since only national governments can rely on cultural legitimation. A recent version of this thesis has been defended by Anthony Smith (1992; 1995) who argues that Europe will never be able to recreate what already exists on the level of the nation-state. Memory, mythic rites, symbols and ceremonies in his view will never be created in a way that will sink into the hearts of Europeans, allowing them to transcend the nation-state in their allegiances, identities and loyalties. This model, then, presupposes a notion of community as *cultural* community, that political community – the *demos* – is based on an *ethnos* which is defined by a historical and territorial community. Of course one can agree that European identity as such does not exist without holding to the view that a post-national identity cannot be created (Delanty 1995a; Therborn 1995).

In the case of culture as *political* community, culture is seen as political culture and more specifically as democratic legitimation. This conception of culture emphasizes the democratic deficit of the EU and looks to national political culture as a model for a more democratic European political community. Undoubtedly this has been the dominant discourse in debates on European integration and is the expression of widespread fears that the EU is developing in an undemocratic direction. Democracy, it is widely assumed, has existed on the level of the nation-state but European integration in creating new kinds of power not subject to formal democratic legitimation has undermined one of the great political achievements of modernity, namely the institutionalization of citizenship (Taylor 1996). Thus the problem with Euro-political institutions is that they lack civic culture which exists at the level of the nation-state and therefore Europeans can never be loyal to the EU in the same way that they are to the nation-state. Examples of this notion of culture are reflected in attempts to create a kind of European social citizenship based

on the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights. These attempts to create a European citizenship are based on the belief that national citizenship is an already functioning and adequate system of normative integration requiring only the supplementary measures of European citizenship. European citizenship is therefore derivative of national citizenship and does not exist in itself. This conception of culture is one that has a certain communitarian slant: public commitment to political structures is seen to rest on the surer ground of the national political community in which democracy is guaranteed by the nation-state. In the UK this idea of political community is reflected in the neo-republican rhetoric of New Labour which seeks to recover the idea of the nation as civil society. In general this idea of political community is more neo-republican, appealing to notions of civil society, and therefore a contrast to the sense of cultural community underlying the first case, which is predominantly conservative.

In the final case, culture as a meta-narrative, culture is construed as a discourse which transcends national societies and refers to a genuinely European cultural heritage. This concept of culture is generally popular with those in favour of European integration as a post-national process and was epitomized in the writings of de Rougement and the Euro-federalists. Thus, rather than looking to the nation-state as a model for a future federal Europe, some of the major champions of European integration look to the European cultural heritage as a spiritual discourse transcending the divisions of European history. What is thus emphasized is less value consensus or democracy than cultural heritage: culture as a transcendent discourse. Examples of this notion of culture can vary from high culture, to programmes to preserve cultural heritage, to cities of culture to notions of cosmopolitanism or Pan-europeanism. Pan-Europeanists stress the cosmopolitan aspects of culture. Their Europe is the Europe of high culture, as is suggested in the choice of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as the EU's anthem. Schlesinger (1996: 14) argues 'culture increasingly tends to function as a residual category in the dominant strain of Euro-thinking'. Another dimension to this notion of European culture is the equation of culture with identity. Thus European identity is supposed to be identification with Europe's cultural heritage. This vision of culture is exemplified in a speech of President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in

1994. Here he stated that what Europe above all needs is a 'spiritual or moral dimension' which could be capable of articulating an identity and the recreation of its charisma (Delanty 1995b). This is perhaps also what Jean Monnet meant when he famously said that if he were to start all over again he would start with culture (he did not state whose culture). Not surprisingly this kind of Europeanism, which is post-national in spirit and frequently based on superficial notions of cosmopolitanism, often goes alongside a commitment to 'Fortress Europe': the building of a new mega-region with an identity which excludes as much as it includes (Delanty 1996). This conception of European identity frequently contrasts a homogeneous notion of Europe to America or Islam, as in Huntington's conception, and can take the form of Euro-nationalism (Huntington 1993). A extreme version of this is to be found in the ideas of the European New Right who advocate a European ethnic identity and federalism (see Varenne 1993). Moves to create a European media culture can be seen in the context of an attempt to bring about cultural cohesion. Since the GATT talks in 1993, there has been a tendency to emphasize European cultural protectionism against Americanization, a move that seriously questions the Huntington thesis of the clash of civilizations: there is nothing to indicate that Europe is embracing the unitary ideal of the West which in fact is internally fragmenting.

Underlying these three notions of culture is a very pronounced emphasis on culture as a unified set of norms. Culture is all too often interpreted as a homogeneous discourse and one which somehow provides the glue to stick society together. Moreover, culture is also seen as essentialistic, as pre-established or a given. This vision of culture is most apparent in the first case, culture as value consensus or cultural community, but is also deeply embedded in the other cases. The myth of democracy operating on the nation-state suggests a unified civic culture of democratic legitimation based on political community, and the discourse of mind which characterizes pleas for European identity evokes a transcendent notion of culture supposedly embodied in something called the European 'heritage'. The result of the communitarian myth is the confusion of the sociological distinction between culture (cognitive structures) and society (the institutional structures).

This underlying notion of culture – as homogeneous, as essentialistic and as consensual – typifies the communitarian idea of culture. Not

surprisingly culture in these versions is often equated with identity, or is a resource for identity. Identity is likewise supposed to be something fixed and requires a stable cultural framework and political institutions to keep it in place. This framework is generally taken to be community. Public commitment, one of the central preoccupations of communitarian philosophy, is seen as residing in a cohesive framework of culture, be it that of the nation-state or a broader macro-region such as the EU. In the following section I discuss some critiques of this notion of culture as a mechanism of social integration. I shall argue that public commitment can take forms other than straightforward membership of a political or cultural community defined by nationality or even supranationality.

The Sociological Critique of Culture

Many social theories assume that culture (the totality of meaning, symbols, values, norms and ideas which define the cognitive structure of society) serves as the means for the reproduction of social structures. While some theorists, such as Durkheim and Parsons, saw this in positive terms as enhancing social integration, others such as neo-Marxists (for example Adorno, Gramsci, Marcuse, Althussser) saw it in negative terms as a system of control and ideological hegemony. This view of culture has been criticized on the grounds that culture is not always an organized or cohesive system of beliefs that somehow controls or maintains society, making social integration possible, but is contradictory and open to interpretation by different social actors.

In what follows I outline four main critiques of culture as a unified set of beliefs. Margaret Archer (1985; 1988; see also Lockwood 1964) has offered one of the most devastating critiques of 'The Myth of Cultural Integration'. She argues the myth of cultural integration is mistaken because it: 1) refuses to recognize that there may be inconsistencies within the cultural system; 2) ignores alternatives within society; 3) assumes that the population is undifferentiated; and 4) rejects the possibility that the conditions may develop which may damage socio-cultural integration. The idea of cultural cohesion, which is particularly pronounced in functionalist sociology, is based on the false assumptions that there are cultural patterns with an underlying unity and coherence and that this cohesion on the level of culture is reflected in uniform action. Instead, she contends 'far from a coherent Cultural System being pas-

sively received, its active mediation is required if it is to be translated into a semblance of social coherence. Thus interpretative manipulation is involved, whether to sustain the Cultural System or to change it' (1988: 14). Archer, in rejecting a one-way relationship between the cultural system and social integration, emphasizes how people make interpretative innovations, manipulate cultural loopholes and exploit inconsistencies in culture, which is never cohesive.

Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1990) argued against what they called the 'dominant ideology thesis' as a basis of value consensus, i.e. the view that there is a dominant value system more or less accepted by all social classes. In their view, culture as a whole cannot be defined in terms of ideology nor in terms of value consensus (see also Abercrombie and Turner 1978). Ideology, and culture in general, in modern society is very fragmentary and does not have the character of a totalizing system of thought. They also demonstrated that in any case ideologies do not dominate all classes. In the case of the 'dominant ideology' this largely served to secured the compliance of the dominant class and was not reflected in the belief systems of other classes. In the present context the significance of their critique of the Marxist orthodoxy of the dominant ideology as a mechanism of control through enforced value consensus is that culture is not automatically a means of securing social integration.

The critique of culture as a belief system producing consensus was also reflected in an article by Michael Mann (1970) on the social cohesion of liberal democracy. Mann argued against the view that there is common cultural system of values and norms in modern society, whether 'false consciousness' or 'true' value consensus. His critique of this liberal argument was the following: 1) Most values are extremely vague and can be used to legitimate any social structure. 2) Even if a value is stated precisely, it may lead to conflict. 3) The standards embodied in values are absolute ones, and it is difficult for them to co-exist without conflict. 4) Cohesion often results precisely because there are no common values. The picture that Mann portrayed was one that emphasized the fragmentation of the social order and the absence of cultural consensus.

These critiques of the model of cultural cohesion are also expressed in R. E. Pahl's (1991) argument that the search for social cohesion in the EU is built on dubious sociological arguments, which have been largely

invalidated. Pahl rightly criticizes the Durkheimian heritage in communi-
tarian sociological theories such as those of Robert Bellah et al (1996),
Daniel Bell (1979), Edward Shils (1957), and Bryan Wilson (1995).
These authors believe that culture can provide a basis for social integra-
tion but that there is a decline in social cohesion today as a result of the
fall of culture – the theme of Richard Sennett's (1977) neo-republican
The Fall of Public Man. Pahl (1991: 350) asks the question whether it is
really the case that social cohesion is less effective now than it was, or
was imputed to be, in the past. Whatever the answer to this question may
be, it is evident that with a rapidly transforming European society, a
notion of social cohesion modelled on the fixed normative system of
community cannot be simply applied to such large scale units as the EU.
There are still endemic social divisions and the propensity for conten-
tious action has increased, not declined. However, more importantly, the
nation-state and community is not the integrated entity it is often held to
be. In fact, as ethnographers have frequently argued, diversity, conflict
and tension are prevalent in local communities, which is far from being
the cohesive entity modern romanticists proclaim it to be (Herzfeld
1987). As Pahl (1991: 358) puts it: 'social cohesion in small-scale societ-
ies does not necessarily contribute either to national cohesion or to social
control. Indeed the contrary is likely to be the case'.

The final theoretical critique of the myth of culture as a basis for
social integration I wish to allude to is Habermas's (1987) theory of the
'colonization of the life-world'. According to Habermas, social integra-
tion, which is achieved through the symbolic and cultural structures of
the life-world and rests ultimately on communicative action, is being
constantly undermined by system integration, which involves the instru-
mentally rationalized sub-systems of economy and polity whose steering
media are power and money. The colonization of the life-world results
when social integration is subjected to more and more pressure from
system integration. One dimension to this is the phenomenon of fragmen-
tation which is becoming the functional equivalent of ideology. Systems
of domination are stabilized by the fragmentation of the communicative
potential of the life-world and not by universal ideologies which have
collapsed under the conditions of modernity. In his view, then, social
integration is not primarily a matter of cultural cohesion but is one of

fragmentation and is to be overcome by consensual forms of communication generated in public discourse.

Rethinking Culture

I have now arrived at a point at which a clarification of the concept of culture and its relationship to social integration is necessary. Against the view of culture as a cohesive system of values and beliefs which supply legitimation in return for value consensus, I wish to argue for a conception of culture whose relationship to social integration is more open-ended and diffuse, one which does not see the absence of consensus as a problem to be alleviated by cohesion. The mistake is not only to assume a one-way relationship between culture and social integration but to conflate identity with culture.

The concept of culture I am proposing is one that is influenced by Bourdieu's theory of culture as practice. Bourdieu stresses how culture is articulated in the identity practices of everyday life where it operates as a resource and cannot be defined by reference to value consensus or belief systems which transcend society. Culture amounts to patterns of speaking and acting in practice. Bourdieu's model of culture is not normally compared to Habermas's theory of communicative action (Bourdieu 1977; 1984; 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Lichterman 1995). While the two theorists look at society from very different perspectives, some common ground can be found in their view of the communicative reproduction of society. Bourdieu's notion of culture is highly cognitive and conflictual while Habermas (1987) stresses the role of communicative action in social integration. Whatever their differences, both share a common concern with a non-foundationalist and anti-essentialistic theory of culture analysed in terms of discursivity and reflexivity. Habermas (1989) stresses the idea of political culture as embodying a self-critical and reflective sense of community which is capable of discursively engaging itself with its cultural traditions. In his model, culture is something that must be forever interrogated and transformed. Consensus is not arrived at by cultural identification but is a critical-regulative idea. Bourdieu, too, stresses the idea of culture as a perpetually self-transformative process. For him culture is not a set of rules or values but is exemplified by the 'habitus' – the cultural situation-bound perspective of social locations – the meaningful reproduction of

internalized styles, codes and skills. Culture is then something that is always being subverted in the attempts of social actors to innovate.

The picture of culture that emerges from these theories is one that sees culture as articulated in identity politics: culture while being separate from agency is continuously transformed by agency which is in turn shaped by culture. In Ann Swidler's (1986) view, culture is a tool kit of beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and arguments which can be used in different ways depending on the kinds of situations with which agency is confronted. Like Bourdieu she argues for a performative theory of culture, a notion that is also reflected in Bauman's (1973) concept of culture as praxis. But social integration cannot be understood solely in terms of agency and culture.

There is also the question of structure. In late modern society structural change has resulted in increased social fragmentation on the one side, but on the other it has also resulted in increasing reflexivity which accompanies the setting free of agency from structure (Beck et al 1994). But an important dimension to reflexive modernity is the question of culture, which is neglected by Beck and Giddens (who have a strangely post-liberal conception of agency emancipating itself from previously constraining structures) and is also decontextualized by Habermas (for whom cultural traditions are never so constraining as to preclude their critical scrutiny (Delanty 1997). Both Scott Lash (1994) and Jeff Alexander have from different perspectives persuasively argued for a rethinking of reflexivity around the idea of culture (Alexander 1996; Alexander and Smith 1996). While the former emphasizes a postmodernized hermeneutic notion of aesthetic reflexivity and the latter a neo-functionalism, both miss the idea that culture and community is a zone of contestation. In order to address this question attention must be focused on such issues intrinsic to community and culture as trust, autonomy and solidarity.

Shifting the focus to deterritorialized and globalized conceptions of community, a suggestion might be what John Thompson (1990; 1995) calls the 'mediazation' of culture in contemporary society: culture is more and more being shaped by the mass media which provide it with new public spheres in which new kinds of debates take place. The age of print culture, which accompanied the rise of the nation-state, may be approaching an end in the new era of global communications in which communication is no longer primarily dependent on place. The EU is an

expression of this trend – which does not so much imply an end to the nation-state as its restructuring – and points to a new kind of culture beyond traditional conceptions of community, and which will be very much characterized by the mass media and debates on the deterritorialized and globalized discourses of, for instance, ecology, migration, violence and human rights.

The implications of this view of culture are that we cannot see culture either as a cohesive system of beliefs which provides value consensus for social integration and which is ultimately rooted in a sense of shared community, or, in Parson's classic model, as a system of values which guides social action and is reproduced through socialization in the family, the basis of community. In the mediaized society of our time, community is not operative at the level of the nation-state, which is not the unified entity it is often taken to be. Therefore it makes very little sense arguing for a new myth of culture to enhance European integration, which is likely to be characterized by new kinds of structure which will bring about new kinds of relationships between culture and agency.

The most salient aspect of agency today is that associated with the rise of new politics of identity, which have sprung up everywhere in the post-Cold War context. The cultural space that has been opened by European integration and the collapse of the Cold War consensus is being competed for by these new identity politics. Culture is today becoming a battlefield of new definitions of community (Schleslinger 1992). The success of policies for European social integration will very much depend on the extent to which they can win over the cultural space, opened up by European integration and processes of globalization, from the aesthetized politics and authoritarian communitarianism of the new nationalism, and give expression to a reflexive idea of community. I do not think that communitarian appeals to culture will help in this regard since these are rooted in a traditional conception of community as a fusion of society and culture. This fusion of society and culture typical of communitarian discourse prevents the reflexive components of culture from being released.

Conclusion: Towards a Reflexive Concept of Culture

I have argued against a model of culture as value consensus on the grounds that culture is not cohesive but is inherently conflictual and that

the relationship between culture and identity is steadily becoming more and more a basis of contentious action (Tarrow 1995). Moreover, culture does not provide social integration with a normative foundation but is more likely to lead to fragmentation, the collapase of unifying ideologies of social order. Indeed, it may be the case that culture is moving away from being a resource of social order to becoming more and more a site of contentious action. Sciulli and Bould (1992: 255) argue that social actors and policy-makers may have shared understandings on strictly quantifiable calculations of successes and failure, but when substantive value issues are at stake, rather being influenced by 'collective representations' in the Durkheimian sense, a fragmentation of meaning is more likely to result than any broad consensus.

An alternative model of culture, which is more sensitive to cultural innovation and attuned to social and cultural fragmentation, would stress the conflictual dimension to culture which can be seen as pluralization (Melucci 1995; 1996). I believe, then, that a lot about culture with respect to Europeanization can be learnt from developments in new social movement research. One of the central ideas to have emerged in this direction is the performative theory of culture: the processing of culture in the construction of identity around new kinds of commitment. As Swidler (1995: 5) writes: 'Probably more than any other field of study, social movement research can elaborate the relationship between cultural change and stasis because movements arise out of what is culturally given'. However, we now need to go beyond new social movement theory to address issues of community and integration. My suggestion would be to relate the idea of social movements to community in order to give to community a reflexive dimension.

The kind of cultural policy the EU would be best advised to pursue would be one that does not seek to reproduce on the transnational level that which has already decomposed on the level of the nation-state. The cultural component of public commitment missing from European social integration is not then to be found in national culture. Any such attempts to replicate nationality on the European level will not withstand the critiques of the sceptics and will provide a poor cultural mooring for economic and political engineering. A far more important project would be to embark on a programme of Europeanization aimed to institutionalize cultures of contention built around new norms of public commitment

and to promote a self-critical European identity. This is suggested by Habermas's (1992; 1994) notion of a post-national identity conceived of as a form of 'constitutional patriotism': an identification with the procedural principles of the constitution and not with the nation or state as such. A European cultural identity cannot be defined by reference to nationality, territory, geography or cultural heritage for these categories are inherently divisive, being generally constructed on a dichotomy of Self and Other.

However, this does not mean that European identity is empty of cultural content. In an age of cultural pluralization there is no reason why European cultural identity cannot be re-invented around a new reference point: the critical scrutiny of culture and reflexive community in the creation of a European civil society. The only viable model for European identity is one that challenges the exclusivist kind of cultural identity. A European identity is not then an alternative to nationality but is articulated in the recognition of multi-identification. The kinds of policies to be pursued should be ones that are more focused on the need to encourage multi-cultural identification than on a preoccupation with cohesion. The idea of cultural cohesion is then falsely conceived. The question of public commitment to Europe cannot be posed on the level of membership of a state and its conception of community – be it nation-state or the supra-national state of the EU, or on essentialistic ideas of culture as a transcendent discourse. In order to bring about enhanced social integration, policies will be needed which are designed to tap into forms of commitment which cannot be reduced to membership of a state or a territorial community.

The conclusion of this article is that an important dimension of Europeanization is that of cultural pluralization. The idea of cultural cohesion presupposes too much homogeneity, such as that associated with national identity and which is unrealistic as well as undesirable as a model of Europeanization. Given the diversity and contestability of cultural identities, Europeanization is likely to succeed only if it creates an ethos of pluralization rather than cohesion.

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