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1 • The Austro-Hungarian “precedent”

In a study published in 1929, Oscar Jászi offered an exhaustive analysis of the bundle of centrifugal forces that had led to the breakdown of the Habsburg monarchy at the end of the First World War. His approach was uncompromisingly critical in view of the spectacular policy failures that ended up causing the dissolution of the empire. Nonetheless, he could not fully refrain from expressing some basic commitment to what he considered to be a unique historical attempt. According to Jászi (1961 [1929]: 3), this uniqueness derived from the effort to hold together a “variegated mosaic of nations and people and to build up a kind of universal state, a “supranational” monarchy, and to fill it with the feeling of a common solidarity.” For the Hungarian author, such an attempt had to be considered to be one of the most ambitious experiments ever undertaken in human history:

“For, if the Habsburgs had been able really to unite those ten nations through a supranational consciousness into an entirely free and spontaneous cooperation, the empire of the Habsburgs would have surpassed the narrow limits of the nation state and would have proved to the world that it is possible to replace the consciousness of national unity by the consciousness of state community. It would have proved that the same problem which Switzerland and Belgium have solved on a smaller scale among highly civilized nations under particular historical conditions should not be regarded as a historical accident, but that the same problem is perfectly solvable even on a large scale and among very heterogeneous cultural and national standards.”

To begin a paper dealing with the present-day situation in the European Union (EU) with a reference to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy may seem rather far-fetched. It is obvious that there are crucial differences between the two types of political order. However, there are also a few interesting common elements, which may

Between Mill
and Hallstein.
Cultural
diversity as
a challenge
to European
integration

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justify, without aiming at a systematic comparison, to draw a few parallels between the “Kakania” so meticulously portrayed after its demise in the writings of Robert Musil and a “EUKania” still in the making. One of these elements is the sheer level of institutional complexity characteristic of both political settings, a complexity that involves the risk of institutional deadlocks. Another element can be found in a deficit of democratic legitimacy, although one should add that this deficit was certainly much more pronounced and consequential in the empire of the Habsburgs than it is in the case of the EU. An additional similarity is that in both polities the support for the genuinely supranational level of rule expressed by the “mass public” was or is relatively weak, as people tend to concentrate their loyalty on their respective national communities. Nonetheless, in both cases there was or is a comprehensive area of political regulations and economic governance beyond national borders, with significant distributive effects. Finally, both the Habsburg monarchy and the EU constitute political orders characterized by a marked cultural heterogeneity. Jászi (1961 [1929]: 3) made out “almost ten nations and twenty more or less divergent nationalities” in the Austro-Hungarian system. Diversity is a highly relevant factor in EU politics as well. Its importance will become even more palpable in the course of the coming enlargement. At present, the Union has 15 members that make for 11 official languages in its institutional operations. The successive admission of a dozen of new member states that is projected after 2004 will imply a sharp increase of both economic and cultural diversity within the EU.

Coming to grips with diversity is certainly not a minor challenge involved in the political integration of Europe. The magnitude of this challenge becomes immediately evident when we think of the central role nationalist movements played during the last two centuries in European history. Typically, nationalist conflicts are articulated by politicizing the meaning of cultural differences. Jászi’s analysis of the reasons that led to the breakdown of the Habsburg system is full of examples that show the force of processes of this kind, and there is little evidence that this force has become a phenomenon of the past when we look at the situation in present-day Europe. Against this background, one can reasonably argue that, so far, a broad agreement on overcoming nested traditions of nationalist strife between states and peoples has been one of the main normative driving forces of European integration. At the same time, according to the official discourse of EU politics, this goal is to be pursued without threatening historically established cultural identities, at least as long as these correspond to the identities of member states.

The aim of this paper is to explore — in rather preliminary and tentative terms — to which extent a very important form of diver-

sity, namely linguistic diversity, is an impediment for creating a common public sphere and bringing about the “supranational consciousness” Jászi had in mind when referring to the failed normative potentials of the “Kakanian” world. The starting point for this exploration is the well-known hypothesis put forward by John Stuart Mill, who assumed that there is a strong connection between the prospects for democratic rule and the existence of a linguistically integrated public. In more or less implicit ways, the hypothesis seems to have reemerged in the current debates on democratizing the European Union. My next step is to reassess Mill’s argument by pointing at the experiences of West European democracies that have followed a multilingual path in their institutional development. The paper’s last section focuses on the importance of recognition as a mechanism for sustaining intercultural solidarity in a polycentric and diverse European polity.

2 • Mill vs. Hallstein

The debate on the implications cultural diversity has for the political integration of Europe seems to oscillate between two poles that can be related, if one is prepared to put things in a bold and simple manner, to the names of John Stuart Mill and Walter Hallstein. On the one hand, contributions drawing their inspiration from “grand” political theory often show a preference for creating or preserving political units with a high level of linguistic and cultural homogeneity. On the other hand, the pragmatically oriented “official” discourse that underpins the process of European integration is typically eager to celebrate diversity without reservations.

In one of the canonical texts of modern liberalism, the *Considerations on Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill (1972 [1861]: 392) wrote:

“Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist. The influences which form opinions and decide political acts are different in the different sections of the country. An altogether different set of leaders have the confidence of one part of the country and of another. The same books, newspapers, pamphlets, speeches, do not reach them. One section does not know what opinions, or what instigations, are circulating in another.”

If one adopts such a perspective, the prospects of sustaining representative forms of rule depend on the degree of national and linguistic unification attained within a given political unit. For Mill, a

collectively rooted “fellow-feeling” is a substantial requisite for the successful development of democratic institutions. His view is grounded on the assumption that a liberal democracy will only be able to cope with situations of intense political conflict as long as its citizens share some fundamental identity patterns, as manifested by language and culture. In Mill’s model, language works as the cement of a shared political culture. Such a shared culture is needed if the institutions of a liberal democracy are to function in a proper way. Thus, to a substantial extent, cultural homogeneity or at least a minimum degree of cultural affinity become a requisite for the exercise of civic solidarity.

An interesting aspect of Mill’s often-quoted assertion is that it points at the instrumental and the expressive dimensions of language, although without using these categories explicitly, and situates them in the context of democratic theory. Language is seen as an expressive symbol, as one of the most characteristic manifestations of national identity. Accordingly, Mill interprets linguistic differentiation as a symptom of lacking political cohesiveness. Yet language pluralism is also a negative feature in instrumental terms, as it is an obstacle for the flow of political communication beyond nationality borders and it inhibits the formation of a common public sphere. What is described in the *Considerations*, can thus be called a vicious circle of non-integration: The lack of foundations supporting a common identity leads to rigid communicative barriers. Such barriers, then, obstruct the process of forming a shared political identity.

Mill’s approach entails a clear normative preference for creating democracies that are homogeneous along linguistic and cultural lines, as cultural diversity is taken to be a major impediment to civic solidarity. During a long period of time, lasting way into the 20th century, this preference remained a standard ideological orientation for liberal nationalists, who tended to adopt the approach *one people, one state*. This approach attained a quasi official character as a guideline for the political restructuring of Central and Eastern Europe after World War I. The former territorial domains of imperial rule were subdivided in accordance with Woodrow Wilson’s interpretation of the nationality principle. The balance of restructuring Europe by applying the Wilsonian formula was questionable, to say the least, as the principle of nationalities was often implemented following opportunistic criteria. All over the Eastern half of the Continent, significant minorities saw themselves as victims of the political concessions made to new titular nations provided with their “own” states. The whole interwar period was marked by intense conflicts resulting from this situation (Galántai 1992). As far as Mill is concerned, we should keep in mind that in his line of reasoning the preference for cultural

homogeneity has rather the quality of an empirically derived conclusion than the status of an a priori judgment. In other passages of the *Considerations* in which nationality issues are discussed, it becomes clear that one major focus of preoccupation for Mill is the Austro-Hungarian domain of rule. Thus, his argumentation does not really put under closer scrutiny if there is general empirical evidence that gives the preference a robust analytical and empirical foundation.

Mill's legacy in contemporary thinking on democracy and diversity has remained strong. Thus, in the debate on Europe's political future, it is frequently assumed that the high degree of cultural heterogeneity within the EU acts as a factor obstructing the making of a common civic identity among Europeans. In Germany, for example, this case has been made by Dieter Grimm, a constitutional lawyer and former member of the Federal Constitutional Court. Grimm (1995) raises the question to which extent the constitutionalization and democratization of the EU's institutional framework might offer an apt remedy against the deficient political legitimacy of transnational decision-making. He turns out to be highly skeptical in this respect, as, in his analysis, the possibilities of formulating a basic European consensus are contingent upon requisites that cannot be included in a constitutional agenda. From Grimm's point of view, plans elaborated with the intention of solidifying the EU's democratic foundations are doomed to irrelevance or failure if they do not count with the support of a dynamics of cultural integration operating across national borders. The constitutional expert questions that there is a chance of creating a European community of participation without having previously created a European community of communication. The approach adopted by Grimm is straightforward: There can be no European democracy as long as there is no European public sphere; there can be no European public sphere as long as there is no European people (in the sense of a *demos* united by strong civic bonds); and there can be no European people as long as there is no common European language. Thus, in quite a Millian vein, linguistic differentiation is seen as a particularly challenging form of cultural diversity if a democratic polity is to be institutionalized.

More or less one century after the publication of the *Considerations*, the German Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission, joined Mill in reflecting on the relationship between linguistic diversity and the legitimation bases of political integration. Referring to the situation he had been observing in the European Community, Hallstein makes the following remarks:

“Europe is diversity. We want to preserve the wealth and the difference of characters, of talents, of beliefs, of habits, of customs, of taste. (...)

The fact that the Europeans do not speak the same language cannot disturb us. Switzerland provides us with the classical example showing that linguistic variety does not constrain, but rather enrich, and we wish for our Belgian friends that they can soon be cited as another example. The multiplicity of languages is not an obstacle but an incentive. The experiences with our European officials in Brussels (...) prove this.”¹

The multilingual orientation that the European project has had since its very beginning responds to the obligation to protect cultural diversity. With his diversity-sensitive understanding of integration, Hallstein is a true spokesman of the generation of founding fathers of the European Union, who were confident that the functional spillovers of the Common Market would not really affect the realm of *cultural* identities. The process of integration should rather imply giving up monolithic conceptions of national belonging and contribute to the formation of new patterns of *political* identification on a European scale.

Thus, the Treaty on European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992, bolstered a tendency that was already visible in the previous institutional development of the integration project: The goal of establishing “an ever closer union” based on common political values and the goal of preserving the diversity of cultures — a diversity which comes to mean in the first place the diversity of the cultures of nation-states — are seen as mutually reinforcing components in Europe’s semi-constitutional architecture. The “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union”, solemnly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in Nice in December 2000 contains a condensed version of a message consistently repeated in the Union’s successive basic treaties and political declarations. The following paragraphs are from the Charter’s Preamble:

“The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values.

Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.

The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States and the organisation of their public authorities at national, regional and local levels; it seeks to promote balanced and sustainable development and ensures free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, and the freedom of establishment.”

¹ Hallstein 1973: 112 (original text in German).

Article 22 of the Charter of Rights consists of one short sentence that puts additional stress on the political significance of diversity in the EU: “The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.”²

The official adoption of the principle of “integral multilingualism” by European institutions can be understood as a tribute the Union deliberately pays to cultural diversity. In this respect, the EU’s language policy is a genuine expression of a multinational constellation. The dominant players in this constellation, though, are not national communities *tout court*, but nation-states. Languages possess a formally equal status in the EU only as state languages. Assigning all state languages the same official status was supposed to create an important symbolic barrier against potential setbacks provoked by nationalist resentments (Coulmas 1991). After the ratification of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the elites devoted to securing a fragile European consensus were eager to keep away from the conflicts that might have been involved in raising language issues, as the quote taken from Hallstein indicates. Officially, there is no European policy pretending to define common linguistic standards for the transnational community in formation. Nor does the EU have, if we leave aside the continuous declarations of good will and the need to respect the prerogatives of the member states, a proper program telling us in which areas and in which ways cultural and linguistic diversity should be protected. After all, in the real life of European institutions, *de facto* agreements create a context in which “integral” multilingualism is largely replaced by a much more selective language regime, a regime that is typically based on French and/or English.

Regardless of their obviously different implications, both Millian and Hallsteinian views of the relationship of cultural diversity and political integration in Europe seem inclined to conflate normative preferences and empirical assessments. The Millian perspective establishes an extremely rigid connection between a common language, a culturally integrated public sphere and a shared civic identity. Such a perspective underestimates the integrative capacity of multilingual democracies, while it may overestimate the communicative cohesiveness of publics using the same linguistic standard. Ultimately, it even precludes the possibility of leading a politically productive intercultural dialogue on a common democratic ground. Inversely, approaches to diversity following the Hallstein model neglect the problem that the making of a civic identity transcending given national affiliations is likely to imply more than simply adding up cultural differences. Thus, the declared aim of protecting diversity requires a political consensus that must rely on some shared cultural

² Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in: *Official Journal of the European Communities*, 18.12.200, C 364/1-C 364/22. The Charter has sometimes been portrayed as an embryonic sketch of a European constitution; however, it is not a legally binding document.

understanding. As far as the language issue is concerned, for example, sociolinguistic evidence often shows that a conflict potential between different language communities is a structural feature of modern multilingual polities (Fishman 1999). It is hard to imagine how a common European civic space is to be institutionally moulded without taking such evidence into account.

3 • Linguistic diversity in West European democracies

What can be said today, some 150 years after the original publication of the *Considerations*, about the prospects for democracy in the context of linguistic differentiation when we look at the findings made available by research in the field of comparative politics? Robert A. Dahl (1971: 105-107, 120-121), one of the leading theorists of liberal democracy of our times, took up the language issue in a broad empirical study that tries to determine the conditions of stability of democratic regimes. In the study, multilingualism is regarded as a typical feature of subcultural pluralism, a category that also includes the effects of religious, ethnic and regional differentiation. According to Dahl's findings, such a structural pluralism, that is characteristic of multinational states, often imposes major restrictions on the capacity democratic systems have for politically integrating different groups. Dahl (1971: 108) refers explicitly to the Mill hypothesis and observes:

“That subcultural pluralism often places a dangerous strain on the tolerance and mutual security required for a system of public contestation seems hardly open to doubt. Polyarchy in particular is more frequently found in relatively homogeneous countries than in countries with a great amount of subcultural pluralism.”

Similarly, Dankwart Rustow (1975: 56-58), one of the pioneering figures of contemporary “transitology” (i.e. the research on transitions to democracy), argues that the combination of modernization, democratization and linguistic heterogeneity gives rise to severe political challenges. Rustow does not say that these challenges can't be mastered. Yet, in his view, political actors in multilingual democracies must show an extraordinary flexibility and ability to learn in order to overcome group antagonisms that are often based on different linguistic identities. Finally, David Laitin (2000), to mention a more recent example, after analysing a data set covering 148 countries, presents a result that can hardly be taken as a confirmation of Mill's thesis: According to Laitin, language conflicts tend to be more conducive to institutional mediation than other politically salient

forms of cultural heterogeneity. Moreover, their potential for instigating a dynamics of ethnic violence seems to be remarkably low compared to other expressions of cultural differentiation. However, as the focus is primarily on the phenomenon of violence, the effects that linguistic cleavages have on the quality of democratic rule are of secondary importance in this kind of analysis.

All in all, the overtly skeptical attitude characteristic of Mill has certainly not disappeared from present-day discussions devoted to political cohesion in linguistically segmented democracies. Mill's thesis continues to be very influential, as we can see in the type of approach adopted by scholars such as Dieter Grimm. At the same time, our knowledge about the mechanisms of integration available in democratic polities that have only "weak" communicative foundations is still highly fragmentary. There is remarkably little research at our disposal that shows how, in linguistically segmented contexts, processes of political communication work at the micro-levels of society. Against this background, the picture we get when looking at the political implications of multilingualism is, at any rate, a complex one. To put forward a categorical and rigid assessment when describing the interplay of linguistic diversity and democratic politics, as Mill did in 1861, does not look like a very promising strategy today.

How has linguistic pluralism affected the institutional development of democracy in the West European context? It has to be taken into account that the variation of language policy constellations in the region is quite high. In some cases, the monolingualism of the state largely corresponds to the sociolinguistic reality of a country as, for example, in Iceland. Among the EU member states, Portugal seems to come pretty close to such a situation. In other cases, the monolingualism of a state is not as much a reflection of a society's linguistic structures, but rather an expression of the political intention to ignore cultural pluralism in the name of an officially stipulated collective identity. In the EU, France and Greece can be taken as the main exponents of this kind of approach to language policy. Broadly speaking, however, EU members are prepared to officially acknowledge the existence of different linguistic communities on their territory. Accordingly, there is a wide range of measures that regulate language pluralism in West European democracies. At one end of the spectrum, we will find more or less symbolic concessions made in order to protect the individual rights of speakers of minority languages, at the other end, a policy of generalized bilingualism applied to all public institutions (Kraus 2000: 146-148).

A multilingual social structure is a challenge for modern democratic polities. In a nutshell, the challenge consists in weakening the tensions to be expected between the promotion of administrative effi-

ciency on the one hand, and the requirements of democratic legitimation, on the other hand. These two aspects can roughly be related to the instrumental and to the expressive dimensions of language respectively. The challenge is well captured in Mill's hypothesis: Functional communication barriers obstruct the formation of a shared political identity; at the same time, such barriers are likely to remain high as long as there is no common political will striving to transcend them. In order to confront the problem, however, the model of a "glossophagic" state, a state that aims at imposing a system of public monolingualism and at devouring minority languages (Laponce 1987: 201), is certainly not the only way of responding to the challenge. Often enough, multilingualism served as a starting point for distinctive paths of institutional pluralism. Institutional pluralism must not be considered a priori as an obstacle in the process of consolidating democratic structures. Countries such as Switzerland, Belgium and Finland have a democratic record that is definitely not below "average" West European standards. Seen in this light, the "problem" does not reside in the institutional specificities of multilingual democracies. The problem is that the more or less canonical contributions to the theory of liberal democracy were formulated in a context that made cultural and linguistic homogeneity a more or less implicit background condition of political integration.³ From the corresponding angle, diversity was typically perceived as an anomaly to be erased by appropriate forms of institutional engineering. Thus, the "dogmatic monolingualism" characteristic of the mainstream of modern liberal-democratic thinking had little to offer in order to grasp original and interesting ways to manage diversity in a democratic institutional setting.

Here, I would like to get back to a central point of concern for John Stuart Mill, namely the public sphere and its importance as a central site for defining common civic commitments. There are obvious affinities between Mill's postulate of a culturally united public and the dominant versions of the French republican model. France might be the paradigmatic example of how a unified space of political communication was systematically formed "from above", i.e. by the state and its institutions. Since the 19th century, the goals of linguistic homogenization and of creating a public sphere that should guarantee the intertwining of civil society and political society became virtually exchangeable. The fervent celebration of the *francophonie*, that continues to be a recurrent feature of Republican political culture, was nurtured by the — obviously questionable — conviction that only the French language embodied the enlightened revolutionary message of 1789, thus transcending all social and cultural particularisms.

The examples of multilingual democracies such as Belgium, Finland or Switzerland stand in manifest contrast with Jacobin pat-

³ Cf. Tully (1995: 58-98), who describes the ideological universe of early liberal constitutionalism as an "empire of uniformity".

terns of polity-building and Westminster models of majority rule. An aspect that is often neglected when these countries are brought into focus is that the possibilities for direct and extensive communication within the population remained fairly limited long after democratization. Let us look at a few figures that take us back to a core assumption made in the Mill hypothesis. In Switzerland, in a survey realized in 1972, approximately 40% of the German-Swiss and 50% of the Romans declared that they only were competent in their own mother tongue. For Belgium, linguistic census data are only available until the year 1947.⁴ According to the results reported for that year, the proportion of bilingual persons was 16% in the whole country, bilingualism referring to the competence to communicate both in Dutch and in French. Even in Finland, where linguistic borders have a profile that is much more blurred than in the cases of Switzerland or Belgium, data collected in 1950 show that after several decades of democratic politics the bilingualism practiced by public institutions was not a societal bilingualism: The proportion of those who regarded themselves as bilingual was 8% within the Finnish-speaking group and 46% within the Swedish-speaking group.⁵

Obviously, such data do not provide us with a framework that would be solid enough for developing a general model of multilingual political publics. But they might nonetheless indicate that, under the safeguard of the mutual recognition of linguistically defined group identities, democratic integration did take place in multilingual societies. This is not to say that the paths followed by these societies were free of conflict, but, at any rate, they opened a terrain that so far has furthered the coexistence of citizens under conditions of both political equality and awareness of difference.⁶ To varying degrees, the spaces of political communication in the three countries considered are divided along linguistic lines. For instance, linguistic differentiation is a graspable reality at the level of the broadcasting media controlled by public authorities. It is also a factor present in the day-to-day activities of political institutions. In multilingual democracies, by definition, the political debate is a debate led in different languages; simultaneously, it is also a debate that transcends linguistic borders. We may assume that in communicative settings of this kind, multilingual individuals play an important bridging role, insofar as they are able to act as discursive mediators between different communities in the process of articulating political demands. In this sense, they may help to articulate the “supranational consciousness” Jászi was thinking of when writing about the prospects for diverse polities. Accordingly, it should be noted that, in a rudimentary form, attempts at encouraging the use of multilingual repertoires in the domains of public communication can also be discerned in the late period of the Habsburg monarchy, whose linguistic scenery

4. In later counts, the authorities abstained from establishing the numerical size of language groups in order to avoid controversies; see McRae (1986:35).

5. The figures are taken from the systematic comparative work on multilingual democracies produced by McRae (1983: 67-68; 1986: 39-40; 1997: 99-100).

6. See Holenstein (1998) for an assessment of the meaning of multilingualism in Switzerland from the perspective of political philosophy; see Van Parijs (2000) for a similar analysis of the Belgian case. The Canadian situation offers many interesting elements of comparison, especially from a normative angle; see Kymlicka 1998 and Taylor 1994.

was far more complex than the situation we find in Belgium or in Switzerland.⁷

Almost 150 years have passed since Mill wrote his *Considerations*, but the truth seems to be that our knowledge about the bases and rules of political communication in multilingual democracies remains surprisingly limited. If we look at the present situation in the EU, it would be more than helpful if we were able to rely on empirically informed models that would shed some light on the *micro* structures sustaining public spheres in the context of cultural and linguistic differentiation. After all, neither the relationship between communication and politics nor the role of the public sphere in modern democracies can be properly analyzed if language is regarded as a factor that is exogenous to the political process. Often enough, setting the linguistic terms of communication is an eminently political issue. A democratic public that is segmented along cultural and linguistic lines requires special mechanisms for collective decision-making, protecting those areas that are substantial for the reproduction of specific group identities from the pressures of an alleged “general will”. At the same time, a heterogeneous democratic public must still be able to define a “common good”, however fragile and provisional this may be, and to generate a widely accepted frame that makes for political cohesion. In multilingual democracies, we may assume, such a frame is created by a horizontal interlocking of public spheres, an interlocking that implies that actors representing diverse realms of politics and civil society raise their specific demands in a way that relates them to each other. Processes of intercultural mediation — “translations” in a very literal sense — apparently play a central role in sustaining the corresponding political dynamics. Against this background, a “politics of translation” will remain a highly important aspect in the process of building transnational institutions for an integrating Europe.

4 • Recognition as solidarity

In the course of its institutional development, the EC/EU has acquired more and more features of a polycentric multinational community. This community lacks a hegemonic force controlling the process of political integration. At the same time, the emergence of a European level of governance has strongly affected the sovereign character of the member states. Due to the successive Europeanization of decision-making structures, unilaterally conceived national initiatives have become obsolete in many important policy areas. The dynamics of Europeanization is also loosening up the traditional

⁷ This observation should at least hold for the Western part of the monarchy, known as *Zisleithanien*, that pursued a relatively flexible course in its nationality policies after the *Ausgleich* of 1867; the public regulation of multilingualism in the territories represented in the Austrian Crown Council is described by Goebel (1997).

interconnection of cultural and political identities that constituted a typical feature of sovereign statehood. While EU member states show a growing disposition to give up rigid ways of interpreting old prerogatives regulating the institutional articulation of collective identities, the EU itself does not claim to acquire new prerogatives in that domain. Therefore, the EU may well be considered to constitute a post-sovereign order that implies a clear departure from former models of national rule. The Union has little pretensions to create a close transnational fit between the realms of politics and culture; its declared aim is rather to protect the plurality of politically relevant cultural attachments that can be found in the sphere of its institutional activities.⁸

To work out a new approach towards cultural pluralism hardly was, if it played any role at all, one of the main preoccupations of the political architects of an integrating Europe. Nevertheless, to a considerable extent, integration has implied paving the way for a politics of recognition on a European scale. However, the enactment of cultural recognition in the EC/EU is not exempt from contradictions. On the one hand, recognition is biased towards the identities embodied by nation-states. Subnational, transnational or intercultural and “hybrid” patterns of identification play a clearly subordinate role in the Union’s institutional approach towards diversity. Thus, cultural identities often become a tactical device used to underpin the articulation of nation-state interests in the system of intergovernmental bargaining. On the other hand, the preponderance of nation-state based legitimization discourses in EU politics makes it extremely difficult to find a common response to the challenges cultural diversity poses for the Union. Up to now, respect for the national identities of the member states has the highest priority in the policy packages set up by the European Union, as far as cultural matters are concerned. The Union’s institutions seem overwhelmed by the dilemma involved in finding a balance between the protection of diversity and the development of a common political framework for Europeans. Institutional inertia, however, will not provide for proper defense against the dynamics of “negative” integration. In view of the developments observable in the field of economic and social policy, this term has been coined in order to describe the tendency that, because of the lack of explicit political deliberation and regulation, matters of collective concern, end up becoming the object of “invisible” market forces. Culture should not be regarded as a domain that is immune to this kind of tendency. The way the language issue is dealt with in the realm of European institutions is a good case in point: The option for nondecision-making in the field of language policy is not a real support for cultural pluralism; it will end up producing very specific and selective results. Instead of breeding an interplay of identities that is

⁸ A suggestive interpretation of the EU as a post-sovereign political community is presented by MacCormick (1999: 123-136).

free of domination, negative integration in the field of culture will lead to standardization without a political debate.

What could a politics of recognition that offers a more balanced perspective for dealing with diversity in the EU look like? While observing general criteria of equality, as listed in the “Charter of Fundamental Rights”, the Union would have to find innovative ways of dealing with the diversity of cultures in the process of transnational institution-building. Neither should diversity be reduced to the particular identities of homogeneous nation-states, nor should it be declared a matter of a “benign neglect” expressing a supposedly abstract cosmopolitanism. Subsidiarity might be a potential point of departure for implanting such an understanding of recognition in Europe’s institutional setting. The dangers of experiencing painful clashes of different cultural identities in the European polity would be reduced by splitting up identity levels according to the principle of subsidiarity and by allowing people to remain sovereign “within their own circle”. All institutional attempts at cultural standardization in the Union realized at the expenses of smaller communities — the choice of a limited number of European languages for official communication in a few functional domains, for instance — should be accompanied by appropriate compensations to the members of the negatively affected collectivities. In the context of transnational integration, cultural diversity would be institutionalized, but to varying degrees and with different implications at different political levels. Specific loci of deliberation or policy-making, for example, might be governed by specific language regimes, shifting from more selective to more integral forms of multilingualism. The more participatory the issue area involved, the more flexible and generous the corresponding language regulations would obviously have to be. Subsidiarity breaks up the rigid connection between legitimate forms of rule, which are supposed to meet general democratic standards, and the institutionalization of single and exclusive identity patterns that has typically been realized by sovereign nation-states (Kraus 2003).

By focusing on the language issue, one realizes that recognition plays an elementary role in culturally differentiated political communities if group relations are to be permeated by a moment of reflexivity. Although it may well be conceived of as a freedom located in a transnational space, the freedom of European citizens still is a socially embedded freedom. Multilingual democracies pay tribute to the embeddedness of civic identities by recognizing the existence of specific linguistic commitments. Similarly, the construction of the transnational order of the EU requires from all parties involved that they learn to see that the sociocultural dimension of political integration is a fundamental aspect in the institutional

changes we are going through. Ultimately, the politics of recognition evidences that the citizens themselves can't be regarded as something "given", as a factor that is exogenous to democratic processes. Rather, "citizenization" (Tully 2001: 25) and its institutional regulation must be seen as constitutive aspects of democratic politics. From this perspective, recognition is not seen as a mechanism institutionalizing a static politics of "being", but rather as a device supportive of a politics of "becoming". It thus can be considered to be an important element in an institutional setting in which citizens learn to develop a reflexive approach towards their own identity, an approach that is aware of the existence of other identities and fosters civic attitudes that tolerate the expression of diversity within a democratically shared polity. In this respect, cultural recognition may well turn out to be an important requirement for both the individual and for the collective exercise of civic solidarity.

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