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Ethnicities

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The politics of complex diversity: A European perspective

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Peter A. Kraus
University of Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

The concept of complex diversity points at a social and political context in which diversity has become a multidimensional and fluid empirical phenomenon. At the same time, it calls for a thorough discussion of the normative framework we rely upon when we talk about identity politics, integration or recognition. The article focuses on the main ethno-national and cultural expressions of complex diversity in present-day Europe. On this basis, it offers a critical interpretation of the dominant approach towards diverse identities that is connected to the process of European integration. Although diversity is being recurrently celebrated in Europe's official political discourse, the term tends to be used in a superficial and biased way, which links it rather to the dynamics of the market than to a reflective identity politics. If we want to grasp the emancipatory potential of complex diversity, we have to tackle its challenges from a perspective that avoids essentializing culture yet is still aware of the key importance culturally grounded contexts of praxis have for articulating a politics of recognition.

Keywords

complex diversity, diversity and multiculturalism, ethnic relations, European Union, Europeanization, identity politics, majorities and minorities, nationalism, recognition

Introducing the Issue: Erdogan in Germany

In February 2008, Tayyip Erdogan visited Germany as the Turkish Prime Minister. In the afternoon of Sunday 10 February, Erdogan interrupted the official part of his visit to give a speech organized as a 'private event'. The event took place in Cologne, in a hall filled with 20,000 people with Turkish backgrounds. While

Corresponding author:
Peter A. Kraus, CEREN – Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism, University of Helsinki, PO Box 16, FIN-00014 University of Helsinki, Finland
Email: peter.kraus@helsinki.fi

addressing them, Erdogan made the case that the 'German Turks' should integrate into their host society, but at the same time decidedly reject assimilation. In the words of Turkey's leading politician, assimilation had to be regarded as something utterly negative, as a 'crime against humanity'. In meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, previously held during his visit, he had already advocated creating Turkish-language high schools and universities in the Federal Republic.[1] With his opinions and demands, Erdogan caused a remarkable political stir on Germany's political scene. Conservative politicians, in particular, expressed their bewilderment or anger with the views expressed by the Turkish Prime Minister. Some of them even drew the conclusion that Germany should push for an interruption of Turkey's accession talks with the European Union (EU) for as long as Erdogan did not refrain from his declarations.

On the one hand, Erdogan's statements, if we take them at face value, connect in interesting ways to recent debates in social and political theory, which have all in all led to a critical reassessment of what assimilation ultimately implies. Let me say straightforwardly that I very much agree with this criticism and that I share the view that assimilation must be considered an illegitimate form of domination. I will get back to this point later, when I try to sketch out a normative framework for dealing with complex diversity. On the other hand, by following the debate initiated by Erdogan in Germany, one will very quickly detect the problematic use of certain key concepts – such as integration, assimilation or diversity – in the political discourses we are exposed to day by day. Basically, the positions adopted on the different sides of the debate seemed rather to be motivated by tactical considerations than to represent coherent political claims. By taking an active stance against assimilationist policies as the prime minister of Turkey, Erdogan placed himself on an extremely shaky normative ground, as he was asking the German authorities to follow an approach that the Turkish state has been rigidly denying to its own minorities over the last decades. The Kurds are only the most notorious example of the assimilationist pressures to which minority groups have been exposed in the republic created by Ataturk.[2]

On the German side, in contrast, more than one observer was eager to emphasize that collectivities of immigrants such as the Turks were not entitled to raise demands whose realization would turn them into national minorities, and thereby disrupt the dynamics of their integration into the host society. Yet the normative line drawn between the claims of a national minority and those of an immigrant group may ultimately be somewhat thinner than the mainstream legal discourse tends to have it. Moreover, whatever one thinks about the different types of political entitlement that are generally associated with the classification of different groups into different categories of legal status, it will be difficult to interpret the enthusiastic response of a significant part of the Turkish community in Germany to Erdogan's declarations as a success of German integration policies.

The discussions triggered by Erdogan's visit to Germany relate in many ways to the topic of this article, to the politics of complex diversity in present-day Europe. A Turkish prime minister visits a foreign country, which is a more or less close ally

of his state: this is the traditional domain of international relations. At the same time, the country to which he has travelled has a substantial portion of immigrants of Turkish origin among its population. Although abroad, Erdogan is addressing them as his fellow-citizens, what many of them certainly are, even if other parts of his public may consist of naturalized Germans with a Turkish background. Whatever the public's specific composition may be, Erdogan addresses his audience as if it was representing a coherent group, namely the Turkish minority in Germany, and argues that this minority is entitled to collective provisions that would protect its members from cultural assimilation. Thus, international relations overlap with an obvious example of an attempt at political mobilization along transnational lines, which connect a 'homeland' to its 'external minority'.[3] German politicians, however, are more than reluctant to concede that the German Turks should possess the same kind of rights which are granted to Germany's traditional 'national' minorities, i.e. to the Danes and the Sorbs. In the approach to minority politics adopted by modern nation states, the principle of territoriality trumps the personality rights that might be attached to cultural identities.

In the case of 'the' Turks in Germany the transnational dimension is additionally complicated by the fact that there is one significant minority within the minority. Many of its members refuse to be considered as Turks in the first place. Thus, quite symptomatically, Kurdish activists were demonstrating at the very gates of the event hall where Erdogan was delivering his speech. While Turkey's Prime Minister was addressing his 'dear brothers and sisters', the demonstrators outside the Cologne Arena, checked by German police forces, were shouting against 'Erdogan the murderer'. Finally, the links between Germany and Turkey evidenced by Erdogan's visit are not only a remarkable example of political transnationalism in a general sense; they also have a pronounced 'trans-European' edge, as Turkey is negotiating its entry into the EU. Accordingly, representatives of the more conservative wing of the Christian Democrats in Germany, who felt deeply upset by what they considered an attempt by a Turkish government to conduct its domestic policies on German soil, called for reviewing Turkey's EU accession talks.

Apparently, the scenery escapes simple and straightforward interpretations. We are on the terrain of complex diversity. Social scientists should play a critical role when it comes to assessing how we want to deal with this phenomenon. I use the term 'critical' here with its two basic connotations: first, I think that political science and sociology can make a very significant contribution to structuring our debate on complex diversity, a debate that has still a long way to go. Second, our job as social scientists in this debate should be critical in the sense that it questions much of the established evidence in the field of majority–minority relations, including the use of concepts such as 'integration' or 'assimilation' for purposes that are mainly tactical. To move in such a direction, we should begin by assessing the empirical manifestations of complex diversity in contemporary societies. This will give us the context for tackling the normative claims that the politics of diversity typically entail. My article will roughly follow this order and start with

an appreciation of the main ethnic and cultural dimensions of diversity in Europe today. On this basis, I will show the limits of the dominant approach towards diversity connected to the ongoing dynamics of European integration. Finally, I will draw some conclusions regarding the normative status of diversity for a theory of situated freedom. However, before focusing on the main expressions of cultural diversity in Europe today, I would like to make a few observations on the steep career the diversity concept has recently made both in academic and political discourse.

Diversity: A first approximation

Over the past two decades, diversity has become a recurrent and highly fashionable topic in Europe's political discourse. Apparently, the term is especially popular when it comes to articulating institutional initiatives at the 'trans-European' level (Kraus, 2006). Thus, the EU's official motto – whose actual significance remains unclear because of the failure of the constitutional process – reads 'United in diversity'. Or, to mention just another case in point, the EU chose the phrase 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' as the slogan of its Action Programme against Discrimination in 2007. These examples capture the two major areas in which Europe's diversity discourse has been unfolding so far: on the one hand, the process of European integration and the successive enlargements of the EU to the east, on the other hand, immigration and the question of how to improve the life chances of the millions of 'new' Europeans of African, Asian or Latin American descent. Diversity has also become an increasingly salient issue in other domains, which are connected to the economy rather than to politics: 'diversity management' is developing as a more and more important field of business organization, especially for those firms that operate globally and employ a multinational staff both at their headquarters and at their local dependencies (Singh, 2007). This is a more 'technical' field of managing human relations, which will be left out in my analysis.

It must be noted that the rise of diversity has not been limited to the realm of 'real politics'. In parallel ways, diversity has also become a key theme in social and political theory. If we limit our focus on cultural diversity strictly speaking, the debate triggered by Charles Taylor and his *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition'* (1992) is still going on. It has gained new momentum with the re-emergence of religion as an important factor of pluralization in our societies, as well as with the search for a normative template from which we could meet the demands for a global 'dialogue of civilizations'. All in all, it is hardly exaggerated to say that diversity has been at the very centre of many of our theoretical debates over the last two decades, and there are good reasons for assuming that it will remain there for quite a while.

We should not overstate the point and regard diversity from now on as *the* new core paradigm in the social sciences. Still, it seems safe to affirm that the rise of diversity defines a new situation, both in terms of the social and political dynamics we are going through and in terms of the ideological and theoretical reflection

of these dynamics. The novelty becomes evident if we look back at the past. In historical perspective, the modern political imagery can be characterized by an ambivalent and often overtly sceptical stance towards diversity. The cultural manifestations of diversity, in particular, were considered to have largely negative consequences for creating political unity and achieving social cohesion within discrete societies and nation states. In the normative universe of 'high modernity', the dominant concern was not to protect diversity, but to achieve a certain level of homogeneity. This preference for cultural homogeneity varied according to ideological predispositions, but it was a common feature of the major strands of modern social thought (Toulmin, 1992). Let me cut a long story short by referring to two key witnesses who corroborate this general assessment. Each holds a more or less canonical status in the main area for which he stands, respectively, that is political theory, in one case, and political economy, in the other. Moreover, in the history of ideas, the political theorist can be taken as one of the central exponents of the liberal view, whereas the political economist neatly represents the socialist tradition.

For the liberal classic John Stuart Mill (1972[1861]: 392) democracy is 'next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities'. Representative government requires a 'united public opinion', and an integrated public sphere, as we would put it today, will not come about among 'a people without fellow-feeling'. According to Mill, the lack of common cultural bonds generates a dialectics of mutual distrust. Hence, from his angle, diversity must be considered a serious impediment to the making of a shared civic culture. For the socialist thinker Karl Marx, on the other hand, ethnic and racial diversity is, in the first place, a factor that undermines class solidarity and the capacity of labour to build strong organizations. In a letter written to activists for the cause of the First International in the United States in 1870, he explains how the conflict between Ireland and England weakens the English working class. According to Marx (1965[1870]: 669), the English workers must be compelled to understand that Ireland's national emancipation is not 'a question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment' for them, but '*the first condition of their own social emancipation*'.[4] Thus, the relevance of national struggles is contingent upon their functionality for class struggle, and diversity is ultimately seen as a distraction from class politics, which should constitute the main site for collective mobilization in capitalist societies.

The views of the two classics summarized here are almost quintessential for the bulk of modern thinking about diversity, even if there certainly is an alternative and to some extent 'hidden' current that can be traced back to the strand of Enlightenment philosophy initially represented by Herder. Herder's 'differentiated universalism' (Anderson, 2002: 9) continued to reverberate in specific ways in the voices of liberals such as Acton and socialists such as Bauer.[5] We may take this current as a point of departure for developing a more sophisticated understanding of the meaning of diversity today, although the alternative current they represent never reached the levels of influence attained by the other views. Broadly speaking,

modern social thought has tended to concur with Mill and Marx in giving a lukewarm, if not overtly sceptical, assessment of cultural diversity.

Distrusting diversity was not only a typical feature of modern social and political thought. In practical terms, the more important point is that the sceptical assessment guided to a considerable extent the policies of nation- and state-building elites. In this regard, it has to be added, with hindsight, that the historical record of modernization came closer to Mill's version of liberal nationalism than to Marx's vision of socialist internationalism. As it consolidated during the 20th century, the world of nation states was rather characterized by homogeneity within borders than by social integration beyond borders. In Europe, at any rate, the steady expansion of national forms of rule was accompanied by continuous efforts at combining the goals of territorial integration and cultural standardization. In this respect, at least, Ataturk, the political architect of modern Turkey, proved to be a true follower of the dominant European pattern. As Therborn (1995: 47) shows, the long-running process of ethnic and cultural homogenization reached its peak around 1950, with the population movements after the Second World War. The price paid in Central and Eastern Europe for approaching a standard thought of as 'normal' in the West was particularly high. The processes of nation-state construction implied intense conflicts, frequent boundary changes, ethnic cleansing and the expulsion of substantial segments of the former population of several countries.

If cultural homogenization represented one of the dominant paradigms of European modernity and was an objective actively pursued by many state-makers and nation-builders, the embrace of diversity in a good part of contemporary political discourses must be considered a very significant change. But what does this change stand for? As I will argue, the ubiquitous use of the concept of diversity in European politics is not without a problematic angle. Moreover, even in the recent theoretical debates diversity's proper normative status has remained somewhat unclear. Put in a nutshell, the key question is: Should the protection of diversity be regarded as important as the strife for equality and the defence of freedom and justice? Or is diversity rather to be considered a 'secondary' value, whose role ultimately depends on its functionality for 'primary' goods such as freedom and justice?[6] I will get back to this question in the final section of this article.

There are a few important conceptual clarifications that have to be made at this point. As I use the term, *diversity* refers to *cultural* diversity. This is the diversity of the basic patterns of identification that frame our collective orientations and thereby have a graspable impact on the structures of interaction and the information flows in the social realm. Ethnicity, language and religion are typically assigned the most prominent role among such patterns. It is of crucial importance to draw a sharp analytic line between diversity and *inequality*: inequality leads to differences that may well be unjust and, in such a case, should be overcome; diversity, in contrast, points at ways of being different that must be tolerated or deserve protection. As mentioned, the distinction between diversity and inequality

is a distinction made on analytical grounds. Many practical cases escape an easy classification when it comes to deciding where the normative borderline between illegitimate and legitimate forms of difference runs. The difficulty becomes manifest when we want to define standards for integrating immigrants, regulating the status of indigenous groups or assessing the situation of women in particular cultures. Often enough, establishing what is on the *cultural* and what is on the *social* side of the borderline that separates diversity from inequality is a question of politics in the first place. Modern citizenship was based on the granting of civil and political rights to successive segments of the population. Social rights were added as a third element to the citizenship status to avoid individuals being excluded from participating in public life because of the uneven distribution of resources (Marshall, 1950). Cultural rights have only been introduced more recently as a fourth – and frequently still contested – element, which will make sure that the chances to participate are not contingent upon enforced assimilation (Pakulski, 1997; Turner, 1994). A decisive step in the politics of diversity always consists in determining what diversity is anyway, in the sense of defining those patterns of belonging that are considered worthy of receiving institutional protection, as opposed to those that are an expression of private preferences and can be left to the market or other 'non-political' means of regulation.

Cultural diversity as complex diversity

Let me now develop my analysis of diversity by moving into the wide field of ethnic relations and thereby bringing into focus those types of identity that have an 'ethnic', a 'national' or a related character. In the context of contemporary European statehood, then, we can make out three basic types of collectivities that stand for three distinct layers of diversity:

- majorities (as represented by 'titular' nations and 'their' states);
- 'old' (national, indigenous) minorities; and
- 'new' (immigrant) minorities.

Although frequently overlooked in the debates on multiculturalism, *majorities* are the weightiest layer of cultural diversity in contemporary politics. What we find represented on present-day Europe's political map are basically majority identities, as institutionalized and reproduced in the system of nation states. In this system, the 'standard citizen' – both in terms of legal entitlements and of cultural practices – is the majority citizen. Only very few European states carry an official denomination that does *not* automatically refer to such a historically nested majority identity. Even if our everyday perception and the bulk of political discourse may take them for granted, majority identities are as much 'constructed', and thereby subject to contestation, as the identity of any other cultural group. In this respect, the difference between minorities and majorities characteristically is that the latter are more powerful in their institutional entrenchment, however implicit

the articulation of this power may be. Still, the more or less continuous reproduction of established (in the sense of 'titular') majority identities over time and space obviously is among the main *raisons d'être* of public education systems and the public media, not to mention national language academies or culture institutes. Regarding the situation in Europe, it has to be noted that the obligation to respect cultural diversity has its main origins in the reciprocal equal recognition of the identities of the member states under the common political roof of the EU.

The category of *old minorities* is constituted by groups who have an autochthonous origin. Such groups are often territorially concentrated and their 'historical credentials' can be considered as old as, if not older than, those exhibited by the majority. Indigenous or national minorities such as the Sámi, the German-speakers in South Tyrol or the Catalans were typically incorporated in the majority state without their consent and tend to have a long record of mobilizations for securing a varying degree of sovereignty for their homelands. The historical grievances towards the majority state serve as the normative basis of demands for institutional autonomy, which members of national minorities consider an indispensable device for protecting their particular identity features. Autonomy thus becomes, for this type of minority, on a smaller scale what the nation state is for the majority.

In contrast with old minorities, the formation of *new minorities* reflects a dynamics of cultural heterogenization that is linked to processes of migration. It is thus generally perceived as an aggregate effect of voluntary decisions by individuals to move across state borders. The members of ethnic groups formed by immigrants and their descendants – such as the Turks in the Federal Republic of Germany or the population with North African roots in France – can hardly claim a homeland 'of their own' in the host countries in the same way as national minorities do. Accordingly, the goal of achieving higher levels of social and economic equality vis-à-vis the majority often plays a more prominent role in their mobilization than the maintenance of a specific group identity.

What is the politics of diversity in Europe about, if we accept that this rough classification makes for a relevant background? Broadly speaking, the articulation of diversity in our societies involves claims for recognition (Taylor, 1992), and the different layers of diversity sketched out here are usually seen as the basis of different – that is, in general terms, graded – types of recognition (Kymlicka, 1995: 27–33). In one case, minority rights may be seen as an overdue compensation for the historical subordination suffered by those autochthonous groups who were marginalized by the cultural politics of the hegemonic nation-building project. In the other case, minority rights serve essentially as an asset facilitating the integration of immigrant groups into the host society.

It must be emphasized that the concession of minority rights does not imply a departure from the principles of citizenship that underlie modernity in general, and European modernity in particular. In fact, when we speak of minority protection we rely on the very logic of political integration and of assigning rights which is based on the model of the nation-state (Krasner, 1999: 73–104). To speak of minorities means that the outcome of nation-building processes is taken for granted,

and that the dominant patterns of institutional identity attribution reflect the existence of a single and uniform source of sovereignty in a given polity. Thus, even if minority provisions aim at mitigating the impact of national prerogatives on minority groups, they do not question the dominant pattern of sovereignty as national rule. Accordingly, they tend to adopt a static approach towards identity formation and articulation and view the different layers of diversity as if they corresponded to discrete and separate frames of collective identification.

Conceiving of diversity as a complex phenomenon should allow us to bring out the dynamic and contested aspects of integration and majority–minority relations in institutional settings where the meaning of sovereignty is undergoing significant changes. In fact, this gets us straight into the terrain of intense semantic disputes, if we think of the discussions triggered by Erdogan's speech in Cologne. In principle, the view endorsed by Erdogan is that Turkish immigrants in Germany should not be subject to a subordinate treatment in comparison with national minorities. From such an angle, no substantial distinction between the rights of 'old' and 'new' minorities would be left. As we saw in the introductory section, this is an untenable position from the perspective of many German politicians, as it implies breaking with the German state's monopoly of defining 'who is who' in identity politics. At the same time, Erdogan's approach lacks credibility to the extent that Turkish authorities are notoriously reluctant to accept any identity attribution that is not strictly controlled by the Turkish state.

Now, there is one more decisive factor that we have to take into account if we want to fully grasp the politics of diversity in Europe today. It is a factor that affects both the articulation of each layer within a given political context and the way these different layers interact: the process of 'Europeanization' reflects the emergence of a new polity or, at any rate, of an important institutional setting (the EU) that is located beyond the nation state. Thus far, the process may not (yet?) have led to the making of a strong additional identity layer, but it certainly has had important consequences for how the other three layers are articulated and interact with each other (Bader, 2001; Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Accordingly, the dynamics of transnational integration and Europeanization entail a profound change of the parameters of identity politics all over Europe.

This is so for two reasons: on the one hand, European integration has implied the taming of nationalism in a – however precarious – interdependent network of collective identities and interests. Interdependence in the EU has to a great extent put an end to a protracted period of conflict between nation states and the mutually incompatible identities they embodied. On the other hand, the uniting of Europe has had normative spill-over effects for both old and new minority groups. At any rate, the taming of nationalism and the emergence of a European citizenship regime has provided these groups with new opportunities to articulate their normative claims. To get back to an example mentioned previously: That both Italy and Austria are EU member states has made the border status of South Tyrol less problematic for the German-speakers in the region. Today, an important segment of members of this group see their identity not so much being primarily defined

as ethnic German, but rather as trans-European and multilingual. The concept of European citizenship that underlies the Charter of Rights of the European Union, while emphasizing a set of common values shared by all Europeans, is strongly committed to protecting cultural diversity.[7] It seems increasingly difficult to argue that this diversity should remain strictly limited only to those types of identity that are represented by the member states, and not also include groups who do not have proper state institutions on their side.

The dynamics of Europeanization are closely related to the politics of diversity for still another important reason. European integration can be interpreted as one of the most salient expressions of a cycle of transformations – tentatively captured by such labels as 'globalization' or 'transnationalism' – that have important consequences for how we experience our identities as individuals and citizens all over the world. In this regard, we seem to have moved towards more fluid and complex forms of diversity in Europe, to forms that are leading to manifold new categories for grasping the phenomena in question, such as 'postnationalism' or, at a somewhat different level, 'cosmopolitanism' and 'super-diversity'.[8] I do not have the space to discuss these categories here as thoroughly as they should be discussed, and will therefore simply use the term 'complex' diversity.

Semantically aware minds may object that calling diversity complex comes close to introducing a pleonasm, as diversity is, by definition, a complex phenomenon. Nonetheless, my view is that the use of the concept does make sense, if only to emphasize the need for developing a more refined vocabulary in our dealing with cultural identities and their political significance: To speak of complex diversity does not only imply that we are becoming more diverse everywhere, and tend to be more aware of this than we might have been some time ago; it also implies to some extent that the standard view of more or less separate 'layers' of belonging is challenged. Hence, what we might call the 'billiard-ball' view of diversity (and of the world) has become quite problematic. If we adopt the billiard-ball view, diversity is politically structured according to uniform (political, legal, territorial) criteria and translated into a collection of separate isomorphic units. Complex diversity, in contrast, indicates that the former billiard-balls are being more and more often mixed up in some kind of 'cocktail' (and this cocktail is served both at the group and at the individual level). Ultimately, the very meaning of being 'German', 'Finnish', 'British', 'Kurdish' or, for that matter, 'European' is undergoing significant changes. Think of cases such as the 'German Turks' and of the many other groups in Europe whose members share an intercultural experience. Again, we must be aware of the fact that this experience also affects what used to be conceived of as the identity of the majority. Is the typical London citizen still somewhat whitish, wearing a bowler hat and drinking tea? Or is she rather a person with a mixed background, say South Asian/European, who watches Bollywood movies and definitely prefers a good curry to Yorkshire pudding? From this perspective, we may well make the point that the 'standard' Londoner of our times is likely to have more in common with somebody from Frankfurt or Amsterdam than with a British 'fellow-citizen' from the Lake District. To some extent, we could therefore

speak of an increased 'underdetermination' of ethnic and national identities: you may well tell me where you are from, but I will hardly be able to tell you who you are.

Complex diversity is used here, in the first place, as a sociological concept. It is meant to come to grips with a constellation in which cultural identities and social cleavages overlap and intertwine in manifold ways. Whereas the differentiation lines of modern societies have typically been related with the 'plain' predominance of distribution conflicts along class positions within nation states, complex diversity brings into focus the importance of recognition in struggles over what equality means, and how it has to be achieved (Honneth, 2003). However, in addition to its sociological intention, the concept also bears an obvious normative potential, as it challenges the historical role of the nation state in amalgamating political community, democratic legitimacy and the rule of law within its one institutional frame (Tully, 2008: 255). To summarize the argumentation: the concept of complex diversity points at a social and political context in which diversity has become a multidimensional and fluid phenomenon. Not only are European societies becoming more diverse in terms of incorporating new layers of diversity. The different building blocks (or layers) of diversity must themselves be regarded as becoming increasingly heterogeneous too. The first conclusion to be drawn against such a background is that no identity should be regarded as pre-given and be politically taken for granted. Accordingly, our approach to identity politics need not necessarily be based upon a one-to-one addition of the different elements of diversity we may find in a specific sociocultural setting. However, this does not mean that we can dispense with recognition and ignore the political implications of cultural diversity. To tackle the issue in a productive way, we will have to move from the realm of discussing general concepts to the realm of analysing concrete politics.

The politics of diversity in Europe

At present, Europe is still far away from living up to the normative potential that the process of integration could have for developing a new approach towards the politics of diversity. In spite of the recurrent celebration of diversity that we find in the EU's official discourse, the European politics of recognition is characterized by significant contradictions. As I have already observed, it is true that European organs have put some effort into securing an independent status for cultural rights, and that this effort has had an impact on redefining the legal status of minority groups all over Europe. Nonetheless, thus far recognition has remained clearly biased towards the identities that are embodied by nation states. Subnational, transnational or intercultural patterns of identification play a subordinate role in the approach adopted by European institutions when they confront diversity. The EU is a polity that is largely controlled by the member states and 'modelled' according to their identities. Thus, it is not too surprising that the protection of cultural diversity in Europe refers primarily to those cultural identities

that are officially represented by nation states. The European view of diversity is still very much a billiard-ball view, in which the billiard-balls are the EU's member states: while each ball gets its own colour, all balls look more or less the same and make more or less the same kind of noise when they clash at intergovernmental meetings because of their conflicting political priorities. In such a setting, the discourse of cultural diversity often enters the stage as a mere tactical device, which is used to underpin the articulation of nation-state interests in the system of tough bargaining at the European level. The eastern enlargement has made this even more patent and created a situation that is increasingly difficult to manage for those actors within the EU who would be prepared to keep on strengthening a properly European identity layer (Habermas, 2008).

Hence, to expect that the dynamics of transnational integration are turning Europe automatically into an empire of diversity would be a rather naïve view. The main rationale of the project of Europeanization was not directed towards creating a neo-Babylonian El Dorado for living diverse (cultural, linguistic, ethnic) attachments in unconstrained ways, thereby radically transcending established patterns of collective identification. Since the Treaty of Rome (1957), to speak of a united Europe implied primarily the vision of a common economic space. European integration and market integration have been all but interchangeable concepts. Meanwhile, after the transition to the Economic and Monetary Union, the former vision of an integrated market has widely become a reality.

It is well known that Europe, as an integrated market, is built upon four pillars: free movement of goods, free movement of services, free movement of capital, and, finally, free movement of persons. The four freedoms will guarantee that the continuing existence of borders between the member states is no serious impediment for economic activities within the Common Market. Yet at the same time, these activities cannot be realized without relying on cultural mediation. Take the example of language: in a common economic space multilingualism obviously causes transaction costs, which would not exist in a linguistically homogeneous setting. Moreover, it implies an additional demand for legal regulation: can an Irish mechanic who wants to establish a car repair business in Germany be expected to be fluent in German? What about the level of proficiency in Swedish of a Polish nurse who is working in a Stockholm hospital? In which languages is the label information on Italian food products destined for exportation to EU countries to be given? To what extent should services delivered in the media sector – which can generally be conceived of as cultural services – be exempt from the pressure not to interfere with the four market freedoms? The dynamics of market integration may entail substantial challenges to the imperative of respecting cultural diversity. When conflicts of this kind arise, the European Court of Justice is assigned the role of the arbiter who has to decide in each particular case whether the protection of cultural or linguistic pluralism shall trump the implementation of the four market freedoms (or vice versa).[9] In reality, the problems might even be more complex, as the process of capitalist market integration has its own meta-language, too. It is a meta-language that can work against diversity in silent, but effective

ways; it is the language of economies of scale and of standardization. In our roles as economic citizens and consumers we tend to have open ears for the message transmitted by this meta-language. Thus, for example, the free circulation of goods provides German supermarkets day by day with a broad range of European products of all imaginable kinds and origins – think of San Daniele ham, Swedish chocolate or Chupa Chups lollipops; only a few decades ago, the familiarity with such merchandise in Germany was limited to insider groups. From Finland to Portugal, the Europeans of today enjoy the manifold advantages of a supply of goods that has been successively expanding. At the same time, the choice of products that European supermarkets have in stock to attract their customers is becoming more and more interchangeable from place to place. What we can buy in Italian supermarkets we will generally find in Denmark as well, even more so if we visit a branch of the same company. Depending on our financial possibilities, we make our choices from a range of goods that has become more ample and colourful; by doing so, we might ultimately also be becoming more and more similar to each other regarding our consumer habits.

In the making of a common European economic space we will discern the same patterns that characterize processes of economic integration in general. To varying degrees, market integration is always associated with standardization. Hence, it cannot be excluded beforehand that the spread of the Common Market's meta-language across Europe will have effects comparable to those that were dissected, on a smaller scale, for the Italy of the 1960s and 1970s by the just as eloquent as polemic cultural critic Pier Paolo Pasolini. Pasolini (1975) reacted to the changes that had taken place in Italian society with a cry of outrage. In his view, the post-war economic boom had paved the way for a triumph of consumerism in his country that, in the end, had experienced an anthropological mutation and a veritable levelling out of cultural differences. According to the gloomy assessment of the radical dissenter, the force of a mass culture devoted essentially to structuring consumer life was creating a streamlined universe, in which all particular, non-standardized linguistic, regional and social identities were bound to disappear. They had no chance to resist the uniform impact of market integration, as the bitter commentator of a period of rapid transformations would put it. Many of the concerns that are articulated by the wing of today's anti-globalization movement that is sensitive to cultural issues are anticipated succinctly in the harsh diagnosis the Italian intellectual put forward some 40 years ago.

Even if one does not share the cultural pessimism that permeates Pasolini's approach, one can still concede that the language of the market does not necessarily enter the scene as the harmonious counterpart of the language of diversity. To some extent, processes of market integration in an unbounded economy have homogenizing consequences. Their 'sense of diversity' stretches hardly beyond the perspective transmitted by United Colors of Benetton advertisements. You may remember the pictures with little children representing different parts of the world sitting together in cheerful harmony, while they are all contributing to the marketing of the same trendy logo. Let us keep in mind, therefore, that the route leading

to the EU began with the establishment of the European Economic Community. Up to now, the Common Market may count as one of the chief aspects in the view that Europeans have of themselves as Europeans. Thus, the identity of the citizens of the EU seems to overlap largely with the identity of market participants and consumers (Weiler, 2004). The functional primacy assigned to market integration in the making of Europe has entailed an understanding of legitimation that conceives of citizens as consumers of political products, in the first place, and shows a propensity to 'free' them from an active participation in a political process that would have them facing the challenges of complex diversity from a bottom-up perspective. Diversity has attained prominence in the political discourse of the EU for two main reasons. On the one hand, the concept can be invoked as a guarantee of the weight and the persistence of member state identities in Europe. On the other hand, at the transnational level it can be interpreted emphatically as a genuinely 'European' value that transcends the framework of nation-state sovereignty. It is easy to see that there is a tension between these two connotations diversity has in the institutional setting of the EU. Yet the tension rarely becomes politically productive because of the strong control the member states ultimately keep exerting over the European agenda.

It is true that the constant reference to the protection of diversity when it comes to legitimizing EU politics and policies has opened an opportunity window for many groups who refer to the term for anti-hegemonic purposes on the battlefields where culture, identity and sovereignty intersect. Still, when compared with the weight of the attempts at securing that market freedoms are duly respected all over the EU's territory, the efforts put into developing an institutional framework that could sustain a new politics of diversity look rather dim.[10] Complex diversity thereby is at risk of being turned into a one-dimensional diversity. Lacking political definition and serving mainly as a shallow token of an individualized consumer society, complex diversity is doomed to become *permissive* diversity: all identities are accepted, as long as they remain politically toothless and do not matter much anyway.

Diversity, situated freedom and recognition

Regardless of the catchy slogans displayed at the official level, Europe and the Europeans seem to lack innovative institutional responses to the challenges of 'complex' diversity. European politics has still a long way to go if it is to achieve the balance between the global and the local that we may find symbolized by some of the football teams that have become more or less regular participants in the European Champions League. FC Barcelona may be a paradigmatic case of such a balance, as the sociologist Manuel Castells (2006) has plausibly argued. Europe is in a bitter need of a new political approach for dealing with diversity. My point now is that such a new approach has to start from an apparent paradox: even if you may ultimately want to have a cocktail that combines diverse identities, you will

still have to cultivate the different ingredients – i.e. the different layers of diversity – that you need for preparing that cocktail.

To return to the language of political theory: Recognition does not have to imply a mirror-representation of diversity.[11] By adopting a reflective approach towards our identities we may well transform diversity when dealing with it. Yet if we want to do this on a legitimate basis we will have to accept seeing people as they want to be seen themselves, in the first place, that is according to their self-categorization, to draw on a cogent argument developed some 30 years ago by the Finnish political sociologist Erik Allardt (1979: 43–47). In a thorough analysis of the 'ethnic revival' that entailed the mobilization of linguistic minorities all across western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, Allardt drew the conclusion that the key element in the claims of groups such as the Catalans, the Welsh, the Swedish-speaking Finns or the Flemings and Walloons was the goal to attain recognition by having their self-categorization accepted, that is to create institutional spaces protecting them from assimilation into the majority. The experience of the past decades, in which we could experience the rise of 'identity politics' on a global scale, only seems to confirm that the rejection of assimilation can be as forceful a factor triggering political mobilization as the struggle against economic inequalities and social exclusion. Taking the argument one step further, we may assume that, under democratic conditions, self-categorization, in a very basic sense, is a first and critical step in the exercise of self-determination. This applies both at the level of the individual and at the level of collectivities; even more importantly, it connects the individual to the collective level.

Against such a background, the politics of recognition must come to grips with the challenges that situated freedom involves on the terrain of identity politics. At first sight, the challenges may seem to entail somewhat paradoxical consequences. In a previous section, I referred to the 'underdetermining' character of ethno-national identities in the contemporary world. Thus, individuals have leeway for shaping and reshaping their identities around different building blocks. 'German Turks' do not necessarily have to emphasize a particular component of their subjective national identity; moreover, they can also opt for a third one, say 'Kurdish'. At some point in their life, even the formerly militant Flemish nationalists in Brussels may choose to adopt a Francophone identity. On the other hand, making such decisions and prioritizing some patterns of identification against others requires having both options for choice and knowledge on how to make use of them, '*savoir faire*' as James Tully (2008: 240) cogently puts it. To express it in the terms introduced above: self-categorization is contingent upon the existence of meaningful categories, categories that connect us to a collectively produced historicity, a collectively produced symbolic universe and a collectively produced body of knowledge. Our freedom as individuals therefore is a situated freedom, as, in order to have options and to acquire knowledge, we have to rely on practices that by definition are social, i.e. collective, practices embedded in a cultural context.[12] Such situatedness should be seen less as a constraint than as a condition of our freedom. The notion of a 'freedom... in contact with the world'

(Merleau-Ponty, 2007[1945]: 49) bears extraordinary relevance when it comes to grasping how we acquire and develop our capabilities as citizens: participation can only be experienced in interdependent relationships that are culturally mediated. Citizenship practices are based on acting with others, on making use of linguistic and extra-linguistic communicative skills, and on having an implicit understanding of self and other (Tully, 2008: 271). The social relations sustaining these practices may ultimately be questioned and transformed by free and creative individuals, but these individuals' freedom and creativity would not emerge without the existence of social and cultural bonds.

To adopt this view implies overcoming the sterile dichotomy between 'essentialism' and 'constructivism' in our analysis of cultural identity and the manifold phenomena related to it, such as ethnicity or nationality. We may well accept that cultural identities are 'constructs', as all social identities are. This does not mean, however, that they can be assembled and disassembled in arbitrary ways. The raw materials that cultures are made of tend to be sticky, and to transform them requires considerable efforts, as all of us who have gone through different processes of 'acculturation' know very well. Such a view must not be confused with an essentializing view of culture, which would attribute cultural phenomena a 'closed' and homogeneous character. That two people share a cultural background does not mean that they hold the same worldview, and to speak of a converging cultural identity is not to speak of value convergence. The situatedness that stems from common cultural attachments is no cognitive straightjacket; rather, it indicates that individuals whose situatedness overlaps will tend to have common 'points of concern' (Laitin, 1988: 589–590) in their perception of social and political reality. Cultures are at least as much about contest as about consent. But to participate in contentious activities, to be able to promote cultural change, we still need to share some common understanding of what is at stake in the process. Thus, our rejection of essentialism should not entail abandoning all 'weak forms of holism which allow us to recognize cultural differences without reifying them' (Kompridis, 2005: 324).

Acknowledging that cultural identities have a holistic character, which reflects their embeddedness in a socially shared, 'Wittgensteinian', background knowledge, is not to claim that the dynamics of cultural complexity, fluidity and 'hybridity' that I described earlier are insignificant. As soon as we leave the comfortable-as-superficial world of United Colors advertisements, however, we will realize that complex diversity is not equal to an exuberant hybridity. To the extent that cultures are holistic, their potential for 'hybridization' is not unlimited. The limits to an unproblematic absorption of different cultural allegiances are often sheer cognitive limits at the individual level: it is true that we can acquire many languages; but only a few of us learn more than a handful. It is true that there is religious syncretism at many levels; but there also are spiritual affiliations that are hard to reconcile with each other. We may choose our cultural attachments from different building blocks, but the very act of choosing would be pointless if these blocks were deprived of a common and socially produced contextual meaning. Cultures,

in other words, transmit the contextual knowledge that we need for *savoir faire*. It is this knowledge that allows us to locate ourselves in interdependent relationships framed by historicity and by historically rooted collective practices. Cultural meaning is, by definition, a socially produced and shared meaning. To say 'shared' is not to say 'uncontested'. Yet, even by individually rejecting specific elements of a cultural identity, or by rejecting a culture in its totality, we cannot avoid relating to the social dimension conveyed by cultural ties.

Which normative conclusions follow from such an understanding of cultural identity? If my assessment holds, we should overcome essentializing simplifications in our dealing with complex diversity. But complex diversity still requires recognition, even if we have to aim at forms of recognition that avoid essentialism (Goodin, 2006: 288). A recurrent topic in the critique of recognition theories is the claim that, by attributing a political status to cultural identities, the members of cultural groups will find themselves inescapably trapped in such an identity.[13] The argument often seems far-fetched, as the actual capacity of ethnic minorities and related collectivities to exert a rigid 'identity control' over their membership in democratic societies is relatively limited. There are few cases where this capacity would approach the powers nation states typically assign themselves when it comes to defining collective identity patterns. It is therefore not easy to understand why some critics of multiculturalism feel the urge to fabricate normative cannons for firing at the sparrows represented by the claims of minority cultures. At any rate, a sound attack on the demands raised by minorities would presuppose an even more thorough questioning of dominant majority identities, but this questioning remains wanting, to say the least, in the argumentation of authors such as Barry (2001), Sartori (2000) or Schnapper (2007). Instead, what transpires in their approaches is a certain nostalgia for the 'simple' diversity of earlier modern times, with clear-cut social cleavages articulated within the largely unchallenged institutional frame established by 'the' nation and 'its' state. It is this very frame that comes increasingly under pressure under conditions of complex diversity.

Nevertheless, it has to be conceded that there is a point in warning against the potential 'groupism' (Brubaker, 2004) associated with collective rights. The institutional attribution of specific identity features to individuals because they belong – or are supposed to belong – to a particular group is problematic, especially if this attribution implies that the group may wield control functions over its members. Considering the sociological 'underdetermination' of ethnic and national identities, the difficulties in fact already start when it comes to determining who is represented by an ethno-national category. Let us briefly get back to the example of the group of 'the' Turks in Germany, addressed by Tayyip Erdogan in his Cologne speech. Regardless of what the use of simple labels may suggest, the collectivity in question must be disaggregated into people who as individuals will favour different, and sometimes even conflicting, identity options: Turkish, Turkish-German, German-Turkish, German, Kurdish, etc. The recognition of 'the' Turkish minority in Germany, as advocated by Erdogan, would obviously fall short of this complexity.

At the same time, however, many citizens who are attached to a minority group will consider it important to possess a similar degree of legal and political opportunities for reproducing their cultural identity as majority members. In this respect, the key argument put forward by recognition theorists remains valid against 'anti-groupist' objections, even more so as recognition does not have to involve reification. Now, a non-essentialist approach to recognition can be developed by recognizing not groups, but culturally grounded *contexts of praxis*, as embodied by languages, religions, territorial affiliations, collective memories and senses of historicity. It is within such contexts that we develop the cognitive repertoires and cultivate the social and cultural bonds that make for our situated freedom and enhance our understanding of self and other. In any contemporary society, these contexts are complex and diverse. To make them visible and audible in public is not to impose identities, but to facilitate their dialogue and their interlocking in correspondence with the will of sovereign citizens.

The approach towards recognition adopted here breaks with the imperatives of a 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) of the kind that takes the institutionally entrenched majority cultures of nation states for granted without acknowledging that there are other important and respectable patterns of cultural identification both below, across and beyond the nation states as well. Moreover, it does not require us to rely on presumably 'groupist' views, according to which static and homogeneous group identities would be the key constitutive units of the social world.[14] What the approach aims at, instead, is an understanding of our freedom that does not negate its social and cultural context, its 'situatedness'. This situatedness implies that both our freedom and the freedom of the 'other' are contingent upon our right to be diverse. In the context of linguistic diversity, for instance, the freedom of speech of those who belong to a minority group cannot be restricted to the right of free communication in the majority language; it must also imply the right to freely acquire and use the minority vernacular. Similarly, the commitment to protecting freedom of religion together with secular principles does not translate automatically into the exclusion of all symbols of religious affiliation from public settings. In a diversity-sensitive institutional environment, a regime of secularism, rather, has to combine liberal and pluralist elements, thereby striving for an equilibrium between freedom of conscience and the respect for both religious and non-religious orientations in the public space (Maclure and Taylor, 2010: 47). Finally, emphasizing the role of contexts of praxis for formulating an appropriate approach to the politics of diversity should make us more aware of the unequal burden normally carried by different collectivities when it comes to confronting diversity. Thus, for instance, developing a multilingual repertoire (in the dominant and in the non-dominant language) typically is something the members of minority groups are expected to do, whereas those who identify with the majority may feel comfortable relying on the dominant language in their everyday communication. Regarding religious allegiances, on the other hand, the general expectation tends to be that minorities *accept* the given majority constellation,[15] whereas the majority citizen, at best, has to *tolerate* deviations

from the established confessional standards. In contrast, coping with complex diversity should imply an institutional bias that favours the acquisition and exercise of cultural competence that grasps different layers of complexity on more equal terms.

The line of argument followed here leads to the conclusion that assimilation must indeed be considered a form of domination in relation to freedom that is as condemnable as exclusion (Tully, 2008: 116–119). What is thereby advocated is a view of cultural diversity that is deliberately non-instrumental and accepts culture as a legitimate realm of its own. Only by applying such a standard will we be able to avoid the use and abuse of cultural identity rhetoric for primarily tactical purposes, as we can detect in Erdogan's declarations or in much of the currently fashionable diversity talk at the European level. At the same time, connecting cultural diversity to contexts of praxis rather than to the 'grand narratives' that permeate the discursive universe of the formation and the reproduction of nation states may help us to unleash the anti-hegemonic potential in the politics of diversity (Fontana, 2006).

To adopt this view of diversity is not to replace rigid national attachments with a well-intentioned, but ultimately superficial, cosmopolitanism that aims at overcoming the national, yet remains strikingly unaware of its own situatedness. Mediating between or even transcending diverse identities in a common political project must not happen on the basis of downplaying, ignoring or negating alterity. Often enough, however, cosmopolitan interpretations of the European idea seem to come dangerously close to the sense of diversity that transpires through United Colors of Benetton advertisements.[16] Those who have been exposed to the challenge of dealing with diverse identities have learned that diversity may well hurt. To recognize the situatedness of our identities, and the great effort it may take to move beyond them, is precisely the first step towards confronting their politics in productive ways.[17]

Europeanization has redefined the terms of recognition both among and within European states. In the course of this process, Europe has become a stage for generalized identity politics, a stage on which both old attachments are reaffirmed and new forms of belonging articulated. We are in a setting in which a normatively sound meaning of 'unity in diversity' has still to be worked out. There is much at stake here: the future of European citizens will substantially depend on how they manage to find ways for living together equal and different, reducing disparities without negating diversity. In this regard, however, Europe's situation is not as exceptional as some may have it, and there certainly are related experiences that Europeans should study to find inspiration for refining their understanding of the politics of complex diversity. One case in point is Canada, a country made of 'deep diversity' (Taylor, 1994), in which the common political context of the federation is to a considerable extent based upon varying institutional and sociological degrees of identification of different peoples, cultures and societies with the overarching community. Another example is India, where the intermingling of local traditions of pluralism, dialogic practice and heterodoxy (Sen, 2006) has sustained a highly diverse polity under democratic conditions. The search for inspiration will hardly

provide those who are looking for it with models for an easy imitation. How could the politics of diversity be less complex than diversity itself? Yet to acknowledge this complexity does not mean that one should refrain from drawing normative conclusions. If Europeans succeed in linking their citizenship status to a political ethos that understands diversity as the very condition of their freedom they might end up constructing a Europe where the Finnish Sámi from Utsjoki, the Moroccan Belgian from Brussels, the Russian-speaking Latvian from Riga, the Basque nationalist from Bilbao and even the 'archetypical' Brit from the Lake District would feel comfortable with their own as well as with others' identities.

Notes

1. The information referring to Erdogan's trip to Germany in 2008 is taken from a series of reports published in *Spiegel Online* (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2008e, 2008f).
2. See Anderson (2008) for a sharp and biting portrait of Kemalist nationalism.
3. This is, in fact, a recurrent pattern in Central and Eastern Europe, where national minorities are often perceived by the titular nations as an irredentist threat, because of their presumed ties to a neighbour state and its respective titular nation (Offe, 1997: 67–68); the Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania are a case in point.
4. Emphasis in the original.
5. Cf. Acton (1922[1862]), Bauer (1924 [1907])and Herder (1989[1784–1791]); see also Tully (2003) for a review of the internal diversity of modern enlightenment traditions.
6. This seems to be the position typically held by liberal multiculturalism; cf. Kymlicka (1995: 82–93) for a compact overview of the argumentation.
7. For an overview of institutional regulations that reflect this commitment see Kraus (2004: 46–49).
8. For empirical and normative assessments of these dynamics see, among many others, Bauböck (2007), Delanty (2005), Faist (2004), Vertovec (2007).
9. For an analysis of the position adopted by the European Court of Justice in its dealing with language matters see Creech (2005) and Usher (1998).
10. See Kraus (2008: 180–198) for a more elaborate presentation of this view.
11. For a stimulating discussion of how to articulate diversity beyond mirror-representation see Goodin (2004).
12. This concept of a situated freedom draws on Merleau-Ponty (1976[1945]). In a similar vein, Bryan Turner (2006: 145–149) has pointed out the connections between the approach of a sociologically sound 'hermeneutics of the other' and the perspective of what we might call a 'critical' cosmopolitanism.
13. See, for example, Barry (2001: 112–154) as a strident expression of this position.
14. Focusing on culture as a key context of praxis may come close to the case made by liberal culturalists, such as Margalit and Raz (1995: 85–87), who regard 'pervasive cultures' as a constitutive element of 'encompassing groups'; these then become potentially eligible for enjoying the right to self-determination. Yet it does not entail the risk that the identity of groups and their members is reified on the basis of any particular cultural attributes.
15. As captured in a condensed way through the formula 'Cuius regio, eius religio'. The principle was sanctioned in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) to bring an end to the conflicts between Lutherans and Catholics on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire.

16. For lucid critiques of what one might call 'banal' cosmopolitanism from either sociological or normative perspectives see Calhoun (2007) and Mehta (2000).
17. Accordingly, in the context of the debate on European integration, starting from the assumption that the transnational bonds between Europeans are to be conceived of as exclusively political, as transcending all cultural attachments, entails the risk of conflating universalism and uniformity. For different approaches to how the issue of diversity should be confronted in a 'cosmopolitan' Europe see Beck and Grande (2004), Cerutti and Rudolph (2001) and Ferry (2005).

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