

European Collective Identity in Terms of Micro-Nationalism

Yusuf Yurdigül

Atatürk Ü. İletişim Fakültesi, Erzurum, Türkiye
yusufyurdagul@hotmail.com

Aslı Yurdigül

Atatürk Ü. İletişim Fakültesi, Erzurum, Türkiye
asli.yurdagul@hotmail.com

Abstract

The point the European Union, idealized with respect to being European or Europeanising, has reached today is a result of union ideas lasting for about 700 years in Europe. This ideal initiated by some countries coming together has entered into the process of development in terms of expanding the intellectual background, giving it a global aspect and creating a collective social memory, and so it has turned into a European collective identity in terms of politics, economy and culture.

However, the idealized European collective identity cannot be seen as long-lasting in today's Europe where nationalism has become popular among the rising values. Although collective identity has been formed as a modern concept providing for the union of nation state structure, national identity and citizenship concept, it has become a source of problem in multinational states with the European Union process. The differences in the European Union countries have become remarkably clear. In the European Union process, member states including different national identities, is inevitably confronting some problems in which different and a rival sense of belonging factors is created. While xenophobia arisen out of immigrations in Europe has empowered nationalist discourse in member states due to economic and religious causes, micro-nationalist movements have matured in local elements that have been strengthened thanks to the EU domestic policies. Moreover, the EU has almost got to represent a constitution in which nationality and citizenship concepts have been gradually separating each other with regards to member states. This separation which has been observed more intensively with the increasing amount of membership to the Union has caused two types of nationalism to gain strength: the one which was arisen as an xenophobia in reaction to immigrations from East and South to the Western countries, and the micro-nationalist dynamism which was gained by local elements as a result of implementing the EU policies by member states.

This study builds a conceptual framework in the context of the European Union, nationalism and micro-nationalism aims to discuss the results of nationalism fact rising in Europe for idealized multicultural and supranational European collective identity, and whether or not the dynamics that exist in Europe but do not seem as European and that have become an identity by not being a local element in terms of the EU policies will be a threat for the EU process.

Keywords: European Union, European collective identity, nationalism, micro-nationalism

Introduction

In today's Europa that nationalism is becoming popular within the values rising again, the differences become evident conspicuous. Although the nation - state structure as a modern phenomenon has been fictionalized with a mentality which envisages combination of the concept of national identity and citizenship, as of last point has been reached with the EU accession process, it is observed that this situation has begun to create a source of problem in multi-national states. In this context the European Union symbolizes a formation, in this formation concepts of nationality and citizenship is increasingly separated from each other. In the EU accession process, the states, which have different national identities, are faced with problems which have been created by the rival different elements of belonging inevitably. For example, the problem of England about Ireland has been resulted with separation / division, this result shows that the EU has structured its policies in a framework to enable the development of local elements. Therefore, while the EU provides the possibility of establishing a relationship with the EU institutions by bypassing its own nation-states to in the regions which are in unity, it agitates argument about the regions can be only under strong structure of nation-states by the presence of the EU's supranational institutions. Also the ideal of an independent Scotland in the European Union is a typical reflection of this situation.

With the pressures which are caused by globalization, enlargement of the European Union, migration towards to western countries from east and south of the earth are creating a suitable ground for the spread of racism and increasing hostility towards foreigners (Demirtepe, USAK, 2006). The ethnocentrism which is caused by migrations to Europe, while being effective in accelerating the nationalist discourse in the member states, on the other hand it leads to the maturation of micro-nationalist movements in local elements which have gained strength due to EU policies. Therefore, discussing the phenomenon of rising nationalism in Europe, in two different contexts will be the most appropriate method. Firstly, the migration towards the European Union member states and nationalism which is shaped within the framework of ethnocentrism arising from economic problems as a result of this migration and the secondly the micro-nationalism resulting from regional policies applied by the European Union to local specificities.

Nationalism Developed Against "Other"

In the political trend which is occurring in the first type nationalism i.e. in case of nationalism which is arising in the context of the EU member states, rather than a political language based on racial or cultural superiority, a result is at stake which is developing against groups defined as "other". A nationalist stance is taken against these groups which are sometimes followers a cultural tradition and sometimes followers of a religious community and an ethnic group, this nationalist stance nourished from fear that they will exploit and occupy the country. This type of nationalism ensues as a result of the perception of authorization more than making emphasis to nation phenomenon in the classical sense. Today in Europa there is nationalism which is originated from attitudes developed against others just like the concern about "Europe will become a Muslim continent in over fifty years" (Kalin, Zaman, 2006) that is underlying the reason of Bernard Lewis' effort to mobilize Europeans against Muslim immigration wave. As mentioned above, the effect of the wave of migration flows to Europe from different countries is very important on the occurrence of such nationalism. At first, these migrations were not being too much trouble, but after, with unemployment observed in the countries which are considered as the

dynamic forces of the EU, migrations have led to the emergence of the process of otherization which is taking its source economic reflex. Yaşar Nuri describes the process has been experienced as;

“Europa took political refugee and migrant workers, from the 1960s until the end of 1990s from different countries. If we look at the Europe of the 1960s a prosperous Europe was experiencing a golden age. Europe has recognized the people that it heard their screams as “We are under political pressure” as a political refugee because of a number of different reasons, morale and responsibility that it has against the former colonies. Although a part of them were economic refugees, they won political refugee status by claiming that they are under political pressure and they have started to live in Europa countries. But now the outlook has changed in Europe... In today's Europe, all immigrants have become a problem. Now radical right is rising in Europa and European officials, politicians are concerned from time to time very deep.” (Yaşar, HPD, 2005: 137–166).

In France and Germany where these concerns were experienced extensively, the most negative scenario was the emergence of ethnic or religious conflict, events which started in the Netherlands, after Dutch film director Theo Van Gogh has been murdered by a Moroccan Muslim in 2004, where the initial spark in terms of processing of this negative scenario. In fact, while long-term conflicts that occurred in 2005 in the ghettos of France after this event paved way for a new and unusual approaches and solutions about "Foreign problem" in the European Union, on the other hand they demonstrated how a nationalist wave from below is very important. The murder which is presented as “a Moroccan Muslim killed a Dutch Christian artist” has been translated from religious discrimination to racial discrimination. "Integration problem" discussions were initiated in Germany in 2006 after the events, provided the problem was discussed as a migrant workers' problem and migrant workers have become "foreigners" non-integrated and who refuse to be integrated.

This ethnocentrism which has developed within the framework of economic and religious reasons has caused in Europe the elevation of radical right and nationalist parties in this ground, in the political sense. In the past periods; in France Le Pen's votes showed substantial proportion increases compared with previous years, in the 1999 elections in Austria Libertarian Party of Jörg Haider took %27 vote became junior partner of the power and in 2001, in Italy, a coalition partnership of Gianfranco Fini emerged. All these developments became ominous developments¹ for the common European identity as important historical indicators of the nationalist movement which has begun to rise in Europe. Movement of Jörg Haider in Austria was the most obvious and worrisome development of nationalist movement in Europe about ethnocentrism. In 1986, the Austrian Freedom Party which was one of smallest party used slogan such as "Because, solid head in a healthy body ONLY" and “We guarantee that we will stop ALIENATION” on 1999 election posters and it formalized ethnocentrism, this party which was the racist party of Jörg Haider took %27 vote and became junior partner of the power in 1999 elections (Özcan, 2000: 557).

This situation which is an important indicator of ethnocentrism in European countries still continues today. In these countries many of the extreme right wing parties are increasing their votes gradually in local or general elections and they have started to have the right of representation in national parliaments. For example, the Democratic Party of Sweden which is known as a conservative party in Sweden took %5.7 vote in the 2010 election and

became a parliamentarian for the first time. Belgium Vlaams Belang Party known for its opposition to Turk increased its vote rate which was %9, 9 in 1999 general elections to %28, 6 in 2012 local elections. Ultra nationalistic Golden Dawn Party of neighboring country Greece increased its vote rate to %6, 97 in 2012 and has gained a significant right of representation in parliament.

These kinds of risings which are not suitable for the ideal of a common European identity have disturbed central institutions and politicians in EU extremely. The European Union Commissioner of Interior Malmström warned about "Rising racism's and ethnocentrism's representatives in politics in Europe have reached peak" (www.haber7.com).

The effects of this kind of political structures intended for nationalism have been tried to minimize their own country parliaments, the European Parliament as well as in other EU institutions. For example, the EU countries reacted violently to a racist party become a partner in power began to pressure for ousting it from power. For this purpose, 14 EU member states began to impose social, economic, and diplomatic sanctions against Vienna and began to pressure for ousting Freedom Party from power, upon extreme right-wing Austrian Freedom Party formed a coalition with the Conservative People's Party. Although sanctions and pressures provided Jörg Haider's resignation in year 2000, his party continued as a coalition partner (Özcan, 2000: 556–58).

The formations which do politics intended to nationalist and conservative discourse such as the Freedom Party in Austria which is one of a member of the European Union, and Gian-Franco Fini coalition in France, although they are pressured by the EU, they continue their activities intended to center politics by softening their radical opinions with popular discourses.

Micro-Nationalism

The micro-nationalist movement which is the second movement of movements that arose within the framework of the nationalism top title; This is a micro-nationalism pursuits which have been developed against the dominant identity by groups have deindividuation syndrome and in the grip of projects revealed by the EU for nation building of local elements found in the member states and the policies implemented by the EU for the protection of member states' national identity. Micro-nationalist pursuits are singular fundamentally, but also emphasize homogeneity and provide a new togetherness and sharing area for individual. The individuals who see that the rights are not provided individually and the government has not done enough and even sometimes behave hypocritically, they become in solidarity with their counterparts instead of struggling one by one. The individuals, who have religious, linguistic and ethnic qualification, demand the minority status. These pursuits which exceed being a community in the community, as a product of an effort (Yaşar, HPD, 2005: 137-166) to create a nation within a nation; Through "Paradiplomacy" which has turned into maneuver mechanism that is very important in the EU recently, they have achieved rival positions to state / nation that they belong. The EU's policies towards to local level identities, has provided a national minority status to groups who are in a struggle for nation building and regional governments gained the status of minority have evolved into international actors through the paradiplomacy. The paradiplomacy (Lecours, 2002: 1–5) which has come out as a result of the pursuits of increasing the powers of the national minority regions, has confronted micro-nationalism to the nation-state as a major power. The European Union's policy towards national

minorities have directed ethnic communities to identify themselves as "nationality" or "national" minorities for gaining legitimacy and being successful. For example, many ethnic communities including Moravians in the Czech Republic and Silesians in Poland have started to define ² their identity in national line (Tesser, 2003: 493-94). These actors turned into a minority position through Paradiplomacy, behaved like nation and presented themselves like this. In this context Paradiplomacy created an impression as nationalist minorities who do not have a state, in the international arena is accepted in the form of "nation". And this became a situation which gets a reaction of nation-states member of the EU, as an effect that is mobilizing micro-nationalism in sovereign nations. This react has ensued in the form of meeting demands or suppressing demands of micro-nationalist pursuits and this react has led to problems intended for the representation of sub-elements' identity and problems intended for the sovereign nation, so it threatened the common "European Identity" ideal.

In a nutshell, "Today, in many The European Union member states, religious and ethnic discrimination is at peak levels ... For Europa that is shown as the homeland of democracy and freedoms, this is a contradictory and an embarrassing table (Laçiner, Özcan and Bal, 2004: 29). Because of racist experiences happened in the past, Europe has canalized to theories that ignore experienced racism nowadays and it is experiencing the crisis of European identity which is designated by policies intended for who are outside the boundaries rather than the who are inside the boundaries. The idea of an idealized The European Union and incompatibility problem of European culture are at the center of this identity crisis. It is possible to see traces of this crisis in almost all the studies themed identity, these studies have occurred after the political structure of the European Union for the integration of the European Union. The political debates, experienced in many European countries about nation, nationalism and citizenship, accelerate nutrition of national identity with ethnocentrism racism and increasingly and also these political debates accelerate emergence of identities of groups which perceived themselves as religious, ethnic, national or regional communities (Rattansi and Westwood, 1997: 221). Nationalist tendencies observed in many of the member countries of The European Union cause for shaping the researches on the subject within the framework of the question "How a European?". The identity and legitimacy issues on the level of development reached by the EU, has increased with effect of racism in Europe (Karaosmanoğlu, 2001: 163), thus increasing leads the need for the development of "European identity" which should be away from nationalist rhetoric. Because both after the union and before the union, (although it shows discrepancies in their own), the European identity states identities which are in a body generally. The policies about trying to make the elements minority or a local qualified as a nation and the efforts for to homogenize National identities of the Member States towards the idea of a federal Europe, lead popularization of nationalism as an emerging trend in the EU. And this situation threatens integrative effect of the identity of a common European which has been idealized, and makes "How a Europe?" question a difficult question to answer.

Because "Union citizenship" concept which has been fictionalized towards the European Union has not been adopted and has not been accepted by the citizens of the member states sufficiently, this situation makes the answer of the question "How a Europe?" a quite difficult. In many European countries, the citizens do not feel themselves as European, and they feel themselves belong to their own country and they define themselves with their national identity. According to a study, %38 of EU citizens think that they have a common European culture, %49 of them do not think that. In another study made by the European

Commission in 2001, the survey that "EU citizenship or national identity, which one you have embraced more?" question has been asked. As a result of this study the Luxembourg with %20 rate took place in the front row as the country which has people who want to be only EU citizens. According to this survey, the United Kingdom and Sweden are the countries, which have appropriated EU citizenship minimum. The adoption of both of national identity - the identity of the EU and only EU identity in these two countries has the lowest ratio (Duyar, USAK: 2006). However, the answers of "How much do you feel yourself as European" question in many European countries have been highly significant positive.

The rate of feeling as European is too much than the rate of the adoption of European identity, the reason of this difference may be because the controls feel themselves as they have been articulated to Europa geographically. The ideal of a common European identity which is tried to be placed with "Citizenship of the Union" consciousness, as seen in the studies has not been very effective. The underlying reason is arising from the concept of integration in Europe in other words, it is arising from the purpose of ensuring integrity between the EU's northern, eastern, western and southern. The more explicit term; the European identity project idealized by taking support from points such as EU member countries have a common geographical structure, contains a common culture partly and have a large majority of the same religion, in fact it is not targeted / ideal that EU countries are trying to realize individually. The enhancement of Europeanness concept towards a common identity with religion, geography, culture, or with a common history does not seem very possible. If we think about Central Eastern European Countries (CEEC) which have been joined with the European Union subsequently or some regions in countries which are the first 15 members and minorities such as Basques, Catalan, Scotland it will be recognized that it is a wrong foundation. European countries do not adopt on the contrary in most cases they define themselves with their national identities that they belong to it.

Conclusion

Especially since 2008, the financial, fiscal and social crisis has a very important role in the rise of nationalist movements in Europe (www.euronews.com). Until a short while ago the Europeans who were seeking employees to run, using immigrants at this point, making them serve themselves by making them work in jobs that they do not want work, now they started to see these people as "others" who are stealing their work and forming the cause of imbalances in social and employment policies and inter-regional disparities in the country. It is indispensable that offering becomes an asset which is increasing rapidly when cultural / political and religious factors added to the causes economic-based. Another remarkable aspect of the event; this situation is using by ultra-nationalist political parties and extreme right-wing movements as an important means of propaganda and pronunciation. Mümtazer Turkone considers these movements in Europe which is using many elements of fascism as ideological in the background as "neofascism".

On the other hand, the European Union has taken important steps about the common identity of the European with The Helsinki Summit and European Union has accepted that there is no candidate country and individual will be alienated for reasons such as religious and cultural diversity and it has accepted that at this point only the criteria is if democratic values is embraced or not. According to the European Union; one of the most important criteria for the success of the EU project has literally been the support which will be given by nationals of Member States to this project. One of the important indicators of it that the

European Union has started to have commonality perceptiveness after the Treaty of Maastricht for the purpose of political integration in many fields including especially economic policies. In this context, a common European identity will make important contributions to EU governance structure. On the other hand a common European identity will bring along the potential of the EU to become an alternative political force in a globalized world through important values such as democracy and human rights. Finally, bringing closer together the communities which are forming EU within the framework of shared values, developing and strengthening the social communication is an important factor on EU's desiderative which is about to create a common identity (Tekin, 2007:34).

But however, the European Union's policy about creating "common identity" has changed with time. The most important change in this sense is the developed policies which are developed by the European Union, for protecting the cultural diversity that exists in Europe. In this context, cultural diversity is realized in two ways. The first of these; to identify with the culture which is highlighted that it needs to be supported with public utilities, especially with the mass media, and the second one is acceptance of the other one and to be open to other cultures. The meaning of this is; rejection of the religious, linguistic, cultural and nationalist fundamentalism and acknowledgment of other cultural products. This is also an attempt to export a specific culture (www.konrad.org.tr). The result of this initiative is emerging as the micro-nationalist movements.

However, in this environment that the national identities are important elements in defining Europeanness, are a diversity of nations in the EU and the presence of European invisible identity elements of threat for an idealized common European identity? How will nationalist rhetoric put forward the European identity firstly, in today's Europe that firstly German after European, firstly France after European and firstly Dutch after European opinion dominates? (Oğuzlu, 2006). Therefore, the European identity which will dominate in multicultural and supranational European Union will be possible within the framework of identity discourse which will be shaped around the ideal of the common Europeanness in the form of European France, European Germany and European Netherlands.

References

- Is "European" Identity Resolving Against Nationalism? Online: www.tr.euronews.com/2011/05/05/ab-ve-milliyetci-akimlar, 01.05.2011
- "Racism and Ethnocentrism on the rise in Europe," Online: <http://www.haber7.com/avrupa/haber/983635-avrupada-irkcilik-ve-yabanci-dusmanligi-yukseliste>, 20.04.2013.
- Demirtepe T, "United Kingdom, Sub-national belonging and the EU ", **Online:** <http://www.usakgundem.com/yazarlar.php?:=70&type=4>, 17.08.2006.
- Duyar E. "To Be Union In Europe: EU Citizenship", **Online:** <http://www.usakgundem.com/makale.php?id=23>, 17.08.2006.
- Kalın I., "Europe is Keeping To Oneself Rapidly", Zaman Gazette, 31.05.2006.
- Karaosmanoğlu A.L. (2001). The Relations Between Turkey and the European Union in terms of the European Security and Defense Identity. East West Journal, European Edition, 14, 163.

- Laçiner S., Özcan M., Bal İ , (2004). Possible Effects of Turkey to the EU. Turkish European İstanbul: USAK Library, Hayat Broadcasting.
- Lecours A. (2002). When Regions Go Abroad: Globalization Nationalism and Federalism, Globalization, Multilevel Governance and Democracy: Continental Comparative and Global Perspectives, Paper for Conference, Queen' University, May 3-4, 2002, s.1-5.
- Özcan M. (2000). A Review on Integration in the European Union In Light of Austria Elections Yeni Türkiye Journal EU Special Edition, Number:35-36.
- Oğuzlu T. (2006). How the rejection of the EU Constitution should be interpreted?, Online: <http://www.liberaldt.org.tr/index.php?lan=tr&message=article&art=404>, 17.08.2006.
- Poyraz T., Arıkan G. (2003). Europe-Turkey Relations and Other Definitions which change periodically. Ankara: Hacettepe University Literary Magazine, Volume: 6: 20, Number: 2.
- Tekin Y.O. (2007). Causes of the European Union's efforts to create a common identity, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Balıkesir University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Public Administration.
- Tesser L.M. (2003). The Geopolitics of Tolerance: Minority Rights Under EU Expansion in East-Central Europe, East European Politics and Societies, Vol: 17, No:483.
- Yaşar N., Turhanlı T. (2005). A Matter of National Identity in Turkey, İstanbul: HPD Legal Perspective Magazine, Number :3, 137-166.
- Vernet D. "Protection of national culture and European Culture: Example of France and the EU ", Le Monde, Paris, Online: <http://www.konrad.org.tr/index.php?id=131>.
- Yıldız S. (2007). Social Identity and National Identity Concepts Nature, İstanbul: National Folklore, Issue: 74.
- Wiewiorka M. (1997). Racism in Europe: Unity and Diversity, Ed: Ali Rattansi, Sallie Westwood, Racism, Modernity and Identity, translator: Sevda Akyüz, İstanbul: Sarmal Publishing House.