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Part 1
Culture

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Introduction

European integration and culture: four approaches

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This introductory chapter examines the multidimensional and often fraught scholarly relationship between European integration and culture. The complexity of culture as an area of European studies and European integration has inspired a growing body of scholarly literature in various disciplines. This literature agrees (for example: Bennett, 2007; Calligaro & Vlassis, 2017a; Miller & Yúdice, 2002) that it is difficult to define the limits of culture. Being such a vast and polysemous category, culture is seen as both a driving and centrifugal force of European integration. In this scientific literature, culture refers to artistic and intellectual heritage from the past, as well as to contemporary cultural expressions created by artists or produced and distributed by cultural industries (Calligaro & Vlassis, 2017a: 10). More broadly, in the anthropological sense, a widened conception of culture deals with all aspects of the symbolic life of a group, such as traditions, customs, values and a set of ways of life and of shared representations (Yúdice, 2003). Culture thus refers to the symbolic meaning and collective ideas that originate from or express cultural identities (UNESCO, 2005). Culture therefore has a dual nature, oscillating between symbolic and material spheres, raising a series of economic, social, and identity-based issues for those actors involved in European integration policies.

The introductory chapter highlights how this multidisciplinary literature seeks to explore the links between culture, European integration and European governance. It argues that this literature emphasises a twofold process: the role and place of culture in the process of European integration and in the establishment of the European Union's legitimacy, as well as the impact of European integration on the emergence of a European culture and on the sustainability of national and local cultures in a context of supra-national and/or extra-European pressures. In fact, this process is illustrated by the EU's motto, 'United in Diversity', representing the ways in which culture fosters integration, cooperation and common destiny, while, at the same time, it highlights identity particularities and cultural specificities. This literature therefore offers different insights depending on the definition of culture, its theoretical scope and its methodological tools. It can be distinguished in four main categories: communication and cultural policy studies, the political sociology approach, the ethnographic and interpretivist perspectives and the legal-institutionalist approach.

Communication and cultural policy studies

Scientific literature from communication and cultural policy studies focuses on the cultural sector (cultural heritage, cultural and media industries, arts) as a critical case of European integration and on why and how “culture” has become a policy concern of the European Union over the last three decades. Thus, it highlights the competing perspectives of EU intervention in the cultural sector, the diversity of actors involved, their interests and strategies, as well as their interactions and influence in the policy-making process. In this respect, this literature seeks to retrace the various stages in the emergence of the EU cultural policy in the 1980s and 1990s (Polo, 2003) and the process by which European-level policies regarding culture have been developed, leading to the Europeanisation of domestic policies in the cultural sector (Littoz-Monnet, 2007). It explains why and how the European Union has started to intervene in the cultural policy sector – understood here as the public policies aimed to support and regulate cultural heritage, the arts and cultural and media industries (Autissier, 2005; Collins, 1994; Pongy, 1997). According to this literature, the areas of media and cultural policy provide a relevant prism through which to explore wider processes of European integration. Therefore, the book *Media and Cultural Policy in the European Union* edited by K. Sarikakis (2007) argues that questions of European identity, citizenship and community or polity building clearly resolve themselves as questions of the European cultural governance and of the (non-)emergence of a European “communicative space” (Sarikakis, 2007).

In a similar vein, several scholars seek to explore the major transformations in the European agenda for culture since the 1990s and the shift from cultural industries/cultural policy to creative industries. They emphasise the dynamics of agenda-setting in the EU institutional context, and they analyse the emergence of a creative economy agenda based on economic competitiveness and marketable nature of culture (Littoz-Monnet, 2012) and the changes in European media policy related to digitisation, economic globalisation and commercialisation (Van den Bulck & Donders, 2014; Vlassis, 2020). As such, coupled with an emphasis on the expansive perspectives of digital technologies, the policy agenda based on creative economy points out the importance of entrepreneurial creativity, innovation and economic growth at the expense of the social and identity contributions of artistic activities and cultural policies (Garcia Leiva, 2011).

In addition, a growing scientific literature focuses on the Convention on the Protection and Promotion for Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by UNESCO in 2005, and on the critical role played by the EU in order to incorporate the concept of “cultural diversity” in its policy agenda (Loisen & De Ville, 2011; Pauwels & Loisen, 2016; Vlassis, 2016a, 2016b). This literature aims to understand why and how the EU adopted the concept of “cultural diversity” as a cornerstone of EU cultural policy in both its policy discourse and practice. It offers an overview of EU internal and external action to promote the concept of “cultural diversity” in a range of policy areas, such as trade, development and digital affairs. Thus, it highlights the changing legitimacy, coherence and authority of EU institutions in cultural matters, as well as the ways through which “cultural diversity” legitimises the EU intervention in cultural sectors, strengthening its autonomy and influence.

Political sociology approach

From a political sociology perspective, an important strand of scientific literature asks what “Europe” and “culture” mean for European governance, and it agrees that culture is one of the most complex and contested fields of European integration. It sheds light on the dynamics of negotiation on culture as a European integration issue between EU institutions and other

categories of actors involved in the definition of cultural governance at multiple levels. In this respect, this literature provides an account of the multi-dimensionality of the European policy of culture, and it demonstrates that the European policy of culture is deployed in sectoral, local and transnational/international areas (Calligaro & Vlassis, 2017b; Calligaro, 2017; Vlassis, 2017). This literature also provides an overview of the multi-dimensional treatment of culture by the EU through the concept of “cultural governance”, tackling a variety of sectors of public intervention. In this respect, it examines the ways in which cultural issues have been framed at EU level and the policies to which they have given rise (Psychogiopoulou, 2015).

In a similar vein, Calligaro (2013) explores the promotion of Europeanness, which arouses feelings of belonging to the EU. She demonstrates that the promotion of Europeanness at the EU level does not constitute an overarching identity policy that imposes a homogenous interpretation of European identity. Defining Europeanness is a process of negotiation. It produces multilayered representations of Europe, and it can be investigated through various issues, such as the European heritage or the iconography of the euro. In addition, the book *The Cultural Politics of Europe* edited by K.K. Patel (2013) aims to debunk the myth of Brussels at the centre of cultural Europeanisation by focusing on the European Capital of Culture program. It argues that European cultural policy has to be seen as relational, multidirectional movement, involving a wide variety of stakeholders and leading to conflicts and collaborations at various levels.

Regarding this approach, it is also necessary to explore the multiple instrumentalities ascribed to culture as a medium for the management of European integration. Barnett (2001) suggests following the evolution of an agenda for so-called “cultural action” by the EU in the 1990s in order to trace the ways in which the relationship between culture, identity and citizenship has been negotiated in European policy-making contexts. According to Barnett, the evolution of EU policies to promote cultural cooperation is indicative of a gradual “governmentalization” of culture at the EU level. In addition, Garner (2017) explores the various instrumentalities of culture in the EU discourse in order to formulate an agenda for culture and development in its external relations. Finally, Vos (2017) discusses how the European Commission employs cultural policy to facilitate EU enlargement processes. By investing in culture and funding cultural programs and networks, the EU seeks to develop a multifaceted approach, and it hopes to stimulate transnational cooperation, economic growth, social cohesion and identification with the EU (Vos, 2017). In this regard, the political sociology approach explores culture as a European multidimensional issue located at the confluence of different fields of public policy.

Ethnographic and interpretivist perspective

From an ethnographic and interpretivist perspective, several scholars seek to highlight the ways in which the European Union has aimed to legitimise its own political actions and further integration with interventions over cultural issues in order to promote European consciousness across EU Member States. The ethnographic and interpretivist perspective focuses on the meanings that shape EU action and institutions about culture and the ways in which they do so. This scientific literature emphasises how the European Union has consolidated an imagined community of Europeans and reveals how the EU has created Europe and its own authority by promoting shared symbols, values and practices. Shore (2000) explores how the EU seeks to forge closer cooperation among the peoples of Europe, turning to “cultural action”. He details the attempts of EU elites to use culture as a tool for forging a sense of cohesion and belonging among Europeans – from invented Euro-symbols (European flag, European anthem, Europe day) and European statistics such as the Eurostat statistical work to European citizenship and the single currency.

In a similar vein, Sassatelli (2009) highlights the construction of an imagined Europe through the promotion of narratives of European cultural identity. She examines the identity-building intentions and effects of the European Capital of Culture and also looks at the work of the Council of Europe and the recent European Landscape Convention. For her part, in the book *The Politics of Everyday Europe*, McNamara (2015) focuses on the power of everyday culture in legitimating the process of European integration, and she argues that the legitimation of EU authority rests in part on a transformation in the symbols and practices of everyday life in Europe. The Single Market and the Euro; European citizenship and the dismantling of borders within Europe; EU public architecture, arts and popular entertainment; and EU diplomacy are important not only for their material effects but for how they naturalise European governance. They can be seen as social and cultural processes which composed the social fact of European integration and supported the political development of the EU.

Legal-institutionalist approach

Based on a legal-institutionalist perspective, a fourth category of scholarly literature explores the relationship between European Union law, culture and identity. According to Articles 2(5) and 6 TFEU, culture forms part of the policy areas in which the EU shall have competence to carry out action to “support, coordinate or supplement” the actions of the Member States, without suspending national competences. Clearly, the Member States retain primary responsibility for action in the cultural field, and EU law is not merely a vehicle for challenging established national legal rules which have a cultural dimension. In this respect, this literature explores from a legal point of view some of the challenges facing the European Union in developing convincing and coherent policies in the cultural domain (Craufurd Smith, 2004; Denuit, 2016). As noted by Craufurd Smith (2004), these challenges stem not only from the Union’s fragmented institutional structure and Member State sensitivities but also from the uncertainty which surrounds the meaning of the term “culture” itself. Thus, cultural issues can be seen to permeate various aspects of EU law, such as international trade and aid, education, sport, language use and the mass media.

Similarly, according to Article 167(4) TFEU (ex Article 151 TEC), the Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and promote the diversity of its cultures. E. Psychogiopoulou (2008) stresses that the EU must heed the cultural repercussions of its activities so as to refrain from jeopardising the further enhancement of Member States’ cultural diversity. In this sense, the cultural cross-sectional clause of Article 167(4) calls for a reshaping of EU decision-making in other policy areas, which have to give due consideration to the impact they might have on cultural matters. European institutions should balance the attainment of cultural objectives with other legitimate EU policy objectives (Psychogiopoulou, 2006). Following this research agenda, this literature also examines the paths taken by the EU for cultural issues, and it evaluates the objectives and the impact of European interventions in cultural matters in order to understand in which ways European law protects and promotes the multidimensionality of cultural policies and, eventually, culture itself (Romainville, 2015; Richieri Hanania, 2019).

In the section on “Culture”, the chapters that follow offer much greater depth and variety in the accounts of this diverse scholarly environment. The 11 contributions explore various research questions in the relationships between culture and European integration, and they aim to develop a conversation about the need for exploring European integration through culture. They therefore illustrate the Handbook’s eclectic approach in dealing with each theme in a variety of ways and in stimulating scholarly debates, academic complementarities and dialogues.

The strength of the collection reveals that the scope of culture and European integration as a research field does not fit under one specific topic or idea, and it should be analysed through a multifaceted and multidimensional approach.

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