

European union: ideology and symbolism Avrupa birliği: ideoloji ve sembolizm

Gönderim Tarihi / Received: 18.09.2024

Ziya Kıvanç KIRACI¹

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 02.01.2025

Doi: [10.31795/baunsobed.1552115](https://doi.org/10.31795/baunsobed.1552115)

ABSTRACT: Nation states constitute the attractive state systems of modern times. In the new order, the nation state, which is founded on a secular worldview, is built with symbols. Through symbolic contents such as flags, anthems and ceremonies, people build cultural unity. At the same time, they feel gratitude to the state to which they belong and bless being together. The feeling of being us is the most fundamental element that consolidates the nation. The European Union, which is expanding with the idea of Europeanness, is also trying to utilize various symbolic contents to build a super-identity. While the idea of a united Europe is not new, the concept of Europeanness is relatively new. Designing a new identity that transcends national identity nevertheless creates the necessity of finding common values to strengthen the sense of unity. The European Union is an important example of how the symbols of the nation-state work in a transnational system. In the context of recent studies of the union, which started out as an economic integration, the study is based on how symbols that are functional for nation states are positioned in a different system. Political determinations on European Union have been made in this context.

Keywords: Political communication, Ideology, Symbolism, Nation state, European union

ÖZ: Ulus devletler modern zamanların cazip devlet sistemlerini oluşturur. Oluşan yeni düzende seküler dünya görüşü üzerine kurulan ulus devlet sembollerle inşa edilir. Bayrak, marş, tören gibi sembolik içerikler sayesinde insanlar kültürel birlik inşa ederler. Aynı zamanda ait oldukları devlete şükran duyar ve bir arada olmayı kutsarlar. Biz olma hissi ulusu sağlamlaştıran en temel unsurdur. Avrupalılık fikri ile genişleyen Avrupa Birliği de bir üst kimlik inşa etmek için çeşitli sembolik içeriklerden faydalanmaya çalışmaktadır. Birleşik bir Avrupa fikri yeni olmamakla birlikte Avrupalılık kavramı nispeten yenidir. Ulusal kimliği aşan yeni bir kimlik tasarlamak yine de birlik hissini güçlendirecek ortak değerler bulma zorunluluğunu ortaya çıkarır. Ulus devlete ait sembollerin ulus aşırı bir sistemde nasıl iş gördüklerini görmek açısından Avrupa Birliği önemli bir örnektir. Bir iktisadi bütünleşme olarak yola çıkan birliğin son dönem çalışmaları bağlamında çalışma, Ulus devletler açısından işlevsel olan sembollerin farklı bir sistemde nasıl konumlandığı üzerine kurulmuştur. Avrupa Birliği'ne dair siyasi saptamalar bu bağlamda yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal iletişim, İdeoloji, Sembolizm, Ulus devlet, Avrupa birliği

¹ Dr. Öğr. Gör., Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu Yerel Yönetimler Programı, kkirac@firat.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8728-2834>

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Avrupa Birliği; günümüzde kamu yönetimi, siyaset bilimi, uluslararası ilişkiler, iktisat gibi birçok disiplini ilgilendiren güncel konulardan birisidir. Avrupa Birliğine dair çalışmaların bu çok yönlülüğü kavramı sosyal bilimler alanında cazip kılmaktadır. Son dönemde yapılan çalışmaların çeşitliliğine bakıldığında bir ulus üstü yapılanma olarak Avrupa Birliğinin bir çok yönden incelendiği göze çarpmaktadır. İlgili araştırmalarda ampirik metotlar kullanılabilirdiği gibi, alan araştırması ya da kuramsal yaklaşımların da kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışma ise siyaset bilimi odaklı olup siyasetle iletişimin incelediği alt konulara odaklanmıştır. Ulus kavramının yarattığı kimlik olgusunun sembollerle nasıl kurulduğu üzerine odaklanan çalışmada sembolizm ağırlıklı bir yaklaşım hakimdir. Aydınlanma çağından itibaren insanlara hayatı anlama ihtiyaçlarına ilişkin konularda sembol ve sembolik içeriklerden yararlanıldığı görülmektedir. Bir ulus inşa etmek aynı zamanda bayrak, marş, ritüel gibi sembolik içerikleri dolaşıma sokma sürecidir. Ortak değerler etrafında yükselen her ulus devlet kendi kutsallarını yaratmak adına sembollerden yararlanır. Avrupa Birliği farklı milletleri barındıran ulus üstü yapısıyla bir Avrupalılık fikri yaratmaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışmanın genel yapısı Ulusa ait kavramların ulus üstü bir yapılanmada iş görüp göremeyeceği konusuna yani dikotomik gibi görünen iki olgu üzerine kurulmuştur.

Literatür taraması

Avrupa Birliği ile ilgili çalışmalar hem tür olarak hem de metot olarak zengin bir literatür oluşturmaktadır. Sosyal bilimlerin birçok alanını ilgilendiren konuya dair basit bir tarama yapıldığında binlerce çalışmalık önemli bir birikim ortaya çıkmaktadır. Çalışma ulus devlet ve Avrupa Birliği kavramlarının benzer ve karşıt yönlerine odaklanmıştır. Bundan dolayı Avrupa fikrinin ilk zamanlarından şu anki durumuna kadar zamansal bir seçim yapılmıştır. Böylece Avrupalılık fikrinin evrimi ile modern ulus yapılarının gelişim çizgisi birlikte incelenmesi mümkün olmuştur. Ayrıca birliğin resmi kaynakları olarak internet sitesi ve yazılı materyalleri incelenmiştir. Bununla birlikte ulus devlet, kimlik ve uluslararası ilişkiler alanında konuya doğrudan katkı sağlayabilecek kaynaklardan da yararlanılmıştır. Ayrıca milliyetçilikle ilgili bazı temel eserlerde yer alan millet ve kimlik nüanslarına dair saptamalara yer verilmiştir. Konunun çok yönlü bir alana yayılmadan toparlanması için daralmacı bir kalıpla çalışılmıştır.

Yöntem

Siyaset Bilimi odaklı çalışmalarda bilimsel yöntemin farklı türleri kullanılabilir. Çalışmanın temel odak noktası bir çelişki üzerine kurulu olduğundan kuramsal bir bakışla betimleme yapılmış ve konu teorik olarak incelenmiştir. Kuramsal yöntem literatürün ilgili kısmından alıntılar yaparak konunun irdeşenmesine yönelik gelişme ve sonuç bölümlerinde kuramsal bulgu ve yorumların açıklandığı bir düzlemde ilerlemektedir. Nitel analiz metoduna hakim olan “neden” ve “nasıl” sorularına odaklanarak çalışmanın genel betimsel yapısı oluşturulmuştur.

Bulgular ve tartışma

Avrupa Birliği son yüz yılda bir ekonomik entegrasyon şeklinde kurulmuştur. Bu cazip birliktelik zamanla Avrupa'nın tamamına yayılan ve bir çok Avrupa devletini içeren siyasi ve ekonomik bütünleşmeye dönüşmüştür. Bu tanımlama federasyon ve konfederasyon çağrışımlarını aşan yeni bir kavramsal içeriğe sahiptir. Öte yandan ulus kavramı da Avrupa merkezli bir tanımlama olup Fransız Devrimi sonrası kurulan devletlere verilen ismin kökenidir. Dinin ve kilisenin hayatı anlamlandırma rolü aydınlatma dönemi ile bitmiş ve ulusların kuruluşu aynı kökenden gelme, aynı dili konuşma gibi ortak değerlere dayandırılmıştır. Marş, bayrak, önemli günler ve kahramanlar her ulusun kendi müstesnalığını yaratan sembolik biçimler olarak kullanılmaktadır. Her ulus kendisini diğerlerinden üstün kılan kutsal değerlerini sembollerle inşa etmektedir. Avrupa Birliği gibi karmaşık ve ulus üstü bir yapılanmanın son zamanlarda inşa etmek için uğraştığı Avrupalılık fikri de benzer sembolik biçimleri kullanmaya çalışmaktadır. Tartışma ulusa ait temel kavramların ulus üstü bir yapılanmada işlev görüp göremeyeceğidir. Avrupalılık ideolojisinin dayanmak istediği kökensel birlikteliğe dair iddiaları Avrupa Birliği bayrağı, Avrupa Birliği Marşı, Avrupa Günü gibi sembolik biçimler ışığında tartışmak gerekir.

Zira birliğin sembolleri kullanmaya ilişkin hevesli tavrı önemli bir bulgudur. Bu durum Avrupa Birliğinin kendisini ortak bir meclise sahip olmanın ötesinde gerçekten bir Avrupalılık fikri etrafında yeniden oluşturmaya çalıştığının bir kanıtıdır. Ancak öte yandan ayrı ayrı ulusların bu fikre çok gönüllü olmadıkları yapılan bazı çalışmalarda ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca Avrupa'ya kıta dışından gelen yoğun göç durumu da durumu daha karmaşık hale getirmektedir. Dil farklılığı da önemli bir durumdur. İngilizce, İspanyolca, Fransızca ve Almanca gibi diller daha çok konuşmakla birlikte Avrupa'da çok farklı diller bulunmaktadır. Avrupa vatandaşlarının çoğu ikinci bir dili bilmemeleri iletişimsel olarak önemli bir sembolizm yoksunluğu olarak ele alınabilir.

Sonuç ve öneriler

Avrupa Birliği bir konfederasyon olmadığı gibi, doğrudan federal bir birlik olarak da açıklanamaz. Ulus devletleri bir araya getirerek yeni bir model yaratmıştır. Bu yeni entegrasyon biçimi haklı olarak dikkat çekmekte ve yeni modellere ilham vermekte olsa bile ulus devletlerin yerini alacak yeni bir form söz konusu olduğunda durum karmaşık hale gelmektedir. Kolektif kimlik inşası Avrupalılık vurgusu merkezli biçimde oluşturulmaya çalışılmaktadır. Avrupalılık fikrinin yerleştirilmeye çalışılması, ulus devlete ait kültürel ve sembolik formların kullanılmasına yol açmıştır. Ancak bu durum Avrupa Birliği kavramındaki çelişkiyi daha belirgin hale getirmektedir. Dolayısıyla ulus-ötesi Avrupalılık iddiası daha çok çıkarlar üzerinden kimlik inşa etme fikrine dayanmaktadır. Ulusun ötesinde, siyasi bir karşılığı olan kolektif bir kimlik inşa etme fikri dünyada henüz tam olarak gerçekleşmemiştir. Avrupa Birliği daha çok kültürel çoğulculuğun itici gücü olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca ortak değer olarak bir kimlikten ziyade liberal değerlerin genel kabulüne dayalı toplumsal bir uzlaşma alanı yaratmaktadır. Bununla birlikte Avrupa Birliği deneyiminin değişen dünya düzeni içerisinde uzun vadede akıbetinin ne olacağı ise incelenmeye değer konular arasında yer almaktadır.

Introduction

The view that the globalization process is weakening the nation state is gaining strength. This process also involves uncertainty for collective identities. There is a period in which the chance to express oneself through politics is lost. Time becomes more important than space and the logic of the state is eroding. Moreover, the nation-state is experiencing an existential confusion against some transnational organizations. In this context, the concepts of Europe and the European Union are among the most striking issues in international politics. The first reason for this is that Europe hosted one of the most important ruptures in human history such as the French Revolution. The most important concepts of contemporary politics were shaped during the periods of enlightenment and revolution. The nation-state as a new type emerged in these times. Debates and struggles over the right of nations to self-determination have fostered new states, new forms of sovereignty and new cultural values. Moreover, in the last century, the geography of the two world wars has been reshaped by military interventions. The European experience in this period was characterized by the disintegration of large traditional states and the formation of relatively small ones into nation states. However, European history has also achieved the opposite in the last century. The European Union has emerged as a complex and dynamic organization uniting many nations. This single and exceptional example is unprecedented. Is the European Union adventure in line with the nation-state model or are there points of conflict between the two? This study compares the basic ideology and symbols of the nation state with the European Union. In this way, it is attempted to provide a new perspective to the basic debates in political science.

Nation state and symbol

The nation is, as many recognize, the political form of modernity. This is because it replaces traditions, customs and privileges with a national space reconfigured by logic inspired by the principles of unified reason. What constitutes the nation is not so much a culture as the means to create and reproduce a national culture. This is the rationalist and modernist perspective (Touraine, 2002: 155-156). However, the evolution of the nation-state structure is dominated by the emphasis on balance and common values. These values are both characteristic of the system and related to balancing the external environment. Examples of balance of power systems in the West can be found in ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy or in the European state system. The distinctive feature of these systems was to glorify the fact that states of equal power existed and to make it a guiding principle for world order. The concept of balance of power reflects the beliefs of the major political philosophers of the Enlightenment. According to these thinkers, the entire universe, including the political world, is governed by rational principles, each balancing the other (Kissinger, 1994: 13).

On the other hand, there are those who argue that it was romanticism, not constitutional logic, that gave rise to the nation state and modern national concepts (Giddens, 1985: 163). The concept of culture, which developed as a critique of modernity, has an important role in the evolution of new political terms such as nation. As political concepts took on a mechanical form, the creative power was interrupted. However, cultural concepts are at the center of social aesthetics. The utilitarianism and unlimited competition brought about by industrialization are opposed by cultural elements such as romanticism and empathy. The cohesive power of culture has also triggered a kind of romanticism. Thus, romantic nationalism has been one of the currents that most influenced the nation-state. Rather than a mechanical rationality, the nation-state has come to rely on symbolic values such as language, faith, blood ties, homeland and flag (Eagleton, 2016: 110-113). National identity describes a situation in which a group of people identify with national symbols so that they can act as a single psychological group when there is a possibility of interference with the symbols of national identity. This also means that national identity, the identification of a group of people as a nation, is not enough to become a nation. For national identity to exist, the mass of the people must have gone through the actual psychological process of achieving this general identification with the nation. When masses of people who share the same identity are considered, it can be said that this mass can act as a single unit in situations affecting the common identity (Bloom, 1990: 52-53). It can be said that nationalism has many dimensions regarding the commonality that builds the nation. In a short period of time, modernization went from being liberal to voluntarist and began to mobilize the past to build the future. As a result, national consciousness turned into an attitude against modernity, often labeling as demonic forces those people or things that did not

identify with a biological cultural heritage (Touraine, 2002: 158). With the sense of unity, the phenomenon of the map, which was not taken into account much in the Middle Ages, gained importance. The nation-state system cannot tolerate a territorial vacuum. It wants every land to be covered in the name of an official state. Therefore, the most important symbol of the nation state is the border. Citizens are ready to die and kill to protect the lines of the national border (Billig, 2005: 30-32). Nations try to reduce differences to a pure spirit. Thanks to this spirit, also called national will, everything that is multiple is transformed into a single structure. But on the other hand, very few existing nations are homogeneous enough to be considered nations. This complexity makes the names of nation-states metonymic. This is because every society contains a large number of specific communities. What is evident in modern society is the distinction between secular society and religious society. Since the Renaissance, the relationship between these two autonomous societies has led to various kinds of confusion within nations. This is a phenomenon found throughout Europe. The same incompatibilities exist between classes and between age generations. But, as Eisenstadt says (2000: 30), differentiated but not clearly defined identities have developed among many social classes, with common cultural symbols that are not limited to a single culture and kinship. The symbols that make up the common identity have a more abstract and mythical quality than the old tradition. The secularization brought about by the French Revolution and the separation of the conception of power from divine sources posed other problems. Secularization, which separated the secular and divine dimensions of power and emphasized the secular, caused a problem of legitimacy for the nation state.

The state has to be built on order, not chaos. The nation state is designed as a machine with all its gears interlocking. Thanks to the coordination between the gears, a system has emerged in which a large number of works are activated by information coming from a single center. Therefore, the parts of the system both trigger and limit each other (Poggi, 2009: 119). Ideologies associated with projects such as nation-building, modernization and economic development share some common characteristics. The condemnation of exploitation and domination and the praise of independence are the main themes. On the other hand, however, their emphasis on the unity of the nation over particularism allows for the spread of unifying symbols. The character of the national leader is celebrated. Content that appeals to social excitement is produced. In this sense, the nation itself becomes the subject of a political religion (Ballandier, 1972: 180). The government, the state, the party actually remain in people's minds not as concrete entities but as symbolic constructs. Although the institutional structure changes, their symbolic value is constant. Through the ritual and the participation of the individual in it, an ordinary citizen transcends his or her individuality and establishes a critical link with the nation. Symbols sanctify power. Symbolic forms need to be positive, nor do they need to be routinized (Lewellen, 2003: 96-97). Social and political systems are in fact structured and expressed through the complex relationships of symbols. In this sense, culture is built on symbols. It is important how symbolic things are used in politics and how they are manipulated by political actors. Only in this way can their intricate relations with the concrete foundations of power be understood. One of the most important symbolic contents is ritual. As a form of action, rituals involving unnecessary repetition are socially standardized. As many in politics recognize, political reality is largely created through symbolic means. Creating a symbol, or more commonly identifying oneself with a popular symbol, is a powerful way of gaining and maintaining power. Power is a key concept in the construction of reality (Kertzer, 1988: 3-6). With the nation-state, ceremonies and some other rituals that emphasize the national spirit are produced in place of religious elements. National ceremonies were reinforced with auxiliary content such as flags, anthems and borders. As a result, as Habermas puts it, the nation oscillates between the imaginary naturalness of its structural element, the people, and the legal construction of itself as a body of citizens (Habermas, 2001: 101-102).

Idea of european union and symbolism

Kissinger argues that Europe created the nation-state, the only part of the modern world that operates a multi-state system, which dominated international practice for three centuries. But in the new international order, he says, this system is obsolete. To counterbalance this, he seeks to create a single Europe, but a united Europe is a dream (Kissinger, 1994: 16). This view may be based on the different worldviews of Americans and Europeans. According to Kagan (2004: 3-5), the two sides have very different ideas about the dimensions of power. Europe is trying to distance itself from power with a

supranational understanding of negotiation. It emphasizes pluralism in order to realize Kant's idea of eternal peace. The United States, on the other hand, still argues that international rules are unreliable and in fact agrees with Hobbes's thought with its stance in favor of power politics. Therefore, it can be likened that Americans came from Mars and Europeans from Venus. While Americans read the world in terms of opposites such as friend and foe, good and bad, Europeans see it in terms of differences. America tends to deter rather than persuade when solving problems. Europeans, on the other hand, favor negotiation and dialogue.

The idea of a United Europe was strengthened after World War II. The existence of the Soviet threat forced the US to take certain measures. European countries lost their ability to survive both economically and politically due to the severe effects of the war. The US established the IMF and the World Bank to repair the damage caused by the war. Later, with the establishment of NATO, some European countries came under the American defense shield. Marshall aid in the same years is valuable as an attempt by the US to get Europe back on its feet economically. As a result of all these initiatives, the idea that cooperation could be established in Europe became widespread and this situation contributed to the formation of the EU to some extent (Dinan, 2004: 16-19). The European Union initially resembles an economic integration formed by three countries that came together for coal and steel trade. Over time, the enlarged community moved to a much higher level of economic integration by establishing the customs union and the common market. In the last thirty years, the enlarged structure has also reached a political content resembling a confederation. It even resembles a multi-regional transnational state in terms of its institutions and functioning. Complex transnational and multi-regional models have already been established in Europe. But none has been as large, economically powerful and attractive as the European Union. Has a united Europe evolved into a more rational structure that solves the problems of the nation state? This question is one of the most important political issues of our time. After all, the nation-state has created a collectivity that functions as a unifying riverbed that holds back counter-currents and guarantees consent to the responsibilities of common life. In order for society to exercise democratic self-determination, it was necessary to transform the people into a mass of citizens. In this sense, the nation is an instrument for the creation of a community that conforms to the responsibilities of the state and democracy (Habermas, 2001: 143). The European Union is an attempt to reconsider all these problems and differences and attempt to re-melt them into the orbit of a central core.

For a certain period, the question of where Europe is located has been on the agenda. De Gaulle defined Europe as a region from the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals. The Ural Mountains are not a barrier. It does not completely cover Central Asia. On a world map, Europe looks like a peninsula of Asia. For some, apart from the geographical definition, Europe is defined by where Christianity ends, since Europe has historically consisted mostly of Christian countries. On the other hand, the question of how far east Europe extends has increased with the unity debates (Roskin, 2006: 255). The idea of a united Europe is credited to Coudenhove Kalergi, a count in the 1920s. Foreseeing the second world war, Kalergi claimed that the world would become bipolar, borders would deepen and great destruction would occur as a result of the war. Kalergi was the intellectual leader of this movement, which proposed the organization of a Conference with the participation of more than twenty European states and the drafting of a constitution for the European Union. Kalergi argued that Europe needed a political restructuring to become a center of civilization. English should be the common language and Europeanism should be emphasized by advocating a multicultural state system against national minorities. In this sense, a united Europe was in fact a political integration. Kalergi, who wanted to alleviate the devastation of the war, maintain development and restore Europe to its former strength, proposed ideas on a common currency and military order (Pegg, 1983: 72-75). So, in fact, a united Europe was originally conceived as a nation. In some studies, it has been found that the number of those who are proud of being European is higher than those who are attached to Europe. This is interpreted as an indicator of a positive perception of European identity. Cultural policies that aim to create European consciousness and cultural identity through symbols while respecting national cultures are seen as an important tool for the European Union to achieve its planned structure. However, in this case, the problem for national and cultural identities is the expectations regarding multiculturalism and the immigration problem. In the current situation, the idea of Europeanness has to be constantly reproduced (Sides & Citrin, 2007: 488-491). What constitutes

such cosmopolitanism are the myths, memories, values, symbols and traditions drawn from the cultures and discourses of each and every nation and ethnic community (Smith, 1991: 245).

More than 2000 people from 24 countries were invited to the Pan-European (United Europe) Congress in Vienna in 1926. The flag of the Pan-European movement, the cross on the flag that is still used today, is remarkable. The flag, which was prepared on the basis of the solar cross symbol, has 12 yellow stars on a navy blue background as it is used today. An ideological position of its time that advocated multiculturalism (Pegg, 1983: 78) shows that at least initially there was an attempt to refer to an origin. This is why it was initially referred to as the Holy League or the Christian alliance. However, the multinationalization of Western Europe in particular has complicated the situation. After the end of World War II, mass migration began around 1960. Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Northern European countries introduced a number of employment programs in order to meet the need for labor force for their rapidly growing economies. In this direction, the countries that opened their doors to immigrants employed some of these newly arrived guests in heavy industries with good salaries and some of them in dangerous jobs with low salaries. In Europe, which has become the center of migration, these decisions are taken by elites with political and commercial power. For the elites, immigrants are a short-term solution to the labor shortage, as temporary residents. Depending on the situation, some of the migrants could have stayed longer. However, no one anticipated that at the end of this process, which did not develop as planned, immigrants would become "guest workers" who would become permanent residents in prosperity and bring their own lifestyles, traditions and customs with them (Caldwell, 2009: 4).

Guaranteeing the diversity and rights of more than four hundred and fifty million EU citizens with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds is among the priorities of the EU *acquis* on human rights. To this end, within the framework of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the EU prohibits discrimination based on region, language, religion, belief and has adopted respect for these differences as a fundamental policy. Studies show that at least half of EU citizens use a second language other than their native language in their oral communication (ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/eurobarometer06_en.html, 17.8.2024).

This situation is naturally one of the factors that weakens the European identity. Because it can be said that this type of integration conflicts with the national identity or is something different from it. According to one view, nation-states form their citizens with both powerful symbols and coercive actions of the state. The current European policy does not have this type of behavioral pattern. This situation is a reason that weakens the unity. In order for citizens to identify with the European identity, the European identity needs to be strengthened with historical myths and political symbols. The cultural policies of the European Union also include strategies that will serve to build a common identity. Regulations such as the adoption of a flag and anthem and the establishment of a single currency can be given as examples of this (Shore, 2000: 46). At this point, it is worth noting one of Fukuyama's observations: The international community is illusory insofar as it ultimately depends on the actions of individual nation-states. For international unity has serious problems with collective action (1992: 137). Indeed, while almost all Americans identify themselves as Americans rather than states, no European nation identifies itself as European outside its own country. The project of a united Europe has therefore proceeded without mass support (Roskin, 2006: 251). For example, in order to strengthen the sense of belonging, the European Union has been using the motto *in varietate concordia* since 2000. According to the Union, this symbolic slogan expresses how Europeans are united under the EU umbrella, working for peace and prosperity while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages (european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en_20.8.2024).

Initially, Europe was made up of nation states based on the two modern values of constitutionalism and liberalism. It is a practice in which states are limited in the face of individual rights and freedom is kept as broad as possible. Europe has not given up on liberal democracy, despite the recent resurgence of the right-wing movement (Keating, 1993: 10). As a reflection of this, the cultural and economic construction of the union was symbolized by two basic concepts during the Rome negotiations. These words in the preamble of the Eurotam treaty are peace and prosperity. Italy, which played an important role in

the Rome negotiations, organized an elaborate signing ceremony. The symbolic feature of this ceremony was the integration of the European peoples under the slogan of a closer union (Dinan, 2004: 76).

However, in recent times, the emphasis on nation-building and the sense of the privilege of being a nation have been on the rise. A nation must have a common understanding, aspirations, feelings and ideas, a common civic ideology and cultural foundation that unites the people within its borders. The task of ensuring a common form of public life is entrusted to popular means of socialization, such as a centralized education system and mass media. In the Western model, nations are seen as non-uniform cultural communities, but their members are bound by common historical memories, myths, symbols and traditions (Smith, 1991: 27). For example, the latest version of the flag of the European Union is based on a logic of shared history. On a sky blue background, twelve golden stars form a circle, representing the unity of the peoples of Europe. The number of stars does not change. The number twelve is a symbol of perfection and completeness (ab.gov.tr/avrupa-birligi-amblemi_108.html, 17.8.2024).

In fact, in the early period, it was often emphasized that the basis of the community was economic and a sharp line was drawn between the "customs union" and the "political community". For many, however, the main motive for European unity is, at the outset, political, even military. The rejection of war as an instrument of state policy, and the rejection of the extreme nationalism of recent European history, culminating in the genocide of Nazism, are fundamental. In this reading, the European Community would represent the triumph of political reason over national passions and selfish interests. The economic dimension is seen as a means rather than an end or content (Smith, 1991: 232-233). However, when the recent migration and rising nationalism are taken into account, it is seen that ritual content that will strengthen the European identity is also being put into practice. On May 9, 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman stated that it was essential to establish permanent peaceful relations in Europe and announced a bill to establish a more systematic and orderly Europe. This proposal, also known as the "Schuman Declaration", is the building block of the institution we know today as the European Union. After the 1985 Summit in Milan, it was decided to celebrate May 9 as "Europe Day". Since then, May 9 Europe Day has been celebrated every year with various events in both member countries and candidate and potential candidate countries. In addition, the importance of raising awareness and informing in schools, on television and in other media is emphasized. Europe Day was first celebrated in 1999 at the Schuman Parade in Warsaw. Europe Day, which also has the status of a national holiday, has been celebrated throughout Europe on May 9 since 2008 ([/aei.pitt.edu/992/1/andonnino_report_peoples_europe.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/992/1/andonnino_report_peoples_europe.pdf), 11.08.2024). These days are usually marked by parades and speeches on the importance of unity. However, it can be said that it lacks the festivities and celebratory content invented by nation states. In such ceremonies, a lyricism is expected to mobilize enthusiasm. Thus, the idea of identity, belonging and being us is reproduced. The symbolic content of rituals is a western invention. In Europe, there are many grandiose commemorations, celebrations or festivals. For example, the Festival of the Supreme Being in Paris in the early years of the French Revolution was the first example of attempts to organize state rituals and sanctify the regime. The rituals of the church and monarchy were replaced by revolutionary state rituals (Kertzer, 1988: 156). The ceremonies that increased in later periods became the building tools of a kind of republican religion. In particular, events such as the 11 November and 14 July celebrations and the Solutre Pilgrimage reflect the magnificence of political demonstrations with their symbolic content. Rituals create an association between the political and the sacred in a national sense (Northcutt, 1991: 145-148). The nation state, as Cassirer (1961: 224) notes, replaced hero worship with race worship. Romanticism and folk tales produced the symbolism of this new perspective. The ideologies circulating in Europe supported this new focus in different shades. Even ideologies such as liberalism and socialism made use of lyricism, myths and folk tales from time to time. One of the important questions that comes to mind here is whether rituals that are effective in the nation-building process can function for a supranational structure. European nationalism has made it a rule to construct identity at the individual and social level on the basis of a positive and self-loving self and a negative other. Ritual and myth are intertwined in this construction process. However, the idea of constructing a distinct set of myths devoid of emotion and sacralization is misleading; there are no such things as purely "rational" myths. Moreover, the mythmaking process needs an effec-

tive discursive network to disseminate and inculcate it. For an idea to penetrate the collective imagination, it needs to connect with a cultural context and become embedded in social processes and practices (Bouchard, 2016: 41-43).

Another important symbol of the European Union is the European anthem. The European Anthem was inspired by the 'Ode to Joy', the last movement of the 9th Symphony composed by Ludwig Van Beethoven in 1823. It is based on Friedrich Schiller's poem 'An die Freude', written in 1785. In this poem, Schiller expressed the ideal of the human race living in an atmosphere of brotherhood. There is no lyrical (written) expression in the European Anthem. However, the universal language of music is used to convey messages about freedom, peace and solidarity, which are the priorities of the EU (ab.gov.tr/_262.html, 19.8.2024). In this way, it is seen that it symbolizes the condition of being a cultural mosaic rather than a logic of Europeanism. When we look at the draft constitution of the European Union, it is seen that Europeanism is based on the philosophy of keeping together rather than creating a new identity. For, in its own words, the Union respects national identity and local and regional autonomy, which form an integral part of the basic political and constitutional structures of the Member States. The Union respects the fundamental functions of the state, in particular the protection of territorial integrity, public order and with other obligations about the internal security (europeanconstitution.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/European-Constitution-FullText, 20.08.2024).

Therefore, unity acts differently from the idea of nation. Because the special character of a people produces a symbolism in the commonality of lineage, language and history. The spirit of the people creates a unity, even if it is imaginary. The inhabitants of the territory controlled by the state recognize a collective belonging. The symbolic creation of a community thus transforms the modern state into a nation state (Habermas, 2001: 64). The challenge here is to make the different symbolic systems, each of which is exceptional, into the cogs of a larger organism. The European Union promotes national myths compatible with universal values. Thus, it will prevent a nationalist threat at the state level. On the other hand, focusing on universal values will prevent the formation of a supranational, perverted type of nationalism (Bouchard, 2016: 45).

Finally, it is necessary to consider the language factor, which is perhaps the most important symbol of the nation. Languages have lost their fluency and variability because they are under the auspices of states, the best demarcated and most permanent institutions of the contemporary world. In addition depending on state borders, their separation from neighboring languages has become clear. In every society, language has become a symbol, a valuable national treasure and one of the sources of state legitimacy. In short, languages absorb and contribute to the solidity of the states that accept them. Today, in the name of a single European space, it is not the abandonment of state languages or their fusion into a single alloy, but the addition of other foreign languages. Language is one of the keys to European integration. It is difficult to say that a language policy has been defined for European civil society. The languages of the member states were initially recognized as the official languages of the union. While French was the common language at the beginning, English gained strength over time. A bilingual structure is gradually emerging in Europe. On the one hand the national indigenous language and on the other hand, the transnational centralized language, English (Swaan, 2001: 146-150). The development of the idea of a common Europe and the struggle for supremacy in symbolic areas such as language has been dominated by the relationship between the three largest members of the union, the United Kingdom, Germany and France. The United Kingdom left the union on January 31, 2020 as a result of a referendum. In this sense, Brexit has become a symbol of separation, not of a strengthening partnership. According to Roskin (2006: 80-81), Britons do not see themselves as Europeans anyway. After the Second World War, instead of working for a united Europe, they emphasized their special relationship with the United States. Moreover, because of this attitude, their admission to membership was vetoed by France for a considerable period of time. France-Germany relations, seen as two great powers after the United Kingdom, have gained importance for the future of the union. Although it is known that relations between the two countries were tense until the end of the war, the Élysée Convention of 1963 and the Aachen Convention of 2019 have become important symbols of a common future and a common defense vision. Some symbolic actions between the two states, which recognize a unity of interest rather than

deepened crises, are noteworthy. For example, in May 1994, Mitterrand invited German soldiers to celebrate the French national holiday. French and German soldiers marched jointly in Paris and wore common berets. In July 1998, the then foreign ministers jointly laid the foundation stone for the new French embassy building in Berlin. In addition, the ritual of the first visit for newly inaugurated politicians is symbolically repeated (Krotz, aei.pitt.edu/9294/1/Krotz2.pdf, 20.07.2024). The course of the relationship between the two countries will determine the path of the idea of Europeanism. As Umberto Eco argues (1995: 334-335), symbols of the nation can be elements of transformation in today's world where events move very fast. Symbols that serve a sense of national honor can play a role again in the construction of a new and amorphous supranational structure.

Ultimately, the European Union adventure is a struggle to create an analogy between national memories and European narratives. It is an attempt to replace the stereotypes of each nation with universal rational values. It is a matter of making the regional symbols of the nation into cogs in a single, large machine.

Result

The European Union is a unique experience unlike any other. It is not exactly a confederation, nor can it be explained directly as a federal union. By bringing nation states together, it has created a new model. Indeed, with its legal and economic dimension, this new form of integration rightly attracts attention and inspires new models. However, things get complicated when it comes to a new form to replace nation states. Collective identity building is an invention often linked to political mobilization initiatives. The emphasis on Europeanness has also been created by the elaborate work of the Union in this direction. For this purpose, the sacredness of nations, such as common destiny and origin, has been reproduced. The attempt to establish the idea of Europeanness as a universal normative standard has led to the use of cultural and symbolic forms belonging to the nation state. However, this makes the contradiction in the concept of the European Union more apparent. However, compared to the specific symbolic values of nation states, the European Union's claim to universality does not match. The claim of transnational Europeanism is therefore based more on the idea of constructing identities through interests. The idea of building a collective identity beyond the nation with a political counterpart has not yet been fully realized in the world. Moreover, although it is claimed that some fundamental innovations as a result of globalization will bring about the end of nation-states, nation-state systems still exist as the most up-to-date forms of political states. The European Union, on the other hand, is moving in a different direction with its enlargements. It has a tone that emphasizes rights and cultural mosaic rather than basic feelings of togetherness and unity. The European Union aims to bring together economic and political powers rather than bringing its members together under a single roof. It therefore shines more as a driver of cultural pluralism. Even though the United Kingdom has seceded, it can be said that the supranational philosophy of the union will continue in its next adventure. The long-term fate of the idea of a united Europe in a changing world order is worthy of further study.

References

- A European constitution*. (2020). 20.08.2024 tarihinde <https://europeanconstitution.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/European-Constitution-Full-Text.pdf> ağ adresinden erişildi.
- Adonnino, P. (1985). *A peoples europe*. *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities*. 11.08.2024 tarihinde https://aei.pitt.edu/992/1/andonnino_report_peoples_europe.pdf ağ adresinden erişildi.
- Avrupa birliği amblemi*. (2019). 19.08.2024 tarihinde https://www.ab.gov.tr/avrupa-birligi-amblemi_108.html ağ adresinden erişildi.
- Avrupa birliği marşı*. (2019). 19.08.2024 tarihinde https://www.ab.gov.tr/_262.html ağ adresinden erişildi.
- Ballandier, G. (1972). *Political anthropology*. Penguin Books.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage Publication.
- Bloom, W. (1990). *Personal identity, national identity, and international relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bouchard, G. (2016). *Europe in search of europeans the road identity and myth*. Jacques Delours Institute.
- Caldwell, C. (2009). *Reflections on the revolution in europe*. Anchor Books.

- Cassirer, E. (1961). *The myth of the state*. Yale University Press.
- Dinan, D. (2004). *A history of european union*. Lyenne Reiner Publisher.
- Eagleton, T. (2016). *Culture*. Yale University Press.
- Eco, U. (1995). *The search for the perfect language*. Blackwell.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. (2000). Multiple modernities. *Daedalus*. Vol: 129. No: 1. içinde (ss.1–29).
- EU motto*. (2000). 20.08.2024 tarihinde https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en_ağ adresinden erişildi.
- European education area*. (2020). 17.08.2024 tarihinde http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/languages/eurobarometer06_en.html ağ adresinden erişildi.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and last man*. Free Press.
- Giddens, A. (1985). *The nation-state and violence*. Polity Press.
- Habermas, J. (2001). *The postnational constellation*. MIT Press.
- Kagan, R. (2004). *Of Paradise and Power*. Vintage Books.
- Keating, M. (1993). *The politics of modern europe*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kertzer, D. (1988). *Ritual politics and power*. Yale University Press.
- Kertzer, D. (1997). *Anthropological demography: toward a new synthesis*. University of Chicago Press
- Kissinger, H. (1994). *Diplomacy*. Simon & Schuster.
- Krotz, U. (2002). *Social content of the international sphere: Symbols and meaning in franco-german relations*. 20.07.2024 tarihinde <https://aei.pitt.edu/9294/1/Krotz2.pdf> ağ adresi üzerinden erişildi.
- Lewellen, T.C. (2003). *Political anthropology: an introduction*. Praeger.
- Northcutt, W. (1991). Francois mitterrand and the political use of symbols: the construction of a centrist republic. *French Historical Studies*. Spring, 1991: Vol. 17, No. 1, 141-158.
- Pegg, C. H. (1983). *Evolution of the european idea, 1914-1932*. University of North Carolina Press
- Poggi, G. (1978). *The development of the modern state*. Stanford University Press.
- Roskin, M.G. (2006). *Countries and concepts: politics, geography, culture*. 9th. Ed. Pearson Publishing
- Shore, C. (2000). *Building europe: The cultural politics of european integration*. Routledge.
- Sides, J. and Citrin, J. (2007). European opinion about immigration: the role of identities, interests and information. *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol: 37, No:3, 477-504.
- Smith, A. (1991). *National identity*. Penguin Books.
- Swaan, A. (2001). *Word of the world- the global language system*. Polity Press.

Ethical approval

This study is among the studies that do not require ethics committee permission because it is not based on good progress such as survey, negotiation, and experimentation.

Conflict of interest

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.