

PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION IN A FEDERAL EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

In many respects European economic integration is now an accomplished fact. A single market and, for most member states, a common currency are in place. But as the spillover integrative process asserts, success in one field encourages expansion into other fields hence the drive among many EU elites for political integration of the EU. No sooner is the project of constructing a federal Europe put forward however, than it brings crucial questions in its wake. Questions such as; what becomes the lot of smaller states within the EU if and when sovereignty, which today acts as their protective buffer is removed? What would the societal culture of the EU super-state be bearing in mind that the societal culture of states is largely hinged on language? In other words, what would be the official language of a federal EU in view of the suspicion and fierce nationalist and cultural rivalries that exists among Europe's peoples? This paper examines these issues which must be addressed if the federalist project in Europe is to be anything more than dangerous adventurism.

INTRODUCTION

The political integration of Europe is no doubt laudable. A politically united Europe would most likely mean a stronger, more viable and assertive Europe in international affairs. A more assertive Europe would ensure that "European values and practices can more than hold on their own in competition with those of the United States, offering higher standards to the world in education and design, quality of life, public transport and fidelity to the environment" (Siedentop 2000:225). Believing this to be the result of a United Europe is one thing, achieving stable political unification to bring it about is another.

There is no doubt that the EU, now a model of economic integration, has overcome a lot of hurdles to achieve the level of integration it boasts of today. In view of its economic successes, there has been in the offing since the 90s, attempts at political integration. Since the signing of the **Maastricht Treaty** on November 1st 1993 which among other profound changes enabled monetary integration, and expanded the concept of European citizenship by allowing for mobility of labour and persons within the EU on a national or EU passport, there have been great expectations in various quarters on possible political integration. This landmark treaty made the then Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl declare “further integration is now inevitable. The course is irreversible.” (cf. Rourke and Boyer 1998:167). Almost twenty years after, political integration still has not been achieved. There have been teething problems that the authorities in Brussels (headquarters of the EU) have been unable to find solutions to. These have hindered political integration and will continue to hinder until they are addressed or eradicated as the case may be. Among these problems are group rivalry and suspicion between Europe’s national groups which so far has worked against their ability to live in a federation. Every state, a federal EU inclusive, operates on a societal culture which would eventually necessitate the use of an official language the implication of which is the dominance of a particular language over all others. Whose language will be the official lingua franca for the EU? Also is the tension of minority and majority relations which would most likely emerge if and when states are compelled to trade their sovereignty for membership in a federal Europe.

The argument for the group rivalry problem created by a politically united Europe is conceived on the basis of a sovereign EU superstate of which Morgan (2002:3) says;

Conceived as a sovereignist project, the telos of European integration is to be found in a unitary European superstate. In all likelihood, this unitary European superstate will possess many federal features. The outcome is thus likely to resemble the United States Europe’s current states (Germany, France, Italy etc) will exist if they exist at all, only as subordinate units of a federal polity.

The creation of a European state would not automatically guarantee the creation of a European identity. Nationalism is still a force to reckon with such that, the absence of a European identity means the citizens of the superstate will cling to their nation state

identity. Then again as Siedentop (op.cit;pg.223) observes, “no doubt all European nations are ferociously self-interested”. Thus, by virtue of the different peoples and cultures of Europe, the European superstate, like most modern states would be a multi cultural state. Europe’s present sovereign states (such as Germany, Denmark, France) would be transformed into the cultural nationalities (the Germanic, Danish, French nations) of the superstate. Judging from the strong sense of nationalism of Europe’s peoples and their long years of animosity, there would arise the majority – minority problem as is the case with every such multicultural society. Under such an arrangement, the majority group possesses the advantage. For the smaller states of the EU such as Denmark and Luxemburg, to trade their sovereignty for minority status in a European superstate would be a bitter pill to swallow, no matter how vibrant this political institution promises to be. These smaller states are more likely to oppose the actualization of a European federation and the underlying reasons, make part of the focal point of this paper.

In view of these problems which are extremely delicate due to the fact that they touch the core of a peoples existence (their culture and identity), reaching a solution would no doubt be extremely difficult. In tandem with this analysis, this paper contends that the EU should be content with its established successes and let political integration be.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

The European Union (EU) could be traced back to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1952 which was the product of the 1951 Paris Treaty. These events were initiated by France’s foreign minister, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet who in 1950 proposed that the continent’s coal and steel production be placed under a single authority. The Schuman/Monnet plan soon became a reality as well as the bedrock of European economic integration. In 1952, Belgium, France, (West) Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands joined together to create a common market for coal, iron, and steel products which became known as the *European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)*. The ECSC worked and helped to propel Western Europe out of its

postwar slump. However, as stated by Siaroff (2007:3), these communities, especially that of coal and steel, required a giving up of sectoral sovereignty; an idea that limited the attraction of the organization to the initial six founding members. In spite of this, the venture proved so successful that in 1957 the six countries signed the Treaties of Rome that created the *European Economic Community (EEC)*. This facilitated trade in many additional areas and as Roskin and Berry (1997:259) posit, “This expansion derived for the community, the name “*common market*” as members agreed to cut tariffs among themselves as well as simultaneously build up a common tariff towards the rest of the world. It also afforded workers from member countries the opportunity to take jobs within the Community without special permits. This aspect of the treaty created a much needed interlocking economy for the Community.

As interchange among the six countries expanded, they soon felt that the name should coordinate their activities further. According to Rourke and Boyer (1998), this led to the creation of the European Communities (EC) which went into operation in 1967. The membership and the level of integration of the EC continued to expand to include such things as a common agricultural policy (CAP) and preferential economic relationships mostly for former colonies (the Lome Conventions). Denmark, Ireland, and Great Britain were admitted in 1973, Greece in 1981 and the admission of Spain and Portugal in 1986 brought the EC’s membership to 12.

In 1995, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined to bring the membership to 15 and by the end of 2005, the number of EU countries had risen to 27 with the majority of new entrants being countries from the former Eastern bloc – Poland, Romania, Slovakia and others.

Prior to the expansion of 1995, a new development occurred in the form of the Maastricht Treaty of 1993. This treaty expanded the concept of European citizenship and also called for a monetary integration, the coordination of social policies and other steps aimed at increasing the economic integration of Europe further.

In spite of these events, it is widely held that other needs besides economics prompted the formation of the EU. Habermas (2001:5) is of the opinion that the strongest motivation for integration, was the ending of the bloody history of war in Europe. A

further rationale was the integration of the German state within Europe to allay the suspicions of those who perceived Germany as a politically unstable but shortly to be re-fortified nation lying at the heart of Europe. Today, all sides are satisfied that these goals have been achieved.

Initially, the EU was open to any European state (Treaty of Rome, Article 237). The revision of the treaty (Treaty of the EU, article 49) later meant that only countries that satisfied basic democratic principles could be accepted through the unanimity rule. This rule in principle, implies that there has to be a consensus of all member nations for any decision to be accepted. Under such a principle, every nation possesses a veto. Hence, EU expansion would have started earlier had France (De Gaulle) not vetoed Britain's entry. However, expansion did not begin until the 1970's, with most members of the current European Union going through a formal application process.

At the end of the cold war and the application for membership by new post communist states like Croatia, Poland and Romania, the EU was compelled to adopt specific criteria at the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. These criteria are – a stable democracy, observance of the rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of minorities and a functioning market economy.

One other aspect which shapes the EU is its geography. In the beginning, the EU was open only to countries in Western Europe, but with the end of the cold war, and the inclusion of countries of Eastern Europe, the criteria for membership has become more on values than it is on boundaries. This is partly due to the reason that Europe cannot really be defined geographically. According to Siaroff (ibid:5)

The European Union is divided over what is meant by Europe. Geographically, of course, Europe is not strictly speaking a continent but rather the western end of the Eurasian continent. It does have geographic clarity due to water boundaries on its north, west and south, but the eastern and southeastern geographic borders are less clear It is not clear how Cyprus is geographically European especially if Turkey is not.

This lack of clarity on the geographical boundaries of the EU in part serves to justify why membership has been hinged mostly on values – the practice of democratic principles.

Today, in many respects the EU is a success story. Economically, the unveiling of the garment of protectionism has led to the production of better products at cheaper costs and the passing of lower prices to the consumers. An example here is the mobility of workers from *labour surplus* countries like Italy and Romania to *labour short* ones like Germany. This has no doubt enhanced service delivery in Germany and made prices for services more competitive. This has ensured, in the words of Broux (2007:1) that “the single market does even more to take advantage of globalization, to create growth and jobs, empower consumers, open up for small businesses, stimulate innovation and help maintain high social and environmental standards.” Definitely, European integration is now a *fait accompli* with a single market economy and a common currency for most of its member states in place. What remains uncertain is the political form the European Union will finally take.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

This paper takes the eclectic approach in the development of its theoretical foundation. As such, the *functional* and *spillover* variants of the *international integration theory* as well as the *psychological theory of conflict* will be adopted as the theoretical basis for this discourse.

Functional integration attempts to explain why states come together to form international or supranational institutions and why they deem it necessary to keep the alliance. A major proponent of this school is David Mitrany (1888). Mitrany saw the state to be lacking in its ability to either preserve peace or improve the social and economic well-being of its inhabitants. As an alternative to such a defective system, he suggested the gradual creation of a transnational web of economic and social organizations. Reasons for the formation of the EU fall within this assertion of functional integration. These reasons include an attempt by Europe’s states to end their bloody history of war as well as cooperate in rebuilding their economies which were shattered by world wars one and two.

The spillover variant of international integration which also had Mitrany as a major proponent contends that “the development of collaboration in one technical field

contributes to collaboration in other technical fields. Functional collaboration in one sector results from a felt need, and generates a felt need for functional collaboration in another sector” (in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1979:280-281). Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff note also that “there is a marked tendency for persons who had experienced gains from supranational institutions in one sector to favour integration in other sectors.” (ibid; 294).

EU expansion is a perfect example of this theory in practice. At inception in 1952, the EU had six members and was just a community offering trade in coal and steel. With the success of this venture, by 1957, trade expanded into other areas of their economy such as agriculture. This proved successful still such that by 1973, membership began to expand too. Despite the increase in membership, the EU has succeeded in merging the economies of its members, creating a common market, a common currency and a bureaucratic structure that oversees the affairs of the Union. In line with the *spillover* variant of international integration and as noted by Rourke and Boyer (1998:164), “there comes a point in economic integration when pressure builds take steps towards political integration”.

This work is also structured on the psycho-cultural theory of conflict which contends that identity is the biggest source of social conflicts that take long to resolve. Psycho-cultural theorists such as Maslow in his theory of *motivation* (1970) and Burton in his *human needs* theory (1990), as well as Horowitz’s *fear of extinction* thesis, Volkans *fear of dying* off thesis and Rothschild’s *fear of the future* thesis, all note that social conflicts that are identity driven grow out of feelings of powerlessness, memories of past persecution, a history of humiliation, oppression, victimization, feelings of inferiority and other experiences which wear away a peoples dignity and self-esteem and propel them towards vengeance or makes them wary of other groups. Hence Ross (1993:18) contend that psycho-cultural conflict “shows how enemy images are created from deep seated attitudes about human action that are learned from early stages of growth.” What this means is that, often, these feelings of hatred and insecurity are handed down from generation to generation. As such, future generations may possess the fear or hatred their forebears exhibited toward certain groups. Greeks and Turks, Palestinians and Israelis are good examples.

When one takes Europe's chequered history into account, it would be difficult to comprehend how the Polish would dare deny themselves of the protective cloak of sovereignty and exist as an ethnic nationality alongside the more populated and aggressive Germans after their experiences with the latter during events such as the *Polish insurrection of 1863* (cf. Grant and Temperly, 1975:251) and World War II. Or can the French and Spanish work towards nation building with the British with whom they share centuries of animosity which still exists today?

In view of the strong national identities created by Europe's history, this framework thus infers that, with psycho-cultural feelings deeply etched, violent conflict becomes probable in a Federal Europe since the creation of such a supranational state would necessitate the bringing together of Europe's peoples into close contact with each other but this time, without the protective buffer of sovereignty.

THE MINORITY PROBLEM

The term minority often means less than half the whole. In modern linguistic terms, the minority concept encompasses "groups of people who are held together by ties of common descent, physical characteristics, sexual preference, traditions, customs, language, or religion, or any combination of these, and who, in relation to some other group with which they are associated, occupy a subordinate status" (Colliers Encyclopedia 1994:336). In other words, minority groups exist only in relation to corresponding dominant groups with greater power, higher status, and greater privileges. While minority literally means the smaller number, in the social sciences, such statistical criteria, may give way to those of power, privilege and prestige. Usually the minority is outnumbered by the majority, or dominant group. I will henceforth refer to ethnic minorities as national minorities since I find the word 'ethnic' somewhat restrictive in describing the groups of the European nation-state.

The minority problem shall be examined bearing in mind the assertions of Morgan (2002) and Siedentop (2000). Morgan contends that "Europe's current states (Germany, France, Italy etc) will exist if they exist at all, only as subordinate units of a federal polity In a post sovereign Europe, Europe's nation states will not be

sovereign”. While Siedentop notes that “all European nations are ferociously self interested.” Both phenomena are bound to determine national relationships in a prospective federal Europe. Since the countries of the EU vary in population, prestige and political influence, the logical consequence of a federated Europe, of a merging of the sovereign states of Europe into a federal state, is the problem of integration – majority dominance and the creation of majority-minority rivalry on a scale more serious than presently exists. As the Economist (2004:13) observes, “competition for influence in an enlarged EU is heating up.”

Relationships between dominant and minority groups follow the same general principles regardless of whether the symbolic differences depend upon race, nationality or religion. As indicated in the Colliers encyclopedia, 1994:337)

The minority problem is basically a struggle for power and status. The group which enjoys the greater prestige and wields the power is always jealous of its privileges and will not surrender them without a struggle, and is determined to defend its own values and its culture against competing and conflicting systems The lesser group, at the same time, is no less attached to its traditions and values, is not satisfied for long with its inferior position, and is eager to improve its status To the dominant group, the problem is essentially one of maintaining its position of dominance and of preserving its privileged way of life From the standpoint of the underprivileged minority, the problem is one of achieving a more desirable status, of removing the stigma of inferiority, of obtaining more power, and of casting off the disabilities and handicaps imposed on it.

Considering the quest for influence that already exists between EU member states, there is every indication that this will transpose into ethno-nationalistic rivalry within the federal state.

TENETS OF FEDERALISM

There are several variations of federalism but each of these tends to be marked by a concern with territorial representation and, most especially, the representation of

regional units in the national legislature. Burgess (1989:4) contends that “a strong executive authority of some sort, tempered by parliamentary accountability, would encapsulate and distil the common political will while various forms of regional decentralization and administrative deconcentration would accommodate distinct cultural, economic and political diversities.” Federalism thus engages a multiplicity of established human beliefs and practices at different levels both within and beyond traditional state boundaries. Watts (in King, 1982:56) argues that “federal societies are distinguished by the relative balance of demands for integration and diversification.” Brugman (in King, op.cit:56) “pinned compromise to federalism as integrating without absorbing, as joining societies that are dissimilar and yet allied, as increasing common power while preserving traditional liberties.”

These notions of balance and compromise are in turn linked explicitly or implicitly to a view of federalism as a form of contractual arrangement. Here, federalism is regarded as a pact (deriving from trust), and implying an agreement that is freely and mutually consented to, whereby each party surrenders a degree of autonomy in exchange for some compensating advantage. It is in this concrete sense that Friedrich (in King, op.cit:56) maintains that “we can properly speak of federalism only if a set of political groupings coexist and interact as autonomous entities, united in a common order with an autonomy of its own.” Of federalism, Siedentop (2000:27) states:

In principle, federalism should offer a means of combining the advantages of different scales of political organization – offering small nations the security and strength of a large state while dispersing interests and ambitions in a way that works against an excessive centralization of power and anything like majority tyranny Federalism is a political system which makes it possible to combine the advantages of small states and large states without at least some of the disadvantages attaching to it.

A FEDERAL EUROPE AND THE LOOMING GROUP CONFLICT

In asserting that federalism is regarded as a pact deriving from trust, King indirectly infers a position that the success of federalism is largely hinged on the trust that exists between the federating groups. In assuming the formation of a federal Europe, we first have to deal with how far the groups of the EU have built a relationship of trust. The import of this analysis would undoubtedly have great implications for the success of a federal Europe, taking into cognizance the fact that when different groups come together to form a collective entity, without a feeling of demos, the institution formed gets plagued with excessive competition and chaos. Be it national or religiously homogenous institutions, there is always cause for distinction, separating one group from the other. In Christianity for example, there exists some rivalry between Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals. Thus Zetterholm (1994:67) opines that “the greater the degree of cultural heterogeneity among the groups forming a political unit, the greater the risk that political decisions may be inconsistent with the central values of one or more groups.” As long as the population of member states feel that their national cultures are different enough from the standard unified culture being developed by the EU, the more reluctant they will be to transfer their allegiances to the central institutions in Brussels. With this distinction comes conflicting interests which usually breeds tensions of sorts. In view of its multi-nationality status, how then would a federal Europe fare?

A federal European state would no doubt be a constitutional democratic institution. Lehning (2001:251), in affirming the position of Rawls, opines that the fourth condition that ought to be satisfied by the institutions of constitutional democracies is the “Conformity to the principle of majority rule in the making of public policy.” Lehning and Weale (1997:125), posit that while popular majoritarianism is irrelevant in a Europe of political cooperation between independent nation states, in a European Union with an identity of its own, the principle of majority rule would be an essential legitimating element.

Majority rule as a necessary feature of constitutional democracy does not tell of a stable European State in the long run in view of the already strong national sentiments etched into Europe’s peoples and rulers. In the face of majoritarianism amid nationally

conscious groups, national minorities in Europe are bound to lose. Lehning and Weale (ibid.134) argue that;

if there really is a deep separation of interest between members of a political community, ... unless special interests are recognised, considerable problems of civil disobedience or civil disorder are likely to arise. Some of the reasons stem from a commitment to human rights: numerical majorities can deprive minorities or their fights.... Some of the reasons stem from the impossibility of majority ever knowing what constitutes the interests of a minority that is distinct in outlook and circumstance.

Taylor argues that the non-recognition of the identity or needs of minority groups may inflict harm and even result in a form of oppression. Galenkamp (in Willigenburg 1995:169-170) takes the issue a little further when she claims, in reference to minorities, that “Their specific identity is particularly vulnerable in that it may be outbid or outvoted by majority decisions, a problem that members of a majority culture do not face.” The European Parliament serves as the EU legislative branch and its members are apportioned among the EU countries on a modified population basis and elected to five-year terms. As observed by Rourke (2001:229). “The most populous country (Germany) has 99 seats: the least populous country (Luxembourg) has 6 seats.” Definitely, when national interest is at stake, Germany has the advantage. Thus, as opined by Cneill (2004:5) “subsequent acceptance or rejection by the Council of EP amendments may reflect more member country national interests than wider European ones.” There is a French discourse which claims that “culture is not only intellectual creativity (*les oeuvres de l’esprit*), it is also a way of life and a civilization that must be protected from, not crushed by globalization.” (Laborde in Political Thought:2001:726-727).

Lehning and Weale(ibid:130) contend that;

there are long-standing and well-established national governments within the EU, and the politicians who have established their reputations and political capital in those systems are not going to wish to give up the advantages they currently enjoy, unless they can see compensating advantages (as is arguably the case for some political leaders in the Low Countries, who could expect to have much more influence on the world stage in an integrated Europe than in their own countries).

In most Inter Governmental Organizations (IGOs), sovereignty is the cloak that protects the minor states from the over-arching influence of the dominant ones and the EU is no exception. Disrobing the small countries of this cloak under the pretext of creating a European state leaves them at the mercy of the diplomatic scheming of the more powerful states. Even now, this diplomatic scheming and exertion of influence is already in place.

As Siedentop (p.22) observed:

If the past behaviour of the Brussels Commission and its decisions are anything to go by, political control might suggest rather a kind of power-broking in which the prize often goes to the most determined and persistent country or lobby, regardless of the formal rules which are supposed to govern the decision Too often, the impression given by Brussels decision is that the rules are for some and not for others Thus, the German government brought great pressure to bear in order to secure for Croatia – which it clearly regards as a client state – more favourable terms of trade than those available to other Eastern European nations. By the same token the French often fall back on the argument of national security in order to prevent major French companies falling subject to foreign ownership.

Events in the 2004 takeover bid for French company Aventis, lends credence to Siedentop's claim. These and similar actions of the major groups of the EU no doubt undermine the welfare of the minority states. Agreed that some minority groups (such as Croatia in the example above) are bound to benefit from such situations too, the contention here is, in the long run, the uneven influence on policies further engendered by a centralized federal structure, would increase the disadvantage already experienced by the minor groups. It would not be absurd to imagine here that minorities disadvantaged by this political arrangement, would seek some form of informal alliance with dominant groups to ensure the protection of their interest. This is bound to propel the formation of blocs within the European state and which would almost inevitably bring back the era of *balance of power* in Europe.

Schouttheete (2000:9-10) however disagrees with this. He bases his arguments on the following;

The Single European Act had introduced decision making based on a qualified majority for almost all directives A number of those directives had been blocked for more than a decade by the *Unanimity Rule*, which applied until the *Single European Act* came into force. However, most of the directives (approximately 220 out of 260), which under the Single European Act could have been adopted by a qualified majority, were in fact unanimously approved. Which proves not only that the principle of decision making by majority is an essential efficiency factor, but also that the application of that principle does not systematically create minorities among members.

While the essential efficiency factor of majority decision making is obvious as compared to that of unanimity, that it does not create minorities or a multi-national society lacking a demos, is a far-fetched assumption. It takes common sense to know that minorities who had blocked majority sponsored directives, using the *unanimity principle* to their advantage, lost their bargaining power when this principle was replaced with the *Single Act*. As such, it became futile not to vote along with the rest of the group most especially when the dominant groups have greater voting power. (The *unanimity principle* is a policy where no decision can be taken unless all parties agree)

Luan Tran argues that globalization which has given rise to increased interdependence, has in turn heightened tensions between minority and dominant cultures (cf. Tran, 2000:247-248). In other words, the closer groups are brought into proximity with each other, the greater the interdependence as well as possibility of conflict. This serves as a good analogy for a federal Europe. It is my contention that dominant groups have more to gain from the majoritarian principle which is indispensable for constitutional democracies. As such, minorities would be placed at an ever more disadvantaged position in a European state. Thus, the progression of the EU into a federal state is bound to have a more negative than it would a positive impact on European integration.

Minority-majority tensions would definitely be a problem the European state would have to grapple with. Consenting to the appropriation of groups rights (as experienced in Canada's Quebec region) would not solve the issue, but would rather deepen the national divisions that exist. Then again, as Galenkamp notes, it runs against

the tenets of democracy which proposes the equality of men and equal treatment for all. The solution to the minority issue, I believe lies in the general solution to EU political integration. In other words solutions that adequately address factors hindering political integration, also address minority-majority issues. However Tran (op.cit:248) opines that solutions to such minority-majority rivalry are embedded in “solutions that accommodate cultural differences within the existing political and legal framework.”

THE PROBLEM OF MAJORITY RIVALRY

For Morgan (2002:7), “the project of European integration ... involves a fundamental transformation in the political structure of post-war Europe. It envisages the replacement of nation-states with a single unitary federal polity.”

France, Germany and the UK have overtime used their influence and dominant status in the EU to secure for themselves concessions on certain issues as well as obstruct what they might consider as unfavorable policies to their interest. For example in 2005, the EU’s future budget which would have seen Britain accept a reduction in its EU rebate failed due to what the German Chancellor, Gerhard Shroeder was reported to have termed the “totally unaccepting attitude of Britain and the Netherlands.” (BBC News online, 2005). The report further quotes a Swedish observer, Niclas Uppsala as saying; “The EU does not exist only for the benefit of the UK.” (ibid). An area where the rivalry among the dominant powers is played out is the area of language and cultural politics.

Language is a very important issue for EU cultural politics. This according to Field (1998:251) is based on the fact that the existence of numerous national languages as official languages at the supranational level is a major barrier to integration. One problem with the EU being a closely knit supra-national organization is the need to develop a societal culture (of Europeaness). Like all societal cultures, the need for a common language is imminent for a successful integration. The problem now becomes; whose language should it be? As noted by Haller (1994), English has, in practice, been developing as *a de facto lingua franca* in Europe. Hence the problem is not that Europe

does not have a de facto common language, but that for political and other reasons, there is strong resistance to the acceptance of this situation on a formal basis. The major antagonists to the spread of English have been France and Germany as both countries have employed strategies to popularize their languages within the EU. Reasons for their resistance are not far fetched.

One of the reasons as mooted by Field (op. cit:251) is based on the proposition that since Britain was not a founding member of the EU, then there is no justification for accepting English as the common language. This is despite the fact that with Britain's inclusion in 1973, English became important as a working language in the common institutions.

Another reason has been the fear of Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony. As Hanson (1997:22) opines; "people learn and use English to improve their prospects to become more internationalized, to participate in the excitement of youth culture, and to feel part of the 'in crowd' and to be in touch."

A more cogent reason however is national prestige. On this issue, Crystal (1997) notes that "for large member states which are conscious of their global 'image' ... the resentment, envy, anger of the non-English mother-tongue speakers who feel disadvantaged, or feel their mother tongue or identity threatened, ... no doubt account for moves to try to restrict the growing use of English as the common European language.

Germany for example is taking steps to try and increase the use and importance of German in central and eastern Europe. It runs language classes for top central and east European government officials. As noted in the Economist (1996), France on the other hand is also taking steps to preserve and perhaps expand the use of French, spending US \$1.1billion a year to promote its use internationally. The reason for such resistance by France and Germany is aptly captured by Taylor (1997:34) when he argues that "if a modern society has an official language, in the fullest sense of the term, that is a state sponsored, -inculcated and -defined language and culture, in which both economy and state function, then it is obviously an immense advantage to people if this language and culture are theirs. Speakers of other languages are at a distinct disadvantage." And of the would be minority groups/states that would emerge from a federal Europe, Kymlicka

(2001:27) says; “This means that minority cultures face a choice. If all public institutions are being run in another language, minorities face the danger of being marginalized from the major economic and political institutions of society.”

From the above analysis, we find one of the paradoxes of European integration in the sense that, the more attempts Europe makes at political integration, the more the influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture, which in turn leads to ever more fierce attempts by major countries to prevent its dominance. Wherein therefore lies European unity?

On the question of a common language to enhance the building of a societal culture for Europe, Fraser (1997) notes that the culture committee of the European Parliament, for example proposed a return to the learning of Latin and Greek. How feasible can this be most especially if we acknowledge that knowledge has long since expanded beyond these languages? What for example would be the Latin and ancient Greek equivalents for aero plane, electricity, genocide, globalization and numerous words that developed long after these languages had ceased to be used? There is no doubt that reaching a solution here would be extremely difficult. Forfeiting one’s mother tongue or having it play second fiddle to some other all in the name of enhancing European integration is indeed for now, a pill too bitter for Europe’s deeply nationalists people to swallow.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION.

The success or failure of a European state depends largely on the process leading to its formation. By process, I mean, in the words of Morgan, “the actual step-by-step transformation of Europe’s separate nation-states into a more integrated political system.” (Morgan, op.cit:2). As Sidgwick (1991:214) asserts,

I think, therefore that what is really essential to the modern conception of the State which is also a Nation is merely that the persons composing it should have a consciousness of belonging to one another, of being members of one body, over and above what they derive from the mere fact of being under one government; so that if their government were destroyed by war or revolution, they would still hold firmly together.

This I believe is the solution to whatever problem of integration hinders the actualization of a stable European State. But a greater problem emerges from this. How can this demos be brought about? How can nationalistic sentiments be rooted out? Here, I propose two solutions; *Trust* and *Positive Political rhetoric* from political elites, of which the former is dependent on the latter.

In building a European consciousness, *trust* is the most important ingredient. As argued by Offe,(1997:4) “Being trusted is an important kind of social capital.” In the case of European political integration, I consider it the most important. The problem of European nationalism can only be curbed when Europeans begin to trust themselves rather than regard each other with suspicion. Europeans’ suspicion of each other is well presented by Siedentop when he points that France’s drive for the creation of a united Europe was fuelled by fear of losing the hegemony she has enjoyed in Europe due to German reunification and the subsequent French veto over British entry into the EEC. Here, the creation of the EU can be related to the following equation; “A or B makes an independent approach to C, especially where C is significantly more powerful than A or B alone. In order to secure some minimal *rapprochement*, the upshot being to deflect hostility (at least for some time) more exclusively towards B or A” (King,1982:37). Siedentop notes further, “Many of those who have been skeptical about European political integration and critical of the growing power of Brussels have been inclined to interpret pressures for unification as emanating chiefly from Germany. Some have even seen the project as little short of an attempt to create a *Fourth Reich*, a more benign and managerial but none the less German dominated Europe.” (Siedentop, op.cit:220) Though Siedentop does not agree with this, it is apparent that it is a view held in some quarters. Going by these assertions, it would not be out of place to say the EU was conceived on a platform of fear and suspicion. Today, a lot of these still remain. However, amendments can be made and it is at this stage that political elites and positive rhetoric come in.

There is an old saying ‘there are no bad soldiers, only bad officers’. Despite the tumultuous history of Europe, if Europeans do not trust themselves, then political elites share a great part of the blame for worsening tensions instead of mending fences. A 5th April 2004 Euro-News Report stated that a poll conducted via the Eurobarometer (which

measures the perception of Europeans on issues) on the trust level among Europeans revealed that only 15% of Britons trust the French while just 4% of the French trust the British. What else is expected of the citizens when their leaders have made it a habit of pointing accusing fingers at each other? In March 2004, Italy's President, Silvio Berlusconi, leveled a lot of criticisms at the meeting in England of the leaders of Britain (Blair), France (Chirac) and Germany (Shroeder), the three most influential nations of the EU. He stated his dissent and suspicion of the meeting hinting that such would cause divisions in the EU. Now, in retrospect, he could have as well lauded the fact that the three most influential groups of the EU had deemed it fit to close ranks and work together while at the same time pressing that such an event should serve as motivation for, and be emulated by the other members of the Union to breed true fraternity and sincere cooperation.

Throughout history, leaders have spurred their people to achieve the almost impossible through powerful speeches. Our times are no different. In line with this, Offe (op.cit.:218) avers; "Progress toward a unity of European intention and action will materialize only when national publics are presented with convincing grounds for political integration." (in Morgan,2002:3-4). Siedentop reaffirms this position when he says, "it is the duty of a democratic political class to give a lead." (Siedentop, op.cit:224). There should be no underestimating the power or influence of political elites.

SUMMARY

While the recent global recession might have diverted attention from pursuing further political integration in the EU, there is no doubt that issues that have plagued its actualization still remain. This paper has so far presented these issues some of which are factual such as suspicion among Europe's national groups which would not augur well for the creation of a federal Europe, as well as those which can be inferred based on Europe's history, diplomatic scheming of EU member states and established social science theories. Within this latter group fall issues such as minority – majority group relationship in a federal EU which would make the smaller/disadvantaged states ever more fiercely protective of their culture and identity in order to ensure the survival of

their heritage. This in turn would affect the creation of a societal culture which is necessary for the successful functioning of any state. A societal culture develops and is influenced by the use of a common language. One major problem the EU would have to face in developing a societal culture is whose language will be the common denominator for a federal EU? Germany, France and Britain are the EU's dominant groups and the need for a societal culture for the EU has found these countries scheming for the propagation of their native tongue to double as the official language of the EU. So far, the use of English has the upper hand, but a problem, though not constitutional, is the fact that Britain was not a founding member of the EU. However, while the elite in Brussels still grapple with how to press for further political integration, many Europeans such as Siedentop and Morgan are skeptical about the need and success of a supranational EU and the analysis provided in this paper shows that they have a right to be. This paper however notes that if political integration is and must be pursued, then the bulk of its success depends on the elites/leaders of the EU's present nation states. In the course of presenting this analysis, this paper had to present a brief history of the EU, the tenets of federalism and the tension that exists in minority – majority relationships to enable a lucid grasp of the issues raised and the analysis made.

CONCLUSION

The EU so far, despite its problems and uncertainties, is a success story. Going beyond its present state of integration may just be biting off more than it can chew. Attempting political integration of the EU on a federal scale, if it must be, ought to be a very slow and cautious project which should not be embarked upon unless issues such as group relations, societal culture/language and trust have been properly addressed. Unless this review is done, Europe's peoples may find themselves pitched against each other in battles of ethnic rivalry such as was witnessed in Eastern Europe. But as Siedentop (ibid,102) warns: "A series of successful steps previously taken can lead participants into a kind of delusion – a delusion that the next step, whatever its nature, can also succeed Yet that of course does not follow. Adding one more achievement to a string of successes could simply bring the whole house down."

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