

Ritual and Affect in Europe Day Celebrations: Institutional Practices of European Identity Construction in Crisis

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Abstract

This article analyses Europe Day celebration practices and explores the role of ritual and its utility in eliciting the affective dimension of European identity construction in crisis. The article reflects on the considerable variation of Europe Day celebration practices, proposes a typology of Europe Day events and reflects on their merit in eliciting reason- and affect-driven institutional approaches in the strategic promotion of European identity to the public. The article employs affect theory to reflect on the relationship between emotions and identity. It argues that institutional efforts aimed to promote European identity within the Europe Day platform rely on actualizing the affective potential underpinning collective identities with the view to compel public support for European integration by inciting emotional engagement and boosting the public's affective investment.

Keywords: European identity; Europe day; ritual; political emotions; affect theory

Introduction: Relevance of the Europe Day Platform

The value of Europe Day as a unique platform for performing an institutionally led promotion of European identity is exceptional. The article will take turns to introduce Europe Day and its merits for elucidating institutional practices of European identity construction, consider the arguments linking identity and crisis, discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework centred around affect and ritual, map out the scope of the Europe Day celebration practices and deliberate the reason- and affect-driven logics to the strategic promotion of European identity.

Europe Day, along with the European Union (EU) flag, anthem, motto and Euro, had been designed as an official symbol of the EU. Held on 9th of May, Europe Day celebrates ‘peace and unity in Europe’ and is recognized as an annual opportunity ‘to bring Europe closer to its citizens’ and ‘forge closer ties between the citizens of Europe and overcome the sense of distance, indifference and even disaffection that they feel for the European institutions’ (European Commission 2013). The annual Europe Day celebrations date back to 1964 and have come to be a cornerstone of the institutional practices of European identity promotion and the most prominent instance of commemoration on a European scale (Fornäs 2011; Manners 2011). Modelled after national days, designed for nations to ‘celebrate or commemorate formative events in their histories via social rituals performed at a specific moment on the national calendar’ for the purpose of binding communities together (Ariely 2019, p. 1392), Europe Day is viewed in this study as an invaluable repository of institutional practices aimed at producing European political rituals. While national days are defined as ‘conventional carnivals of surplus emotion’, where strong affective investment – be it of ‘joy, sorrow or inebriation’ – is invoked in

the participating public as a part of national identity building rationale (Billig 2008, p. 45), these considerations translate unevenly to the European context and inform this study's focus on the analysis of Europe Day celebration practices.

Existing studies of EU cultural policy argue that 'cultural policies and creative expressions, products, and experiences they generate are perhaps the most visible and apparent symbols of identity, whether existing or aspirational' (McNamara 2015, p. 65). Thus, it is essential to account for the extent and the institutional logic of utilizing cultural policy and the place of symbolic construction within it, for promoting and popularizing European identity. Drawing from the concept of banal nationalism, a discussion of banal Europeanism offers insight into the way national identity building practices translate on the European level, and concerns everyday social practices that contribute to tacit practices of construction and promotion of a popular European identity (Cram 2009; Checkel and Katzenstein 2010). Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of inquiry into the institutional logic of utilizing symbolic construction for promoting European identity. This article looks at the seemingly banal practices comprising Europe Day celebrations through the lens of affect theory, and considers their potential for European identity construction.

Connecting Crisis and Identity

The onset of the series of crises crippling the EU economic, social and political spaces (Kinnvall et al. 2018; Rodrigues and Xiarchogiannopoulou 2014), informed a new order of urgency to the question of European identity. According to Hall (1993), 'social identities crystallize most sharply in situations of opposition and conflict'; hence, at times when a group perceives itself to be threatened or undergoing a crisis, issues of identity gain critical weight and relevance. Str ath (2002) argues that issues of identity come into focus 'in situations of crisis and turbulence, when established ties of social cohesion are eroding or breaking down' (p. 387). According to Kaschuba (2000), 'a crisis of social values and meanings always provokes a greater production of symbols. These are used to bridge the breaks and to imagine historical continuities and traditions, thereby re-establishing or inventing common emotions and loyalties' (p. 224). In elaborating on the nature of national identity, Billig (2008) comments on the link between identity and crisis: 'One might think that people today go about their daily lives, carrying with them a piece of psychological machinery called "a national identity". Like a mobile telephone, this piece of psychological equipment lies quiet for most of the time. Then, the crisis occurs; the president calls; bells ring; the citizens answer; and the patriotic identity is connected' (p. 7). Likewise, Volkan (2007) argues that individuals' daily routines are devoid of comprehensive recognition of large-group processes that would alert to the issues of collective identity until a crisis occurs: 'Our relationship with our large-group identity, in ordinary times, is like breathing. While we breathe constantly, we do not usually notice it unless our ability to breathe is threatened' (p. 529).

The link between crisis and identity policy within the European political context had been acknowledged long before the events considered in the present inquiry had taken place. Reflected both in policy-driven responses and academic inquiry into the EU identity policy, 'the European identity was designed and decided at the Copenhagen EC summit in December 1973' (Declaration on European Identity, 1973), which had been tasked

with providing a response to a series of crises: ‘The Bretton Woods Agreement after the Second World War, based on the dollar, had collapsed in 1971 after years of growing tension between the West European states and their American ally. The Vietnam War underpinned the tension and overstrained the dollar... Finally, in the autumn of 1973, the dramatic oil price increase took the Western world by surprise producing a mood of crisis’ (Delanty et al. 2008, p. 32).

In this article, the term ‘crisis’ is employed in reference to what is best characterized as the EU’s ‘age of crisis’ (Dinan et al. 2017), or a state of ontological insecurity, understood as ‘principal dynamics behind the emotional underpinnings of increased anxieties and fears among the European populace’ (Kinnvall et al. 2018, pp. 249–250; see also Manners 2018; Manners 2021). Therefore, it is not limited to a single specific crisis, but rather denotes a series of consecutive and concurrent crises, which commenced in 2009 with the onset of the Eurozone crisis, later proliferated in the migration crisis, converging to the crisis of the EU governance, rise of Euroscepticism, the UK membership crisis, the EU’s democratic deficit, escalating economic crisis, and the Ukraine crisis (Buonanno 2017; Dyson 2017; Laffan 2017; Rosamond 2017; Schimmelfennig 2017; Schweiger 2017; Seibel 2017). While the empirical variation of the crisis manifestations is considerable, their overarching impact on the pertinence of the issues of European identity is equivalent and is viewed as compound for the purposes of the present inquiry.

Affect and Ritual Theory Framework

This study emphasizes the value in considering Europe Day celebrations through the prism of political ritual to analyse the affective underpinning in the construction of European identity. Days of remembrance and commemoration explicitly allow for invoking temporality for the benefit of identity construction: ‘The use of remembrance rituals is a widespread form of perpetuating collective memories, especially when these memories are held to be particularly traumatic or glorious’ (Manners 2011; Volkan 1991; Volkan 2009). Fornäs (2011) distinguishes three key mechanisms for signification of a geopolitical community through the practice of day celebration: by reminiscing and commemorating a founding moment of a community; by setting course for the future in expressing collective values and charting joint action in pursuit of the latter; and by rooting a significant identificatory mechanism into the calendar, providing for the cyclic recurrence and repetitiveness of the celebratory day: ‘it gives a community the occasion to jointly celebrate and display its unity and its values in specific ceremonial rituals enacted that day, offering annually ritualized time for communal activities that serve as a symbolic model for collective practices to unite people and integrate them in a shared social and cultural sphere of meaning’ (p. 87). Hence, Europe Day celebration practices are considered here in their capacity to display institutionally devised symbolic rituals that ‘affirm and reaffirm the consciousness of European integration’ (Manners 2011), thus delivering on the objective of promoting European identity.

The notion of political emotions has been successfully instrumentalized for the purposes of investigating the place of affectivity in politics (e.g., Brader 2005; Clarke et al. 2006; Capelos and Chrona 2018; Demertzis 2014; Fierke 2014; Pace and Bilgic 2018). This study’s inquiry into the affective dimension of European identity construction in crisis is delivered through emphasis on emotions as they are compelled in the

context of Europe Day celebration practices. The article views emotions as intersubjective social constructions that are strategically compelled by institutions in the pursuit of promoting European identity. Directed at individuals and groups, group emotion is viewed as an ideational structure that first and foremost ‘pertains to an *identity* and not to a biological individual’ (Mercer 2014, p. 521–522). Hence, emotions are crucial, for ‘while discourse is what gives *form* to identity, affect is what gives it *force*’ (Kølvraa 2018, p. 1405). Moreover, ‘experiencing group emotion is an expression of group identity, a reinforcement of that identity, and a way to maintain group boundaries. Emotion structures relationships. A group without emotion is a mere collection of autonomous individuals. Being a group member means experiencing and expressing similar feelings and a failure to do so is a signal that one is not really part of the group’ (Mercer 2014, p. 523).

Defining affect as ‘an experience of intensity – of joy, fear, love, sorrow, pity, pride, anger – that changes the state of a body, that has concrete effects on individual and social practice’ underscores the ‘somatic real of power relations: “power works directly on bodies”’ (Stavrakakis 2014, pp. 121–122). Hence, affect is conceptualized as ‘the evolved cognitive and physiological response to the detection of personal significance’, and ‘an episode of massive synchronous recruitment of mental and somatic resources to adapt to and cope with a stimulus event that is subjectively appraised as being highly pertinent to needs, goals and values of the individual’ (Neuman et al. 2007, p. 9).

Accepting Kertzer’s definition of ritual as a ‘symbolic behavior that is socially standardized and repetitive’, it allows for an influential means of expressing one’s social dependence (Kertzer 1988, p. 9). Stipulating repetitiveness and redundancy of a ritual action, these precise characteristics provide for ‘channeling emotion, guiding cognition, and organizing social groups’ (ibid). Moreover, ritual introduces psychological as well as physiological investment: ‘Participation in ritual involves psychological stimuli, the arousal of emotions; ritual works through the senses to structure our sense of reality and our understanding of the world around us’ (ibid, p. 10). Ultimately, political ritual is expressed through fixed rules and ‘must be kept unchanged to be effective’ (Bottici 2007, p. 158).

Reflecting on Stavrakakis’ analysis of group identity in a national context and arguing for its equal utility in the analysis of European identity, ‘mobilization of symbolic resources has to be coupled with an affective investment grounded in the body in order for (national) identity to emerge’, whereby ‘... solidarity is maintained through the ritualization of practices which offer some limited enjoyment (celebrations, festivals, consumption rituals, and the like)’ (Stavrakakis 2007, pp. 199–200). The scope of Europe Day celebration activities considered here provides an insight into such ritualization practices and elucidates the place of affectivity in European identity construction.

Practice Diversity: Four Categories of the Europe Day Events

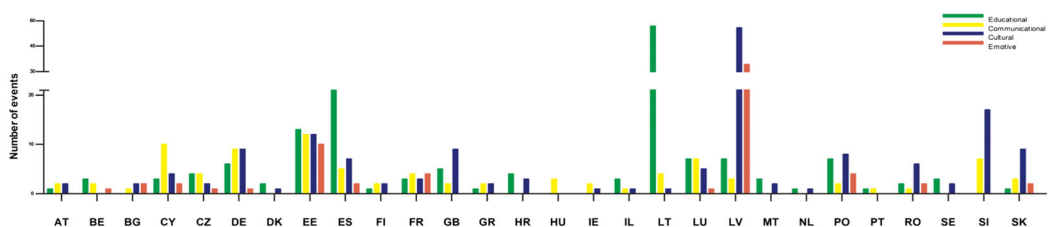
The article turns to consider the range and content of events that comprise the Europe Day celebration practices. Its analysis relies on the documentary data comprised of records of Europe Day events held between 2009 and 2018, obtained from Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) and the Commission Representations across the EU member states (internal and public access), as well as promotion materials (leaflets, brochures, promo videos), and partially supplemented by the interviews held within the scope of the

fieldwork at DG COMM within the broader scope of inquiry into institutional practices of European identity construction in crisis. The document data analysed in this study can be considered both abundant and unevenly distributed. The latter entails considerable disparities in the intensity and frequency of relevant Europe Day practices: the data demonstrate that Brussels consistently transforms into a European identity promotion fair for the entire first decade of May, while other EU member state capitals vary considerably in the intensity of their engagement in Europe Day celebration activities (see Figure 1 for an overview of such disparities). At the time of data collection, a complete registry of all Europe Day activities carried out across the EU between 2009 and 2018 was not in existence. However, this inquiry sought to tackle the lack of systematic overview over Europe Day celebration activities by reaching out to individual Commission Representations, compiling records available in open access, as well as utilizing a complete record of Europe Day 2018 celebrations obtained in the course of fieldwork at DG COMM in May 2018 (see Figure 1).

At the outset of this study's inquiry into the diversity of the Europe Day celebration practices and its meaning for the analysis of institutional practices of European identity construction, the article will provide a taxonomy of the events designed and carried out on the occasion across the EU member states. The classification of the Europe Day celebration practices proposed in this article is based on a full overview of all celebration events held on Europe Day 2018 across the EU member states. The choice of the 2018 Europe Day celebration activities for developing the classification was motivated by the availability of consolidated record of all relevant activities held across the EU member states that year, which comprises total of 449 events held across the 28 member states. The graph illustrates the variation of activities and the disparity among the member states' participation in the practice to offer a glimpse into the uneven (if not kaleidoscopic) practices of Europe Day celebrations. The subsequent analysis accounts for the entirety of the temporal scope of this study's inquiry.

The Europe Day celebration activities in this study are classified into four categories of events: *educational*, *communicational*, *cultural* and *emotive*, which can be located on a spectrum between rational and affective modes of compelling popular identification with Europe. These four categories are informed by the following types of events, which reflect in detail the diversity of Europe Day celebration practices: *Educational* events encompass conferences, seminars, workshops; lectures, debates, discussions or citizens dialogues; events with educational establishments; info stands. *Communication* events include consultations with political, economic and civil society actors; commissioner

Figure 1: Europe Day 2018 events across the EU member states. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



visits; speeches by EU, national or local politicians; press-conferences, audio-visual appearances; article publications. *Cultural* events include concerts, award ceremonies, fairs and exhibitions. Finally, *emotive* events include games, sporting activities, competitions, commemorative events and flash mobs. Having outlined the scope of the events associated with the Europe Day celebration practices, the article will elaborate on the diversity of Europe Day celebration practices within each category and move to undertake a closer investigation of the most prominent trends, which explicate the scope of variation and between rational and affective logics of European identity promotion.

Educational events are among the most numerous and regular, forming a prominent trend in the Europe Day celebration activities across the member states. This category encompasses events explicitly designed to address the public's lack of knowledge about the EU. The scope of such events diversifies to undertake a task of informing the public on the history and the purpose of the EU, the value of the European integration project, the history and significance of Europe Day, the rights and the entitlements of the EU citizens. A respective set of locations is systematically preferred to host Europe Day celebrations: schools, universities, libraries and museums – popular choices throughout the EU member states. Utilizing the Europe Day platform for the purposes of reasoning the European integration project to the public remains consistent with the Adonnino Committee report (Commission of the European Communities 1985), which emphasized the value invested in the celebration of Europe Day for generating awareness and educating the public.

To exemplify this trend, Europe Day 2018 celebrations in Lithuania featured events held in 52 public libraries engaging the informational network of the Commission's representation, with its thematic focus on the Year of European Cultural Heritage, as well as extensive EU knowledge tests conducted at schools, universities, public and private sector organizations. The 2010 Europe Day celebrations in Dublin featured a lunchtime seminar at the European Movement Ireland held on the 12th of May 'to provide information on the various ways Irish people can have an influence in the EU system' (European Commission, Representation in Ireland 2010). On the occasion of Europe Day celebrations in Brussels, the European Parliament displayed an information stand to 'inform people in an interactive way on the EU, its policies and institutions', featuring quizzes and board games. In Stockholm, the Europe Day celebrations included seminars dedicated to 'globalization, the competitiveness of Europe and the crisis, the EU budget, North Africa and Europe, and International Trade and EU', and the traditional information stalls educating the public about the EU and Europe Day. For the 2015 Europe Day celebration in Brussels the Commission organized 25 stands representing different directorates-general, structured around five priority themes: jobs, growth and investment; the energy union and the environment; the digital single market; the EU in the world and the European Year for Development; and the union working for its citizens (European Commission 2015).

Along with the educational events addressing the adult audience, the Europe Day celebrations include an array of activities designed specifically for children. The European Parliament Office in Malta held a series of information classes on the significance of Europe Day at Chiswick House Primary School in Kappara. The information sessions addressed a total of 180 children between the ages of eight and nine; the students attended a brief introduction of Europe Day and viewed a locally produced animated video featuring

information on the origins of the European Union in the aftermath of the World Wars. In Sofia, Europe Day was celebrated with ‘European lessons and Eurocakes’ for children in kindergartens. In Brussels, the younger visitors were offered to make a ‘European-themed kite’ at the Parliament and ‘explore biodiversity’ at the Economic and Social Committee, while the Commission hosted games ‘to get children thinking about animal welfare’.

Communicational events focusing on improving the outreach to the public and promoting the image of the EU, its institutions and the European integration project to the public account for an equally diverse pool of activities: speeches by the commissioners, politicians ranging from local to EU levels, press and media events. The angle of such events varies to adjust thematically to the European Years programme, as well as accommodates other campaigns driven at the time, such as EU&ME, which was featured prominently during the Europe Day celebrations 2018 EU-wide. Panel discussions with the general public, as well as with specifically targeted audience and adjusted to particular subjects, are regularly held in the majority of the EU member states. Thus, a number of Europe Day events were held throughout Estonia in May 2018, inviting the local youth to participate in discussions with the Prime Minister and other members of the government, EU officials, politicians and opinion leaders, featuring series of short debates starting ‘on the hour, last for about 30 minutes and cover the following topics: Openness of the European Union and free movement of citizens – what is there to gain? European Parliament elections 2019 – meeting an Estonian MEP. What kind of cultural heritage are we creating today?’ (European Commission 2018). Commissioners’ speeches can be combined with such panel discussions or be held as stand-alone events. Radio interviews and live broadcasting of various Europe Day celebration activities are likewise common in extending the outreach of the promotion activities to a wider European public.

The scope of communicational events is further broadened to include activities whose connection to the European identity promotion agenda becomes increasingly precarious. The 2010 Europe Day celebrations in Limerick introduced a ‘European Recycling Platform’, organized in association with Limerick City Council and featured ‘free recycling events’ at Tesco Car Park, inviting householders to dispose of their rubbish ‘with a plug or battery’ free of charge (European Commission, Representation in Ireland 2010). While arguably stemming from and tapping into the Green Europe narrative (Manners and Murray 2016), the connection drawn between rubbish disposal and European integration, the occasion illustrates the extremes of flexibility in the utilization of Europe Day platform for promoting European identity.

Within the pool of *cultural* activities prominently featuring Europe Day celebration practices are events featuring performative and visual arts, musical concerts, exhibitions and food tastings, which demonstrate a consistent pattern in institutional representations of Europe within the scope of European identity popularization. Accordingly, the Europe Day celebrations in Luxembourg in 2018 included a cultural programme comprised of music, dance, song, folklore performances, a photo booth, a balloon release, street graffiti workshop featuring preparation of a 6 m² tarpaulin graffiti model on the theme of Europe and entitled ‘Everything began in Luxembourg’, colored by local students, and concluded with the ‘cutting and distribution of the traditional European cake’ (European Commission 2018). In Poland’s Słubice and German Frankfurt-Oder Europe Day 2018 was celebrated with three 45-min cruises, where the attending public

participated in the performances of choirs from Poland and Germany presenting pieces from Polish, German and European classics, as well as Ode to Joy in Polish and German. Moreover, the cruise featured art workshops on European cultural heritage and European painting, as well as a bilingual animator ‘to encourage, talk and animate the participants of the cruise around EU issues, asking questions and rewarding answers’ (European Commission 2018).

Another consideration of the diverse pool of the Europe Day cultural events allows to recognize a constellation of activities that emphasize the cultural pluralism demonstrated in the numerous joint representations of national cultures of the EU member states. This angle is primarily associated with the many performative art activities and tasting events, such as ‘Cookery with a European Flavour’ or ‘Get a taste for Europe’, which feature samplings of the EU member states’ national cuisines in performing ‘unity in diversity’ (European Commission, Representation in Ireland 2010). The Europe Day festivities also regularly feature screenings of films directed or produced in other EU member states as well as local productions, which had garnered accolades elsewhere within the EU. To exemplify, Europe Day celebrations in Dublin featured a screening of a compilation of Irish short films and presented works of Irish filmmakers that have received awards in European festivals, while the EU&ME campaign’s production of five short films was premised on the engagement of up-and-coming production teams from various EU member states, with their further promotion across the EU. Thus, in Zagreb, the 2018 Europe Day celebrations included a screening of the five short films of the EU&ME campaign in an open-air cinema in the city’s ‘Europe’ square, by the European Commission’s Representation in Croatia. It was targeted at youth, provided fresh popcorn, beverages, and was supplemented with a feature-length European movie, which had been supported by EU funds (European Commission 2018).

While the most prominent trend in the varied collection of Europe Day celebration practices aims at forging popular European identity through engaging the public in educational activities and appeals to reasoning their support for European integration project, a more subtle tendency comes into focus in seeking to elicit affect and impart emotional engagement of the public. The category of *emotive* activities includes sporting competitions, flash mobs, commemorative events and symbolic performances. Within the pool of sporting competitions introduced into the scope of Europe Day celebration activities, several examples prove illustrative of the contribution offered to European identity promotion objectives. The 2013 Europe Day festivities in Pale featured a ‘Race to Europe’, a street running competition, as well as a volleyball competition for disabled people. The event programme specified that ‘This activity will be all the more symbolical since the players will be former soldiers from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, injured during the war. They will now contribute to the reconciliation process and to restore confidence through sport cooperation’. Such events effectively bridge relatively recent regional history of conflict and a European framing of overcoming the trauma, where the European narratives of peace and reconciliation offer some contextual traction. Discursive association of the events invoked here suggests that through these conciliatory practices the region explicitly engages in the process of European integration.

One other infrequent yet noteworthy contribution to the scope of the Europe Day celebration practices is a flash mob, which more explicitly foregrounds the place and meaning of ritual and its affect-inducing potential. Several such events have taken place within

the scope of Europe Day celebrations (e.g., Europe Day 2018 ‘European Flash Mob’ in Bucharest, Europe Day 2015 in Strasbourg, etc.), along with more numerous flash mob events featuring the performance of Ode to Joy on occasions unrelated to Europe Day but explicitly linked to promoting European identity and European integration (e.g., London 2019 flash mob, 2016 Europe Day in Ottawa). The 2010 Europe Day in Brussels exemplifies this practice in having featured a flash mob held in front of the building of the European Parliament. The video coverage of the latter was provided by the Tipik Multimedia communication agency, whose webpage listed the European Parliament as the client commissioning the event and further provided a detailed list of the delivered services. These included the event and production management, film direction, music creation, graphics and video design: ‘... determining locations to be used, hiring a film crew and a team of professional dancers and producing the promotional materials related (posters, radio spot, video trailers etc.), (...) developing an understanding of the event and its objectives, coordinating the film crew and the dancers, material research and writing a script, managing the editing process’ (TIPIK Multimedia 2010). It further named the choreographer and the professional dance group hired to stage the performance and specified that the event featured an original song composed by a member of the contracted agency specifically for the occasion. Along with six professional cameras filming the event, the agency recruited a multi-camera team ‘to spy on the many dancers as well as the many spectators’ to produce numerous amateur videos later published on YouTube along with the official one. However, the detailed annotation of the involvement of paid professionals, lack of spontaneity and anonymity of the participants, it having been commissioned and meticulously organized from conception to distribution, do not support the flash mob format. Whereas the means of execution of the event virtually transformed it into a simulation, its value stands in reflecting the commitment to establish an effective and functioning approach to public involvement and enhancement of the identification processes through the means of affective empowerment (Mercer 2014). Even such sparse records of flash mobs employed within the scope of the Europe Day celebration practices, convincingly articulate the affective mode in the institutional approach to European identity promotion.

Commemorative events form a sub-group of emotive activities that draws particular attention. While Europe Day as such presents a commemorative event in having been designed to memorialize the Schuman Declaration as the founding moment of the European Union as such (European Commission 2013), the actual scope of activities that explicate this connection is very narrow. The speeches delivered by various EU officials within the scope of the rich palette of Europe Day activities, reference the events establishing the EU and its founding fathers, and yet the commemorative component cannot be traced beyond a very small number of events that explicitly aim at enacting practices of remembrance. One of such rare occasions can be recognized in a 2010 Europe Day programme in Dublin, which featured free tours of Glasnevin Cemetery, ‘one of Europe’s largest and most beautiful cemeteries ... the final resting place of many notable Irish men and women who fought to keep Europe free from tyranny, and helped to guide Ireland’s entry into the EEC in 1973’ (European Commission, Representation in Ireland 2010).

The pool of *emotive* events is concluded with a selection of symbolic performances. While the very platform of Europe Day is nothing short of a carnival of European political symbolism, a number of events focus specifically and exclusively on performing the

political symbols of the EU as the main event. Europe Day 2018 in Marseille included a ceremony of hoisting the European flag in bulwarks on the Frigate Hermione on its route to Portugal, which had been carried out under the patronage of the Commission's then President Jean-Claude Juncker. The 2018 Europe Day celebrations in Madrid featured an array of activities involving the displays of the EU flag, with the objective to make the day's activities 'more citizen-orientated' and to focus the efforts on 'emphasizing the sentiment of European identity among Spanish citizens'. This included placement of the European flag on 2350 buses on the day and displaying large EU flags on the Madrid's 'emblematic buildings', such as its Town Hall, whose façade displayed the EU flag for the duration of the week, and which was also lit up blue in the evenings to honour the occasion; the Regional government of Madrid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Santa Cruz Palace and the Representation of the European Institutions in Spain, and the Cibeles Fountain, which likewise displayed EU flags during the festivities (European Commission 2018). The 2018 Europe Day celebrations in France also featured illumination of buildings in Paris and Aix de Provence with the colours of the EU flag, pursuing similar sentiment-inspiring objectives. While 'identity can by no means be fostered by symbols designed by policy decisions', and only "'organic" symbols, which can in the end be acknowledged by institutions, rather than created and disseminated by them' are rendered effective to express a collective identity (Cerutti 2011, pp. 5–6), this case recognizes the institutions' consorted efforts to utilize the EU political symbols within the scope of Europe Day celebration practices as a commitment to engage with the affective mechanisms of European identity construction.

Having reviewed the scope of the Europe Day celebration activities and proposed a classification of the four types of Europe Day events, the article proposes to analyse Europe Day celebration practices to elucidate two competing European identity promotion rationales.

Europe Day Practices: Between Reason and Affect

A major theme in Western philosophy since its inception (Elster 1999, p. 16; Elster 2009), the relationship between emotion and cognition reflects the analytical entanglement between affect and reason through two competing views on their opposition or compatibility. Conventionally segregated from and opposed to reason, 'emotion has been typically characterized as automatic (as opposed to deliberative), maladaptive (as opposed to useful), innate (as opposed to learned)' (Spezio and Adolphs 2008, p. 74). An alternative view emerges in the expanding studies that recognize emotion and cognition as neurologically indistinguishable and "'inseparable" as brain activations' (Mattern 2014, p. 590; Goodwin et al. 2009; see also Neuman et al. 2007). Dismissing the view of the dichotomy of cognitive and affective as two polarized modalities, this study retains the distinction between reason and affect to guide the analysis of Europe Day celebration practices.

At the very core of the concept of identity is the notion of individual's *awareness* of membership in a group, based in recognition of a common origin, shared characteristics, or mutually acknowledged ideal (or *normative framework*), and vested with *emotional significance* attached to it (Tajfel 1978; Fuchs 2011; Tileaga 2013; Karolewski et al. 2015). This article's objective is, therefore, to consider in which ways Europe Day celebration practices can be understood to contribute to the promotion of European

identity by (a) increasing the public's awareness, (b) boosting the emotional significance and (c) promoting norms attached to the membership in the European community. It is in the context of revisiting these three positions, namely, awareness, the normative component and emotional significance, that the four categories of Europe Day events are considered on the reason–affect spectrum, which in turn serves to identify the extent to which the two alternative modes of engaging the public are utilized in the institutional promotion of the European identity.

As argued above, Europe Day is considered here as an EU equivalent (or an institutional attempt to produce such equivalent) of national remembrance days that are marked by providing experiences of considerable emotional intensity that manifest somatically in the participating individuals and have tangible effects on both individual and social practice. This foregrounds the analytical value of performative rituals, understood here as socially standardized symbolic behaviour, redundant and repetitive, which seeks to integrate people in a shared social and cultural sphere of meaning (Kertzer 1988). Therefore, our consideration of ritual performance in the analysis of Europe Day celebration practices foregrounds the inquiry into its adherence to the key defining features discussed above: repetition, redundancy, inducement of emotion or affective investments, the identifiable coherent meaning vested in the ritual itself and sufficient engagement among the public.

Turning to consider the four categories of events comprising Europe Day celebration practices, the educational and communicational activities account for a significant portion of the Europe Day celebration events and largely comprise the backbone of the reason-driven mode of engagement with the public, employing an explanatory approach in promoting the EU to its citizens. Contributing to raising public awareness, educational activities also allow for the promotion of the norms attached to the EU membership by indorsing the scope of European values in various formats and contexts, from reiterating the EU's peace-keeping commitments invoked in history lessons to its environmental priorities echoed in children's quizzes. Having stated the overwhelming diversity of the activities constituting the educational and communicational events, these cannot be rendered to produce a ritual practice due to a lack of either repetition or consistency of the meaning, which is stipulated as imperative for the format of political ritual. Moreover, the meticulous purposefulness of the activities comprising the educational and communicational events renders them anything but redundant, as well as predominantly devoid of compelling an affective investment in the public.

The analysis of activities considered within the category of cultural events is valuable not merely in demonstrating the diversity and heterogeneity of the identity promotion practices carried out within the scope of Europe Day celebrations, but also in explicating the polysemic nature of Europe as a concept, which informs a further order of complexity in discerning the logic of the institutional efforts in European identity promotion. One distinct interpretation of Europe arising from among the Europe Day celebration practices emphasizes the eclecticism intrinsic to the pool of the cultural events, that best underscores the 'unity in diversity' rationale, manifesting through events distinguished on the principle of inclusion of performers and participants among expatriate artists with differing origins and countries of residence within the EU. The emphasis on mobility and adaptability as qualifying features of the very 'European-ness', informed an additional order of variation in the Europe Day celebration practices. Some of the more extreme manifestations of such variation were exemplified during the Europe Day celebrations in

Torreveija, Spain, which featured a performance by ‘European All Stars International Jazz Band’ comprised of several local musicians of ‘distinct nationalities’ who performed specifically and exclusively on the occasion of the Europe Day festivities. The announcement specified the musicians’ backgrounds (Spain, the Netherlands, England and Australia, with a sidenote to the latter: ‘well, it’s almost Europe!’) emphasizing the ‘truly European nature’ of the upcoming performance (Torreveija.com, 2013). Whereas the emphasis given to the national origins of each of the performing musicians may be considered representative of Europe’s diversity (with the notable exception of Australia) that is brought together in the ‘unity’ that the band would stand for, its presentation alone suffers from emphasizing the artificial and short-lived nature of the gathered group, limited to a single performance on the occasion of the Europe Day celebration, altogether omitting any consideration of a distinctly non-European origin of jazz music as a genre. Similar logic is reflected in the 2010 Europe Day celebrations held at the Dublin City Gallery featured a concert of Sephardic music, performed by the members of the Jewish diaspora ‘spread around Europe following the Spanish Inquisition’ (European Commission, Representation in Ireland 2010). The event’s relevance was framed through highlighting two historical realities shared by the countries in the region. Entwining the event into the ‘European logic’ becomes possible through emphasizing the extensions of its constituting elements beyond the member states’ individual historical heritage. Qualifying cultural events’ aptness to assume the functions of a political ritual is problematic in two points: first, the lack of repetition is underscored by an excessive diversity of the activities; second, cultural events display an array of diverse and at times incoherent interpretations of the Europe Day’s symbolic value and meaning.

The category of emotive events is addressed in this study in their potential to engage the public by evoking emotions, either as ‘political sentiments’ and ‘lasting affective dispositions’ towards the EU, its institutions, policies, political representatives, symbols and values; or as ‘politically relevant emotions’, which are viewed as more transient responses, short-term reflex emotions arising in the moments of political tension (Demertzis 2014). While emotive events are less numerous, they come to form a highly relevant trend in reflecting on the practices enacting the affective logic of engaging the public in the promotion of popular European identity. Introducing sporting events and competitions within the scope of the Europe Day activities made significant contribution to establishing an affect-driven mode of engagement with the public, employing an emotion-provoking approach in promoting the EU to the public. The types of activities comprising emotive events exemplify a model of practice allowing for generating physical and emotional inclusion of the participants that ultimately holds potential to deliver a genuine political ritual among the plethora of Europe Day celebration practices. Thus, empowering public’s affective attachment beyond its immediate context, emotive events are recognized to represent an instance of enacting the somatic real of power relations, where ‘power works directly on bodies’ (Stavrakakis 2014, p. 122). These emotive events provide the scope for ‘shared action, awareness and emotions’, which goes to the very core of a ritual practice and provides Europe Day the potential to construct and sustain the European identity (Ariely 2019, p. 1392).

The introduction of flash mobs into the programme of the Europe Day celebrations is equally significant for several reasons. While it indicates institutional awareness and commitment to establishing effective identity promotion mechanisms, it also exemplifies

recognition of validity in flash mobs as a form vested with inherent appeal to ‘corporeality’, emotivity and particularly its apparent futility, which arguably demonstrates a highly relevant move to engage ritual practice for the purpose of promoting European identity: ‘Acting in synchrony with others – which includes marching, singing, and dancing with others, and might be extended to protesting, defending, or working closely with others on a task – is another mechanism for emotional contagion’ (Mercer 2014, p. 524). The latter brings us back to the very core of the argument placing emotion and emotional attachment at the centre of the affective dimension of collective identities. The category of emotive events brings this inquiry closest to recovering a ritual form in the Europe Day celebration practices. The elements of repetition and redundancy featuring the flash mob events, along with the explicit focus on the ability to induce emotional response in the participating or observing public shared across the activities comprising this category, are crucial in indicating the place and the potential of ritual to contribute to the institutional efforts in European identity promotion.

While symbols function as a means of visualizing or ‘incarnating’ a political order, enabling of the symbolic dimension is vital for justification and legitimation of the identity constructing practices, they are bound to establish and uphold an integral image of the political entity they represent (Kertzer 1988; Manners 2011). The diversity and lack of consistency that characterize the Europe Day celebration practices point to a detrimental gap between the meaning or the symbolic content attached to Europe Day in the wide range of their interpretations across the EU. The extremes of diversity of Europe Day celebration events explicate the lack of regularity and uniformity. Both would be crucial for Europe Day’s ability to foster functional political rituals fit to contribute to the promotion and popularization of European identity.

Moreover, the prescription for the ample engagement of the public in the activities aimed at providing social and cultural integration poses a question as to whether Europe Day celebration events are carried out on a scale that allows for adequate access to a sufficient population of the community for the practice to be effective. The estimates provided in the data retrieved from the European Commission via their regional representations stipulate considerable variation in the numbers of participants projected for different Europe Day celebration activities. Some of the smaller scale educational events included as few as several dozen participants, such was the case with most of the events hosted in schools and universities. The most generous estimations of event participation went as far as to project reaching out to millions of citizens, as was the case in the approximation of the public’s exposure to the 2018 Europe Day EU flag displays in Madrid. Ultimately, physical participation in Europe Day activities tends to average between hundreds and thousands, although the projections for virtual participation through the events’ broadcasting suggested considerably higher numbers.

Conclusions

This article explored the role of ritual and its utility to elicit the affective dimension of European identity construction within the scope of the analysis of Europe Day celebration practices. The article explored reason- and affect-driven institutional approaches in the strategic promotion of the European identity to the European public. The two approaches alternated between prioritizing rational argumentation to compel public support for the

EU, and promoting emotional appeal of the European identity. The article reflected on the considerable Europe Day practice diversity and proposed a classification of the Europe Day activities by accounting for educational, communicational, cultural, and emotive events, as well as discussed how these four categories of events contributed to our understanding of the reason-driven and the affect-inducing logics in the institutional efforts for the promotion of popular European identity. The Europe Day celebration practices were estimated in their capacity to reflect on the affective rationale in the institutional efforts to promote European identity to the public by engendering a functional political ritual. The article found that European identity promotion practices are diverse and fluid and sought to focus specifically on the value of the institutional use of political emotion in promoting European identity among European populations. Moreover, the article argued that institutional efforts aimed to promote European identity within the Europe Day platform rely on actualizing the affective potential underpinning collective identities with the view to compel public support for European integration by inciting emotional engagement and boosting the public's affective investment.

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