1 Markets versus morality

Charles Mackay (1814–89), a Scottish poet, journalist, song-writer, and author of *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, once wrote that nations, like individuals, have their whims and their peculiarities, their seasons of excitement and recklessness. If nations have indeed such things as national personalities and habits, then the past ten years offer an intriguing glimpse of how they have adapted to post-Maastricht Europe. This book examines the fate of national cultures, defined here in anthropological terms as everyday socialization, beliefs, norms, institutions, and common behavior in light of the challenges brought by European institution- and market-building. To be sure, numerous studies explore the challenges faced by national governments as they attempt to preserve or redefine national identities or cultures.[1] My contribution to this debate is twofold. First, I describe the formation of national identity and institutions emblematic of the national traits of a country. I concentrate on the national governance of socially sensitive policies and will argue that variations in morality norms shed light on some of the most important aspects of state and national identity. My examples are Dutch drug policy, more liberal than the rest of Europe, Nordic alcohol control policy, more restrictive than the rest of Europe,

[1] For very different examples of writings which predict an end to national cultures: Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism, and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995); Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eric Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). A more ambiguous assessment is found in Susan Berger and Ronald Dore (eds.), *National Diversity and Global Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Other examples of the literature on national cultures and European integration are: Sharon Macdonald (ed.), *Inside European Identities: Ethnography in Western Europe* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1993); Bernd Baumgartl and Adrian Favell (eds.), *New Xenophobia in Europe* (Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1995). Some scholars simply believe that attacks on national identity lead to strengthening of expression of existing identities without turning hostile to outsiders and Europe. Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, and Pierre Lemaitre, *Identity, Migrant and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (London: Pinter, 1993).

and Irish policy towards sexual morality, more conservative than the rest of Europe.[2]

Second, I will discuss how constitutive rules, specifying proper behavior, cope with pressures emanating from the expansion of European governance, policies, and institutions. This book's overall conclusion is that national peculiarities are shrinking and that a modest rate of cultural convergence has occurred. Dutch drug policy is becoming more punitive, Nordic anti-drinking measures are liberalizing, and Irish attitudes towards abortion are softening. The timing and direction of these trends are highly suggestive of explanatory factors related to the widening scope of EU activities.

In my discussion of divergent morality norms, I seek to expand on the key assumptions advanced by the growing body of constructivist research[3] and sociological institutionalism.[4] Constructivist international relations scholars claim that the community of states or world culture shapes state identity and preferences. They contend that states often do not have a clear sense of where they stand on an issue, and like individuals, slowly develop perceptions of interests and understandings

[2] I use the term "drugs" throughout the book even though the reference is to a particular class of pharmaceuticals. Narcotics is a mislabel because cocaine and amphetamines are stimulants and have the opposite effect to that of sleep-inducing drugs. Even heroin and cannabis are not true narcotics because they do not aid sleep. Any reference to "Nordic" includes Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland but excludes Denmark. Denmark is, however, a Nordic country but it does not share the same anti-alcohol tradition as the other four countries. Also note that "Irish" or "Ireland" always refers to the Republic of Ireland.

[3] Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics*, 50 (1998), 324–48; Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Ann Florini, "The Evolution of International Norms," *International Studies Quarterly*, 40 (1996), 363–90; Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization*, 52 (1998), 855–85.

[4] John Boli and George M. Thomas (eds.), *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Neil Fligstein, *The Transformation of Corporate Control* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization*, 50 (1996), 325–48; John W. Meyer, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli (eds.), *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1987), 41–70; Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); W. Richard Scott and John W. Meyer (eds.), *Institutional Environments and Organizations: Structural Complexity and Individualism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994); Yasemin Nohuglu Soysal, *The Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

of situations through ongoing interaction with other states or transnational organizations and institutions. States assimilate templates of international meanings, adhere to certain norms, and hold common expectations about appropriate behavior.[5] These norms are subsequently internalized and are taken for granted. Although the practitioners of constructivism present slightly different versions of this argument, all of them claim that social structures, which contain shared knowledge, material resources, and practices, construct identity and are produced and reproduced by agents/actors, who in turn are embedded in the social structures.[6]

In selecting these case studies, I draw attention to situations where countries adhere to a style of action at odds with wider structures found in the EU. International or European norms, accordingly, may or may not foster, depending on the circumstances, common patterns of behavior among dissimilar states. Although many European liberal principles have become internationalized with the expansion of the West, the countries and issues in question deviate from European or international practices and structures.[7] National officials remain faithful to old models of thinking because the new categories of cognition and action repudiate state and national identity. That is to say that international norms shape human and state behavior in some, but certainly not all, areas of political life and that some states refuse to adapt to new evolving institutional practices with the result that new European concepts fail to penetrate national consciousness, institutions, and repertoires of action.

The plan of this book is threefold: first, to chronicle how national practices have withstood the ascendance of European or Western

[5] For different applications, see Deborah Barrett and David John Frank, "Population Control for National Development: From World Discourse to National Policies," in Boli and Thomas (eds.), *Constructing World Culture*, 198–221; Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Thomas A. Loya and John Boli, "Standardization in the World Polity: Technical Rationality over Power," in Boli and Thomas (eds.), *Constructing World Culture*, 169–97; Nina Tannenwald, "The Taboo on Nuclear Weapons," *International Organization*, 53 (1999), 433–69.

[6] Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground. Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations*, 3 (1997), 319–63; Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, 46 (1992), 391–425; Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1994), 384–96.

[7] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Barry Buzan, "From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory meet the English School," *International Organization*, 47 (1993), 327–52; Gerrit Gong, *The Standard of "Civilisation" in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

models of thinking and action, second to specify how adaptational pressures actually produce change and which agents push for change, and third to understand the future of European integration. I define Europeanization as institutional adjustment to wider European rules, structures, and styles and as the diffusion of informal understandings and meanings of EU norms. The aim is to explore the long-term effect of European agreements on national identities, values, institutions, and policies and to specify the causal mechanisms responsible for the dissemination of European-oriented values after a considerable time lag.

Cultural norms and national identity

Norms point decision-makers in the direction of solutions that are considered effective and sensible by the relevant audience. They are templates that sort out how to assess a new situation and what kind of action to take. State leaders rely on norms to diagnose a situation and design an action plan in congruence with national expectations. Normative standards are frequently institutionalized and routinized. Once they are embedded in institutions and procedures, their meaning is no longer questioned and is taken for granted. Decision-makers rely on "tool-kits" to solve problems and organize activities. The symbols, stories, rituals, and worldview in turn legitimize the selection of a particular policy course because the population holds expectations that governments take this sort of action.[8] Obviously, international norms are likely to remold domestic prescriptions of behavior if a prior cultural or institutional compatibility already exists. Policy officials do not gravitate towards a "tool-kit" that clashes with national patterns of recognized repertoires of action. Occasionally, cultural markers are ambiguous and open to different interpretations, which then creates room for the introduction and absorption of international norms. Once they are incorporated into domestic institutions and structures, they fashion behavior along a certain model.

Once in a while, a state will be strongly attached to its way of doing things and will decisively reject "mainstream" (i.e. European) approaches and conventions. This book gives three examples of normative models that prescribe standards of behavior that are relatively unusual and singular to a country. For example, the Netherlands does

[8] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986), 273–86. See also James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

not buy into the global prohibitionist regime on drugs.[9] It has taken the view that drug-taking is mainly a public health challenge. Since 1976, the Dutch parliament has supported drug decriminalization and harm reduction. Sweden and Finland repudiate the post-1945 liberal approach to alcohol consumption. Parliaments in the Nordic countries restrict the sale of alcohol to state-owned stores and levy high alcohol taxes. In 1983, the Republic of Ireland ratified an amendment to the constitution with the aim of creating an abortion-free zone.

The particular actions to regulate drugs, drinking, and sexuality reflect a very specific understanding of the relations between state and society, of the responsibility of the state to shield society from human passions and risky behavior, and of the self or personhood. Nordic societies mistrust the enduring appeal of mind-altering substances and suspect individuals of lacking the necessary self-discipline to desist from abuse and dependency. In turn, substance abuse constitutes a direct threat to economic prosperity and the social wellbeing of society. According to this view, the personal inconveniences of drinking restrictions pale compared with the constraints on individual freedom on account of chemical dependency.

The Irish believe that individual autonomy and definition of the good life are best served by strict adherence to the Catholic ethos. Catholic doctrine guides state policies in areas of life of special importance to the Church, namely the family, education, and health. This form of policy intervention is taken for granted because the Irish voter perceives no contradiction between one's personal needs and the leading tenets of the Church.[10] By contrast, in the Netherlands, the state shuns highly moralistic agendas and encourages individuals to discipline themselves. After recreational drug use reached epidemic proportions, the authorities decided on a nonabsolutist solution and gave permission for the sale of cannabis in specially licensed coffee shops.

Most likely, countries, like individuals, always hold certain issues or projects close to their heart. There must be numerous incidents of a mismatch between domestic and international norms. Nevertheless, these morality policies merit special attention because they go beyond formal prescriptions on how to tackle substance misuse or how to cope with the decline of tradition and religious authority. As the following

[9] Ed Leuw and I. Haen Marshall (eds.), *Between Prohibition and Legalization: The Dutch Experiment in Drug Policy* (New York: Kugler Publications, 1994); Marcel De Kort and Ton Cramer, "Pragmatism versus Ideology: Dutch Drug Policy Continued," *Journal of Drug Issues*, 29 (1999), 473–93.

[10] Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998); Joe Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

chapters will show, the morality standards describe what it means to be Finnish, Swedish, Dutch, and Irish respectively. They are cultural markers, which dictate how to talk about the issues, what to expect from others, and what others expect from you. Because state and collective identities grew out of particular historical experiences and are unique to a country or a group of countries they cement the bonds that unite a people and also sustain external identity.[11] State and national identity is thus partly formed in opposition to shared international norms and differentiates a country (or geographic cluster of countries) from its (their) neighbors.[12]

For example, bookshelves are filled with autobiographical accounts of what it means to grow up Irish and thus Catholic.[13] The unique devotion to Catholicism of the population of the Irish Republic is a source of both internal identification and external differentiation. Not all European Catholic nations link their national identity to strict adherence to the Catholic ethos. An Italian, although nominally Catholic, has other ways of describing his or her national identity. The history of the emancipation of the Irish people bequeathed a legacy that fused Catholicism and modern Irish identity. The Catholic ethos governs state policy and prescribes how the state and society must behave. This pattern of state action gives Ireland its distinctive character and sharply contrasts with that of, say, Britain. Along similar lines, restrictive drinking rules grew out of the early and successful efforts by popular movements to impose external forms of discipline on societies undergoing the wrenching experiences of urbanization and industrialization. The strong aversion to mind-altering substances characterizes an aspect of "Nordicness" quite distinct from the personalities of other European peoples. The Nordic uneasiness with regard to mind-altering substances is attributed to "communication anxiety" (being shy) and to the reliance on liquor to overcome social inhibitions. Long, dark winters, according to Nordic conventional wisdom, deprived Finnish and Swedish people of regular contact with strangers and stunted the growth of strong interpersonal skills.[14] When together, to ease sociability, Finns and Swedes drink heavily with terrible consequences for the

[11] Brian C.J. Singer, "Cultural vs. Contractual Nations: Rethinking their Opposition," *History and Theory*, 35 (1996), 309–37.

[12] Even in the international security field, states pursue preferences and objectives divorced from international structures and beliefs. Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War I," in Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security*, 186–215.

[13] For example, Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes. A Memoir* (New York: Scribner, 1996); Nuala O'Faolain, *Are you Somebody? The Life and Times of Nuala O'Faolain* (Dublin: New Island Books, 1997).

[14] A classic joke about the painfully taciturn Finn is as follows. Two Finns sit at a bar.

physical and social health of the individual and society. Binge drinking (heavy drinking at one sitting), however, became a legitimate target for state intervention following the ascendance of the social democratic movement, which equated boozing with disorder and unpredictability and deployed the institutions of the welfare state to curb alcohol consumption.[15]

Dutch drug policy is also a testimony to an aspect of Dutchness. Dutch subscribe to the idea that moral decisions are private affairs and, accordingly, that private activities should not be prohibited, banned, curbed, or restrained by outside agencies. The public health focus of Dutch drug policy emerged from a tradition that permitted society to find its moral center. If Sweden and Finland prefer to raise certain collective moral principles and to hold out certain life projects as more desirable than others, the Netherlands allows its citizens to pursue life projects even if they prove to be very harmful and destructive. The state is not actively involved in structuring the lives of its citizens along a particular dimension and does not assert a hierarchy of values.[16] Citizens can form their own opinions and evaluate what is manageable or not.

In short, different countries construct different moral environments, which provide clues on how to regard and solve questionable private activities. Most norms do not last for more than a generation because each new cohort group confronts different experiences and selects different guideposts on how to organize life. Frequently, norms are contested and only gain dominance if the majority endorses the value framework. The norms described in this study continued to be recognized by the majority as valid, appropriate, and germane in spite of tremendous structural changes in the workplace, the family, career paths, and international fashions. One of the reasons for their longevity is that state and social institutions maintained and reproduced the moral environment, thereby vouching for their robustness and flexibility.[17] State policy, formulated and administered by institutions, immersed new generations of citizens in appropriate standards of behavior and

After hours of silence one raises a glass and says "Cheers." His friend snaps back, "We didn't come here to talk."

[15] Åke Daun, *Swedish Mentality* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Jean Phillips-Martinsson. *Swedes, As Others See Them* (Stockholm: Affärsförlaget, 1981); Harry G. Levine, "Alcohol Problems in Nordic and English-speaking Cultures," in Malcolm Lader, Griffith Edwards, and D. Colin Drummond (eds.), *The Nature of Alcohol and Drug Related Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[16] Bo Rothstein, *Just Institutions Matter: The Moral and Political Logic of the Universal Welfare State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[17] Ron Jepperson, Alex Wendt, and Peter Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security," in Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security*, 63–64.

devised ways to ward off demands for adjustments or change. But the cultural norms also endured because they spoke of a truth, accepted by the majority as beyond questioning. Institutions, to be effective and retain legitimacy, must formulate objectives and execute policies in congruence with fundamental beliefs of society.[18] The deep attachment of the Irish to Catholicism is both the outcome of the critical role played by the clergy during the prolonged struggle against British colonialism and the reason why the ecclesiastical hierarchy and lay Catholic movements continue to represent collective opinion and demarcate available policy options.[19]

A similar analysis explains the interaction between cultural values and reproduction of temperance ideals in Sweden and Finland. Nordic social welfare officials and public health agencies continuously raised awareness of the dangers of substance abuse and oversaw the operation of the state alcohol company, which controlled all aspects of the production, trade, retail, and distribution of alcoholic drinks.[20] Public campaigns, research reports, and parliamentary legislation kept attention focused on the country's drinking problem, a dilemma recognized by many voters as severe and urgent. Because mass opinion recognized the dangers of alcohol for society, social welfare agencies and alcohol policy officials succeeded in constituting and reconstituting the drinking problem, eventually substituting a highly moralistic discourse for scientific models on aggregate alcohol consumption and its impact on alcohol-related accidents, injuries, disease, mortality, and social dislocation.

Dutch social service agencies and public health officials articulated a vision of society in which the state was not charged with the task of enforcing a particular mode of behavior. Drugs in general were condemned but drug users were considered regular members of society who need and deserve assistance and care. Even Dutch law enforcement espoused a philosophy that precluded intrusive monitoring of private acts of more or less law-abiding individuals. The policy measures and

[18] The empirical chapters examine at length the creation of morality norms. I do not assume collective norms and identity and examine both their origins and the generative process of consolidation and adaptation.

[19] Tom Inglis, *Lessons in Irish Sexuality* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998); Paul Keating and Derry Desmond, *Culture and Capitalism in Contemporary Ireland* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1993); Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, *Schools and Society in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1993).

[20] Jan Blomqvist, "The 'Swedish Model' of Dealing with Alcohol Problems: Historical Trends and Future Challenges," *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 25 (1998), 253–321; Harold D. Holder, Eckart Kühlhorn, Sturla Nordlund, Esa Österberg, Anders Romelsjö, and Trygve Ugland, *European Integration and Nordic Alcohol Policies: Changes in Alcohol Controls and Consequences in Finland, Norway, and Sweden* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998).

narrative were accepted by the majority since they agreed with the central premises of this approach.

In each country, state policy and institutions provided detailed and broad scriptures of symbols, narratives, and discourse to construct cognitive categories through which politicians, officials, and individuals framed problems and solutions.[21] Because institutions forge common standards of behavior, dictate a certain course of action, and create criteria for judging what is appropriate, the likelihood of adopting new European standards is low unless a "goodness of fit" exists.[22] When basic compatibility exists, European meanings of particular activities raise few controversies. If European norms and practices run completely counter to national rules and practices, then European conventions confront many hurdles. By far the biggest obstacles are the very same institutions whose existence hinges on the survival of the moral environment. If Sweden and Finland liberalize and deregulate the liquor market and adopt a non-Nordic model of informal control mechanisms, the state monopoly company and social welfare agencies active in the alcohol field forfeit their claims on state funding to run programs, employ specialists, and gather specialized knowledge. Aside from institutions, however, the electorate also rallies against external pressures because European formulations of socially sensitive issues contradict basic ideas on how to tackle problems such as alcohol or drug dependency. Prohibitionist drug policies are not compatible with the moral permissiveness of the Dutch, Continental drinking models are irreconcilable with the Nordic desire for order and security, while post-Christian materialism and individualism negate the definition of a good Irish man or woman.

Many different arguments can be brought to bear to make the same point: this area of political and social life, in contrast to capital markets, telecommunication, monetary policy, state aid, or environment, is shielded from pressures to adjust to European structures and rules. To discover that cultural institutions, so intimately tied to the identity of the nation-state, are subject to Europeanization is extraordinary. It suggests that member states are in fact being recast along a European model

[21] Paul DiMaggio, "Culture and Economy," in Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 27–58; Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions* 22–26; Thomas R. Rochon, *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 5.

[22] Maria Green Cowles, Thomas Risse, and James Caporaso, "Europeanization and Domestic Change," in their *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1–20; David Strang and John W. Meyer, "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion," in Scott and Meyer (eds.), *Institutional Environments and Organization*, 100–13.

against their preferences and conscious desires! Much of the literature on European integration has focused on the loss of economic, fiscal, and monetary autonomy and the codification of EU rules in structuring product and capital markets, environmental regulations, employment rights, regional aid, and transportation. Relatively little attention has been paid to the possibility that cultural expressions of national sovereignty are subject to similar kinds of pressures.[23]

The European Union and morality norms

To find that morality norms, which define collective identity, are moving towards a European-wide formulation is surprising, to say the least. To be sure, EU institutions and Community law exert no direct, focused pressure on member states to shed national approaches to the regulation of socially sensitive activities. There are no transparent European measures on how member states ought to deal with substance abuse and sexual permissiveness. EU legislation does not call for new policies at the national level to regulate drug and alcohol use or abortion. The reason for this lack of direction from above is self-evident. Universal (European) norms barely exist and scarcely frame a shared understanding among like-minded states. It is of great concern to students of European integration that Europe contains a vast array of cultural legacies and normative standards. The attempt to formulate European-wide norms or advance greater harmonization repeatedly founders on the shoals of unrelenting emotional opposition which obstructs the drafting of a common policy at the supranational level. For the proponents of the European ideal, the retention of cultural diversity in post-Maastricht Europe hampers the quest for further political integration and the fulfillment of the goal of "ever closer union." The argument is therefore rather circular. Cultural differences between nations in Europe persist because of the lack of a strong central authority able to unify and homogenize the people of Europe while the lack of such a centralized authority can be largely attributed to cultural diversity and historical differences.[24]

[23] See, however, the collection of articles in Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen, and Antje Wiener (eds.), "The Social Construction of Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6 (1999), 528–719.

[24] Briggid Laffan, "The Politics of Identity and Political Order in Europe," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34 (1996), 81–102; Anthony D. Smith, "A Europe of Nations – or the Nation of Europe?" *Journal of Peace Research*, 30 (1993), 133; see also his, "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity," *International Affairs*, 68 (1992), 55–76; Stephen Wood, *Germany, Europe, and the Persistence of Nations: Transformation, Interests, and Identity 1989–1996* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998).