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**The Role of the EU’s Cultural Diplomacy in Case of**

**Basque and Catalonian Ethnic Conflicts**

Author of the work:

***Kristine Tolokonnikova***

Supervisors:

***Wolfgang Zank***

***Pauline Stoltz***

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**Abstract**

Master thesis ‘The Role of the EU’s Cultural Diplomacy in Case of Basque and Catalonian Ethnic Conflicts’ is a research work aiming to establish the key factors for successful cultural diplomacy of the EU, which could prevent the split of its member state Spain, where the bright separatist movements of Basque and Catalans exist. The research also includes an analysis of the other actors, which could avoid the ethnic conflicts in Spain apart from the EU. The main question of the work is whether the cultural diplomatic events in the last ten years, organized by the EU influence the Basque and Catalan decisions towards independence from Spain?

The quantitative (the Basque/Catalan opinion on independence and feeling of belonging to national sentiment) and qualitative (other actors and events influence on mutinous identities and the side, which the EU supports – the Spanish government or the Basque/Catalan government) analysis were selected for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the EU’s cultural diplomacy. The research is based on the social constructivism theory, which is helpful in several explanations – what is identity, what causes separatist movements, why nowadays still some regions want independency even existing within the country for a many years, what is the cultural diplomacy, how the cultural diplomacy can influence identities, what is the role of the EU and other actors in separatist movements and how it is possible to avoid the ethnic conflicts?

As a result, the analysis shows that the cultural diplomatic events in the last six years organized by the EU, had influenced Basque decision towards independence from Spain. However, cultural diplomatic events in the last ten years organized by the EU, were not effective in case of Catalonia. The reason of such results is the other actors, which apart from the EU had influence on the Basque and Catalan identities – the government of Spain, the Basque/Catalan governments and NGOs. The EU’s cultural diplomacy can fluently work in the case, if other actors are passive. Thus, in the case of Catalonia, there is even no need for the EU’s cultural diplomacy, because the ethnic conflict can be resolved by reaching the consensus and mutual understanding between both governments of Spain and Catalonia.

To mitigate separatist movements in the member states, an ensuing recommendation for the cultural diplomacy of the EU is to keep organizing the high amount of events not simply when the ethnic conflict reaches its peak, but as a permanent practice on a mid- to long term basis. In the case of Basque and Catalonia it should continue to hold a high amount of cultural diplomatic events and at the same time remind separatist movements that independence will entail an exclusion from the EU by veto power on the part of the Council of the EU, as well as the loss of all benefits which are emphasized by the cultural diplomatic events.

**Introduction**

After the horrors of the two World Wars and increasing globalization, which has created the interdependency between countries, cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in the European Union (*the EU*) to achieve political goals and create strong image in the international arena. Neither of twenty eight democratic countries relies on hard power in their interaction with other political actors. The European Union stands for its liberal values – peace, freedom and justice.

The European Union is a unique and important political actor. It is the second largest economy in the world. The European Union is one of the biggest actors, which promotes liber values, within the main goal reaching peace in the world. In 2012 the EU got awarded with the Nobel Prize for ‘*over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe*’[[1]](#footnote-1). Meanwhile the European Union is a great power in the international political arena, on the other hand, its future and strengths is under the question.

There are separatist movements and ethnic conflicts ongoing in its member states. In last decades one of the bloodiest turned out to be the Basque ethnic conflict by several bomb attacks and assassinations. In the other part of Spain a few month ago Catalan self-determination referendum was held, which resulted in 80% of vote in favor to split from Spain[[2]](#footnote-2). Ethnic conflicts can cause several problems: can give a born to extreme nationalism, ruin existing peace, relations with other external political actors, influence international system and change the map of Europe.

The title of the work ‘**The Role of the European Union’s Cultural Diplomacy in Basque and Catalonian Ethnic Conflicts**’ has been chosen because nowadays this topic is actual. It is important to research the ability of the EU and its soft power to keep different cultures and nations united in peace. Such existing inner problems can harm international image of the EU, and lead to the destruction of the EU’s relations with its member states and bring changes on the map of Europe. The main question, which is going to be discussed in case of Basque and Catalonian ethnic conflicts, is **whether the cultural diplomatic events in the last ten years, organized by the EU, influence the Basque and Catalan decisions towards independence from Spain?** To answer this question there is a need to analyze other issues: 1) how do citizens of these regions identify themselves? 2) what are the arguments of Basques and Catalonians to separate from Spain? 3) what kind of cultural diplomatic events did organize the EU? 4) did other factors apart from the cultural diplomatic events held by the EU influence decisions of Basques and Catalonians to separate from Spain during last ten years? 5) which of the government - Spanish or the Basque/Catalan – the EU is favoring?; 6) how could be the EU’s cultural diplomacy as an instrument improved in the future to resolve its inner ethnic conflicts?

International theory of **social constructivism** has been chosen for the research. Social constructivism describes system, which is based on human relations consisting from thoughts and ideas. Thus it can be applied to the main actors of this research – ethnic identities, the EU, governments and non-governmental organizations. Social Constructivist Slavoj Zizek within theory of ‘theft of enjoyment’’ helps to understand, what are the reasons why ethnic conflicts are going on. Without such knowledge and historical background it is not possible to find solutions for the exiting problems, which bothers ethnicities. Social constructivism helps to explain the meaning and formation of identities. International theory offers scheme, how identities can be shaped. Michel Foucault in ‘Discipline and Punish’ describes Panopticism, which shapes and controls identities and how it can be applied to the EU and its main instrument – cultural diplomacy. Alexander Wendt also draws importance of the sovereignty and explains why not all identities end in self-help statement and are fighting for self-determination. Also Nira Yuval-Davis explains, how identities can become extreme by sacrificing their lives for common goal. The scholar gives an idea on how to deal with such situations. Overall, social constructivism appreciates cultural diplomacy as an instrument, which can shape identities and resolve existing ethnic conflicts by projection of common dreams and interests. Such goals can be reached within spill-over process by organizing different events covering not only political field, but also economic and cultural issues. Social constructivism describes why still in the European Union ethnic movements are going on and is meaningful to discover how effective the EU’s cultural diplomacy is to influence actors and keep them united.

The project work is based on the **literature** and **data analysis**. According to the fact that social constructivism theory is used as a basis of research, several works written by such authors like Alexander Wendt ‘Anarchy is what States Make of it’, Michel Foucault ‘Discipline and Punish’, Slavjo Zizek ‘Trying with a Negative’ and Nira Yuval Davis ‘The Politics of Belonging’ were applied to analysis with the aim to explain the meaning and importance of identities, nation and sovereignty, the existence of ethnic conflicts and to illustrate, how different actors and the EU’s cultural diplomacy can shape identities. To provide relevant information and make research as much as possible objective different political journals, reports and internet resources were used to describe ongoing Spanish ethnic conflicts and actions of Spanish, Basque and Catalan governments – Political Science, Journal of the European Public Policy, the Scottish Government, Reports of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, etc. For the sake of minimizing the influence of mass media and propaganda, the borrowing of information from renowned news sources such as BBC, The Guardian, or The Economist was limited to certain timelines and data pertaining to events of interest for the research project at hand.‏ For the quantitative analysis to measure Basque/Catalan feelings of belonging to national sentiment, opinion on independence of their regions and to have general picture of the biggest events held by the EU and Basque/Catalonia data from Euskobarometro, Basque Cultural Center, El Periodico, Indtitut de Ciencies Politiques I Socials (ICPS), Barometer d’Opinion (BOP), ect. and the EU Comission’s official homepage of events were gathered and calculated.

The first chapter of research illustrates the main ideas of the social constructivism scholars about the cultural diplomacy, formation of identities, and the organization interaction with identities and examines, how the approaches of theory can be applied to the quantitative and qualitative data used for the research. Social constructivism stress out the importance of the EU’s cultural diplomacy and its spill over on the identities, however it also takes into a scope other actors, which can play important role in shaping identities. Social constructivism also explains, why some identities are fighting for independence and why sovereignty is still important nowadays.

The second chapter is dedicated to the Basque country. Chapter includes the analysis on the Basque opinion on independence and feelings of belonging to national sentiments in last ten years. Apart from that, important events and the role of the other actors has been taken into scope too. Comparative analysis with the amount of the EU’s cultural diplomatic events was made with the data of Basque answers on independence and feeling to national sentiment periodically in last ten years.

The third chapter is dedicated to Catalonia. Like in the chapter about the Basque country, the analysis was made about Catalan opinion on independence and feelings of belonging to national sentiments. The events and other actors were examined during last ten years too. Comparative analysis was made between the EU’s cultural diplomatic events and data on Catalan opinion on independence and feelings of belonging to national sentiment.

The final chapter examines the cultural diplomatic policy of the EU and the side, which the organization is favoring – the Spanish government or Basque/Catalan government. Apart from that, all previous data and the results of quantitative investigation were gathered and analyzed by seeing common linkages between opinions of identities and activities of actors, thus, providing the final answer to the main question of the research.

**I Social Constructivism**

* 1. **The EU’s Cultural diplomacy in the framework of social constructivism**

Cultural diplomacy and identity are new elements in the study of diplomacy and international relations. Alexander Wendt in a book ‘*Social Theory of International Politics*’, shows the importance of cultural diplomacy in a social constructivism theory and criticizes other approaches, which do not pay attention to the role of identity, norms and culture. The basis of the theory are human interaction, their will and agreement to make actions, which creates the existence of social factors and human institutions like human rights or sovereignty. In constructivism theory, cultural diplomacy is an inter-subjective construction of ideas, norms and identities, what can lead to welfare, cooperation and mutual understanding between different actors.

Cultural diplomacy manifests in different fields, thus it becomes difficult to put it under one definition. Simon Markdescribes it ‘*as a long term relationship built between actors, which may take years*’[[3]](#footnote-3). According to Signitzer Benno, cultural diplomacy is ‘*sensibilisation of one’s own society as to how it is seen by the other society*’[[4]](#footnote-4). It is moving beyond the goal of reaching mutual understanding between actors. The aim of cultural diplomacy is to make positive attitude towards one actor with the hope that it will be beneficial to over-all diplomatic targets.

Cultural diplomacy covers the following areas: art, media, science, tourism, politics, economics, religions, governmental and non-governmental sectors. It can take various shapes within promoting ideas and creating dialogue between actors. Cultural diplomacy entails an exchange of information, values, beliefs and traditions. Simon Mark states that ‘*cultural diplomacy is a diplomatic practice of governments – single governments and also groups of governments such as the EU, and sub-national governments*’[[5]](#footnote-5). In the past, within the cultural diplomacy state was representing its high culture and intellectual elites, but nowadays the focus is more to popular culture – activities, that attract mass audiences, states and members of national diaspora.

Cultural diplomacy is not the same what public diplomacy or international cultural relations are. Neither is it propaganda. Some elements of public diplomacy as reactive media briefings are outside of cultural diplomacy’s rubric. Also different actors engage into cultural diplomatic activities not just to ‘*proselytize their own values, but rather to understand different cultural traditions, to find new sources of imaginative inspiration, to discover methods and ways of working and to be influenced rather than to influence*’[[6]](#footnote-6). Not all international cultural relations include government or contribute to foreign policy goals or diplomacy. According to Jan Melissen, propaganda ‘*involves rather primitive business of peddling one’s own views and narrowing other people’s minds*’[[7]](#footnote-7). Cultural diplomacy can involve the peddling of the state’s views, but it is rarely narrowing minds of people. Cultural diplomacy is a soft power instrument.

Joseph Nyedefines soft power as ‘*the ability to entice and attract; it is in behavioural language – the power of attraction*’[[8]](#footnote-8). It is not just influence, but also persuasion within argumentation. Soft power can be effective only in cases where society accepts it and sees it as credible. It has ties with economic development and other political issues, for example, minority rights. Economic and political power is used to spread the values of a foreign culture with the goal to expense native culture.

In the internal political arena the EU is using soft power as an instrument to communicate and attract the publics of member states within broadcasting, cultural exporting and exchanging. One of the main objectives of the EU’s cultural diplomacy is creating intercultural dialogue within numerous projects with the aim to make strong European identity and keep its diverse cultures united. It is performing nation branding – at the same time respecting sovereignty, different cultures of member states and creating spill-over process thus creating ground of common identity.

There are no doubts, that European identity existed long time ago. Craig Calhounillustrates that important role played Latin Christendom, which opposed to Islam and Orthodox Christianity and the times of colonialism, where in other parts of the world idea of the European and ‘others’ became more contrasted[[9]](#footnote-9). Regarding to Ian Manners, the EU’s identity as a normative power begun to exist within three points: 1) historical context (e.g. legacy of the two world wars); 2) hybrid polity (e.g. a post-Westphalian order with supranational and international institutions) and 3) political-legal constitutionalism (e.g. treaty based integration of the Europe)[[10]](#footnote-10). Normative power ‘*refers to the power of governing the creation, deletion or modification of norms within a system or society*’[[11]](#footnote-11). To define what kind of power nowadays is using the European Union in the field of its inner politics, there is a need to overcome several dichotomies, whether ‘power to’ is more important than ‘power over’ and the difference between ‘having a power’ and ‘being a power’[[12]](#footnote-12).

In my opinion, the EU does not seek power over its member states, because it is about to have power to act on behalf of both itself and its member states thus in general creating powerful actor. Secondly, sovereignty still is an important issue of states. Within becoming members, states are giving part of its sovereignty within realizing directives and taking part in the EU’s policy making. The EU is also not making pressure to join its Union, it is up to each government’s decision. Richard Sakwa admits, that ‘*the EU was created as a peace-enhancing institution, but today it is becoming transformed from a normative power (based on values) into a soft power*’[[13]](#footnote-13). Compared to normative power, soft power can be better applied to the EU’s inner policy, because it does not imply value judgment to the same extent.

From the beginning the EU was more focusing on common foreign and security policy. Within its development, the agenda about common European culture was officially introduced even if Europe was before united mainly on the basis of cultural factor (including creativity, migration, values, cultural and linguistic exchanges). *De iure* European identity and process of Europeanization became as a public agenda in 1973 with the Declaration on European Identity after Copenhagen meeting[[14]](#footnote-14). It outlined the need of European unification, where every member state would share same ideals and objectives. Within the process of Europeanization the EU is trying to accomplish a creation of the common culture and sense of belonging to it. Cultural diplomacy and identity is used as a tool for ongoing Europeanization process and peace among member states.

The main goal of social constructivism theory is to establish stabile multilateral channels between actors within addressing the importance of cosmopolitan ideas and identities. This what the EU does by welcoming its agents to formulate needs and programs to reach common aims, construct global awareness and spread peace around the world. The EU is a constructed body in ‘*which negotiation, compromise and consensus are important*’[[15]](#footnote-15). Another scholar of the social constructivism theory, Martha Finnamore shows the importance of international organisations and its diplomacy: ‘*The norms of international society are transmitted to states through international organizations*.’[[16]](#footnote-16) The EU having directives and regulations promotes spill-over process thus shaping national policies - ‘*teaching states what their interests should be*’[[17]](#footnote-17). Using soft power of cultural diplomacy, the member states of the EU gain benefits for the economy through increased market access for European cultural and creative industries, thus strengthening cultural diversity and sharing European values.

Even if the cultural diplomacy of the European Union continues to provide different public and private partnerships with funding, removes barriers to mobility, support and pools resources of cultural organizations, develops educational and cultural exchange programs and promotes experience exchange between different actors, empowerment of local cultural stakeholders is ongoing, which can lead to rise of extreme nationalism. Within harmonization process among the member states of the EU, ethnic conflicts are still going on. That is the case of Spain of two ethnicities – the raise for the independency of Basque and Catalonians. To understand the decisions and motives of citizens to separate from Spain and to examine the importance of the sovereignty, there is a need to analyse their identity within the social constructivism theory. Without the knowledge of the roots of the existing conflicts, it is impossible to find solutions and to figure out, on what the cultural diplomacy of the EU should focus more and how to make it more effective.

* 1. **Basque and Catalonian identities in social constructivism**

Cultural identities are marked by different factors (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, class etc.), what makes to define ‘us’ in relations ‘to them’ or others. From this the ideas about communities appear. The social constructivism is trying to find the answers about who ascribes a cultural identity and whether people are choosing their identity or if it is beyond their control. Social constructivism theory also can explain whether the international organizations can affect the identity and how does such process work.

Kenneth Waltz believes that ‘*political reality is not based on material forces, but depends on minds, values and ideas*’[[18]](#footnote-18). The international system can transform as soon as values and thoughts, which are the basis of the existing structure are changing. Thus, it leads to the assumption, that ‘*anarchy is what state makes of it*’[[19]](#footnote-19). Actors think about each other and make new norms, which can be distinctive from previous ones. That does not mean that ideas are more important than power and interests. The last have the effects on virtue of the ideas to create them.

Alexander Wendt explains the meaning of identities: ‘*A* *basis of interests, which actors define in the process of defining situations.*’[[20]](#footnote-20) These situations are also linked with historical issues, what shapes the choice of individuals about their identity. For example, when Spain established modern and liberal constitution in the 19th century, Basque provinces supported Carlists’ traditionalist force, because of scare to loose *fueros* (self-government based rules)[[21]](#footnote-21). After two Carlist wars Basque provinces including Navarre lost most of their autonomy in the favour of Spain, but even until nowadays Basques are keeping control over taxation. Still there were Basques who were supporting inclusion of their region in state, because meanwhile ‘*for the traditional elites, local autonomous institutions were seen as mechanisms for isolating their region from changes taking place in the rest of Spain, capitalist elites saw the possibility of fostering regional industrial development*’[[22]](#footnote-22). Like the Basques, many of the Catalonians also fought on the Carlist side, hoping to restore *fueros* and recover regional autonomy. It can be clearly seen that the Basques and the Catalonians during Carlist wars were fighting for their interests – for the self-government status, meanwhile, on the other hand, those who saw benefits from new capitalistic Spain, willingly joined new Republic. The historical outcome of the wars made both regions to live within Spanish identities.

Another actors, which play important role in shaping and coordinating collective identity, are institutions, which are ‘*relatively stable sets or structures for identities and interests*’[[23]](#footnote-23). Within the motivation of actors to socialize and participate in collective knowledge, the structures are codified by formal rules and norms. Because of the institutions are mutually constitutive with the ideas of actors, the process of institutionalization appears – ‘*a process of internalizing new identities and interests, not something occurring outside them and affecting only behaviour*’[[24]](#footnote-24). This assumption of the social constructivist theory concerns the European Union. The EU is based on common beliefs, values and norms embodied by the identity, which means it is composed of variables related to political and cultural identity. The identity of the EU is unique, because ‘*it can theoretically exist simultaneously with other national or cultural identities, with individuals establish a hierarchy of importance or relevance for their identities to their lives*’[[25]](#footnote-25). Apart from legal acts as regulations and directives, cultural diplomacy is used in the spill-over framework to manage the conflicts in member states. The EU’s cultural diplomacy has an important role, because it is also based on values and carries ideas, which can achieve common good by influencing its identities.

Another constructivist example by Michel Foucault on how does identities transform within the influence of institutions are described in ‘*Discipline and Punish*’. He describes Panopticon – ‘*a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them*’[[26]](#footnote-26). Panopticism can be described like a new political anatomy whose object are not the relations of sovereignty, but the relations of discipline, which is functioning through educational institutions, workshops and other actors where their programs are running through society without interruption. Michael Foucault compares Panopticism with prison, which ‘*becomes a transforming apparatus whose rules and processes also apply to most institutions and organisations*’[[27]](#footnote-27). Gathering official statistics and monitoring populations are the part of disciplinary society: ‘*The objectification of people led to the notion of a population.*’[[28]](#footnote-28) The management and governing of population is impossible without a statistical population, which can be categorized, normalized and quantified. Panopticon can be applied to the EU, because it is a model of general function and has aim to improve the life of individuals. The power of the EU is usually invisible, but it is possible to see, how does it work e.g. at schools or entrepreneurships, thus, ‘*there is no risk that increase of power by Panopticum may generate tyranny; disciplinary system will be democratically controlled, because it will be available for the world’s judicial committee*’[[29]](#footnote-29). The EU is based on democracy and is using soft power to influence identities. Within holding and supporting cultural diplomatic events, the EU is trying to resolve ongoing ethnic conflicts in Basque and Catalonia.

Also, common grounds of how the identities are formed can be found in the idea of Slavoj Zizek about the ‘*theft of enjoyment’[[30]](#footnote-30)*. Community is hold together by the bond of shared relationship to a thing, which is structured by fantasy and is treated as a way of life. It is not a clear set of values to which it is possible to refer, but ‘*a set of contradictionary properties that appears as ‘our thing’* *and all the details, by which is made visible the unique way a community organizes its enjoyment’* [[31]](#footnote-31). The important feature of society is to believe in this thing, because this is what makes it to exist. Regarding to the thoughts about the others – ‘*they want to steal our enjoyment by ruining our way of life*’[[32]](#footnote-32). Slavoy Zizek highlights the ‘*traumatic fact*’, which appears when others steal enjoyment of community and thus does not allow it to live fully. Such thieves are tended to construct, play with or even destroy the other identity.

Within the theory by Slavoj Ziek, it is possible to illustrate, how Spain became ‘*thieve of enjoyment*’ for Basque and Catalans by analysing the reasons why both ethnicities want to gain autonomy. In case of Basque, historically they always have had a tendency to defend their identity, including language, culture and customs. Several wars and conflicts occurred in the 19th century because of an annexing rationale of kingdoms or states, which wanted to incorporate the Basque provinces into their territory and exercise sovereignty[[33]](#footnote-33). Basques lost their fueros. Their problem became deeper within Francisco Franco dictatorship in Spain, when Basque language (one could be beaten by police and even imprisoned for saying *kaixo* or hello in public[[34]](#footnote-34)), symbols and various expressions of their culture were banned. Also, economic and political issues, such as leakage of Basque wealth and being politically oppressed by Spanish policy, made to establish Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (*ETA*), armed Basque nationalist and separatist organisation, which ended up in bloody events. According to Slavoj Zizek, Spain is a ‘*thief of enjoyment’* by stealing the language, cultural traditions and *fueros* from Basques: ‘*The union with Spain has never been desired*’[[35]](#footnote-35)*.*

In case of Catalonia, Spain is a stealer of its economical wealth – ‘*fiscal discrimination, where it has to contribute around 8% of its annual GDP, much over any solidarity obligations, to sustain inefficient Spanish state*’[[36]](#footnote-36). Catalans are forced to contribute of their taxes to the Spanish government, what made Catalonia being in debts and not wealthy. Madrid government refused Catalonia to have fiscal autonomy, which Basques are enjoying. The cultural values during Francisco Franco regime also were oppressed, but nowadays their language and culture is not sufficiently supported by the Spanish central government. Presently Catalonia cannot compete on any international sport events like Scotland or Wales do. In general, Spain has stolen enjoyment and a unique way how enjoyment is organised for both – Basque and Catalan ethnicities.

Social constructivism clearly explains why some states, being even the members of other big actors or institutions, does not end up in collective identity, but in self-help statement, which appears when identities does not feel secured anymore. Even if the EU stands against the split of its member states, Basque and Catalonians raised against Spain. Identities may become aggressive because of the issues in domestic politics or systematic victimization. When such behaviour appears, usually other actors engage in competitions of power, because anarchy never guarantees stability. According to Nira Yuval-Davis ‘*the emotional components of people’s construction of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they become*’[[37]](#footnote-37). In extreme cases people are eager to sacrifice their lives in the name of their identities. After terrorist attacks or war, people often tend to return to less objective safety, where they share their fate with nearest and dearest. Such example can be seen in case of Basque by establishing ETA, which nowadays is recognised as a terrorist organisation on the international political arena. According to data, since 1968, it has killed 829 people mainly using bomb attacks, were kidnapping and made thousand people injured[[38]](#footnote-38). In chaos of anarchy, which existed in Basque region, another paramilitary group was formed called Antiterrorist Liberation Group (*GAL*) in 1980[[39]](#footnote-39), which tried to deal with ETA. Even if this organisation did not exist after decade, it is responsible also for victims and is defined as a state terrorism. Basques experienced violent times, until in 2014 ETA handed over weapons[[40]](#footnote-40).

In the political projects of belonging feminists also define ‘the ethics of care’[[41]](#footnote-41) and is compared to mother-child relationships, which have to guarantee mutual equality and respect. In reality children can wield a lot of emotional power on their parents, still they do not have same power as adults do, thus making them more easily to be abused and deprived in many ways. To reach social and political solidarity there is a need for the ethics of care as a normative basis, which serves to transversal politics, which includes reciprocity of trust. After knowing the needs of individuals, construction of belonging can be promoted by holding different political projects, which are based on loyalty, solidarity and myth of common destiny. Different facets of belonging like ‘*social locations, identities, ethnical and political values can become the requisites of belonging and the delineation or weakening boundaries*’[[42]](#footnote-42). Cultural diplomacy in case of the EU is valuable, because it based on different projects and promotes immage of common destiny, which can influence Basque and Catalan ethnic identities.

Institutions like the EU makes egoistical actors to cooperate and reconstruct their interests through shared commitments and norms. Usually the outcome is construction of mutual interdependency, where norms are tied to the duties of actors, their identities and interests. The concern of the absolute gains is also important, because it is the basis of successful cooperation and the center of balance. Relative thinking creates competitive thinking thus ruining existing friendship between actors. The reconstruction of the actors by the institutions is slow and incremental process of transformation, because actors needs to realize joint gains in stable environment.

Systematic change also can be inhabited by actors’ interests in maintaining stable role of identities, because, meanwhile identities agree to minimize uncertainty and anxiety, they avoid to be responsible for costs and outcomes about breaking commitments made to others. Actors prefer to make choices having meaningful degree of freedom. This issue explains importance and the role of sovereignty for the member states of the EU. On the other hand, such area of existing freedom allows to give a birth to separatist movements and nationalism, which happened in case of Basque and Catalonia.

When Spain joined the EU and ETA was still active in Basque region, the existing conflict prolonged. The reason is that the EU, by its cultural diplomatic policy, supports rights of the individuals, democracy, freedom and sovereignty thus giving even more hopes and inspiration to extreme powers to fight for independency. According to data by Spanish Ministry of Internal Affairs, the amount of victims after 1986 (Spain joining the EU) raised from 32 even to 52 (in 1987) and 46 (in 1991)[[43]](#footnote-43). The Basque were also ‘*leaned to the European Union concept of sharing sovereignty, not shared sovereignty’[[44]](#footnote-44)*. In case of Catalonia, where independence movements were showed in peaceful way, the existing freedom of the rise of nationalism appeared when in 1979 Spain delegated more autonomy in matters of education and culture[[45]](#footnote-45). Later at the time, when Spain joined the EU, Catalonians were more inspired to fight for the rights of autonomy.

In social constructivism theory, sovereignty is defined as ‘*an institution, and so it exists only in virtue of certain intersubjective understandings and expectations*’[[46]](#footnote-46). Sovereignty cannot exist without others, same do identities, because they are relational. Sovereign state and a particular form of community can be constructed on the basis of mutual recognition of one another’s right to exercise political power within limits of territory: ‘*their sovereignty depends on recognition by other states*’[[47]](#footnote-47). That means that states are relying on the international society. Even if the EU supports freedom, rights and sovereignty of states, on the other hand, by not supporting split of its member state, it may not accept new autonomy thus excluding it form the channels of other important international actors. Thus, such step can also influence the image of the European Union and its liberal values. What is left for the EU is to use soft power and within cultural diplomacy try to influence identities of conflicting ethnicities in Spain.

To understand the choice of ethnic identities of Basques and Catalonians in last 10 years, it is important to analyse pool trackers – who is influencing and shaping Basque and Catalan identities, what are the reasons for such choice of independence - and analyse events happening during certain years in both regions to try as much as possible see influence of the EU’s cultural diplomacy. Also, it is important to analyse, which part – Spain or its conflicting sides – the EU is supporting more and how it is using cultural diplomacy to avoid endogenous splitting in its member state.

**II Evolution of the political identities in Basque case**

**2.1. Basque formation of identity**

The nature of European nationalism that underlined two world wars has largely subsided and spurred on by the EU integration. But still nationalism is alive within many movements on its periphery. The Basques and Catalonians are the two ethnic groups, which are fighting to gain independence and wrest power away from the central government in Madrid. Both enjoyed trappings of autonomy – *fueros* - and both have seen crackdowns by the central government by Primo de Rivera and then Francisco Franco, who suppressed the use of regional language or any display of sub nationalism during his nearly forty year rule[[48]](#footnote-48). Meanwhile two ethnicities share common traits - have maintained linguistic, cultural and economic differences from the other parts of Spain - , they also diverge in certain issues in their movements.

According to Slavoy Zizek, it is important to look back at history and investigate what makes Spain to be ‘*thief of enjoyment*’ for Basques. Within the knowledge of what Spain is continuing to steal from Basques helps to understand on what the EU should focus to resolve existing problem in the future. Also, looking back on the last ten years, it is important to see how identities are changing and what influences such changes. Social constructivism does not focus only on international institutions, but also considers the role of other actors - government, nongovernmental organizations and different factors (because

social constructivism sees identities as a basis of interests, which actors define in the process of defining situations)– which can shape identities.

In order to see the EU influence of cultural diplomacy, it is important to analyze the Euskobarometer pools about Basque identities and look back at events in last ten years. The *Table 1* illustrates Basque opinion during last ten years regarding to the independency question – whether Basque should be an independent country? According to data, poll shows results of Basques, who answered they want to have independent country and who prefer region to be federal and stay within Spain. Apart from that, there are still citizens, who have not yet decided or have no opinion about the future of their region.

*Table 1*

Source: Table made by author, according to database: Euskobarometro, Oleadas Euskobarometro, November 2004 – 2014; <http://www.ehu.eus/es/web/euskobarometro/oleadas>

In 2004 it is possible to see, that 64% are supporting Basque as an independent country and 33% are against it. During this year, a series of bombs exploded in Madrid, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing 202 people[[49]](#footnote-49). Bombing was organized by ETA. After this tragic event 17 suspected members of the armed Basque separatist group were arrested, but in the end of the year in seven Spanish cities more bombs exploded[[50]](#footnote-50). Also, plenary session hold on the 30th of December about a new ‘Political Statute of the Community of Basque Country’[[51]](#footnote-51) was formulating Spain to become a state based on federate model, granting Basque people greater decision making. The proposal was rejected by the Spanish Parliament in Madrid. In next year, Basque separatist group ETA continued to make bomb explosions in a business park of Madrid. At the same time in April, parliamentary elections were hold in Basque region and Eusko Alkartasuna – Basque Nationalist Party (*EA-PNV*) lead by Juan Jose Ibarretxe won. It is interesting to point out that during terroristic activities of ETA and EA-PVN leadership in Basque region, according to *Table 2*, the feeling of belonging to nationalistic sentiments grew from 41% to 43%, meanwhile in 2006 the opinions about Basque country as an independent country reached 69%. It means, that Basque nationalistic government one year before parliamentary elections had influence on Basque decisions about independence and their national sentiment.

*Table 2*

Source: Table made by author, according to database: Euskobarometro, Oleadas Euskobarometro, November 2004 – 2014; <http://www.ehu.eus/es/web/euskobarometro/oleadas>

Both *Table 1* and *Table 2* show interesting results in period from 2006 to 2008. Support

for the independent Basque country fell down from 69% to 62%, meanwhile also belonging to national sentiment dropped down from 43% to 39%. During 2006, ETA declared a ceasefire and Spanish government failed to keep dialogue with the group. After bomb attack at the airport of Madrid, ETA called off ceasefire in 2007[[52]](#footnote-52). On the 14th of January in 2007 thousands of people protested in Madrid and Bilbao against the bombing at Madrid’s airport[[53]](#footnote-53). In 2007 ETA was ready to make new commitments to peace if Spanish authorities end attacks against the group. Dialog between Spanish government and ETA again failed. Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero denied proposal of ETA and terrorist group ended permanent ceasefire. Many Basques also lost faith and hopes for ETA and were judging its violent activities. Spanish people got tired from periodical attacks and insecurities organized by ETA and that can be clearly seen in both tables – the feeling of nationalistic sentiment and support declined.

In the period from 2008 to 2010 Spanish government was dealing with economic crisis – unemployment soared to 17,4 % with over 4 million people jobless[[54]](#footnote-54). The first mass labor protests happened since Socialist Worker’s Party came to power in Spain. Meanwhile Spanish government was focused to resolve existing economic crisis, Basque managed to deal with economic crisis, because of existing autonomy in fiscal activities. By comparing the numbers, Basque region had 12.1% debt of the GDP, while Spanish government had a debt to GDP ratio of almost 90%[[55]](#footnote-55). Also, unemployment rates in Basque region were double less than in other parts of Spain. Basques proposed declaration on self-determination, but it was blocked by Constitutional Court. Apart from the economic crisis, in 2009 crucial event happened – the parliament in the Basque region of Spain voted in its first non-nationalist government in 30 years[[56]](#footnote-56). Before the elections the European Court of Human Rights banned two Basque political parties, which were closely linked to ETA: Basque Nationalist Action and the Communist Party of the Basque Lands. After elections, ETA continued its terrorist activities and killed French policemen, which made President of France Nicolas Sarkozy to vow to eradicate all ETA basses in France. The results of *Table 1* and *Table 2* illustrates that Basque national sentiment (39% of yes answers) and decision about the independent country (dropped down from 62% to 61% of yes answers) kept steady. Even if both nationalistic parties in Basque were banned, opinions and feelings of identity of citizens did not change.

The year of 2010 begun with a new declaration of ceasefire by ETA, but the Spanish government dismissed the move stating that ‘*there can be no political settlement until ETA renounces violence for good and disarms*’[[57]](#footnote-57). Even if the new conservative government headed by Mario Rajoy took up the office, unemployment in Spain reached 5 million mark[[58]](#footnote-58) and still dismissed the move regarding to ETA. Armed Basque separatist group was willing to accept international mediation to solve long-running conflict with Spanish government. In 2011, thousands of people marched on Basque streets to protest the government’s decision of shipping separatist prisoners convicted of terror to jails far from their home[[59]](#footnote-59). Such activity of the citizens represents existing national sentiment. In next months, police of Spain and France arrested several members of ETA. In Spain Basque separatists created a new political party *Sortu,* which rejects conducted violence by ETA. Several Basque separatist also held small street rallies and hung posters on walls to support the new political party. Within loosing support of citizens, ETA became weak. Even Ekin, which was a civic support organization for the Basque separatist group ETA with the goals of impelling independence, nation building and socialism at street level, had ended endeavours as an organization. During Basque parliamentary elections, the leading Basque Nationalist Party lost 3 seats thus beginning to loose support from citizens. According to the *Table 2* there is a steady growth from 39% to 44% of those, who feel belonging to national sentiments. On the other hand, such growth can be explained with the decline of the citizens, who has no opinion about their answer – from 8% fell down to 5%. Also, *Table 1* continues to show constant drop of Basques, who wants to live in autonomous country - from 61% to 59%.

In 2013, Spanish judges were fighting against the European Court of Justice, which rejected a law that allows imprisonment to be extended for convicted terrorists and ETA members and wanted to free several prisoners of ETA including Ines del Rio, who took part in 23 assassinations and car bombings[[60]](#footnote-60). Such step for Basque nationalists gave hopes to free other ETA prisoners. In Spain, several thousand people were against such release from jail, but in Basque region protesters, who were familiar with prisoners, marched to support them. The important event happened on the 9th of June in 2014 – claim for sovereignty campaign of ‘*Guru Esku Dago*’ or ‘It’s in Our Hands’[[61]](#footnote-61). Around 100 000 people covered the distance of 123 km forming a human chain[[62]](#footnote-62). The campaign drew attention of the international actors and Spanish government. On the other hand, compared to overall population of the Basque country, which is around 2,5 million people[[63]](#footnote-63), the number of participants was not so big. The *Table 1* proves that by showing continuous decline in the favour of autonomous Basque country – from 59% to 56%. *Table 2* illustrates modest increase from 51% to 56% in the absence of belonging to national sentiment.

The last ten years Spanish government always rejected proposed declarations on self-determination by Basque region and was dealing with ETA and its terroristic activities. Economic crisis which heavily hit Spain, even more diverted attention to influence Basque identities, by organizing events or offering mutual agreements on development or cooperation in different fields. Regarding to the government of Basque, during its parliament elections belonging to national sentiments of citizens grew in 2005, 2009 and 2012 and always was followed by declines. According to the *Table 1* and slight plummet of citizens supporting the idea of Basque autonomy, Basque government and nationalistic parties had weak influence on identities. The Basque Nationalist Party cannot keep its support and within every elections is losing seats. Overall Basque government had weak influence on Basque identities. Apart from Spanish government and Basque government, it is important also to analyze the role of the EU and its cultural diplomacy.

**2.2. Role of the EU’s cultural diplomacy in Basque case**

Within the process of globalization and growing interdependence among different actors, social constructivism theory considers the role of international institutions, which can shape identities. The EU is not supporting the split of its member states and existing ethnic conflicts. There is a need to admit that ‘*the EU can only intervene to support, coordinate or complement the action of member states. It has no legislative power in current fields and may not interfere in the exercise of Member States.*’[[64]](#footnote-64) It means that usually what is left for the EU as an instrument is cultural diplomacy to influence mutinous ethnicities.

Regarding to the social constructivism author Michel Foucault, the EU within cultural diplomacy by making events, can create discipline and influence identities. The EU goes beyond sovereignty and cultural diplomacy can establish discipline. Social constructivism theory also is useful because it represents quantitative data: ‘*Gathering official statistics and monitoring populations are the part of disciplinary society.*’[[65]](#footnote-65) Also Nira Yuval-Davis by describing ‘the ethics of care’ compared to mother-child relationship, supports social and political solidarity, which can be reached by holding different political projects, based on mutual solidarity and reciprocity of trust. Such events described by feminist author the EU is organizing thus opening the possibility to influence Basque identities.

*Table 3* illustrates, how many mutual and important cultural diplomatic events were hold between the EU and Basque from 2004 until 2014. Data is used mainly from the EU’s official event homepage and Basque Heritage webpage. In the graph, important cultural diplomatic events are meant to be as occasions, which included more than 500 participants, broad audience (mass media and news), are officially registered in the database of events in the homepages of the EU and governmental organizations of Basque and directly linked with Basque people (politicians, economists, entrepreneurs, cultural actors, citizens etc). Events, where future perspectives of the mutual cooperation and development between the EU and Basque region were discussed, have also been taken in a scope. According to the fact, that cultural diplomacy manifests in different fields covering art, media, science, tourism, politics, economics, religions, governmental and non-governmental sectors and it can take various shapes within promoting and exchanging ideas and creating dialogue between actors, different events from different fields were taken into the scope for the analysis.

*Table 3*

Source: Table made by author, according to database: European Comission official event webpage and Basque Heritage S.L.,etc.

As it has been discussed before, in social constructivism theory, cultural diplomacy is a long term running instrument and can cover many different areas, which is the reason why the graph illustrates the last ten years and covers exhibitions, cultural events and cultural diplomatic events. *Table 3* gathers exhibitions, cultural events (which includes cultural activities, festivals and awards) and cultural diplomatic events (which are hold within the direct political/economical goal). According to fact, that cultural diplomacy is long term factor, graph illustrates period from 2004 to 2014.

*Table 3* shows there were only 4 cultural diplomatic events organized by the EU and Basques. Compared to other years, in 2004 the amount of activities were the lowest. In this year the Basque Aerospace Cluster organized international conference and business meeting about new manufacturing trends for aeronautical industries. The event continued to happen every two years and in 2008 has become the biggest professional Aerospace event in Spain within the participation of the EU. The event serves as an opportunity to hold pre-planned business deals and carry out spontaneous business encounters. Another important events held in 2004 were Industry and Technology Summit (event where different companies gather to make future manufacturing and technological industries’ strategies), Euskal Encounter (a huge four day meeting for computing amateurs and professionals to exchange knowledge and carry out variety of computer-related activities within the EU) and Spanish Machine – Tool Biennial Event (BIEHM), which is the leading industrial event in Spain, within attracting buyers from the EU countries and exchanging knowledge by professionals in machine-tool industries[[66]](#footnote-66). All four mentioned events within the cooperation of the EU, were held in every next two years until 2014.

In 2006, another linked to the economic affairs – Bilbao Marine Energy Week - event happened, which is the second edition of southern Europe’s largest marine energy conference. It is organized by an alliance including Basque Energy Agency, Tecnalia Corporation and Bilbao Exhibition Center by attracting experts around the world and leading businesses in the energy and marine industries for the EU. It is a week where the debate centers on the development and future of marine energy.

Compared to other year, the EU and Basque region continued to organize big conferences and events in the fields of economics. Especially Aerospace Cluster, which changed and involved into GEO2 or Sustainable Development Affair, organized 15 sessions about sustainable development, environment, energy and society within the EU. In 2008, big exhibition happened – MEART (the Semi-Living Artist) within the EU held international conference within exhibition ‘Body and Nets’ addressing the theme ‘Challenges for Ubiquitous Identity’[[67]](#footnote-67). Other events in this year were the same as in 2004.

*Table 3* shows sudden and interesting changes in events organized by the EU and Basques.

The amount of big events compared to previous years leaped twice more. Apart from the

3rd International Conference and Exhibition on Ocean Energy[[68]](#footnote-68), the city of Basque Donostia was considered as European Capital of Culture in 2016, and next year announcement was officially accepted. Such step is very important, because the European Capital of Culture is conducted by the European Union for a one year period. Such title of the city includes cultural events with a strong European dimension. Also, year 2010 is interesting, because if previous events were organized mainly in Basque cities, this time the EU held events also in Brussels. For example, Brusells has returned to the list of European cities that have Basque center. The new Basque center Bruselako Euskal Etxea was reestablished and recognized by the headquarters in Brussels[[69]](#footnote-69). In 2010, also Minister of Industry, Innovation, Trade and Tourism of the Basque Country presented new Euskadi development plan in economics and brand at the headquarters of the European Union’s Committee of the Regions[[70]](#footnote-70). For the first time in this year happened the 1st European Encounters of Industrial Subcontracting in the Basque country taking into account mutual commercial interests[[71]](#footnote-71).

The year of 2012 shows that the EU and Basque continued to organize mutually important and big events - Euskal Encounter, Aerospace event, Industry and Technology Summit, Spanish Machine – Tool Biennial Event (BIEHM), Bilbao Marine Energy Week, European Encounters’ Industrial Subcontracting event and RoK-FOR event about the forestry sector and encourage the sustainable use of natural resources and renewable energy across Europe by evolving six European countries – Germany, Finland, Spain (Catalonia and Basque region), Croatia, Serbia and France[[72]](#footnote-72). The aim of such event was to demonstrate, how regional forestry strategies can impact on other policy areas. In this year, for the first time in Brussels, the Basque language was represented by the government of Basque region in the European Parliament by noting the importance of the minority language. In Brussels also a big cultural event happened – Basque creativity and talents were represented in the Brussels Short Film Festival[[73]](#footnote-73), which is the main event in the European audiovisual sector. Event was supported by Etxepare Basque Institute along with Delegation of Euskadi at the EU.

The year of 2014 reached a peak of the highest amount of important events organized by both the Basque region and the EU. Apart from periodical big events (Euskal Encounter, Aerospace event, Industry and Technology Summit, Spanish Machine – Tool Biennial Event (BIEHM), Bilbao Marine Energy Week, European Encounters’ Industrial Subcontracting event and RoK-FOR events), two new events were held – Business Day, wich opened new commercial and investment opportunities for the Basque companies in Germany, and Business Opportunities in the Digital Ecosystem, stating that ‘*the Bilbao-Bizkai area has the potential of becoming one of the world’s capital of audio-visual production and distribution*’[[74]](#footnote-74). In 2014, within the help of the EU, the European and Asian Basque club held a meeting in Barcelona[[75]](#footnote-75). Participants established networking with other Basque clubs from Paris, Berlin, Rome, Shanghai, London, Bordeaux, Brussels, Barcelona, Sydney and Salou. In the end of the meeting, the EU also presented the funding plan for cultural events and future plans within these clubs. Afterwards, the Berlin Basque club was awarded because of its creativity and modernity, representing Basque diaspora[[76]](#footnote-76). The International Day of Basque Language was celebrated all weekend with different cultural events in Berlin.

In general, the EU begun to focus more on Basque problem by increasing amount of events only from 2010. Especially in 2010 the EU and Basque cooperation got deeper by re-establishing Basque Center in Brussels and announcing Donostia as European Capital of Culture in 2016. Such step from the EU was taken because in 2008 Basque proposed referendum on independency, what marked dangerous situation for the EU. Meanwhile Spanish government was dealing with ETA and economic crisis, it is possible to assume that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is influencing Basque identities and their opinion of having independent country. *Table 1* from 2008 to 2014 shows constant drop of those who prefers to have Basque as an independent country (62%-56%) and steady rise of those who wants to be united with Spain (35%-29%). At the glance it seems that changes are not so big, but on the other hand, it is important to remember that social constructivism describes cultural diplomacy as a long term instrument. If positive changes already are appearing in last six years within the EU’s stronger focus on Basque issue, it is possible to predict the positive outcome. The period before 2008 can be describe as an anarchy what Basque identities made of it. Social constructivist Nira Yuval-Davis highlights the importance of people’s feeling, because the more they are threatened and feeling less secure, they continue to exist in a trap of anarchy. ETA can be illustrated as an actor of anarchy. Within its existence and terroristic activities, the Basque identities feelings about their national sentiment and independency of region where chaotic. When the danger by ETA was averted, the emotions of identities became more stable.

Overall, the events held between the EU and Basque were formal and mainly within economic goals. The EU can be described as a mother trying to satisfy Basque entrepreneurs by giving opportunities and economic benefits. Thus, it may lead to think that having such profits, Basques, who are linked with business possibly will perhaps want to continue cooperate within the EU and will vote for staying in Spain, because as an independent Basque country would drop out from the EU thus losing its support, voice and contacts[[77]](#footnote-77). There is a need to admit that by using cultural diplomacy, the EU is also using smart politics. By showing benefits and profits within mutual events and providing economic benefits, the EU is charming Basque identities by imposing common goals and having image of mutual destiny of profits. It works like the principle of Panoptic by shaping identities. In case if Basque still will rise against Spain and will fight for the independency, the EU, after using cultural diplomacy will exert smart politics, by stating ultimatum – Basque without Spain will lose place in the EU and thus common goals.

**III The Catalonian mutinous identity**

**3.1. Evolution of Catalan identities**

Last ten years majority of Basques expressed their wish to gain independency from Spain several times and in different ways even by actions of terroristic ETA organization. Still during last years the data has showed positive results and the role of the EU’s cultural diplomacy, which shapes and influences Basque identities. Compared to Basque, within its bloody ethnic conflicts, Catalan case seems to be the opposite. Without having terrorist/separatist organization, still Catalans are fighting for their independence. Referendum held in 2014 shows opposite results compared to Basque pool – 80,76% Catalans voted for independency and only 4,54% voted against it[[78]](#footnote-78).

Like in the case of Basque, the EU is also using as an instrument cultural diplomacy to avoid Catalan ethnic conflict. According to referendum on Catalan independency in 2014, there is confident expression by Catalans to fight for their independency. At a glance, it seems that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is not effective. To understand why Catalonians still cannot be convinced or influenced to stay within Spain, social constructivism draws importance to look at the policy provided by the government of Catalonia, the government of Spain and events carried out within the EU. The meaning of events and its influence can be understood by at the same time observing the changes in opinions of Catalans about independency and feeling of the national sentiment. Data is used from the El Centre d’Estudis d’Opinio (CEO) and El Periodico Barometer.

*Table 4* illustrates position of Catalonians regarding to the question of independence. Poll shows the results of Catalonians, who prefers to live in autonomous and independent country and who would like to exist within Spain or be Spanish. Also, there are respondents

*Table 4*

Source: Table made by author: Institut de Ciencies Politiques i Socials (ICPS); Sondeigs d’opinio Catalunya; 2004; http://www.icps.cat/archivos/sondeigs/SC2004.pdf ; Centre d’Estudis d’Opinion (CEO), Barometre d’Opinio Politica (BOP); 2004-2014; <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ceop/AppJava/pages/estudis/categories/llistaCategoria.html?colId=3&lastTitle=Bar%F2metre+d%27Opini%F3+Pol%EDtica>

who still have no opinion about the future of their region. Social constructivism notes the importance of the events and different actors, which can influence decision of identities. This is the reason why in next paragraphs Catalan statement about independence is going to be periodically compared within policy of Spanish and Catalonian governments.

Period from 2004 to 2006 in Catalonia was quite interesting. It begun with Basque separatist group ETA ceasefire with ‘*the aim of uniting ties between the Basque and Catalan peoples on the basis of respect, non-interference and solidarity*’[[79]](#footnote-79). It can be explained by the fact that both regions are interested to gain independence from Spain. Next year for Catalans was marked with the ‘*Draft of New Statue of Autonomy for Catalonia of 2005*’[[80]](#footnote-80). It was a reform proposal regarding Catalonian self-government. The creation of new Statute was ‘*direct consequence of the success of the Catalan left in the November 2003 elections, which allowed for the formation of a three party coalition government led by Party of the Catalan Socialis (PSC); the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) and Initiative for Catalonia Greens-Alternative Left*’[[81]](#footnote-81). The draft was sent to the Spanish parliament, which approved it. Still, Constitutional Court of Spain recognized 14 articles as unconstitutional, for example, on the calculations of the share of Catalonia in the state taxes; denying favouring the Catalan language over co-official Castilian in public administration, media and education,[[82]](#footnote-82). After that government of Catalonia involved liberal intellectuals and journalists from such conservative media as COPE (Catholic Radio Network) and the Madrid-based newspapers El Mundo and La Razon, to address Catalan identities. Government of Catalonia was active and in 2006 held referendum on the Statute of Autonomy, which resulted into improvement by majority of 73,8%[[83]](#footnote-83). In the new text of the Statute ‘*Catalonia was no longer recognised as a nation in its first article and in other parts it has no legal weight*’[[84]](#footnote-84).

*Table 4* in 2004 shows quite high number of 54% Catalans who want independence, meanwhile 38% are against it. Until 2006 there are changes in opinions. There is a plummet of supporters on independence – from 54% to 52% -, and marginal rise of those who wish to stay within Spain – from 38% to 41%. Such changes can be explained that both Spanish and Catalonian governments were active and partly reached agreement within the Statute. Even if all articles of the Statute were not accepted, still it had the role to satisfy citizens of Catalonia. During all last ten years respondents, who had no idea about the future of Catalonia, balanced from 6% to 10%.

In next two years from 2006 to 2008 graph shows drop back to almost same previous results provided by respondents. In the end of 2008 Catalonians, who voted in a favour of independence, rose again to 54%, but sceptics dropped to 40%. After the new Statute majority of Catalan government did not give up so fast and appealed to the Constitutional Court over many articles thus also influencing identities by continuing to express dissatisfaction through media. As it was mentioned before, from 2008, Spain experienced deep economic crisis. Spanish Finance Ministry published fiscal balances, which reflected the contributions of the Autonomous Communities before economic crisis[[85]](#footnote-85). Later on Spanish government was hiding data and did not publish it even if Spanish government was receiving constant claims from the Catalan parties. Catalan government has calculated, that for the last twenty years it has been giving 8,5% of its GDP per year, which is around 17 billion euro[[86]](#footnote-86). Within economic crisis it was losing ranking of GDP per capita among the other regions of Spain.

*Table 4* from the year 2008 until 2014 shows sudden changes in both opinions about independency of Catalonia. There is a sudden rise of Catalans favouring independency (from 54% to 80%) and plummet of respondents being against it (from 40% to 10%). Already disappointed by the Spanish government during economic crisis, referendum on Catalonia independence in 2009 on the 13th of September was hold in Arenys de Munt, a Catalanian municipality[[87]](#footnote-87). This query was the first one on Catalonian independence having remarkable influence on the future politics of Catalonia and Spain. Arenys had opportunity to answer the questions of whether they agree that Catalonia becomes independent, democratic and integrated into the EU. The outcome was of 96,2% voting in a favour of independence[[88]](#footnote-88). This event gave inspiration to hold next referendum and continue formalities of popular consultations through referendum. To encourage participation, Catalonian government was actively taking part in politics by screening film under the title ‘All People have the Right for Self-determination’ and holding several panel discussions about the way of convincing the EU to accept Catalonia as a member state[[89]](#footnote-89). Because of active participation of government, there is an explanation why in *Table 4* supporters of independence rose from 54% to 57% in the period of 2008 to 2010.

The year 2010 was important turn for Catalonia, because on the 10th of July there was a protest in Barcelona against limitations of the autonomy of Catalonia within Spain[[90]](#footnote-90) and recent decision of the Spanish Constitutional Court, which again rechecked several articles of the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia and denied them. There was no legal basis in recognising Catalonia as a nation. After such result, more than 1 million of Catalans took part in the protests: ‘*Without a doubt it was one of the biggest protest marches that has ever occurred in Catalonia.*’[[91]](#footnote-91) Indeed the event was big, because the population of Barcelona is around 1,6 million people[[92]](#footnote-92). The event was organised by four parties of Catalonian government. Spanish government did not react to the event and continued to be, according to social constructivism ‘thief of enjoyment’ by violating elements of nation, language and economy, which already resulted with a twenty three percent unemployment rate in Catalonia[[93]](#footnote-93). In 2010, elections of Catalonian parliamentary resulted in return of power of Convergence and Union (nationalist electoral alliance) after being in opposition previous years within leadership of Artur Mas as President of the Generalitat of Catalonia[[94]](#footnote-94). In 2011, the Catalan language newspaper El Punt Avui proclaimed that ‘*Catalonia is not Spain*’[[95]](#footnote-95). The slogan in English had aim to bring international attention to the ongoing ethnic conflict and struggle for more autonomy. During 2011, several local referendums were held which resulted in overwhelming ‘yes’ vote results. Unfortunately, there is no data of Catalan national sentiment for the previous years. Still, according to the information provided by El Periodico, *Table 5* reflects Catalan feeling to national sentiment from the year 2010.

In 2010, 47% of respondents are feeling belonging to national sentiment, meanwhile there are 20% of Catalans, who still do not have idea about their answer. Until 2012, there is a sharp rise of respondents, who feel belonging to national sentiment and dramatic drop of those (from 20% to 6%), who are not sure about their feelings. Within general rise of feeling to national sentiment, also number of supporters of Catalan independence leaped from 57% to 67%. Such data can be explained by ongoing events in 2012, which resulted in another protest march in Barcelona.

*Table 5*

Source: Table made by author according to the information of El Centre d’Estudis d’Opinio (CEO) <http://ceo.gencat.cat/ceop/AppJava/pages> and El Periodico Barometer (<http://www.elperiodico.com/es/politica/barometro-gesop.shtml>).

The reason of the protest was the high fees compared to other parts of Spain, which Catalans had to pay for Spanish government. Several municipalities of Catalonia came together to create Association of Municipalities for Independence to promote Catalan self-determination and held protest march with Catalan National Assembly in Barcelona during National Day of Catalonia within slogan: ‘*Catalonia, new state in Europe*’[[96]](#footnote-96). After the protest citizens changed the names of squares, for example, instead of Spain Square to Independence Square. The situation in Catalonia reached its peak and debates about the right to hold referendum begun. At the same year, snap elections in September were hold in Catalonia, because Artur Mas failed to reach agreement with Prime Minister of Spain Mariano Rajoy to give greater fiscal autonomy to Catalans. Even if Artur Mas won an absolute majority of seats, his party Convergence and Union resulted in setback. Republican Left of Catalonia recovered its 21 seats and became main parliamentary opposition party for the first time[[97]](#footnote-97).

In 2013, on the National Day of Catalonia there was 480 km long human chain in support of Catalan independence from Spain[[98]](#footnote-98). For the first time it was supported by fourteen non-governmental organisations[[99]](#footnote-99). As an inspiration for this event served Baltic way, when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania created human chain to fight for their independence from the Soviet Union. During Catalan way there were around 1,8 million participants[[100]](#footnote-100).Within rising tensions between Madrid and Catalonia, Artur Mas announced the plans to hold referendum on independence in 2014: ‘*The Catalans are people who want to decide for themselves on their future.*’[[101]](#footnote-101) However, such bright separatism has not moved the Spanish government, which still is defending silent majority, who stayed away from Catalan demonstrations. Even if Spanish government was hoping that People’s Party will block possibility of referendum, it was held on the 9th of November in 2014. Catalonia announced that it will hold an independence vote despite Spain’s Constitutional Court suspending the referendum[[102]](#footnote-102). In the end of 2014, both *Table 4* and *Table 5* show high percent of Catalans, who voted in the favour of independence (80%) and who feel belonging to national sentiment (62%). Both graphs illustrates from the year of 2008 sharp rise of existing nationalism in Catalonia.

Compared to Basques, it seems that the EU’s cultural diplomacy has no influence in Catalonia. To discover the reasons, why the EU cannot stop existing high Catalan nationalism and avoid future changes on the map of Europe, it is important to analyse how many and what kind of mutual events were organised between the EU and Catalonia. Perhaps the cultural diplomacy cannot even solve the existing problem. To find out answers to these questions, next chapter describes and measures the influence of the EU’s events organised within Catalonia.

**3.2. Influence of the EU’s cultural diplomacy in Catalonian case**

As it has been mentioned before, social constructivism illustrates circumstances, when the EU’s cultural diplomacy can serve as a discipline and act by ‘the ethics of care’ thus influencing identities. Further international theory pays attention to the meaning of long term influence by international organization (in this case the EU), that is the reason why *Table 6* includes last ten years from 2004 to 2014 showing amount of mutual and important cultural diplomatic events held between the EU and Catalonia. Data mainly is used by gathering information from the EU’s official event homepage, Generalitat de Catalunya and Horitzo (Catalan Association in Brussels) homepage. *Table 6* includes important cultural events, which includes more than 500 participants, broad audience (mass media and news), that are officially registered in the database of events in the homepages of the EU and governmental organizations of Catalonia and are directly linked with Catalan people (politicians, economists entrepreneurs, cultural actors, citizens etc.). Events where future perspectives of the mutual cooperation and development between the EU and Catalan region were discussed, have also been taken in a scope.

*Table 6*

Source: Table made by author, according to the information from the European Comission official event webpage, Generalitat de Catalunya, Horitzo, etc.

Compared to the events held between Basques and the EU, in case of Catalonia *Table 6* shows surprisingly low results. In 2004, only one exhibition/forum the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures and Brokerage event on Mobile World were organized with the EU. During the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures around 350 000 visitors per week attended the exhibition[[103]](#footnote-103). The attention during event was paid to the cultural rights, local democracy, emergence of human rights and to the role of Europe. In the same year, the EU helped to organize Mobile World Congress featuring conferences about the perspectives of the mobile industry and its development.

In 2006, the EU organized the 5th European Family Conference in Salou[[104]](#footnote-104), gathering local governments of the EU for the future plans on sustainability. The focus of event was dedicated to introducing new instruments, mechanisms and tools for effective monitoring and continual improvement of sustainable development and creation of better quality of life. This event brightly marks out social constructivism idea of imagined common destiny – the EU also hold conference on education thus inspiring families to support the future generation, which will later take over and lead. Another event organized by Catalonia and the EU was EcoProcura 2006, where ideas about improving healthy environment, resource-efficient economy and investments were discussed[[105]](#footnote-105).

*Table 6* shows there are for 3 events more than in previous years organized between the EU and Catalonia. The Brokarage Event – Mobile World Congress 2008 took again place in Barcelona. Apart from this event, there was Exquimia 2008 – Chemical technologies partnering event, where different agreements were facilitated between technology providers, companies, researchers, technical associations and institutions[[106]](#footnote-106). In 2008, Horitzo Europa (Horizon Europe in Catalan) – pro-European association[[107]](#footnote-107) - was established in Brussels thus providing free courses of learning Catalan language and holding discussions on the future of partnership between the EU and Catalonia. Such event means, that the EU begun to pay attention to Catalonia as a separate region of Spain. In the same year for the first time First International EURASNET Conference on Alternative Splicing was hold gathering different experts on genomics, cell biology and biochemistry. Cultural event of Barcelona World Race or regatta triumphed with having over seven million individual internet users, which visited regatta website, with 360 000 videos have been watched and over 3 900 articles and news items have been published in the Spanish press alone, not counting programs broadcast abroad[[108]](#footnote-108).

The EU and Catalonia continued to hold same amount of important events in 2010. There was Alimentatia brokerage event where international food and beverage industry was presented and many businessmen met to sign agreements on the future cooperation[[109]](#footnote-109). EMAS Day included visit to Ciutadella Park in Barcelona and presented the environmental activities[[110]](#footnote-110), thus in next month it held discussion on the best practice exchange in the framework of the job training sessions. Also in this year Mobile World Congress Brokerage and Romanian Mobile Innovation Week were organized in Barcelona[[111]](#footnote-111). As a cultural event of sport European Championship in Athletics was hosted by Catalonia. Barcelona was the first Spanish city to host this championship, what makes to think, that the EU begun to seriously follow the events happening in Catalonia. In 2010 there was a big demonstration favoring the Statues of Autonomy in Barcelona, which is the reason the EU begun to strengthen cultural diplomacy by organizing events, which could distract attention from existing high Catalan nationalism.

In 2012, the EU and Catalonia continued to cooperate by holding more political oriented events compared to previous years. Apart from another Mobile World Brokerage Event and Romanian Mobile Innovation Congress, after the second big demonstration took place in Barcelona, European Association with Horitzo Europa hold debate on independence and Barcelona as a new state of Europe[[112]](#footnote-112). After several month Horitzo confirmed political plan to ‘*keep promoting European spirit in Spain and make commitment to foster the establishment of further and new pro-European associations all over Spain*’[[113]](#footnote-113). In 2012 cultural event or Joint Book Lunch ‘The Politics and Symbolism of Post-War Reconstruction in Franco’s Spain’ draw guidelines how the international community should respond to nation building and post-conflict reconciliation[[114]](#footnote-114).

Even if Spanish government tried to ignore Catalan wish to hold referendum and the EU continued to organizing cultural diplomatic events based more on political dialogs, Catalonia held self-determination voting in 2014. Feeling of belonging to national sentiment reached the highest peak in Catalonia. And all what was left to the EU was to pay even more attention to the Catalonia by increasing mutual cooperation. *Table 6* shows unexpected rocket of the events – 2 exhibitions, 1 cultural event and 10 cultural diplomatic events – compared to previous years. In 2014 Brussels and ‘Catalunya Europe’ hosted the exhibition ‘Catalonia is fashion’[[115]](#footnote-115). The opening was attended by the delegate of the Government to the EU. Another exhibition in Brussels was Catalan Cinema Exhibition showing five movies produced by Catalonia[[116]](#footnote-116). The meaningful cultural event by building Catalan traditional human towers covered several capitals of the Europe – Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Rome and Barcelona. By doing that Catalonia ‘*was sending message to Europe and the rest of the international community, that Catalans want to vote and these are human towers of democracy*’[[117]](#footnote-117). The number of cultural diplomatic events within the goal of cooperation in the field of economics slightly increased in 2014 – EVS27 Brokerage event (gathering leaders of the International Electrical Vehicle stage, academic, industry leaders and building future plans on electric transportation[[118]](#footnote-118)); Mobile World Congress event 2014; Brokerage event Alimentaria 2014; Investment Forum and Brokerage event in Barcelona (where entrepreneurs and a large number of private investors and stakeholders met for the purposes of securing financing, generating long-term commercial relations and extending contact network[[119]](#footnote-119)), Brokerage event Expoguima 2014 (business support Catalan Government agency with the Enterprise Europe Network organized event focused on chemical technologies[[120]](#footnote-120)), Brokerage Event at Smarty City Expo 2014 (which aim is to assist entrepreneurs, universities and research groups in finding international partners for product development and other partnerships[[121]](#footnote-121)); International Public Procurement – Presenting and managing successful bids (where specialized services provided tools targeting procurement opportunities[[122]](#footnote-122)); Open Days seminars in Brussels (sponsored by the European Institutions including five day long debates about regional, territorial cooperation programs in 2014[[123]](#footnote-123)); Catalan EMAS Awards (focusing on development of medicine and environmental improvement[[124]](#footnote-124)) and EU 30 in Brussels, discussing about Catalan and Scottish perspectives in the EU as independent countries[[125]](#footnote-125).

In general, it is safe to assume that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is not effective in the case of Catalonia. The government of Catalonia was active last ten years – it was fighting for independence by addressing Catalans through the mass media and organizing protests and demonstrations, which lately were supported by fourteen non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, compared to Basque case, it seems that the EU only during last four years has begun to pay attention to Catalonia as a separate region from Spain, according to the amount and type of events it was organizing within Catalonia.

As it has been mentioned before, cultural diplomacy is a long term instrument. It is possible to predict, that in case of Catalonia it is already too late to organize cultural diplomatic events thus influencing Catalan opinion towards independence from Spain, because of existing high Catalan feeling of belonging to national sentiment, wish to gain independency and active government of Catalonia. However, that does not mean that the EU cannot find a solution for this situation. The accession of new states to the EU requires unanimity of member states. In case if the EU decides for independent Basque and Catalonian states to go through all formalities and reapply for the membership, Spain by using priorities of the unanimity in the Council of the EU can block their possibility of return to the EU. By supporting Spanish government, the EU within cultural diplomacy can use smart power. In such case, what is left for Basques and Catalans is to measure pros and cons being without the EU or in it within Spain. To understand, whether the EU is using smart power there is a need to analyze, which side – Spanish or Basque/Catalonian it supports more.

**IV The Cultural diplomacy of the EU in case of Spain**

**4.1. The position of the EU – between Spain and its ethnic identities**

Within existing Basque and Catalan separatist movements in Spain, the EU has found itself in a tricky situation. On the one hand, it stands for the liberal values – democracy, freedom of speech and rights –, what should favor Basques and Catalans. On the other hand, the EU does not support split of its member states and prefers strong unity, which should favor the Spanish government side. To discover what kind of politics and power the EU is using to influence Basques and Catalans, it is also important to see the side, which the EU is favoring. Also, it is important to measure benefits and loss in case if both regions would gain independence and the problems, which would face the EU in such outcome.

Regarding to the Basque and Catalonia, by gaining independence, their language and culture will not be absorbed anymore. Separation from Spain will put the end of unequal partnership – earned taxes will not be contributed to the Spanish government in Madrid. Also, both regions will not live in ‘*a centralized Spanish state under a monarchy for whom they have little affection*’[[126]](#footnote-126). On the other hand, independent Basque and Catalonia would ‘*face serious hit in economy – they would have to assume a significant part of Spain’s debt*’[[127]](#footnote-127). After this challenge another problem would appear – finding a currency other than Euro, because Spain would veto Basque and Catalan membership in the monetary union. Both new independent countries would face a hard time getting membership in other different organizations.

At the moment, the EU treaties ‘*are silent on whether the EU membership may carry over automatically to states that have gained independence of the twenty eight existing EU member states*’[[128]](#footnote-128). In 2004, the EU Commission President Romano Prodi stated that ‘*a newly independent region would, by the fact of its independence, become a third country with respect to the Union and the treaties would, from the day of its independence, not apply anymore on its territory*’[[129]](#footnote-129). Within allowing to carry over of Basque and Catalan membership, several legal complications and problems would raise for the EU.

For example, while Spain and other current EU member states were required to meet a series of criteria upon entry, the Basque or Catalonia would have had to undergo no such process, thus making not fair entry regarding to existing EU member states. Also, in case of Basque country, in last forty years human rights periodically were abused, thus meaning no respect to the European Convention on Human Rights[[130]](#footnote-130). Secondly, with the introduction of the new member states would come the need to reallocate the EU funds. A proportion of funds presently allotted to Spain would have to be reallocated to the Basque Country and Catalonia. In the EU, budgetary decisions require approval of the Council, which has the rights of veto, thus it means that Spain can block benefits for both new independent countries. The EU will have to look for a new alternative means of financing Basque and Catalonia membership. Apart from these issues, because of an independence of Basque and Catalonia the EU is taking a risk to cause ‘balkanization of Europe’ – Europe could end up split into a mosaic of squabbling, ever diminishing micro states.[[131]](#footnote-131) After the independence of Basque or Catalonia other nationalists in Scotland, Flanders, Padania, Madeira, Bavaria, Scania and elsewhere will also call for independence. Thus, in the interests of the EU is to keep their member states strong and united, avoiding inner split.

This means that the EU share interests of Spanish government, meanwhile within cultural diplomacy shows the respect to the Basque and Catalan whish, listening and having negotiations about their perspectives on independence and continuing even more to pay attention and cooperate with both regions. But in the case of Basque and Catalonia the EU’s cultural diplomacy has the other side apart from the mutual cooperation – it works as a seduction. By such mutual events the EU shows, what kind of benefits both regions can gain staying within Spain and the EU. Thus it leads to think that the EU is manipulating with cultural diplomacy and is using smart power.

According to Chester Crocker, smart power ‘*involves the strategic use of diplomacy, persuasion, capacity of building and the projection of power and influence in ways that are cost effective and have political and social legitimacy*’[[132]](#footnote-132). Smart power goes beyond soft and hard power, thus making the chance for the actor to choose the best way to address specific issue. Smart power cannot be exercised alone, it requires partners and allies. For example, Spain in the Council of the European Union is searching for the alliances and support by the other member states within the aim to make clear picture for the Basque and Catalan about their future in case both regions will gain independence. Several representatives of the member states expressed their opinion siding Spanish government’s official position – for example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke out against independence for the Spanish region of Catalonia[[133]](#footnote-133) and Lithuanian Foreign Ministry stated that ‘*The Soviet occupation of the Baltic nations cannot be compared with the situation in Spain. All domestic mater in Spain should be resolved according to democratic and legal measures that exist within the country, respecting the Constitution’[[134]](#footnote-134)*. Such step can be called ultimatum – if Basque or Catalonia gains independence, the Council of the European Union will put veto vote on their membership in the EU. It is safe to admit, that by using cultural diplomacy and acting on the basis of the EU treaties (soft power) and within the expressing ultimatum and direct treats by putting veto in the Council of the European Union (hard power)[[135]](#footnote-135) the EU is using smart power.

Even if social constructivism can explain the formation of identities, institutions, the importance of sovereignty and its recognition by other international actors, explain the rise of nationalism and separatist movements and illustrate the importance of institutions, which can shape identities, theory does not mention and consider the possibility that cultural diplomacy and its events can also be used as the instrument of smart power by the EU, leading to the ultimatum on veto vote on Basque and Catalan membership. Without the membership of the EU, both regions after gaining independence can find themselves in the wild international political arena without alliances, support and interdependent linkages with other actors. The Basque country and Catalonia apart from the EU would have to reapply for the membership in other international organizations such as – International Monetary Fund, United Nations, World Trade Organization, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development etc.

However, if the EU’s cultural diplomacy in case of Basque and Catalonia is a smart power instrument, that does not mean that cultural diplomacy cannot be effective and influence the feelings of identities of belonging to national sentiment and decision on the independence. To answer the question,whether the cultural diplomatic events in the last ten years, organized by the EU influence the Basque and Catalan decisions towards independence from Spain, there is a need to gather and compare all data and previously made analysis on different actors.

**4.2. Pros and cons of the EU’s cultural diplomacy and perspectives in Spain**

Formally neither internally nor externally, the politics of the EU’s cultural diplomacy does not exist. Only in 2014, for the first time the importance of the cultural diplomacy was formally addressed within the EU’s foreign politics[[136]](#footnote-136). However, that does not mean that cultural diplomacy does not exist and is not exercised. At some point, it can cross even with the regional cohesion policy, which aim is to reduce disparities between various regions. With a budget of €347 billion for 2007 – 2013 Cohesion Policy represents the single largest source of financial support at the EU level for investment in growth, jobs, designed to enable all regions to compete effectively in the internal market[[137]](#footnote-137). Nonetheless, cultural diplomacy covers events not only focused to the economics, but also to the culture, politics, art and other areas. Cultural diplomacy of the EU exists and in the case of Basque and Catalonia examines hidden politics by events mentioned in the previous chapters to influence and pacify separatist movements and avoid a split of Spain.

Before drawing the conclusion, it is important to mention, that Spain is one of the least transparent European countries in terms of funding non-governmental organizations (NGO). On the 18th of February in 2009, NGO Monitor submitted a request for information on NGOs and funded projects, but did not receive response[[138]](#footnote-138). No information was found on the processes used to evaluate and approve this NGO funding either. NGOs in Spain are weak and not effective. Only since the National Day of Catalonia, when 480 km long human chain was created, several non-governmental organizations are taking part in events on the Catalan independence.

*Table 7* gathers all previously analyzed data and the information about Basque identities (their opinion on independence, feeling of belonging to national sentiment), the amount of the cultural diplomatic events held between the EU and Basque, the activity of the government of Basque, the Spanish government and the NGOs. In case of Basque ethnic conflict it is possible to observe, that the EU’s cultural diplomacy has influence on the Basque identities. The more cultural diplomatic events are hold between two actors, the amount of Basques supporting independence is falling. Especially it can be seen from the year 2010 to 2014 (from 61% to 56%), meanwhile the amount of cultural diplomatic events balanced from 9 to 11 events. Even if in last four years there is only 5% drop of Basques, who support the idea of independence, there is a need to keep in mind that, according to social constructivism, cultural diplomacy is a long term instrument and it needs to have more time to reach its goal.

*Table 7*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YEAR | Basques favoring independent country | Basque feeling of belonging to national sentiment | the amount of the EU's cultural diplomatic events | the government of Basque | the Spanish government | NGOs |
| 2004 | 64% | 41% | 4 | active before elections | passive | passive |
| 2006 | 69% | 43% | 5 | passive | passive | passive |
| 2008 | 62% | 39% | 5 | active before elections | passive | passive |
| 2010 | 61% | 39% | 10 | passive | passive | passive |
| 2012 | 59% | 44% | 9 | active before elections | passive | passive |
| 2014 | 56% | 42% | 11 | passive | passive | passive |

Source: Table made by author, according to the previous analysis and data.

During the last ten years, both the Spanish government and NGOs were passive. All what the Spanish government did was the denying proposals on the Statues, which were submitted by the government of Basque. It did not focus or had any political activities to influence identities of Basques, for example, by having common events, where benefits of future cooperation would be addressed if Basque stays within Spain. Regarding to the NGOs, no data was found about their activities or participation during the last ten years.

Apart from all, the last ten years, the Basque government was active only in the years, before the parliament elections were hold in 2005, 2009 and 2012, thus keeping Basque feeling of belonging to national sentiment from 39% to 44%. Also, the reason, why the EU’s cultural diplomatic events did not manage to successfully and fluently influence Basque opinion on independence from 2004 to 2008, was because of ETA and its terrorism and propaganda. It can be clearly seen, that from 2010, when ETA finally gave up its activities and the government of Basques still were passive, for example, by not submitting any proposals to the Spanish government on holding the new referendum or on upgrading the Statues, the support on independent Basque country begun to drop from 61% to 56. In Basque case it is possible to conclude, that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is fluently working in case if Basque government and ETA is passive. It is safe to admit, that the EU’s cultural diplomacy had the influence in case of Basque ethnic conflict in last six years.

*Table 8* illustrates previously analyzed data and the information about Catalan identities (their opinion on independence, feeling of belonging to national sentiment), the amount of the cultural diplomatic events held between the EU and Basque, the activity of the government of Basque, the Spanish government and the NGOs. In case of Catalan ethnic conflict it is possible to observe, that the EU’s cultural diplomacy has no influence on the Catalan identities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YEAR | Catalans favoring independent country | Catalan feeling of belonging to national sentiment | the amount of the EU's cultural diplomatic events | the government of Catalonia | the Spanish government | NGOs |
| 2004 | 54% | No data | 4 | active | active | passive |
| 2006 | 52% | No data | 4 | active | active | passive |
| 2008 | 54% | No data | 5 | active | passive | passive |
| 2010 | 57% | 47% | 5 | active | passive | passive |
| 2012 | 67% | 58% | 6 | active | passive | passive |
| 2014 | 80% | 62% | 13 | active | passive | active |

*Table 8*

Source: Table made by author, according to the previous analysis and data.

In the period from 2004 to 2008, it is possible to see that the Spanish government influenced Catalan identities by adopting the new Statute submitted by the Catalonian government. Apart from the fact, that all articles of the Statute were not accepted by the Spanish government, still - from 54% to 52% - Catalan opinion on independence dropped. However, the government of Catalonia was eager to fight for the acceptance of all articles, what resulted in a return of majority Catalans favouring independence. In next years, the Spanish government did not change Statute and was passive, meanwhile the government of Catalonia was active gaining the support from the NGOs in the last years since 2013.

The amount of Catalans, who supported independence in last four years, rapidly grew from 57% to 80% even if the EU also increased the number of cultural diplomatic events from 5 to 13. Such data improves, that the EU did not have influence on Catalan identities in last ten years. Such illation leads to think, that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is useless as far as the Spanish government, Catalan government and NGOs are active. Thus to resolve the existing ethnic conflict and avoid split of Spain the consensus and mutual understanding should be reached between the government of Spain and the government of Catalonia. However, if such goal cannot be achieved, the last instrument, which possibly can avoid Catalonia to become independent is veto on its membership in the EU.

In general, the EU’s cultural diplomacy has small role in case of Spanish ethnic conflicts. It can work out only if other actors do not have influence on Basque or Catalan identities. It is fluent when other actors are passive. At some point it can be said that the EU’s cultural diplomacy is a weak instrument, however, it does not mean that is has no role or is useless. As it has been discussed in previous chapter, the cultural diplomacy can be also smart power instrument. Through cultural diplomatic events hold within Basque or Catalonia, the EU addresses and shows different benefits, which region can gain by being in the EU within Spain. In case if still the mutinous identity is struggling for the independence, according to the EU’s laws, it can put veto on membership, thus cutting links with many institutions, agreements and other organisations, thus lowering economic and other benefits.

As far it has been discovered, overall cultural diplomacy can serve as soft power or smart power instruments. Being only as a soft power it is fragile instrument, which can unite different actors, however it can also split them. Cultural diplomacy, which respects liberal values, justice and freedom of speech, favours identities by delegating more autonomy (what happened in 1979, when Spanish government delegated more autonomy to Catalonia). When Spain joined the EU, Catalonians were more inspired to fight for the rights of autonomy, thus created bigger space for Catalonian government to act. Later on when Spain joined the EU, Catalans had even more hopes for independence, because the EU is based on liberal values. Such space, where separatist movements can rise, is created by cultural diplomacy itself within soft power. However, if ethnic conflict still exist, that does not mean, that it cannot be avoided.

Nevertheless, the cultural diplomacy can serve also as a smart power instrument – within spill over process, deepening interdependence and by cultural diplomatic events ‘reminding’ to regions, what benefits both Basques and Catalans can gain by staying within the Spain and being in the European Union. At the same time if mutinous identities are still eager to fight for independence, the EU can make ultimatum stating direct treats that new independent countries will be excluded from the EU and will have to reapply for the membership facing the possibility of veto put by Spain and other countries, where bright separatist movements exist. Also, there is a need to remember, that state can exist in case if it is internationally recognized. All things considered, it seems that cultural diplomacy (as soft power) must be fighted by cultural diplomacy (smart power).

All things considered, cultural diplomacy should be universal and paying equal attention to different fields thus constructing interdependency, which later is almost not possible to cut, because of expensive lost and costs. In the future the EU should have more cultural diplomatic events in different fields within mutinous regions thus having more time to create imagine of the common goal or seduce to stay within country, because the cultural diplomacy works in a long term. It should not rise the amount of cultural diplomatic events, when the ethnic conflicts are reaching a peak. According to the ethnic conflicts of the Basque and Catalonia, even if cultural diplomacy was weak or not effective instrument at all, it does not mean, that its smart power within the ultimatum of veto power in the EU Council will possibly not play an important role in the future. However, the EU’s cultural diplomacy can be also seen as a secondary instrument to avoid separatist movements. In the case of Catalonia it is possible to resolve ethnic conflict by reaching mutual agreement and consensus by both governments – the Spanish government and the government of Catalonia.

**Conclusion**

Just over a half century ago, the process of establishing a union of European states begun. The path to unity has faced a multitude challenges that have been overcome, but many obstacles still have to be faced. One such obstacle is the rise of regionalism within certain the EU member states. Several of these regions have gained various levels of independence from their respective central government[[139]](#footnote-139). As a result of such independence nationalist movements are demanding independence and the right to self-determination. In Spain the Basque Country and Catalonia seek for independence, but also asserting their rights to retain status as the EU members once becoming independent states. The Basques and Catalans are eager to wrest power away from the central government in Madrid.

Hence the EU found itself in a tricky situation – between mutinous identities of the majority of Basques and Catalans and the Spanish government. However, the EU have chosen to support the Spanish government and avoid the split of its member state by using cultural diplomacy as a smart power instrument, because the new former Spanish states would cause many problems to be faced. For example, the membership and the fair entrance in the EU would be questioned, the problem would rise also in allocating funds, sharing previous debts with Spain and taking a risk to cause a balkanization process in Europe. According to fact, that the EU cannot interfere in it member states to resolve ethnic conflicts, all what it can do is to use the cultural diplomacy, which can be described as a hidden policy, because there is no official statement or plan of it in the EU’s policy.

Cultural diplomacy is an old phenomenon, which existed since the beginning of civilizations. Also, the social constructivism theory emphasizes the importance of cultural diplomacy, which is instrument to communicate and attract the publics of member states thus creating intercultural dialogue within numerous events with the aim to make strong European identity and keep its diverse cultures united. The EU’s cultural diplomacy is teaching states what their interests should be. Even if cultural diplomacy is a long term instrument, because actors need a time to realize joint gains in a stable environment, it is still valuable, because is based on different events and promotes image of common destiny. Hence, what social constructivism does not notice, it that cultural diplomacy can be not only a soft power, but also smart power instrument, which seduces mutinous identities and then is making threats about exclusion from the EU, if identities still want to gain independence.

However, the research shows, that t**he cultural diplomatic events in the last six years organized by the EU, had influenced Basque decision towards independence from Spain.** On the other hand, **cultural diplomatic events in the last ten years organized by the EU, were not effective in case of Catalonia.** Such results can be explained by the fact, that other actors apart from the EU had influence on the Basque and Catalan identities – the government of Spain, the Basque/Catalan governments and NGOs. The EU’s cultural diplomacy can fluently influence identities only in case, if Basque/Catalan and the Spanish governments are passive. In the case of Catalonia, there is also possible to assume, that consensus and mutual understanding can be reached between the government of Spain and the government of Catalonia without the EU’s cultural diplomacy.

To summarize, the cultural diplomacy of the EU is a weak instrument in case of Spanish ethnic conflicts, but that does not mean that in the future it will not play an important role. There is still time to hold cultural diplomatic events with mutinous ethnicities and seduce them, showing the profits they can gain being a part of Spain and the EU, and at the same time make ultimatums and threats about the exclusion from the EU in case Basque or Catalonia gain independence. However, cultural diplomacy of the EU can be strengthen – it should always have to pay attention and hold many cultural diplomatic events, not only in case when the ethnic conflicts reach a peak.

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