

# Is the process of globalisation breaking down national cultures and identities and contributing to a cosmopolitan cultural identity?

Since the phrase 'global village' was coined in the 1960s, the changes observed by Marshall McLuhan and the reasons for them have become increasingly prominent. Over the last two decades, travel, trade, and the internet, have been the vehicles which have driven globalisation. A by-product of such global mixing, it could be argued, is what Kwame Anthony Appiah would call 'cosmopolitanism', that is, the disintegration of distinct national identities and the creation of a global, borderless culture. However, cosmopolitanism has not been allowed to dominate. In Europe and the US, the very same catalysts which have driven globalisation have also driven the rise of a nationalist far right and an ever more prominent trend of divisive cultural divergence.

The EU is an organisation based on diversity. With a population of 535 million Europeans, the Union claims to have 26 official languages while a further 34 are spoken within the bloc. However, a cosmopolitan identity based on Appiah's theory of a mix of respect for diversity and pride in individuality has been extremely slow to take hold. Within the 'European Village', national identities seem more inclined to reassert themselves and diverge rather than embrace cosmopolitanism and converge. This was never clearer than in the aftermath of the Brexit vote. According to Lord Ashcroft's report, 81% of those who voted to leave the EU saw multiculturalism (a key aspect of Appiah's theory) and globalisation as forces for ill. Meanwhile, other hallmarks of globalisation were similarly reviled, including the internet, immigration, and the green movement, making the Brexit vote a clear rejection of a cosmopolitan identity.

This rejection can also be seen in the recent rebirth of cosmopolitanism's antithesis, nationalism. George Orwell's definition of nationalism as the advancement of one nation's interest at the expense of all others is to be seen clearly in the wave of Euro scepticism engulfing Europe. Similar

rejection of cosmopolitanism is to be seen in the US where anti-immigration views were held by 79% (according to PEW research) of those who voted Donald Trump into office in 2016. The nation supposedly built on 'E Pluribus Unum' has now become a place where ICE ruthlessly deports the undocumented and white nationalists feel free to march in the streets of Charlottesville.

However, before you label me a global pessimist, allow me to present you with an example of a society embracing the features of globalisation mentioned above. Here in Ireland, the 2016 census showed us to have over half a million non-Irish nationals living in the republic, with over 130,000 'mixed race' families. Ireland has become infinitely more cosmopolitan with the rise of globalisation, and has also contributed to global migration trends, with 29,000 people migrating in 2018/19 alone, according to Places of Sanctuary Ireland.

While cosmopolitanism is still being challenged in states across Europe and in the US, it is undoubtedly becoming a reality of modern life. However, like many aspects of globalisation, it has occurred in Thomas Hylland Eriksen's words "too much, too fast, and too unequal". This overheating in global culture has led to the perceived breakdown of national identities, and their reassertion by disillusioned citizens has manifested in many worrying ways. Under cosmopolitanism national identities may not be breaking down, but they are perceived to be doing so, and that is almost the same thing