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EU governance and European identity

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Abstract

This Living Review presents an overview of the research on European identity in the context of EU governance by focusing on central debates in the political science literature. It departs from the problems of disagreement between European citizens and their elites as well as the lack of a European demos. Against this background, the article discusses the functions of collective identity including the legitimation function and solution of collective dilemmas. Here, two perspectives pertaining to these functions are depicted: first, the issue of European public space and second, the integrative workings of European citizenship. Next, the article explores the conceptual and methodological problems of the research on European collective identity. In particular, it focuses on the conceptual ambiguity of the collective identity term, causes of confusion in European identity research and problems of operationalization and measurement. Following this, the article discusses the literature on identity technologies of the EU and identifies the shortcomings of identity technologies with regard to EU governance.

Keywords: European identity, governance, legitimacy, democracy, public opinion, European public space

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1   Introduction: Justifying the relevance of a European collective identity

Facing enormous challenges while lacking strong support among the European citizens, the European Union is vulnerable to unpredictable stress. Hence, some research on European integration deals with two crucial questions: how much pressure can the community tolerate in order to persist and what holds the EU together in times of scarcity, conflict, danger, and threat? Looking for answers to these questions, a multitude of publications stress the need for societal cohesion among the people. The gradual emergence of a sense of community among European citizens is said to be a means of overcoming centrifugal tendencies due to the increased heterogeneity of today's European Union of 27 member states and nearly 500 million people.

Certainly, David Easton (1965: 186; 1979: 188) conceded that it is in principle possible "to bind a group together before feelings of mutual identification have emerged". People's beliefs in the benefits of working together, for instance, could also hold a group together. Thus, we-feelings come as a *result* rather than a precondition of cooperation (Easton 1979: 325; Westle 1999: 92). However, this cannot be an option in the long term and under all circumstances. Some cohesive cement or we-identity is perhaps not relevant "to the possibility of a political community but to its duration under *stress*" (Easton 1965: 187 – emphasis added). At the European level three main factors are producing stress: permanent legitimacy shortfalls, impending deficiencies of effectiveness and the uncertainty of the European community's borders. In fact, some researchers suggest that the idea of a European collective identity is most notably a phenomenon of crisis. Bo Stråth (2002: 388f) has pointed out in this context that the European identity concept was delineated at the EC Copenhagen summit in 1973. Against the background of the oil price shock, the abstract idea of a collective European identity should have been used as an instrument in order to consolidate Europe's place within a crisis-ridden international world order. Strath's argument corresponds with a general observation: Critical junctures in human history have repeatedly turned out to be cornerstones for collective identity building since "identities become salient and are fought over in particular historical moments, especially in times of crisis" (Risse 2010: 2).

Other students of European integration, however, consider the development of a European collective identity as an essential prerequisite for further integration. Given the size of the European Union and the dissimilitude of its member states, the elite's scope of action within unanimity is increasingly shrinking. In order to guarantee both the efficiency and effectiveness of EU governance, the use of the majority rule will be demanding more concessions from EU citizens in the future. Hence, an influential strand of research on European integration assumes that the emergence of a resilient we-identity among Europeans is an essential precondition for the people's willingness to show solidarity throughout Europe inasmuch as they accept re-distribution policies (Scharpf 1999; Zürn 2000; Grimm 2004). Along with classical thinkers like John Stuart Mill (1861: 391), this branch of research also argues that collective identity is a necessary condition for *democratic* decision-making. An unconditional resilient feeling of commonness, so the argument goes, makes the political minority trust that the ruling majority would not exploit its power position at the minority's expense (Offe 2003: 246; Kielmansegg 1996, 2003; Höreth 1999; Maurer 2002). Finally, these scholars suggest that a European collective identity is entrenched in the Europeans' consciousness of sharing a common fate. This awareness may reinforce, in turn, the mutual willingness to work together by pursuing common goals and solving collective problems that go beyond the capacities of single nation-states (Kaina 2006: 129).

This line of argument is challenged by those scholars who criticize the idea of a shared European collective identity. An important representative of that point of view is Thomas Risse (2010). On the one hand, he questions the need for a "uniform and shared European identity above and beyond national identities" and stresses the Europeanization of national (and other collective) identities instead (Risse 2010: 5). Through Europeanization, so his argument goes, "Europe and the EU

(become) integrated in people's sense of belonging" (ibid. 5) and "references to Europe and to the EU [...] incorporated into one's sense of national belonging" (ibid. 25). On the other hand, Risse concedes "the more the EU moves beyond regulatory policies toward redistribution and taxing Europeans, (EU citizens') secondary identification with Europe might reach its limits" (ibid. 8). Obviously, the question of whether the EU really does need a shared European identity cannot be answered without giving an answer to the question of what the European Union actually is.

Research literature which deals with the landmarks of European unification (Laffan 1998; Thomas 2006) agrees that today's EU is quite different from the functional agency (Mitrany 1966: 145) and the economic Zweckverband (Ipsen 1972) of preceding integration years. Intensified by the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, the European unification path has developed a power structure of supranational authority (Bach 1999, 2000). Scholars on European integration widely agree, therefore, that the European Union is taking roots as a new type of governance (e.g., Marks *et al.* 1996; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997; Kohler-Koch 1999; Jachtenfuchs 2000; Stone Sweet *et al.* 2001; Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 2004). As for the "identity question," it does not really matter if we describe the EU as a multi-level system of governance or a political system. It is sufficient to say that today's European Union shows some features of a full-fledged national polity (Hix 2005: 2ff; Lepsius 2006: 11; Hix and Høyland 2011: 12ff) while it lacks other characteristics of a modern polity. In particular, the EU is not a state (Böröcz and Sarkar 2005: 155). Moreover, the so-called input dimension of a political system is still underdeveloped at the European level (Kaina 2009). Thus, we describe the current nature of the EU as a "polity in between" which governs citizens of a certain territory within "a stable and clearly defined set of institutions for collective decision-making and a set of rules governing relations between and within these institutions" (Hix 2005: 2). As a result, the European Union can be analyzed as a political collectivity inasmuch as a supranational authority, a Weberian Herrschaftsverband, has been established at the European level. Against this background, Risse's Europeanization argument seems to underestimate the need for a European sense of community in today's European Union in order to legitimize both re-distribution policies and majority rule in political decision-making (see also Section 2.2).

During the past years there has been a surge of interdisciplinary publications on the Europeans' we-feeling. On the one hand, some literature concerns the content of a common European identity. On the other hand, numerous philosophers, historians, sociologists and political scientists have dealt with the prospects of a European identity and the obstacles to a shared sense of community at the European level. In addition, there is a growing body of literature on technologies of collective identity construction applied by the EU. This Living Review presents an overview of the research on European identity in the context of EU governance by focusing on central debates in the political science literature.

2 European identity and the problem of the EU's legitimacy

2.1 Beyond the permissive consensus: How to bridge the gap to the publics

The academic attention to the emergence of a European collective identity has been substantially influenced by the pace and scope of the European integration process. Despite the repeated calls for bringing "the Union closer to its citizens" (quoted in Kohler-Koch 2000: 525; see also van Kersbergen 2000: 11; Lodge 1994), "Europe" is still far from its citizens. The people's cognitive and emotional detachment from the EC/EU was hardly a severe problem as long as the so-called *permissive consensus* (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970) allowed the national and European elites to push the European unification forward. However, this matter obviously belongs to the past. As the European community has enlarged and the integration process has reached a deeper level, the progress in European unification is increasingly susceptible to swings in public mood (Thomassen

2009; Fuchs and Klingemann 2011). The growing relevance of public opinion becomes dramatically apparent by the fact that numerous EU projects have been rejected by popular vote: the Maastricht Treaty in Denmark (1992), the accession of Norway (1972, 1994), the Nice Treaty in Ireland (2001), the introduction of the euro in Sweden (2003), the European Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands (2005) and the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland (2008).

In addition to such visible signs of disagreement between European citizens and their elites, research on public opinion suggests the end of the permissive consensus.[1] A wealth of empirical examinations provide evidence that citizens' support for European integration has been decreasing since the early 1990s (e.g., Hix 2005: 151; 2008: 51ff; Deutsch 2006; Hooghe 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2007; Taylor 2008: 24–31; Kaina 2009, Hix and Høyland 2011: 109). The very literature on the euroskepticism phenomenon (e.g., Taggart 1998; Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Lubbers and Schepers 2005, 2010; Fuchs *et al.* 2009b; Leconte 2010; Boomgarden *et al.* 2011) fortifies that Europe suffers from the "Post-Maastricht Blues" (Eichenberg and Dalton 2007) and that the permissive consensus has been displaced by a "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks 2006: 248). Moreover, empirical research also confirms that citizens' support for European unification widely depends on cost/benefit calculations and economic expectations (Gabel and Palmer 1995; Anderson and Reichert 1995; Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998a,b,c; Cichowski 2000; Tucker *et al.* 2002; McLaren 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Eichenberg and Dalton 2007). Over the course of the post-Maastricht process, these considerations have been complemented by another dimension centering on the protection of national interests, especially the national community and forms of collective identity that the traditional nation state has conveyed (Hooghe 2007: 7; see also: Carey 2002; McLaren 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2007: 121; Hooghe and Marks 2004, 2005, 2009; Duchesne 2008; Fligstein 2010). Yet this kind of utilitarian support is unstable inasmuch as the attitudes towards the European Union and the integration process rest on short-termed instrumental evaluations rather than on normatively embedded convictions.

The EU's challenge of bridging the gap to the publics opened the door for researchers who suppose that a shared sense of European community is crucial for further steps in European integration (e.g., Herrmann and Brewer 2004; Risse 2004; Bach, Lahusen, and Vobruba 2006a; McLaren 2006; Bruter 2005; Kaina 2006, 2009; Fligstein 2010). This assumption is closely linked to the debate on the European democratic deficit and the EU's legitimacy shortfalls.

2.2 Challenging the EU's democratic capability: The *no demos* thesis

In view of the downward trend of citizen support for European integration as well as the challenges of enlarging and deepening the EU, it can be asked if the previous permissive consensus would still be sufficient in order to continue the European story of success. Realizing a sort of (multi-level) governance, the EU is facing the challenge of justifying political rule since every form of governance limits the self-determination and individual freedom of people. However, legitimizing European governance becomes harder the more the European integration process succeeds. This "paradox of success" arises from three developments revealing the transforming character of the European Union as a "polity in between."

The first development describes the erosion of the permissive consensus (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). For a long time, this specific melange of common citizen support for European integration and widespread indifference of the European publics (e.g., Hix 2005: 149, McLaren 2006: 8, Kaina 2009: 88f) has conceded a generous room of maneuver for national and European elites to push the integration process onward. By now, research on public opinion corroborates the end of the permissive consensus (see Section 2.1).

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[1] For public perceptions of the EU as a system of governance see the Living Review by Loveless and Rohrschneider (2011)

A second development refers to impending shortfalls in the effectiveness of the European multi-level system. In the wake of broadening the EU's scope of governance, Simon Hix (2008: 31) diagnosed a "policy shift" at the European level. After the successful creation of the internal market, the EU policy agenda is now focused on the question of "what economic and social policies should be pursued in the new European-scale polity" (Hix 2008: 89). The change of the European policy agenda is accompanied by an increasing conflict potential inasmuch as European decision-making involves re-distributive consequences. As a result, coalition-building between the European Commission, Council and European Parliament becomes more difficult and makes policy-gridlock at the European level more likely (Hix 2008: 44ff).

The diagnosis of Hix is tightly related to a third development, growing distribution conflicts at the supranational level, which was particularly visible during the recent currency and debt crisis in the EU. The success of the European integration process has led to a stage where supranational decision-making increasingly affects the general living conditions of EU citizens (Bach *et al.* 2006b: 7, Vobruba 2007: 10). The aforementioned "policy change" and the resulting growth of re-distributive European decision-making comes with the risk of increasing distribution conflicts at the European level which were formerly resolved within EU member states (Lepsius 1999: 210, Vobruba 2003: 41,48, Bach 2006: 25). As a consequence of the European policy change and the increased heterogeneity of EU members, this "Europe" in which most of Europeans do not take interest creates winners and losers and cannot continue to guarantee Pareto-rational results anymore (Joerges 1999, Føllesdal and Hix 2006: 11, Hix 2008: 48). The more EU citizens become aware of this consequence, the more success and legitimacy of the integration process depend on the EU's social cohesion and the union's capability for societal integration.

Against this background, the well-known debate on the European democratic deficit and the EU's legitimacy shortfalls has grown heated as the scope of European governance has extended (e.g., Weiler, Haltern, and Mayer 1995; Abromeit 1998; Beetham and Lord 1998; Eriksen and Fossum 2000; Lord 2001, 2007; Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Goodhart 2007; Kaina and Karolewski 2007; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2007; Hix 2008; Kaina 2009). On the one hand, there are some scholars who doubt that the European Union suffers from a severe democratic deficit (Moravcsik 2002, 2004, 2006; Zweifel 2002a,b) or question whether the EU's technocratic nature has to necessarily be in accordance with democratic standards, since its legitimacy is founded on its contribution to problem-solving (Majone 1994, 1996, 1998; Wessels 2003; Moravcsik 2004, 2006). On the other hand, the mainstream of political science literature on European integration intensely criticizes the lack of democratic control, accountability and responsibility as well as the insufficiency of input structures for European citizens to effectively influence political decisions at the supranational level (e.g., Weiler, Haltern, and Mayer 1995; Abromeit 1998; Lord 2001; Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2007). Except for the skeptical views of some students of European integration who deny the need for more democracy at the European level, a majority of political scientists dealing with the European Union assume that the EU needs further democratization to cope with the present and upcoming legitimacy problems of European governance.

Several researchers, however, do not believe in the possibilities of the EU's further legitimization by democratization until all the peoples of the European Union share a strong or "thick" European sense of community (Böckenförde 1991: 344ff, Kielmansegg 1996, 2003, Offe 2003, Scharpf 1999, Zürn 2000, Dahrendorf 2003). The debate on the democratic *capability* of the European Union was actuated by the claim that the use of the majority rule in collective decision-making is bound to certain socio-cultural prerequisites in order to avoid heteronomy (Kielmansegg 1996: 48; Hix 1998: 53; Zürn 2000: 195; Decker 2002: 258ff; Haltern 2007: 49–51). This strand of literature argues that there has *first* to be an answer to the question of "Who is the people?" *before* government can be organized democratically. Any answer to this question, in turn, has to decide who belongs to "us" – and who does not. Accordingly, a shared sense of community is supposed to be the indispensable precondition that makes group members consider the results of democratic decision-making as an

expression of self-determination, even though the consequences of this process conflict with one's own interests (Decker 2002: 263). In this context, some scholars controvert that there can be a European sense of community in the foreseeable future (Kielmansegg 1996, 2003; Grimm 1993, 1995; Scharpf 1999). According to Peter Graf Kielmansegg (1996, 2003), the most determined representative of this school of thought, there is no European demos sharing a collective identity because the European level lacks a community of communication, collective experiences and common memories. Yet, such communities create and stabilize collective identities. This dilemma, so the argument goes, condemns the European Union to remain an undemocratic construction.

Other researchers object to this claim. Some of them point to empirical studies that already show some evidence for the emergence of a European collective identity (e.g., Everts and Sinnott 1995; Niedermayer 1995; Scheuer 1999; Fuchs 2000; Schild 2001; Risse 2002, 2004; Westle 2003a; Citrin and Sides 2004; Bruter 2005, 2007; Hurrelmann 2005; Deutsch 2006; Scheuer and Schmitt 2009; Fligstein 2010). Others basically suspect that European citizens may develop a shared sense of community with their European fellows in the future (Kohli 2000; Meyer 2004). A third group supports this optimism by arguing that the democratization of the EU will help engender a strong European collective identity (Habermas 1996, 2001; Fuchs 2000; Zürn 2000; Decker 2002; Eriksen and Fossum 2004; Føllesdal and Hix 2006). Scholars of the second and third group see a broad, common value base among the Europeans which is supposed to be a sufficient fundament in order to constitute a European demos and to legitimize a democratic order at the European level (Fuchs 2000: 233; Fuchs and Klingemann 2002: 20).

However, the confident belief in the development of a European collective identity by democratization remains vulnerable inasmuch as it postulates a connection that has to be proven in reality. This leads to two further challenges for research on this topic. First, there is still a need for systematic studies to clarify whether the link between the democratization of the EU and the development of a European sense of community among the citizens is conditional or causal in nature. This is important since any progress in democratizing the European Union comes with the danger of aggravating given legitimacy shortfalls of the EU precisely because there is no resilient sense of community among the Europeans. This peril results from the specific "burdens" of democracy since democratic decision-making is principally open and generates winners and losers. For this reason, we need more theoretical and empirical insights into why, first and foremost, and whether more democracy at the European level might contribute to the emergence of any kind of we-identity among the European citizens. This knowledge is required both for scholars and political practitioners in order to balance the risks of democratizing the European Union without a European demos.

Second, the belief in positive impacts of the EU's democratization on the materialization of a European sense of community confronts researchers as well as politicians with a temporal squeeze (Kaina 2009). This is a "dilemma of simultaneity" in that the European Union has to improve its democratic quality and establish beneficial conditions for the development of a European collective identity at the same time. On the one hand, EU governance has reached an advanced stage so that the future of the European unification increasingly depends on the citizens' consent as well as the mitigation of legitimacy shortfalls by democratizing the European Union. On the other hand, more democracy at the European level is accompanied by the risk of tightening legitimacy problems of EU governance as long as there is no resilient European sense of community among the European citizens. This quandary of time might not only increase conflicts between member states but also create a severe test for the Union's cohesion. However, it might also stimulate a new research agenda dealing with the question of how this temporal dilemma of the European Union could be attenuated. Efforts in this direction are requested inasmuch as research on European identity highlights several functions of a collective European identity for the democratic governance in the EU.

2.3 Functions of collective European identity

Research on collective identity building at the European level discusses at least two main functions of a European we-identity, including the increase in the legitimacy of EU governance and its persistence or stability, for instance through the solution of cooperation dilemmas.

2.3.1 Collective identity, legitimacy and the European public space

One school of thought in particular attempts to connect collective identity with legitimacy of governance in the EU. It does this, for instance, through a notion of integrated public sphere allowing for community-wide communication.[2] Inspired by the writings of Jürgen Habermas, it is argued that the post-national democracy in Europe relies on the emergence of a European communicative space that fulfils functions of a public sphere (Habermas 1974: 49–55; 1995: 109–131). The public sphere is expected to connect civil society[3] to the power structure of the governance both by enabling citizens' opinion formation and by giving the citizens the power to influence the decision-making. In other words, the public sphere is a deliberative political space in which both government and civil society participate (Díez Medrano 2009: 91). In this sense, the public sphere is essential for citizens to realize their claims to democratic self-government. However, it is expected to be an integrated public space, pervading the entire community, rather than a number of disconnected functional public spaces in which citizens debate only narrow and specific issues. The corresponding collective identity which develops in the process of citizens' participation in the public sphere does not rest on origin-based or heritage-orientated identification, but rather on the practice of constructing commonality through communication processes which are expected to generate a collective self-understanding (Baumeister 2003: 740–758).

In the context of the EU, the public sphere perspective regards European citizens primarily as community members. In this sense, public space promotes collective identity by anchoring citizens in a community. However, belonging to a community does not have to be underpinned by pre-political bonds, since the public sphere is capable of generating collective identity through participation, communicative opinion formation and autonomous lawmaking. Public spheres created as such rest on a reflexive identity, i.e., a shared understanding of commonality coupled with recognition of difference (Schmalz-Bruns 1999: 185–224).

A number of authors argue that a new public space is actually emerging in the European Union. This new public space is associated with the institutions of the EU and their supranational development that transcends the boundaries of the nation-state. Philip Schlesinger (1999: 263–279) argues that the multi-level political system of the EU also generates multilevel forms of political communication that include lobbying, information campaigns and news reporting. However, this complex communicative activity occurs not in an integrated European public arena network, but rather in fragmented and even contradictory sub-arenas. As a result, Schlesinger suggests that we should rather assume a system of interrelated (but not integrated) spheres of European publics. Apart from this, there is an asymmetry in the structure of the European publics. The growth of transnational media such as newspapers, magazines and television news sustains a rather restricted elite space rather than encouraging generalized access to communication by European publics, which confirms the "democratic deficit" understood as an elite-citizenry divide (Schlesinger 1999: 276).

While Schlesinger still observes an elite-citizenry divide in the European publics, Eriksen and Fossum apply the differentiation between strong and general publics to examine European public space (Eriksen and Fossum 2002: 401–424). The concept of strong publics refers to institutionalized

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[2] More about this debate can be found in the Living Review "The EU as a public sphere" by de Vreese (2007).

[3] The role of civil society in the EU context is elaborated in more detail in the Living Review "Civil society participation in EU governance" by Heidbreder (2012).

deliberations which are also part of the public (but in a condensed and more routinized form) and are close to the centre of the political system. This proximity vis-à-vis the centre of the political system denotes the decision-making power of strong publics which reaches beyond the opinion or will formation (general publics) outside the formal political system.

As a rule, strong publics relate to parliamentary assemblies and other deliberative institutions with formally organized structures which possess a codified stake in the decision-making process, whereas general or weak publics have merely moral influence (Brunkhorst 2002: 677). For Eriksen and Fossum (2002: 411) and many other scholars, it is the European Parliament (EP) which fulfils the function of a strong public in the EU. In contrast to the Council, the EP is more consensus-orientated and likely to be open for deliberation, as majorities can be more easily formed in the absence of the traditional division between government and opposition. Since the EP is directly elected by the peoples of the member states, it can claim to be an expression of the will of the people, and thus the only direct democratic body to represent European interests (see also Rittberger 2006: 1211–1229). Moreover, the EP has, over the past half century, been successively empowered by the member states (Rittberger 2003: 203–225; Rittberger 2005; Maurer 2003: 227–247).

Furthermore, Eriksen and Fossum count European conventions (both the Charter Convention and the Constitutional Convention) as types of strong publics. They are believed to institutionalize communicative interaction, but are believed to do so beyond a mere aggregation of preferences, as is the case with the Intergovernmental Conferences. In the conventions, participants deliberated in an open debate which was not only open to a variety of actors (such as parliamentarians, civil society actors etc.), but also had features of representatives assemblies. Therefore, the conventions assumed a stronger normative force, as they were no longer entirely dominated by executive and technocratic actors (Eriksen 2005: 354; Eriksen and Fossum 2002: 416). Nevertheless, Eriksen (2005: 358) comes to a similar conclusion as Schlesinger: even though there are signs of an integrated public sphere with easy and general access for citizens, dominating and salient are segmented publics which show problems of fragmentation and communication distortions. Under these circumstances, collective will formation is difficult, and a collective identity cannot be presumed. Even the strong publics specialized in collective will formation cannot fulfil the integrative function and cannot induce a general collective will.

A more optimistic view of European public space and its fruitful role in creating European democratic governance is presented by Trenz and Eder (2004: 5–25). Trenz and Eder put the function of public sphere in the context of social learning of political actors. Through interactions in the public sphere, citizens experience each other as contingent others and they develop individual coping strategies. In the case of the EU, we deal with a transnational public sphere which has the potential to unfold a transnational communicative resonance (Trenz and Eder 2004: 9; Eder 2007: 33–50).

Since we can observe a growing communication network in the EU, the conclusion about a transnational resonance might not be so far-fetched. In this perspective, the more collective actors are contingent on the public, the more likely processes of collective learning contributing to the development of transnational democracy in the EU are. Since constitutional reform of the EU is bound to the public performance of the EU, there are learning processes which create public resonance. In the process, networking actors present their activities before the general public and evoke its reactions either in the form of consent and loyalty or in the form of protest and voice. For Trenz and Eder (2004: 18), it was the European Convention that assumed the function of a vehicle transforming the particularistic and non-public lobbying practices specific to the EU governance into a distinct mode of communication with the public.

However, not all EU institutions establish a communication mode of interaction with the public. Since information about political processes is a prerequisite for debates in the public sphere, it is relevant to know, for instance, how the Commission communicates with the public. The study conducted by Patrick Bijsmans and Christina Altides (Bijsmans and Altides 2007: 323–340;

also van de Steeg 2002: 499-519) suggests that the Commission and the national media emphasize different aspects of the EU political process which, instead of integrating the communication structures in Europe, does the opposite. It does not even result in a superficial integration of the European communication sphere, which would be a precondition for European citizens to act. This perspective represents the notion of European governance being supported through mass media by creating an informed and involved public, which is a prerequisite for democratic governance in the EU.

The lacking transcendence of the European national spheres and the consequent fragmentation of the public sphere in the EU is also indicated in other studies. The study by Downey and König (2006) indicates that even if there is an obvious European reference, such as in the Berlusconi–Schulz case, similar framing of events does not occur in a way that would encourage deliberation among citizens, since the actors involved in the conflict are portrayed as representatives of ethnic nations rather than their respective political parties. Consequently, ethnicity shows more perseverance than expected, and makes deliberative change of opinion less probable due to communication difficulties (Downey and König 2006: 165–187).

However, even within an integrated public space, communication might not be sufficient to generate collective identity. In this case, the EU's strategies to improve democratic legitimacy by strengthening its publicity will necessarily fail. This thin understanding of public sphere and democracy may cause inappropriate institutional measures to be chosen in order to generate public attention. In this sense, the EU would confound public space with public relations and transparency with publicity. Therefore, improving democratic legitimacy of the EU would require more than just publishing decisions and seeking attention (Hüller 2007: 563–581).

Even though there is still a lot if disagreement between scholars on the existence and workings of the European public sphere, a consensus seems to emerge that the main problem is not the lack of a European public sphere per se but rather its thinness. Many authors accept that a pan-European public sphere is not in sight and therefore focus on the so-called Europeanization of national public spheres. This research aims to determine how much information on the EU is conveyed in the national press in comparison to coverage of national news. In this vein, Thomas Risse (2010) argues that the increasing presence of the European Union in national press has politicized European identity and created a European public sphere in which the same questions are increasingly addressed in different states. In particular, this Europeanization of the national public spaces occurs "the more the same (European) themes are controversially debated at the same time at similar levels of attention across national public spheres and media and the more similar frames of reference, meaning structures and patterns of interpretation are available and in use across national public spheres and media" (Risse 2010: 125). In addition, these Europeanization processes are accompanied by transnationalization processes in which Europeanized identities and public spaces reinforce each other: "The more a transnational community of communication emerges in which (a) European and other national speakers regularly participate in cross-border debates, (b) speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in transnational discourses that (c) frame the particular issues as common European problems" (Risse 2010: 126). This leads Risse to conclude "the emergence of Europeanized public spheres and communities of communication constitutes a polity or reflects the emergence of a polity" and "a European polity comes into being not through the creation of prepolitical demoi but through Europeanized public spheres in which European issues are contested and debated" (Risse 2010: 174). This optimistic Habermasian position leads to counterintuitive conclusions, where the politization of the EU, for instance through the negative referenda in France and the Netherlands to the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, might signify "the birth of a transnational polity" rather than a mere legitimacy crisis (cf. also De Wilde and Zürn 2012).

Beyond the question of the "thinness" of such Europeanized identity, there might still be a problem of its elitist focus, as pointed to above. As it appears, it is largely the elites that dominate

the emerging sphere, leaving little room for citizens to participate (apart from referenda, which are rare events). Beyond the quality press (which is the primary data for research on Europeanized space), the research does not seriously engage with the studies on Europeanization of ordinary citizens. Contrary to the predominantly elitist vision of transnational communication, Jonathan White (2010a,b) highlights a profound indifference of ordinary citizens in the EU societies, their political disaffection and ambivalence towards the EU which can have depoliticizing effects. White shows how little Europeanization might take place in the everyday lives of ordinary citizens (for instance the taxi drivers whom he interviews in three EU countries) and argues in favor of the commonness in Europe rather than communication patterns (White 2010a). In the same vein, Adrian Favell (2008) explores the private lives of 60 "pioneers of European integration"; educated and highly-skilled "free movers" living in Amsterdam, Brussels, and London who decided to leave their society of origin in order to live in one of the Eurocities. Favell's work not only points to the citizens' enduring national attachment but also shows the resilience of the national society with its exclusionary social mechanisms and institutional prejudices generating considerable difficulties for even the highly educated European citizens from a different country.

The research by White and Favell shows that the problem of divide between Europeanization-transnationalization of the elite discourses and Europeanization-transnationalization of the citizens might still exist. It not only casts a shadow on the optimistic findings of the European public sphere research but also questions the applicability of the thin identity concepts in the context of distribution policies, solidarity and democratic deficit.

2.3.2 Collective identity, cooperation dilemmas and European citizenship

A further type of collective identity function relates to what is well-known in social sciences as dilemmas of collective action (Olson 1965; Chamberlin 1974: 707–716). These dilemmas delineate types of social situations in which individual rationality of interdependent actors leads to collectively irrational outcomes (Axelrod 1980: 3–25; Howard 1988: 203–213). Collective dilemmas can primarily be solved by using two methods. First, there is a third party with enough power to change the sub-optimal outcome of the strategic constellation between actors. Second, there is a social structure allowing for and stimulating repeated interactions between the same actors, thus stabilizing expectations about each other, and even developing social resources such as trustworthiness and credibility (Axelrod 1984, 1997). These social resources pertain to the reciprocity which is expected to be promoted in the EU as a stable institution organizing actors' interactions. Under the circumstances of reciprocity, conflict potential is likely to be reduced and the chances for cooperation increase. In this perspective, the EU is an example of a complex international organization which not only links different policy fields but also generates social norms and knowledge, thus giving rise to a social order (Gehring 2002). Even though interests of the politics actors are still the major motivation for political action, they become modulated by norms of appropriate behavior. Both social norms and reciprocity can thicken into collective identity, increasing the chances of cooperation even further. The socialization (whose congealed form is collective identity) is expected to modify actors' preference formation from idiosyncratic to more collective-orientated. This bridge-building socialization stresses the relevance of norms of appropriate behavior within a collective (Zürn and Checkel 2005: 1045–1079).

However, some authors argue that certain types of norms are more central than others for the social and political order of the EU and, consequently, for the development of a collective identity. Fundamental norms keep a community together, as they are linked with the polity level. For Antje Wiener, one of the fundamental norms is citizenship pertaining to the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights, and democracy e rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights, and democracy (Wiener 2006: 1308–1313; 2007: 1–7). The EU is an example not only of a complex organization, but also one that encompasses diverse European societies. Therefore, the socializing

function of citizenship appears to be particularly relevant. In other words, citizenship constitutes actors and their interests, as it provides individuals with an understanding as citizens, thus shaping interests and identities. The issue of citizenship mirrors the debate on how cohesive (to a certain extent) a collective identity based on fundamental freedom and human rights can be. Human rights promises to bridge differences and particular identities, but they also lack a thicker communitarian component, as they are universalistic in their appeal. We could argue that bridging differences is solely a precondition for a collective identity that entails attachment and reciprocity.

In this context, Andreas Føllesdal (2001: 313–343, esp. 315) regards European citizenship as a central measure for increasing reciprocity and trust among the citizens of Europe. Here, European citizenship is expected to act as an agent of collective identity. Citizenship as a special institution is likely to habituate individuals into citizens by redirecting their interests and perceptions (at least partially) towards the collective, whereby the individual inclination to free-ride is reduced and their confidence in the behavior of others increases. Therefore, institutions such as citizenship (with a built-in reference to collectivity) socialize individuals to abide by norms that generate cooperation.

Other authors go beyond the solution to the collective action dilemmas. Ireneusz P. Karolewski (2010a) regards European citizenship as a moderate integrative device, since shared citizenship identity does not eliminate differences, but can be expected instead to supersede rival identities. As citizenship can assume different forms, its variance finds its reflection in the thickness and strength of citizenship identity. Even though many different political identities can exist, such as party identities or ideological identities, citizenship identity represents a master identity which underpins citizens' behavior in the public space. However, the extent to which citizenship becomes consequential for collective identity depends on the type of citizenship and the type of identity technologies involved (see also Section 4). Rights-orientated citizenship leads to the model of liberal citizenship, obligation-accentuated citizenship spawns the republican model of citizenship and compliance-focused citizenship produces the caesarean model of citizenship. These models of citizenship are coupled with differently strong and resilient collective identities, and are thus associated with specific collective identities. However, only the republican model of citizenship is endowed with a strong and thick collective identity, as it propagates a cult of commonness in the public space and focuses on the duties of the citizens in a democratic community. In comparison to the strong collective identity of republican citizenship, the liberal model of citizenship is associated with a notion of weak or thin collective identity. This rights-based citizenship focuses primarily on the legal status of citizens. In this sense, it highlights the rights-component of citizenship and underplays obligations and compliance. In contrast, the caesarean model of citizenship shows features of strong collective identity in the cognitive sense, but it barely represents collective identity in the political sense. Therefore, caesarean citizenship is associated with reaffirmation of self-identity as a response to insecurity and existential anxiety.

However, there are increasingly more skeptical voices on the identity-creating power of European citizenship (cf. Besson and Utzinger 2008; Koopmans 2012; Schmidtke 2012). One of them is the work of Adrian Favell. Based on his aforementioned research on Eurostars, or residents of three major Eurocities of Amsterdam, London and Brussels (Favell 2008), Favell (2010) goes further and argues that the pioneers of the European mobility do not develop any European identity based on European citizenship. For instance, the political rights guaranteed by the Maastricht Treaty do not seem do play any relevant role in their lives, as Eurostars rarely vote in the cities of residence. If they are interested in politics at all, their interest is limited to the politics of their home country. Instead, they predominantly exercise European citizenship by reaping the benefits of mobility in Europe as employees, consumers, neighbors and public service users. Consequently, Eurostars legitimate the European integration project in a pragmatic way, rather than espousing any political European identity.

Furthermore, some authors even point to an anti-civic potential of European citizenship, in particular whenever it is directed at migrants of third countries as a way of establishing outside

boundaries. For instance, Karolewski (2012) stresses that the EU's immigration policies increasingly use images and scenarios of threat from bogus asylum seekers who are presented by EU agencies as a danger to the social integration and cohesion of European societies. Biometric technologies, detention facilities and new methods of surveillance are employed to establish exclusionary and restrictive immigration policies in the EU. Instead of generating trust and reciprocity, these exclusionary practices tend to uphold or even strengthen collective feelings of insecurity, and thus are likely to promote a culture of fear that makes citizens overreact to risks, rather than resolve problems of security. Against this backdrop, European citizenship is not only associated with transnational rights and mobility but also becomes linked to politics of insecurity (Huysmans 2006) and the demarcation between the citizen and the suspect, which can entail anti-civic effects. As the EU shifts its focus from political participation and democracy towards the field of internal security, it increasingly bases its legitimacy on the bureaucratic power of surveillance, control, separation and expulsion. This development of European citizenship is likely to exacerbate the existing democratic deficit of the EU through the expansion of executive powers, escape from democratic accountability and overall secrecy surrounding security issues. Therefore, it could plunge the EU even deeper into the democratic dilemma.

3 Concepts, notions and methods of research

3.1 Collective identity, problems of definition, and causes of confusion in European identity research

Despite the multi-disciplinary relevance of the identity concept, there is no definition that every scientist would agree on. Certainly, there is a comparatively broad consensus that the presence of an "other" is an indispensable part of the identity concept (e.g., Tajfel 1982: 104; Wendt 1994: 389; Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 47; Hettlage 1999: 244; Delanty 2000: 115; Schlesinger 2000: 1873; Croucher 2004: 40; Rumelili 2004: 32; Lepsius 2006: 114; Božić-Vrbančić et al. 2008: 1018; Anderson 2010: 46). But regarding the content of the term "identity," ambiguity is not only a typical trait of this notion but also its greatest impairment when it comes to its usefulness as an analytical category. For this reason, some researchers even recommend giving up the identity concept, since it is far too extensile to be of use for systematic inquiry (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 1). Other scholars agree that "the notion of identity means quite different things to different people" (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 4), which is why "identity" prohibits not only an applicable, definite and satisfying definition (Mayer and Palmowski 2004: 578) but also many approved methods of measuring (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 4, Huntington 2004: 41, Abdelal et al. 2009b, Fuchs 2011a). However, most students do not concur with the appeal of banishing the identity concept from the social sciences because identity is too important for social life. They acknowledge that in the long run, both individuals and human groups cannot live without identity. Having an identity, so the argument goes, is a "psychological imperative" as well as a "sociological constant" (Greenfeld 1999: 38). Doing identity research without reference to the concept of "identity" would be like research on democracy without the notion of "democracy." Instead of surrendering, we need an intensifying of our efforts in making sense of "identity" as an analytical category (see also Eder 2009).

Given the problems of defining identity commonly, the broad field of social sciences provides a variety of conceptualizations of both individual and collective identity (Owens et al. 2010). There are at least three main ideas of identity (Kaina and Karolewski 2006: 12): first, identity as something collectives or individuals have; second, identity as something a group or a person is; and third, identity as a resource persons or a group of people use, as something individuals or a collectivity do. Whereas the first and the second idea dominate in the social sciences, the third idea of identity can be found, for instance, in (socio-)linguistic approaches of identity research which is

linked to an ethnomethodological/conversation analytic perspective (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 215; Cramer 2010).

Naturally, any term in the social sciences is more or less contentious and some concepts are more open to dispute than others. Disagreement, however, is not synonymous with a lack of clarity. Since "research that employs unclear concepts [. . .] usually leads to poor analyses" (Nørgaard 2008: 4f), we need to elucidate the analytical categories we use. This is all the more important as our inability to unambiguously specify the key concept for research on European identity comes with the risk of producing a grave epistemological problem for at least three reasons.

First, without unambiguous concepts we cannot grasp reality in an appropriate way. Second, lacking a clear concept specification we also run the risk of developing unsuitable operationalizations and unfitting measuring instruments, which is why we cannot trust the validity and reliability of our empirical findings. Finally, the more the definitions of a key concept vary, the greater the problems for generalizing and communicating new insights since researchers often do not communicate with each other and tend to disregard the work of their colleagues.[4] In fact, there is some evidence in the research literature on European collective identity that scholars from different perspectives – for instance, from a normative or an empirical point of view – are prone to systematically ignoring each other. The emergence and consolidation of communicative islands, however, undermines the cumulative character of scientific research and hampers the progress of knowledge. Advancement in research on "European identity" accordingly depends on whether we are able to consolidate our empirical knowledge which, in turn, is contingent on our capability to make clear what we are talking about when we refer to "collective identity" in general and "European identity" in particular.

Examining a great deal of literature on European identity research, we found at least three theoretical issues which are worth discussing in greater detail. These theoretical shortcomings are the two-level problem in analyzing collective identities (Section 3.1.1), the issue of equating "belonging to" with "belonging together" (Section 3.1.2), and finally, the drawback of confusing collective identity with political regime support (Section 3.1.3). All of them contribute to scholarly disarray and make it not only increasingly difficult to navigate through the state of the art on European identity, but also impede advancement in the field of European identity research. In the following, we will confirm our critique and present a proposal for conceptualizing European identity research in order to ease observable scholarly schisms.

3.1.1 The two-level problem in analyzing collective identities

In their review of scholarly literature on identity, the sociologists Timothy Owens, Dawn Robinson and Lynn Smith-Lovin (Owens *et al.* 2010: 490) pointed out that "(m)ost definitions of collective identity include a notion of identification with shared features along with a recognition of shared opportunities and constraints afforded by those features." In his recent book, Thomas Risse (2010: 19) similarly noted that studying collective identity needs a clear distinction between the *subjects* and *objects* of identification. Put differently, inquiry on collective identity has to make clear *who* identifies with *whom* or *what* – and *why* or for *which reason*, we would like to add. Risse's helpful proposal benefits from being straightforward and uncomplicated. Its capacity to avoid confusion in research on European collective identity is nonetheless constricted, mainly due to the two-level nature of collective identities. Accordingly, *collective* identities relate to *two* subjects at different

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[4] Renowned political scientists, such as Sartori, do not only deplore a lack of conceptual rigor in our discipline but also the emergence of so-called "communicative islands". If scholars do not understand each other anymore because they increasingly use their own notions and concepts (since they better fit their research interests than other concepts) they tend to communicate in certain "conceptual circles" by more or less ignoring the work of other "circles". We believe this is also a consequence of the continuing specialization, fragmentation and hybridization of our discipline. To be sure, our comprehensive examination of the research literature on "European identity" reveals clear tendencies that certain conceptual or methodological "camps" neglect the work of other "camps".

analytical levels, namely *individual(s)* and/or a *group of people.* Therefore, Risse's analytical distinction can easily lose its clarity since a group of people can be both the subject and the object of identification. If individuals identify with a group of people, the former is the subject and the latter the object of identification. In contrast, a group of people is simultaneously object and subject of collective identity if the group identifies with itself as a collectivity. In that case, the group is a collective subject identifying with itself in terms of its key attributes, which makes it unique and different from other groups.

The two-level problem of collective identity is all the more confusing when some scholars fail to explicitly point out who precisely is the subject of a European collective identity (e.g., Pollack 2008; Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Eder 2009). Thus, in the case of research on *collective* identities, the distinction between subjects and objects, as well as the reasons for identification, should be supplemented by distinguishing between an *individual level* and a group or *collective level* (Smith 1992: 59f; Harrie 2006: 62; see also Duchesne 2008: 402, 403; Duchesne and Frognier 2008: 144, 145; Kaina 2009: 41).

This perspective offers two important advantages. First, a framework based on the aforementioned analytical distinctions might serve to structure the research agenda as well as to systemize different perspectives and several approaches in previous research on European collective identity (see Table 1. Even more importantly, such a framework might guide us to "good research" (Nørgaard 2008) by urging students of "European identity" to disclose their notion of "collective identity," justify their research focus and clarify their research puzzles.

Table 1: An analytical framework for research on European collective identity. Source: Kaina (2013).

		Levels of collective identity	
		Collective or group level	Individual level
Components of collective identity	Subject	a group of people	individuals
	Object	a group of people	a group of people
	Reason	e.g., • a common story • a set of values and principles • similar collective experiences • a common history and/or memory	individual's perception of sharing precious and exclusive commonalities with others

As for the second advantage, the framework shown in Table 1 is compatible with different perspectives in previous research on "European identity" by avoiding a scholarly schism between the collective and individual level of analyzing (European) collective identity. We will explain this argument in greater detail.

We agree with Fuchs (2011a: 35) that much confusion in the research on "European identity" can be traced back to at least two misunderstandings. The first disaccord exists between researchers with an *empirical* approach on the one hand and scholars with a *normative* approach on the other. The second misunderstanding is caused by the two-level problem in analyzing collective identities.

To begin with the first misunderstanding, empirical research on European collective identity mainly deals with the question of whether, to what extent and for what reasons EU citizens *identify* with the European Union as a group of people and their fellow European citizens (e.g., Duchesne and Frognier 1995; Duchesne 2008; Scheuer 1999; Risse 2002, 2004, 2010; Westle 2003a,b; Bruter 2005, 2007; Citrin and Sides 2004; McLaren 2006; Green 2007; Scheuer and Schmitt 2007,

2009; Kaina 2009; Thomassen 2009; Fligstein 2010). In contrast, normative research essentially seeks to answer the question of what the *content* or *substance* of a European collective identity could be. In doing so, most scholars dealing with the substance of "European identity" tend to offer mere normative arguments by deducing the content of a European collective identity from philosophical ideas, normative principles or legal documents (e.g., Delanty 1995; Habermas 2003; Habermas and Derrida 2003; Magnette 2007; Leiße 2009: 111–117; Přibáň 2009). However, there are also studies which empirically explore the substance of a "European identity" using, for instance, discourse analyses or surveys among elites and non-elites (e.g., Díez Medrano 2003, 2009; Bruter 2004a; Antonsich 2008; Cerutti 2008; Jenkins 2008; Schildberg 2010; Risse 2010). We accordingly feel that the momentous scholarly schism runs between the collective and individual levels of analyzing (European) collective identity. Thus, the second misunderstanding in analyzing (European) collective identity is caused by a biased focus on individuals who are seen as the subjects of collective identities.

Researchers coming from a socio-psychological or sociological tradition consider collective identity to be equivalent to the "emotional sub-dimension" of *social identity* which, in turn, is part of the individual's self-concept (Esser 2001: 342, 345, Grundy and Jamieson 2007, Rutland *et al.* 2008, Fuchs 2011a). Those scholars consistently analyze collective identities at an individual analytical level since the *subject* of collective identity is a person who is related to a group of people in a certain way. In fact, many students on collective identity in general and European collective identity in particular consider any kind of collective identity as *feelings of belonging* to certain human groups (e.g., Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001: 754; Westle 2003a: 455; Croucher 2004: 40; Bruter 2005: 1). The conceptualization of collective identity in terms of an emotional component of an individual's self-concept has both pros and cons. The most important benefit is seen in the possibility to study collective identities at the micro level of societies – that is, the level of individuals (Westle 2003a: 455; Bruter 2005: 8). This advantage, however, is weakened by two shortcomings: first, putting the focus on individuals, and second, the overemphasis of feelings. The latter problem we will discuss in Section 3.1.2.

As for the problem of putting the focus on individuals, we have argued above that not only individuals but also a *group* of people can be studied as the subject of collective identities – and several scholars do so (e.g., Delanty 1995; Habermas 2003; Habermas and Derrida 2003; Huntington 2004; Eder 2009). We can explore this thought by referring to two main ideas of identity that are prominent in studies on collective identities: first, identity as something a person or group *is*; and second, identity as something individuals or collectives *have* (see Section 3.1). The first idea is tantamount to a statement of "who I am" or "who we are." Accordingly, it basically relates to a *definition* in terms of describing a self-image or self-concept, a *meaning* of "me" and "us" (as for the group level, see Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001: 754). Thus, identity as "being" helps to *classify* things, people or groups of people (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 206). The second idea intrinsically refers to a *justification*. Since "having an identity" relates to "associating oneself with something or someone else" (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 206), identity as "having" always implies more or less unexpressed reasons for a subject's identification with something.

The distinction of identity as "being" and "having" is strictly different from Kantner's (2006: 507f) proposal to distinguish between "numerical identification (or categorization)" and "qualitative identity." According to Kantner (2006: 508), "numerical identification" means that all objects of the material, social and subjective world can be identified in space and time by a *neutral observer*. Our proposition takes this for granted and relates both ideas of identity as "being" and "having" to *self-reflections* of people or a group of people (see also Stets and Burke 2000: 224).

Due to the two-level nature of collective identities, it certainly makes sense to study both ideas of identity as "being" and "having" at an individual as well as collective level (see cells A–D in Figure 1). We simply must be precise about what we are referring to and what we are interested in whenever we speak of the emergence of a "European identity."

	Levels of collective identity		
	Collective or group level	Individual level	
Identity as "being"	**B** Collective self-image; group definition (Who are *we*?)	**A** Individual's self-concept; attribution to a group (Who am *I*?)	*vertical* (sense of belonging to)
Identity as "having"	**D** Reasons for self-representation as a "we"	**C** Reasons for individual's identification with a group and its members	*horizontal* (sense of belonging together)

(Left label spanning both rows: **Ideas of identity**. Right label spanning both rows: **Individual–group relationships**.)

Figure 1: Configuring research foci in studying European collective identity.

On the one hand, we can study the individuals' self-concept related to a group in that we ask, for instance, how far the Europeans consider themselves Europeans, which pertains to "who I am" (see cell A) (e.g., Westle 2003a; McLaren 2006; Bruter 2005; Green 2007; Grundy and Jamieson 2007; Scheuer and Schmitt 2007, 2009; Duchesne 2008; Caporaso and Kim 2009; Fligstein 2009; Kaina 2009; Thomassen 2009; Risse 2010). But we also can deal with group definition and the image of the European collective self when asking, for instance, which contents give meaning to "who we Europeans are" (see cell B) (e.g., Delanty and Rumford 2005; Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Kaelble 2009). In this context, we can also study the degree of contestation of a "European identity" since *meaning* "is the product of social activity, established inter-subjectively and may always be a matter of agreement or disagreement" (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 206; Abdelal *et al.* see also 2009a: 9).

On the other hand, we can empirically scrutinize the reasons for which EU citizens identify with the collectivity of EU citizens (see cell C) (e.g., Bruter 2005; Green 2007; Grundy and Jamieson 2007; Kaina 2009, 2010). Furthermore, we can try to find out: (1) what the reasons are for why "we as Europeans" can be considered a collectivity or a "we" (e.g., Caporaso and Kim 2009; Schönberger 2009; Thomassen 2009); and (2) how this collective sense of "we-ness" is to be constructed (see cell D) (e.g., Cerutti 2008; Kraus 2008; Eder 2009; Karolewski 2010a). In other words, the individual level of collective identity describes a person's attribution to a collectivity or a group (definition) that is regarded as significant and precious for the individual's self (justification). In contrast, the group level of collective identity refers to the self-image of a group (definition) and the reasons for seeing "us" as a collectivity and a "we" (justification). As to the group level, justification is primarily necessary to act inwardly and outwardly as a collectivity; group definition is mainly used to present the group both internally and externally as a community. This way, the group gives its members certain reasons to identify with it and enables others from outside

the group to recognize it as a collectivity. Collective identities are both internally and externally defined (Schlesinger 2000: 1875, Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 6) and need the presence of a "significant other" (e.g., Tajfel 1982: 104, Wendt 1994: 389, Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 47, Delanty 2000: 115, Schlesinger 2000: 1873, Rumelili 2004: 32).

We believe the structure of the cells A–D in Figure 1 is suitable for representing not only different approaches of political scientists but also various positions of other disciplines in research on European collective identity, such as the diverse perspectives of sociologists, socio-psychologists, historians and philosophers. In the following Section 3.1.2, we offer some arguments on the second issue of analyzing European collective identity.

3.1.2   The need for distinguishing between "belonging to" and "belonging together"

Aside from the two-level nature of collective identities, Bettina Westle (2003b) argued some time ago that collective identities are based on two distinct kinds of individual–group relationships (see also Magnette 2007: 668). First, a person's self-attribution to a collectivity in terms of someone's sense of belonging to a group does admittedly need the group's acknowledgement (Meyer 2004: 22). Therefore, collective identity is based on a vertical relationship between individual and group (Westle 2003b: 120) resulting from the individual's experience of belonging by collective recognition. We relate this vertical type of individual–group relationships to the idea of identity as "being" and the individual analytical level of collective identity (see cell A in Figure 1).

Second, the process of collective identity formation additionally depends on two crucial preconditions. It presupposes not only the common will of belonging together (Kocka 1995: 29), but also the group members' mutual acceptance as associates of one and the same collective (Gellner 1983: 7) and, in this special sense, the mutual acknowledgement as equals (Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 74). Consequently, collective identity is also based on horizontal relationships between the group members (Westle 2003b: 129) in terms of a sense of belonging together. In contrast to the vertical kind of individual–group relationships, horizontal relations between group members can apply both at the collective and the individual level of collective identity, as well as to the idea of identity as "having" (see cells C and D of Figure 1). The first choice is again justified by the two-level nature of collective identity since a sense of belonging together cannot be seen only as a feature of a collectivity, but is also one part of an individual's psychology. The second decision is based on the above argument: Since "having an identity" relates to "associating oneself with something or someone else" (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003: 206 – emphasis added), identity as "having" always implies unexpressed reasons for a subject's identification with something.

These two different modes of individual–group relationships not only serve an analytical purpose but also pose a methodological challenge. In European identity research, the materialization of a European collective identity is said to be equivalent to a gradual emergence of a sense of community among EU citizens. The methodological challenge at hand refers to the following question: is the people's sense of belonging to a group – in terms of a vertical relationship between an individual and a group – really a fair indicator for measuring their sense of community and sense of belonging together in terms of horizontal relations between group members?

As we have found in the European identity literature, most empirical studies on a mass European identity start from the theoretical premise that an individual's collective identity can be considered as a feeling of belonging to a group (see also Section 3.1.2). A lot of research on European collective identity therefore provides empirical analyses on how Europeans' feelings of attachment to the European Union have been developed over time. Here, we are facing the second problem of conceptualizing collective identity (see Section 3.1.1); along with other scholars, we assume that feelings of belonging to a group cannot emerge before the individual is aware of her/his group membership and – more importantly – before the group has become relevant for the person's self-concept. Social psychologists therefore argue that collective identity is built up

on the psychological existence of the community (Castano 2004). Referring to the salience of a collective identity, European identity research still lacks systematic inquiries on how, why and under what circumstances a collective identity is to be activated (see, however Mols *et al.* 2009; Anderson 2010). Consolidated knowledge about those activation mechanisms will be conducive to empirical research on identity conflicts since "competing or layered identities within collectives can create opportunities for conflict and fractionalization" (Owens *et al.* 2010: 494, Hooghe and Marks 2009, Kaina 2009: 64, 72–83). Similarly, Božić-Vrbančić *et al.* (2008: 1018) are critical that the "question of power is completely ignored" in research on multiple identities in Europe even though not all identifications are equal.

More than thirty years ago, Henri Tajfel (1974, 1978, 1982) already defined a person's knowledge of belonging to a group as one component of group identification (Tajfel 1982: 70, 102). According to his work, collective identities of individuals contain at least three attitudinal elements: cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations. With regard to cognitive orientations, social categorization and attribution serve as benchmarks which display commonalities between "me" and "others" and designate dissimilarities between "me" and "other others."

Some sociologists who support a social constructionist view on collective identity challenge this outlook (Jamieson 2002; Fuss and Grosser 2006), which leads us to the issue of equating "belonging to" with "belonging together." These scholars highlight the distinction between processes of categorizing self and others versus processes of coming to feel a sense of common identity or belonging together with others (Fuss and Grosser 2006: 213). "Being categorized," so their argument goes, "does not automatically mean to take on this label as an aspect of self-identity or to see oneself as sharing something with others so categorized. If and only if the category has profound consequences in terms of changed patterns of social interactions (does) the assignment to a certain category become [. . .] relevant for self-identity" (Fuss and Grosser 2006: 213f – emphasis added; likewise: Kantner 2006: 507).

This argument allows for two important insights. First, cognitive perceptions in terms of categorization and attribution are obviously not sufficient in order to conceptualize collective identity. This general detection, however, does not preclude that cognitive orientations are a necessary element of the collective identity concept at the individual level. The observation that collective identities are widely artificial rather than naturally evolved (Cederman 2001a: 141–143) may underpin this argument.

Some students on nationalism, however, dispute the idea of collective identities in terms of synthetic constructions. There are two main theories that explain collective identity formation in nation-states (Cederman 2001a: 141ff; 2001b: 10): essentialism and constructivism. Whereas "essentialists" believe that political collective identities result from the given cultural "raw material" within a society, "constructivists" stress the active role of intellectuals and political entrepreneurs, for instance, in manipulating cultural symbols and mobilizing ethnic or cultural cleavages (Cederman 2001a: 142). For the time being, the current position suggests that, compared to the competing essentialist paradigm, the constructivist school of thought is a length ahead.

In fact, many scholars regard collective identities as social constructions of difference (Giesen 1993) which *also* rest upon processes of categorization and attribution (Eisenstadt 1999: 373). The "stuff" of these social constructions may be very different and covers, for instance, norms, values and symbols (Hettlage 1999: 245f), but also primordial features such as gender or race (Giesen 1993; Croucher 2004: 39f). As a result of social constructions, *frames* of assumed or real characteristics provide distinct patterns of interpretation which, in turn, back up intersubjective perceptions (Hettlage 1999: 245). The social constructionist argument – and this is the second insight – nonetheless highlights that we should make an analytical distinction between individuals' sense of "belonging to" and their sense of "belonging together" since individuals' attribution to a group is different from their belief in sharing something with other group members (see also Figure 1).

There is also empirical evidence corroborating this line of thought since people may have a sense of belonging to a group without having a sense of belonging together with other group members. In their study on European collective identity among young adults, Daniel Fuss and Marita Grosser (2006: 228) found that some young people considered their sense of belonging to Europe as a consequence of their national citizenship status and origin: being a German is accordingly tantamount to belonging to the EU and, consequently, being a European, since Germany is a member state of the European Union. Hence, Fuss and Grosser call this kind of European collective identity "status identity" since it is only a technical and unemotional statement of "belonging to" without having any idea of "belonging together" (Fuss and Grosser 2006: 229, 236).

Against this background, another crucial question arises: how do cognitive perceptions of belonging mutate into emotional bonds? In other words, what turns people in a group, who are members of the same social category, into a community? This is a very important question because community membership has a "higher" quality than merely belonging to a social category. The specific value of communities results from feelings of mutual commitment between the group members (Citrin and Sides 2004: 165; likewise: Eder 2009: 430; Risse 2010: 22). Due to these feelings of commitment, the awareness of "belonging to" becomes identical to the awareness of "belonging together" which, in turn, provides the background for one's willingness to show solidarity as well as readiness to make a personal sacrifice for the well-being of the collective and fellow group members.

Overlooking the research literature, there are several answers to the aforementioned question. Some scholars stress that people's awareness of "belonging together" is mainly constructed by elites and, as such, an artificial artefact (e.g., Giesen 1993; Cederman 2001a). Other students stress that (horizontal) feelings of togetherness develop inasmuch as people believe that the group is a significant collective whose state affects the fate of its members and which is valuable enough to give the group a specific worth (Estel 1997: 79). This argument is based on the plausible supposition that individuals aspire to such memberships which give some kind of gratification (Tajfel 1982: 103; see also Abdelal *et al.* 2009a: 4). The Social Identity Theory (SIT), originated by Henri Tajfel (1974, 1978, 1982), claims, for instance, that both the maintenance and enhancement of self-esteem is an important motivational underpinning of someone's identification with a collectivity (Stets and Burke 2000: 232). Collectives or groups become valuable if their insiders share "precious" commonalities that make a difference to outsiders (Estel 1997: 79f). Large collectives, however, may become worthwhile for their members only if people can assume that their fellow group members share those precious commonalities. According to the oft-cited phrase by Benedict Anderson (1991), large collectives with millions of members are "imagined communities."

Many other researchers regard human interrelationships and social interactions as the fundamental driving force for an emerging sense of belonging together in that they convert cognitive perceptions into affective bonds (of many: Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 74; Giesen 1999: 134; Delanty 1999: 269; Eisenstadt 1999: 372f; Schlesinger 2000: 1874; Jamieson 2002; Jones and van der Bijl 2004: 346f; Mayer and Palmowski 2004: 577; Fuss and Grosser 2006: 212, 215). The group members' interrelationships and social interactions transform assumed or real commonalities into emotionally justified commitments. Taking recourse from these emotive certitudes, the *collective self* can experience continuity and develop the collective belief in a common fate (Smith 1992: 58). But this process depends on two essential conditions: people's mutual acknowledgment as group members (Gellner 1983: 7) and the modelling and stereotyping of common characteristics that make a difference to others (Hettlage 1999: 246). Based on certain "codes of distinctions" (Giesen 1993; Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 74), strategies of inclusion and exclusion are used in order to define a border between inside and outside, in-group and out-group, "us" and "them."

Decades ago, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) already posited that collective identities require the definition of both in-group and out-group. Emerging collective identities are traced back to borderlines inasmuch as the in-group's features primarily matter in relation to the perceived

dissimilarity of out-groups (Tajfel 1982: 106). In this respect, collective identities also imply an evaluative aspect in that they rest on a process of social comparisons. Taking up this point, we see another void in research on European identity. We call this challenge the border issue. When it comes to a European collective identity, there is a great empirical void concerning the way of "othering" and demarcation (see, e.g., Lucarelli 2008; Kaina 2010). Thus, we need more insights on how social boundaries are created in European collective identity building. Since "boundaries identify who is and is not a member of a collective" (Owens *et al.* 2010: 491), we should strengthen our efforts to learn more about the strategies and practices the group of EU citizens uses to construct a supranational collective identity (Owens *et al.* 2010: 491). In particular, we still know far too little about EU citizens' psychological processes of delineation against out-groups (see, however, Rippl *et al.* 2005; McLaren 2006; Boehnke and Rippl 2007; Kaina 2010). Our knowledge urgently needs to be extended in this regard since collective identity-building always rests on a process of social comparison. In order to be effective, at least one contrast group and one relevant dimension of comparison is needed (Leiße 2009: 127). However, recent empirical evidence suggests that it is difficult for EU citizens to reach an agreement on what the comparison with "others" should refer to and who precisely the relevant other, the out-group, is Kaina (2010). Accordingly, we also need to answer the question of whether the European Union is even capable of developing a European collective identity. In this context, we might also profit from sociological work which distinguishes between three types of symbolic boundaries – i.e., moral, socioeconomic and cultural borders (Lamont 1992, cited by Owens *et al.* 2010: 491; Bach see also 2010).

Regarding the relationship between in-group and out-group, scholars on collective identities in general and collective European identity in particular debate the "dark side" of collective identity formation (e.g., Kohli 2000; Fuchs *et al.* 1995; Delanty 1995: 149–155; Stråth 2002; Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 443f). The gloomy facet of collective identity is traced back to contestation and even conflict between in-group and out-group (Delanty 1999: 269; Scheuer 1999: 30). Several scholars argue that collective identities do not necessarily rest on averseness to others because strangers do not have to be enemies (Delanty 1995: 5, Delanty 1999: 268, Jamieson see also 2002; Neumann 2001: 143). Nevertheless, the in-group/out-group antagonism is a latent phenomenon which can be activated under certain circumstances such as the insiders' perception that outsiders pose a threat to the in-group (Rippl *et al.* 2005; McLaren 2006). In this situation, insiders will react with discrimination against outsiders in order to protect the collective self from perceived or real, substantial or symbolic "attacks." Accordingly, political science is facing the challenge of providing answers to the question of how the strategies of inclusion and exclusion as well as demarcation can be reconciled with democratic postulates of equality and freedom.

All in all, delimitation and the group's recognition of individual membership are different sides of the same coin. Accordingly, it is likely that vertical relationships between individual and group generally precede the emergence of a horizontal sense of belonging together and are a necessary piece of a sense of community. However, when something predates another thing, both things cannot be equal and should be analytically distinguished.

The concept of "belonging to" raises another theoretical problem in empirical, individual-centered research on European collective identity. That issue is basically caused by scholars' uncertainty over what the object of people's sense of "belonging to" is: Europe, the European Union or the collective of Europeans? We agree with Sonia Lucarelli (2008: 23) that the very idea of collective identities refers to (a group of) people. Even when we speak about the "identity" of interest groups, social movements, political parties, business companies or international organizations, we actually mean a group of people. Accordingly, our conceptualization of collective identity differs from the proposition by Klaus Eder (2009: 427, 443), who defines collective identities as narrative constructions which are the objects of identification. Our argument is that the object of collective identity is always a group of people while there can be a variety of reasons for identification, such as a common story (e.g., Tilly 2003; Eder 2009; Sassatelli 2010), a set of values and principles (e.g.,

Cerutti 2008) or similar experiences (e.g., McMillan and Chavis 1986; Kielmansegg 1996). The point, however, is that scholars' uncertainty about the object of people's sense of "belonging to" brings about another conceptual deficit, namely confusing collective identity with political regime support. This theoretical weakness is the topic of the next sub-section.

3.1.3   The problem of confusing collective identity with political regime support

Research on people's attitudes towards politics has exceptionally benefitted from the seminal work by David Easton (1965, 1979). His concept of political support has inspired generations of scholars who have empirically scrutinized citizens' political orientations. Easton's analytical framework is based on modes and objects of political support. Without going into greater detail, it is sufficient to mention diffuse and specific support as modes of political support. As for the objects of political support, Easton distinguished between political authorities, political regime and political community. He theoretically justified these delineations by arguing that there are different consequences for the long-term endurance of a political system depending on both the modes and objects of support. Accordingly, diffuse support is far more significant than specific support, and support of the political community by most community members is the most fundamental precondition for any political system to sustain. Otherwise, as in the case of civil wars or contested borders, it is difficult to consolidate a political regime and any form of established governance. Political regime support, in turn, is more important for a political system in order to persist than citizens' support of authorities. While a long-standing decline in regime support will result in regime change, the general answer to decreasing citizen support for political authorities is replacing these authorities with other ones. Accordingly, scholars also speak of levels of political support. Whereas citizen support of the political community is indispensable for a political system to persist, support of political authorities is not. Regime support, in turn, is on a level in between. In fact, several scholars who study European collective identity at the individual level lean on Easton since he described diffuse support of the political community as some sense of community among the community members (e.g., Weßels 2007; Fuchs et al. 2009c,a; Fuchs 2011a). However, there are also researchers who confuse European collective identity with EU citizens' support for the European Union as a form of governance. One prominent example is the work by Michael Bruter (2003, 2004b, 2005) on the emergence of a mass European identity. He constantly distinguishes two "components" of a European collective identity among the Europeans (see also Thomassen 2009: 188). The first component he calls "civic identity," the second one "cultural identity." Whereas "cultural identity" refers to citizens' identification with a human community to which they feel they belong, "civic identity" relates to citizens' identification with a political system (Bruter 2004b: 189f, Bruter 2005: 11ff, Bruter 2007: 265, Bruter 2009: 1500). The definition as well as parts of the operationalization of Bruter's "civic component" of European collective identity is more akin to Easton's political regime support rather than expressing a dimension of Europeans' sense of community in terms of a sense of "belonging together." Thus, it does not come as a surprise that Bruter frequently finds more evidence for a "civic identity" among the Europeans as opposed to a "cultural identity" because his "civic component" at least partly measures citizens' support of the European political regime (Bruter 2004b, 2005, 2007).

Apart from Bruter's misleading conceptualization, there are further examples of confounding collective identity with political regime support in the research on European collective identity. While Bos (2009: 74) claims that a European sense of community refers to collective identification with European institutions beyond the national member states, Magnette (2007: 676) argues that EU citizens' belief in the cardinal principles of European law and citizens' acceptance of the procedures and institutions that create and implement those principles is already a kind of European identity. Thomas Risse (2010: 26), in turn, further complicates the matter by supposing that "identities pertaining to territorial entities [. . .] describe visions of what are regarded as good

and just political and social orders." According to Easton, however, such visions of a good and just political and social order analytically relate to the regime level of political support rather than the community level. Due to different consequences for the long-term endurance of a political system, we should generally keep to Easton's helpful analytical framework.

Summing up the most important arguments of this section, we would like to stress seven arguments:

1. We apply the notion of "collective identity" to (a group of) people.

2. Collective identity can be seen as a complex phenomenon which comprehends emotional facets as well as cognitive, evaluative and behavioral aspects.

3. Collective identity can be studied at two different analytical levels by differentiating between an individual level and a collective or group level. Accordingly, it is necessary to learn more about how the individual and collective levels of "European identity" are linked to each other (see, e.g., Díez Medrano 2009). For instance, how does the European Union's self-image and group definition affect people's reasons for their identification with their fellow EU citizens as well as the EU as a group of Europeans?

4. We distinguish three components of collective identity, namely subject and object of and reason for identification. Against this background, it is also important to extend our empirical knowledge about the impacts on the reasons for the EU's self-representation as a group as well as the reasons for citizens' identification with both the EU as a collective and their fellow European citizens. By doing so, it might be helpful to distinguish between polity, politics and policy. For example: does the EU's "democraticness" (polity) affect people's willingness to identify with the European Union and its members? Is the increasing politicization of the European Union (politics) detrimental to the emergence of a shared sense of community among EU citizens? Do we find systematic evidence that some EU policies have a beneficial bearing on developing a European collective identity whereas other policies get in the way of it (see, e.g., Lucarelli 2008)?

5. It might be helpful for further research on "European identity" to change the definition at the individual level of analysis in that we speak of one's identification with a group and its members rather than feelings of belonging. The identification term includes several parts of individuals' orientation towards groups and underlines that identities are process-like and context-dependent (Wendt 1994: 386; Hettlage 1997: 322; Neumann 2001: 144; Rumelili 2004: 32f; Harrie 2006: 78; Vobruba 2007: 79; Duchesne 2008: 163; Lucarelli 2008: 26; Rutland *et al.* 2008; Eder 2009: 442; Mols *et al.* 2009; Cramer 2010: 621).

6. The identification term avoids the common confusion of "belonging to" with "belonging together." Since "belonging to" and "belonging together" convey different modes of individual–group relationships, we should no longer confound them with one another. As a result, a sense of community among EU citizens should be operationalized by Europeans' (horizontal) sense of "belonging together" rather than their (vertical) sense of "belonging to."

7. We should be skeptical when scholars infer the emergence of a European sense of community among EU citizens from the dynamics of political regime support at the supranational level. Supporting EU membership, for instance, is not equivalent to the Europeans' sense of community.

Evidently, many of the characteristics named above go with a multitude of collectives. Research on collective European identity, however, deals with the emergence of a political collective identity – that is, a "social identity that (has) political consequences" (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 6).

Political collective identities refer to political communities (Bruter 2005: 1) by leading people to imagine that their group deserves the right of "substantial sovereignty, that is, ultimate decision-making authority" (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 6). Even though the relevance of a European collective identity has become more important as the supranational system of governance has developed (see Section 1), the problems of defining collective identity commonly hamper systematic inquiry on this subject. This problem is complicated even further by the difficulties of methods, operationalization and measurement.

3.2 European identity and the ambiguity of evidence: Challenges of methods, operationalization and measurement

When it comes to the issue of methods, our updated review of the state of the art on European identity research is necessarily limited. One the one hand, the severe theoretical problems we have discussed in the previous sub-section reveal lasting problems in specifying the main concept of (European) collective identity. For this reason, previous research on European identity lacks definite analytical instruments for empirically covering and delimiting its main object of study. Accordingly, empirical studies on European identity are still fragmentary and widely disconnected from each other. On the other hand, our line of arguments in Section 3.1 is a proposal in character and has yet to be debated in the scientific community. Thus, our overview on the problems of methods, operationalization and measurement cannot systematically follow the suggestions of the previous sub-section. Nevertheless, we will occasionally refer to the arguments of Section 3.1 to illustrate the tight relationship between the research puzzle and the choice of method, concept specification and operationalization.

Studies on collective identity in general and European identity in particular vary in how collective identity is treated as a variable. Thus, collective identity can be empirically analyzed both as a dependent and an independent variable (Abdelal *et al.* 2009a: 3, Kaina 2006, 2009). In the first place, the increased scientific interest in European identity has generated a multitude of publications that seek to understand and explain the emergence of a collective identity at the European level. As we have argued above, however, it is not always clear what the subject and object are or what the reason for an emerging European collective identity is. For further progress in European identity research, operationalizations should clarify the main concept by taking the three components of collective identity into account (see Table 1). In the second place, studies seek to explore the effect of European identity on other phenomena of interest. For instance, empirical evidence for the degree and forcefulness of we-identity EU citizens express shall substantiate assumptions on both the promising chances of and severe obstacles to the endurance of the European integration project. Other students are interested in the European collective self-image and deal with the question of whether and, if so, how a "European identity" has a bearing on the EU's common foreign policy and the EU's strategic action within a global security architecture.

3.2.1   Studying European identity as a dependent variable

Research concentrating on European identity as a dependent variable can be arranged in order of three series of questions.

The first group searches for answers to the classical questions of collective identity formation: "Who are we?" and "Who does and does not belong to us for what reasons?" Referring to cell B in Figure 1, those studies mainly deal with "identity as being" at the analytical group level of collective identity in that they seek to define a European collective self-image and search for answers to the question of which contents give a meaning to "who we Europeans are" (see Section 3.1.1). Thus, the first group essentially deals with the possible substance of a common European identity (e.g., Delanty 1995; Bruter 2004b; Citrin and Sides 2004; Meyer 2004). Some students seek to

deduce such a substance of a European collective identity from philosophical ideas and normative principles or from legal documents, whereas other scholars employ discourse analyses or surveys among elites and non-elites (see Section 3.1.1). However, studies in this field of European identity research are still piecemeal. They could benefit from a mixed-method-approach by systematically using and forcefully combining qualitative and quantitative research methods such as cognitive mapping, quantitative content analysis, surveys, discourse analysis and ethnographical tools (see also Abdelal *et al.* 2009a).

The second group of scholars dealing with European identity as a dependent variable is interested in the prospects of a self-sustaining development of a European sense of togetherness among EU citizens as well as the obstacles to a shared sense of community at the European level. Exploring (collective) identity as a dependent variable at the individual level is furthermore focused on the issue if something "is causing a person to adopt a particular identity" (Abdelal *et al.* 2009a: 3). Referring to cell A in Figure 1, many scholars in this group explore the EU citizens' self-concept related to social groups by dealing with the question of how far the Europeans consider themselves Europeans (see Section 3.1.1). Other students empirically scrutinize the reasons for which EU citizens identify with the collectivity of EU citizens and their fellow European citizens. These researchers are interested in European identity as "having" at the individual level of analysis (see cell C in Figure 1) and want to learn more about the reasons for the Europeans' (non-)identification with the European collectivity and their fellow European citizens (see Section 3.1.1). Notwithstanding the current shortcomings of valid data and suitable gauges (see Section 3.2.2), studies of this group are methodically dominated by surveys and standardized questionnaires. Recently, however, there is also a rising interest in applying experimental methods in political science research (e.g., McDermott 2002a,b; Morton and Williams 2008, 2010; Faas and Huber 2010). Empirical inquiry on a mass European identity could benefit from this trend by adding experimental methods to the classical survey instrument (see also Abdelal *et al.* 2009a).

The third group of students is mainly interested in two issues circled around cell D in Figure 1: (1) what the reasons are for why "we as Europeans" can be considered a "we"; and (2) how this collective sense of "we-ness" is to be constructed (see Section 3.1.1). Again, discourse analysis, ethnography and content analysis are used to explore these questions empirically. Some scholars also use quantitative data analysis both at the individual and the aggregate level of analysis in order to corroborate the reasons of why "we Europeans" can be considered a collectivity. Other students analyze how European identity is constructed by narratives (e.g., Sassatelli 2010; Eder 2011), language (e.g., Cramer 2010), value interpretation in the course of policy-making (Lucarelli 2008) or symbols and foundational myth-making (see Section 4). Those studies on European identity construction, however, partly merge with an idea of identity as "doing" (see Section 3.1.1).

Although it is hardly possible to look through all the literature available, most studies obviously vary between doubt and skepticism on the one hand and optimism and confidence on the other. Whereas some scholars claim there is clear evidence of an emerging European identity among EU citizens (e.g., Everts and Sinnott 1995; Niedermayer 1995; Scheuer 1999; Schild 2001; Risse 2002, 2004; Citrin and Sides 2004; Bruter 2005; Hurrelmann 2005; Deutsch 2006; Scheuer and Schmitt 2007; Cramer 2010: 620; Fligstein 2010; Fuchs 2011b); other scholars express their doubts by partly pointing at empirical findings of their own (e.g., Duchesne and Frognier 1995; Meinhof 2004; Kaina 2009) and partly stressing the lack of central preconditions for developing a European collective identity (e.g., Grimm 1993, 1995; Kielmansegg 1996, 2003; Scharpf 1999; see also Section 2.2).

Regardless of the large number of publications, systematic and longitudinal empirical research on this topic is still in its infancy. This is true for both qualitative empirical approaches and quantitative methods. Of course, there is no recipe for examining the impact of several factors on the forwardness and backwardness of a developing European collective identity in a systematic manner. The following, however, is an attempt to systematize a number of arguments made by various scholars.

The first suggestion is that it can be useful to analytically distinguish between factors referring to individual and non-individual aspects (see also Figure 2). It is important, however, that these factors are linked to each other in many ways. The famous macro-micro-macro problem that highlights the challenge of theory building in the social sciences in general also has to be taken into account in European identity research. Needless to say, this expectation cannot be met by a review. Due to the huge theoretical challenge for the scientific community, we present Figure 2 without causal arrows. The dotted line between individual and non-individual aspects, however, symbolizes the context-dependency of individuals' predispositions. In quantitative research on political attitudes and behavior, it is now common to use multi-level analyses to model the impact of the social context on the individuals' attitudes and political behavior (recently, e.g., Van Deth and Tausendpfund 2013).

Accordingly, non-individual aspects can be seen as a class of exogenous contextual factors and endogenous opportunity structures which influence the manifestation of a European collective identity. The former refers to events or circumstances which originate outside the community's borders and threaten the collective fate. This idea is derived from some researchers' proposition that the citizens' sociotropic perceptions of an external threat as well as the collective experience of danger from outside – for instance, in the case of war, terrorism, environmental catastrophes or growing social and economic encumbrances due to increasing competition pressure from outside – may strengthen the group members' sense of community (Simmel 1955, Huntington 2004: 24, Förster 2007: 149).
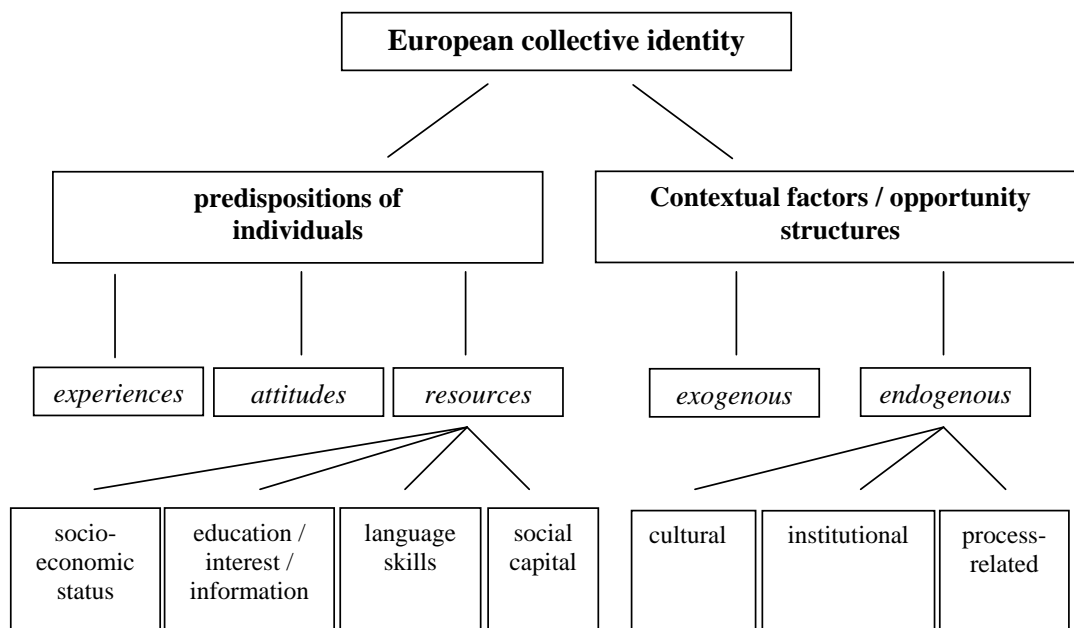
Figure 2: Systematizing possible influences on developing a European collective identity

Endogenous opportunity structures could be based on cultural, institutional or process-related features. It is impossible to completely list all the relevant factors in this context. Instead, some examples shall illustrate the attempt to structure some of those aspects. The cultural sub-division encompasses, for instance, the existence or absence of common values, norms and principles as well as common symbols, traditions and memories. Aside from these factors, the availability of a convincing communal or integration ideology may also play an important role in promoting a shared sense of community (e.g., Easton 1979: 332; Westle 1999: 22, 95; referring to a "founding

myth": Grimm 2004: 455ff). In this context, Božić-Vrbančić *et al.* (2008: 1016f) deplore the EU's "inability to make affective appeal to its citizens (and) construct affective libidinal bonds." The institutional branch can be taken literally: it refers to the existence and normative quality of the political infrastructure at the European level, its effectiveness and performance. This set of factors comprises not only supranational institutions of governance but also the development of an intermediary system at the European level, including a European party system and European interest organizations (e.g., Leinen and Schönlau 2003; Hix 2005: 186–192, 208–231; Immerfall 2006: 77–94).

Finally, we have to admit that within the proposed structure, the process-related section is still the most blurred one. This branch of factors influencing the conditions for developing a European collective identity and a shared sense of community might contain, for instance, the extent and development of a European public (e.g., Eder *et al.* 1998; Eder and Kantner 2000; Eder 2003; Klein *et al.* 2003; de Vreese 2007 – see also Section 2.3.1). Moreover, the process of an increasing similarity between the EU member states with regard to prosperity, welfare and economic growth could be an aspect of this group of impact factors. This idea is underpinned by the assumption of psychologists that status differences between group members impede the process of homogenization inside the group because this kind of discrepancy cements discrimination in terms of stereotypes or prejudices (Förster 2007: 149, 248). Conversely, it can be assumed that decreasing heterogeneity not only weakens the opinion that "the others" are different from "us," but also fosters the perception of commonalities (Wendt 1994: 390). Furthermore, the process-related cluster of possible influences on the emergence of a common European identity points out that collective identities in large-scale communities are artificially generated constructs. That is, a common sense of community will be shaped by discourses (e.g., Stråth 2002; Suszycki 2006) inasmuch as collective identities among strangers refer to "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991).

The other side of the coin indicates certain predispositions of individuals. Many scholars emphasize that experiences play a crucial role in developing we-feelings and a shared sense of community (e.g., Haller 1999: 269; Bruter 2004b: 208; Fuss, García-Albacete, and Rodriguez-Monter 2004: 280f; Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 14). This could not only be real experiences, such as meeting other people, but also so-called parasocial "encounters" via internet, TV, radio, magazines and newspapers (Förster 2007: 247). However, it is mainly an open question of what *kind* of experience has a greater influence on the materialization of collective identities. For instance, which are more significant: experiences with insiders or with outsiders? Do positive experiences affect we-feelings to a higher degree than negative ones? And what do these experiences refer to: other people, institutions, elites or certain outputs of the political process?

The latter question in particular leads up to the attitudinal cluster that may influence the degree of a shared sense of European community at the individual level. In this case, the conceptual challenge is to distinguish such variables from those which will serve as indicators for the theoretical construct of a common sense of European community as an independent variable (see Section 3.2.2). What we have in mind here are ideological belief systems and value orientations but also already existent collective identities. In particular, the questions of whether people hold an exclusive or inclusive national identity and how existent national identities relate to an emerging supranational European collective identity are among the most debated issues of European identity research at the individual analytical level (e.g., Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001; Carey 2002; Risse 2002, 2004; Westle 2003a,b; Deutsch 2006: 165–171; Bruter 2005: 15–19; 114–118; Duchesne and Frognier 2008; Caporaso and Kim 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2009: 13; Fuchs 2011b: 61–63). Furthermore, such citizens' attitudes could be interesting as a mirror, for instance, for low self-esteem and authoritarian, rigid and xenophobic orientations as opposed to high self-esteem, open-mindedness and tolerance.

Finally, it can be plausibly assumed that people's individual resources – for instance in terms of education, command of language or social capital – may form either favourable or unfavourable

conditions for European identity formation (e.g., Fuss, García-Albacete, and Rodriguez-Monter 2004; Fuss and Grosser 2006; Weßels 2007; Fligstein 2010).

3.2.2   Studying European identity as an independent variable

Studying identity as an independent variable is concerned with its impact on something else, such as a collective's capability of group integration and collective action or the group members' readiness to accept binding decisions by which they are affected. Looking at the possibilities of studying European identity as an independent variable, there are already several studies focusing on the individual analytical level of collective identity (e.g., Citrin and Sides 2004; Mau 2005; Weßels 2007; Kaina 2009; Fuchs 2011b). These approaches are interested in the effects of a European identity, for instance, on citizen support of the integration process and the European Union. As for individuals, research on identity as an independent variable furthermore asks if "identity is causing a person to do a particular thing" (Abdelal *et al.* 2009a: 3).

In the following, we will focus on three aspects. First, we concentrate on the individual level in analyzing European identity. Second, we apply our ideas about measuring European identity to EU citizens' sense of belonging together and their sense of community, respectively (see also Section 3.1.2). Third, we refer to surveys as one promising method for empirically analyzing a shared sense of belonging together among EU citizens. Some researchers criticize the dominance of surveys in studying European identity and argue for more qualitative methods (e.g., Cerutti 2008: 9f). Referring to our proposal for systematizing different angles of European identity research (see Figure 1), we argue for a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods which rather complement than preclude each other (see also Abdelal *et al.* 2009a). For the following proposition, however, we focus on a quantitative approach.

Based on the supposition that a collective identity refers to affective attitudes of people, standardized questionnaires frequently contain questions which emphasize feelings of attachment in order to operationalize a common sense of community among Europeans. Apart from our theoretical critique presented above (see Section 3.1.2), answers to such general questions do not reveal much information about the degree or the sturdiness of a sense of belonging together among Europeans. The strength of any we-identity in terms of group members' sense of community has to be proven in case of conflicts, danger and threat.

On the whole, the current development in quantitative empirical research on a common sense of belonging together among EU citizens is still unsatisfying due to a shortage of standardized, longitudinal, reliable and valid data as well as suitable methods of measurement (e.g., Risse 2002; 2004: 253; Bruter 2004b: 187; Sinnott 2006; Kaina 2009). This situation is probably the main reason for both inconsistent evidence on the state of collective identity at the European level and conflicting assessments of its development. One cause of this unsatisfactory situation can be found in the limitations of broad surveys on a vast multitude of issues. The design of questionnaires normally results in a trade-off between efficiency regarding time, money and the amount of questions on the one hand, and the researchers' quest for profundity and complexity on the other. As a consequence of compromises detrimental to the latter goal, wide-ranging surveys often neglect the abstract nature of concepts in social research. Theoretical constructs like "collective identity," "sense of community" or "sense of belonging together" are abstractions of social reality and cannot be observed in a direct way. Thus, such concepts not only need a definition but also require reference to noticeable variables by defining appropriate indicators (see Figure 3).

As for the definition, we use people's "sense of belonging together" synonymously to their "sense of community." We are aware that this is a simplification which needs more elaboration in further research. Defining "sense of community," we refer to a proposal by psychologists. Accordingly,

> "sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members
> matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be

met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan 1976; quoted in McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9).

Drawing on our theoretical premises, we modify this definition in two aspects. On the one hand, we do not confine someone's "sense of community" to emotions (see also Section 3.1.2). On the other hand, we conceptualize someone's "sense of belonging together with others" as an orientation defined "as anything people have in mind with respect to a specific object" (Niedermayer and Westle 1995: 44). The "specific object" in our context is the European political community. Furthermore, our suggestion is mainly based on three points of view.

First, based on literature on national collective identities, we suggest that the quantitative empirical inquiry of citizens' orientations regarding the development and extent of a shared sense of community among Europeans can also provide knowledge about the *intensity* of those sentiments and the levels of identification with the European community in terms of EU citizens' sense of belonging together (Westle 1999: 102f; Huntington 2004: 49). If one agrees that 'the development of orientations begins with [. . .] awareness [. . .] and ends with behavioural intentions [. . .]' (Niedermayer and Westle 1995: 44), the phenomenon of any collective identity cannot be limited to affection, sympathy, pride or other affective modes of orientation. Rather, it seems that feelings express an advanced stage of identity and that they are probably not a sufficient condition, but in many situations they are a necessary condition for behavioural consequences.

Second, we accordingly assume that different *modes* of citizen orientations are relevant to the study of a shared sense of community among Europeans (see Figure 3). Therefore, cognitive orientations – such as knowledge, interest and salience – should be the basic attitudes (see also Estel 1997: 79; Fuss and Grosser 2006). As we have argued in Section 3.1, we have to form a picture of 'us' as well as to recognize that the specific 'we' is actually a significant category of self-identification, *before* we can develop any we-*feelings*.

However, it is doubtful that cognitive orientations are automatically transformed into behavioral intentions (although Tajfel 1982 argues otherwise). As a rule, cognitions need some permanence to evolve into habits that produce familiarity which, in turn, encourages social action. Moreover, before cognitive orientations become relevant for individual behavior, they are generally influenced by the affective as well as the evaluative orientations of the individuals. Hence, we suppose that both behavioral intentions and concrete observable behaviour are the highest levels of identification. This proposition is based on the argument that evaluations and feelings have to prove themselves in certain situations of conflict, disagreement and danger – in other words, every time the readiness to pay a price on behalf of the community is needed. Since the proposed framework is focused on orientations, real individual behaviour is left outside this conceptualization.

Third, the most general examples of operationalization shown in Figure 3 are also theoretical constructs and require indicators as well. In this regard, further empirical inquiry into a shared sense of community among Europeans may profit from research on the so-called "inner unity" of East and West Germans in the unified Germany. Just two examples may illustrate the argument. Are people ready to give up some of their cake by making personal sacrifices? The "willingness of individuals to give up things they value for the sake of the collectivity and the acceptance of re-distributive policies" (Zürn 2000: 199) is the decisive question of acting in solidarity with others. Accordingly, people's intention to show solidarity throughout Europe could be measured, for example, by their willingness to accept a tax increase in order to financially support their poorer neighbors. Mutual sympathy could be measured by certain statements – standardized or open questioned – which reproduce distinctive images and reciprocal stereotypes. At the same time, such findings may produce knowledge about the criteria of inclusion and exclusion. These results will also give some information about the reasons for coming closer together as well as the causes for the maintenance of barriers.

The proposal shown in Figure 3 brings about an important insight for measuring European identity in terms of a shared sense of European community. Dealing with Europeans' sense of be-
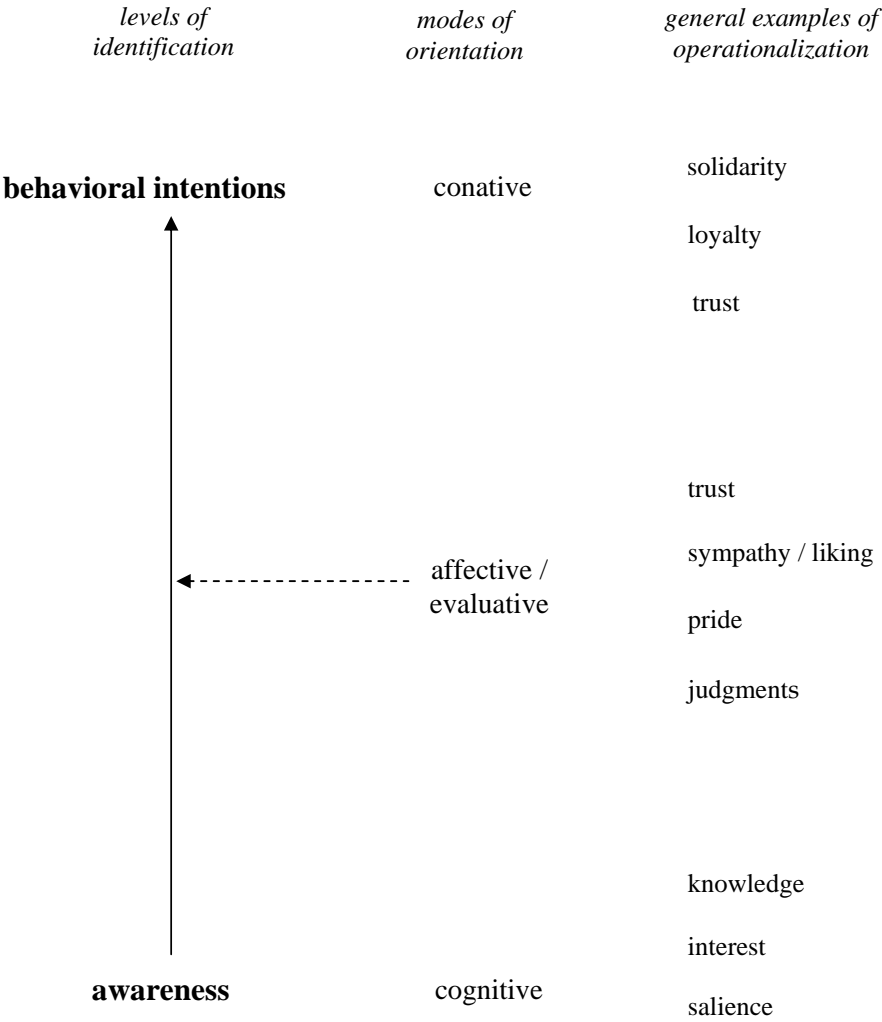
levels of identification	*modes of orientation*	*general examples of operationalization*
		solidarity
behavioral intentions	conative	loyalty
		trust
		trust
		sympathy / liking
← - - - - - - - - - - -	affective / evaluative	pride
		judgments
		knowledge
		interest
awareness	cognitive	salience

Figure 3: Systematizing citizens' orientations regarding a common European identity

longing together as a variable, we should treat it as a construct of several components or elements (see also McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9) comparable, for instance, to the construct of the Authoritarian Personality (Adorno *et al.* 1950). From this, two consequences for designing such a variable appear. First, we have to think about what these elements could be. One possibility for specifying those elements might be to refer to the modes of individuals' orientations – i.e., cognitions (1), feelings and evaluations (2) and behavioral intentions (3). The second consequence deals with the challenge to theoretically justify those elements and relate them to suitable operationalization procedures.

In the end, we must also clarify what kind of community we have in mind when it comes to the European Union. Referring to a distinction by Gusfield (1975), there are "two major uses of the term community" (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 8): The first usage relates to a territorial and geographical idea of community such as neighborhoods, cities and states; the second use refers to a relational notion regarding the "quality of character of human relationships without reference to location" (Gusfield 1975: xvi) and developed around interest and skills such as professional

or spiritual communities. As a first hypothesis, we assume we need both uses of community in studying a European sense of community. The territorial notion of community is needed inasmuch as the European Union has established a Weberian Herrschaftsverband at the European level (see Section 1). Thereby, territorial borders mark the geographical scope of political rule and define who is not only subject to certain obligations but also entitled to exclusive rights as a member of the political community. The relational notion of (European) community becomes relevant when EU citizens develop a shared sense of community on the basis of common values, beliefs and interests that bind people together without and beyond territorially defined membership. Against this background, it might be promising to analyze whether and, if so, how both kinds of European communities are related. However, these considerations need both more theoretical elaboration and empirical clarification in future research.

4   Identity technologies of the European Union

In addition to the theoretical double perspective on collective European identity as both a dependent and independent variable, there is growing research on the identity technologies of the European identity, which pertains to methods of identity construction by political authorities.

In tune with the constructivist paradigm of collective identity (see Section 3.1), the EU is believed to apply identity technologies towards its citizens in an attempt to construct collective identity. These identity technologies aim for collective identity in a top-down manner as citizens become receivers of a collective identity whose orientation is constructed by the political authorities. The EU attempts therefore to generate a sense of belonging among citizens in a non-nation-state polity. In order to generate collective identity, the EU reverts to various identity technologies including the manipulation of symbols, foundational myth-making, the promotion of positive self-images and transfer of identity. However, different perspectives exist on the effectiveness of the EU's identity technologies and differing academic proposals have been made regarding the identity technologies that the EU should use. Nonetheless, there is one common ground for these proposals: the EU should apply its identity technologies in a more subtle manner than the EU member states can by reverting to traditional forms of nationalism. Therefore, the identity construction is likely to occur in the light version as the EU cannot (and should not) exactly emulate the nationalism of the nation-states regarding its strength, sacrificial appeal and aggressiveness (Karolewski 2007: 9–32; Karolewski 2010b).

4.1   Manipulation of symbols

It is believed that the EU practises manipulation of cultural symbols pertaining to collective identity. One example of this is the introduction of the common currency in the EU (Hymans 2004: 5–31). The establishment of the tangible symbol of the euro and its iconography is expected to raise the salience of "Europeanness" without the necessity of homogenizing the European cultural diversity, since the euro allows for different iconographic connotations. At the same time, a common currency establishes a certain degree of commonality and therefore fosters new identity content (Risse et al. 1999: 147–187). Thomas Risse (2003: 487–505) stresses the significance of the euro for the development of the collective identity in the European Union. He argues that the introduction of the euro has had a substantial impact on the citizens' identification with the EU and Europe, as the common currency enhances the realness of Europe by providing a tangible link from the European level to the daily lives of the citizens (see also Cerulo 1995). The recent research on the symbols of collective identity also highlights their importance for the EU (Manners 2011). The role of iconographic symbols and quasi-national rituals appears to be particularly promising for the generation of European identity as they are likely to transcend linguistic boundaries, mainly due to of their non-oral content.

Furthermore, Michael Bruter (2003, 2004a) examines separate symbols and items pertaining to collective images and identity in Europe. According to his analysis of focus-group discussions in France, UK and the Netherlands, he argues that the majority of the participants' perceptions of Europe and their self-assessment of their European identity referred predominantly to civic images, whereas a minority perceived the EU in cultural terms. The images of cultural Europe by the participants were associated with peace, harmony, the disappearing of historical divisions and cooperation between similar people. In contrast, the images of civic Europe were linked to borderlessness, circulation of citizens, and prosperity (Bruter 2003: 1148–1179; Bruter 2004a: 21–39). In his further study, Bruter (2005) confirms his preliminary conclusions about civic and cultural images with regard to certain symbols. He highlights that the EU imitates nation-states by delivering proper national symbols in order to stimulate a European political community. These include not only euro notes and coins, but also a flag, an anthem, a national day, and until recently, an attempt to introduce a constitution. In other words, the EU manipulates cultural and political symbols to construct European mass identity by mimicking technologies of national identity.

Further cases of manipulation of cultural symbols pertain, for instance, to the EU's cultural policy. This encompasses symbolic initiatives such as the European Cities of Culture, with the goal of raising the visibility and identifiability of the EU. The European Union increasingly promotes commonality symbols while attempting to respect the realm of national cultures (Sassatelli 2002: 435–451). Thus, the EU tries to enhance its salience via symbolic diffusion into the everyday life of citizens, but without relinquishing the symbolic ambiguity. However, it is argued that in the case of the EU, ambiguity does not necessarily mean confusion, but rather is to be viewed as a response to the European cultural diversity (Sassatelli 2002: 446).

Moreover, one could argue that attempts to personify the European Union, for instance through the establishment of an office of the foreign minister or president, point in the same direction as the manipulation of symbols. Personification techniques are frequently used by the nation-state elites to stimulate collective identity. Since nation-states or political systems in general are abstract entities, they necessitate a more concrete embodiment for the mass population to conceive of them and to develop shared identity with reference to them. This embodiment can occur as personification in which the state, or in our case the European Union as a polity, becomes associated with the most salient figure in the political system. Recent studies in political psychology confirm the hypothesis that personification of political systems facilitates 'stronger' attitudes and hence may be decisive in the formation of collective identities. As opposed to personification, embodying the political system as a parliamentary institution is likely to produce weaker attitudes, which leads to the conclusion that a widespread practice of personification of the political system has robust and potentially far-reaching attitudinal consequences (McGraw and Dolan 2007: 299–327). For the European Union, it could mean that the proposals made in the Draft Constitutional Treaty implying personification techniques would be more effective in terms of collective identity than public visibility of the European Parliament.

At this point, we should address the tension between the manipulation of symbols by European authorities and EU governance. By manipulating symbols, the EU establishes an order-creating cultural system as a conveyor of identity, but not as a basis for popular sovereignty. Therefore, manipulation of cultural symbols reflects the identity technology used by the nation-states, which socialize the nation into bearers of loyalty towards the state. This is related to the *no-demos* problem of the EU (see Section 2.2), since the EU is not a state and there is no European demos in sight. Consequently, the identity construction qua manipulation of symbols might not be easily discernible from collective brainwashing, which contradicts the very notion of democratic citizenship. This collectivistic stimulation of citizens' identity responding to cultural manipulation exhibits a predilection for authoritarian politics, since it enhances the inequality between the rulers and the ruled, and thus increases the democratic deficit of the EU (Karolewski 2010a).

4.2   Foundational myth-making

Beyond research on symbols we can observe a shift of focus towards foundational mythology in the European Union. The foundational myth-making in the EU concentrates on narratives creating normative and cognitive foundations for the EU governance, thus laying ground for European identity. The constitutive myths or mythomoteurs have thus far been explored mainly in the nationalism research (Smith 1987: 87), where one of the most relevant aspects of nationalism is a generation or strengthening of national identity via foundational myth-making. In the context of the EU, one of such mythomoteurs is the narrative of how the integration process was responsible for peace, prosperity and democracy in Europe. According to Vincent Della Sala (2010), this narrative went through all stages of successful national mythologizing: diffusion, ritual and sacralization. Della Sala argues that this foundational myth has become entrenched in the political discourse of European integration and is mainly activated before important decisions that involve citizens, such as the national referenda on EU issues (for instance in France, the Netherlands and Ireland) or the EU's struggle to establish new institutions dealing with recent debt crisis (Della Sala 2010: 11). At the same time, it can be pointed out that the foundational myth of the European Union as a vehicle for peace, stability and economic growth is apparently losing its appeal, particularly among younger generations of Europeans. As a consequence, the EU has been at pains to establish new mythomoteurs which would, for instance, cajole the participants of referenda into accepting European projects such as the Constitutional Treaty. One such a myth relates to fundamental rights as inherent to the European project and based on a common European heritage, even though fundamental rights were not part of the initial project of European integration. As Stijn Simismans (2010: 62) argues, the narrative of the EU as a guardian of fundamental rights from its very inception results from the EU's appropriation of the fundamental rights credentials of its member states and the Council of Europe. Although fundamental rights were not in the Rome Treaty, the EU has gradually generated this myth, which is believed and acted upon by both institutional myth-makers and civil society actors. It faced its particular activation during the debates on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and is about to reach the sacralization phase.

The foundational myths are different from other political myths which have much more in common with positive self-images (see Section 4.3). The foundational myths construct the glorious past of a polity and appeal to new generations that cannot remember the origins of the polity in question. In other words, foundational myths attempt to forge collective identity among citizens through creating a feeling of continuity between older and newer generations. One might even argue that the appeal of foundational myths aims for temporarily re-establishing a permissive consensus in times when it is needed, for instance before referenda.

4.3   Positive self-images of the EU

In addition to the manipulation of symbols, the European Union engages in the promotion of positive self-images, which finds resonance in the academic debates on the possible content of the EU's collective identity. Three main types of self-images promoted by the EU can be discerned: the image of cosmopolitan Europe, civilian power and normative power.

The first type of positive self-image refers to the EU's substantive identity as cosmopolitan Europe. One of the most known and fervent proponents of cosmopolitan Europe is Jürgen Habermas, who believes that the European Union can be based on a thin collective identity stemming from a set of abstract universalistic principles such as human rights, but evolves and thickens from this Kantian cosmopolitan conception into the European constitutional patriotism which is expected to replace the ethnic bonds of European nations (Habermas 2003: 86–100; Stevenson 2006: 485–500). Since the EU represents a post-national constellation, European citizens, induced by the process of European constitution-making or constitutionalization, are likely to develop a sense of loyalty and solidarity among strangers with regard to each other by abstracting from their

particular identities. This cosmopolitan Europe is also associated with a constitution rather than a state and is anchored in a shared culture of universal and liberal values (Shabani 2006: 699–718; Lacroix 2002: 944–958; Cronin 2003: 1–28; Rile Hayward 2007: 182–196. Simultaneously, the cosmopolitan image of Europe shows normative boundaries, which distinguishes Europe from, for instance, the USA. Habermas (2003: 291–297) regards the historical and institutional peculiarities of Europe (such as secularization, the priority of the state over the market, the primacy of social solidarity over achievement, skepticism concerning technology, awareness of the paradoxes of progress, rejection of the law of the stronger, and the commitment to peace as a consequence of the historical experience of loss) as an appropriate boundary mechanism.

Beyond the differences to the USA, the cosmopolitan image of the EU is expected to rest on the EU's transformed concept of power politics, according to which the EU exports the rule of law, democracy and human rights worldwide. Erik Oddvar Eriksen (2006: 252–269) argues that the criteria for the EU's missionary activities can be derived from cosmopolitanism, suggesting that the EU subordinates its external policies to the constraints of a higher ranking law. In this perspective, the EU is regarded as different from the interest-maximizing actors in international politics as it is able to act out of a sense of justice or duty pertaining mainly to human rights. Consequently, infringements of human rights become sanctioned, whereby the EU increasingly fulfills the role of the forerunner of the new international order. However, this self-image of the EU is not entirely mirrored in the reality. Eriksen points out that while inconsistent human rights policies within the EU and moral double standards are not exceptions, the EU can be deemed the most promising role model for other actors in its cosmopolitan zeal to anchor human rights in international politics (see also Lavenex 2001: 851–874). Not only does the EU project its cosmopolitan image outside, but it also attempts to enhance the positive image consistency between the externally projected and the internally applied standards. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is believed to be the indicator for these attempts.

A further positive image of the EU discussed in the debate pertains to the notion of the EU as a civilian power. This issue has aroused considerable interest in recent years, since it seemingly gives the EU an additional feature with which to distinguish itself from other global powers such as the USA. The notion of civilian power refers to the methods of international politics rather than the substance (Orbie 2006: 123–128). The EU is believed to pursue post-national or ethical interests by using methods of normative change rather than the use of force. The civilian power Europe would act primarily in accordance with ideas and values, not military or economic strength. In this sense, the EU's actions are believed to be more civilizing, which echoes the debate on the EU as a post-Westphalian political system (Sjursen 2006: 169–181). One of the tenets of civilian power Europe is believed to be multiculturalism, which is a form of self-binding by law. Seen from this angle, the EU's objective is not to maximize its selfish interests, but to promote the development of an international society according to the rule-based international order of multilateral institutionalism. The EU therefore fosters the power of international institutions and regional organizations, which allows for an extensive coordination and cooperation of actors in international politics (Youngs 2004: 415–435). The goal is the creation of institutionalized and global governance capable of solving global and regional collective problems. Consequently, the principles of conduct are of major interest for the civilian power Europe. The civilian nature of the EU is likely to be demonstrated particularly in the context of the EU foreign policy cooperation, which is believed to maintain a non-colonial civilizing identity towards its neighbors. As opposed to the US, EU member states are believed to revert to deliberative cooperation mechanisms among themselves. Consequently, even in an uncertain political environment, member states are likely to remain attached to deliberation and cooperation, which is an indicator of a basic trust between the member states (Mitzen 2006: 270–285). In this sense, trust among nations is expected to play an important role in the European identity, as opposed to the anarchy of brute power outside the European Union.

The third image of European identity is the EU as a normative power, which is directly linked to the cosmopolitan and civilizing image. Here, the EU stresses its progressive stance in rejecting the death sentence or in promoting and implementing environmental policies, for instance. By so doing it asserts its leading role and depicts the US, for instance, as a laggard. In other words, the EU promotes its positive image as the forerunner in the fight against climate change, thus claiming its moral supremacy. Consequently, the EU uses the vanguard-laggard dichotomy in order to describe its own identity in contrast to other countries, in particular the US. The United States is especially useful for the EU's identity constructing processes; since it is a global power with its own normative appeal, it can serve as a "significant other." In this case, the EU uses techniques associated with the construction of the inferiority of the other with the aim of establishing and perpetuating its own positive image. The normative power image referring to environmental diplomacy and bio-safety regulations is regarded as a reflection of distinctive societal values of European societies. Therefore, the green normative power defines itself through the difference mainly to the US, which becomes a constitutive factor pertaining to shared European identity (Falkner 2007: 507–526). However, this image of green normative power is empirically inconsistent. Robert Falkner (2007: 521) argues that the EU's distinctive stance in environmental politics was not simply the outgrowth of a deep-rooted normative orientation but frequently the result of domestic conflicts over the future of biotechnology. In the debate over genetically modified foods, the EU offered international leadership only after strong anti-GM sentiments appeared among the public. Prior to this, the EU attached little importance to the bio-safety talks. However, even after the EU claimed international leadership in that field, it sought to export its own domestic regulatory model which would ensure that international rules would not damage the EU's economic interests in medical biotechnology (see also Lenschow and Sprungk 2010).

On the one hand, the positive self-images generated by the EU exhibit cracks in consistency which may inhibit their socializing capacity. On the other hand, the self-images can be regarded as propaganda instruments with the goal of manipulating the EU population, as they are not entirely mirrored in the social reality and espouse double standards. This can have negative implications for the legitimacy of EU governance, exacerbating the gulf between the manipulative elites and the EU population. In addition, it remains controversial whether the EU is capable of generating constitutional patriotism based on a thin identity. The troubles with the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in its various versions point to the effects of constitutionalization that are contrary to what the advocates of constitutional patriotism expected.

Recent research on positive self-images of the EU not only stresses occasional cracks in the normative credibility of such self-images, but rather highlights that there might be a more systematic problem of normative reliability of the EU's positive self-images. For instance, all the self-images of the EU as cosmopolitan, civilian, normative power share a positive view of the EU as a foreign policy actor guided by the common good and reluctant to use military power (cf. Pacheco Pardo 2012). Ramon Pacheco Pardo (2012: 15) argues, however, that these images do not accurately depict the real nature of the foreign behavior of the EU. In contrast to the positive self-images, the EU seeks to defend its own security without much consideration for the means involved. In particular, the EU did not hesitate to resort to military means in the case of proliferation of WMD. Especially following terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London, the EU has developed an increased readiness to flex its military muscle. This trend is likely to further enhance since the Treaty of Lisbon calls for an increase in the military capabilities of the EU within the European Security and Defense Policy and an increase of the operational force capable of acting beyond the EU's borders. In this sense, the EU appears as a normal power rather than a cosmopolitan, civilian or normative power, and thus loses its exceptionality.

This is even more evident in the case of the EU arms trade policy, as countries with poor human rights records are still frequent receivers of European weapons and military technology (Erickson 2011). Therefore, both human rights concerns and pressures to export influence the EU's foreign

policy, as opposed to a predominance of normative aspects suggested by the normative power image. As a consequence, conflicts of material and normative interests are the rule rather than the exception in EU foreign behavior. In this context, Erickson (2011: 12) points to a low level of EU socialization concerning arms deals which stand in the way of the creation of a single European external identity. A particularly instructive case is the China weapons embargo debate, where pressures on lifting the embargo have considerably risen since China has become a willing supporter in the European sovereign debt crises under the condition of ending the embargo. Here, ongoing conflicts between leading EU member states (France and Germany) illustrate the difficulty of upholding a consistently normative position within the EU. These findings are particularly striking when compared to the EU's official discourse on European security where the cosmopolitan, civilian and normative images are not only pervasive but also closely connected to the EU's role claims in the international relations (cf. Ferreira Nunes 2011).

In addition, the discrepancy between the positive self-image of the EU and its policies has been increasingly criticized in the scholarship on the EU's role in the field of international criminal justice. For instance, the EU member states have committed themselves to the fight against impunity for serious international crimes including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture. However, the record of the EU member states is ambiguous, as support for the investigations of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is uneven and the member states are often reluctant to develop binding common policies in this area (Aoun 2012). Even though the EU regards itself as the unconditional supporter of the ICC, the member states are not straightforwardly committed to bringing the perpetrators of serious international crimes to justice. On the one hand, the EU and its member states show a strong interest in international justice and present themselves as forerunners of the so-called universal justice. On the other hand, the EU is reluctant to accept the fight against impunity as dominant norm of international criminal justice (Aoun 2012: 34). For instance, some EU member states have proven reluctant to support the ICC in its investigations, thus allowing many perpetrators of serious crimes to enjoy safe havens within their borders. In contrast to the EU's positive self-image, they did not offer full political support to the inquiries of the ICC and the implementation of arrest warrants. In the case of Darfur, the EU has even encouraged negotiations with warlords targeted by an ICC arrest warrant and failed to make strong statements supporting the ICC Prosecutor. Elena Aoun argues in her study that criticism is particularly strong with regard to the leniency of the Europeans in their dealings with the Sudanese President Al-Bashir. When the ICC prosecutor applied for an arrest warrant against President Al-Bashir in 2008, the EU Presidency (held by France) not only hinted at the possibility of the suspension of the indictment in exchange for ending the killings in Darfur, but after the arrest warrant was issued, the EU Presidency even advocated a "balance between peace and justice" (Aoun 2012: 26).

These findings might point to systematic discrepancies between the official EU discourse and the EU policies, rather than mere cracks in normative consistency. It shows that processes of socialization towards common normative positions among the EU member states are not self-evident, as the positive self-images suggest. As a consequence, the self-images might have a limited potential as technologies of collective identity.

4.4   Transfer of identity

The positive self-images do not only have relevance for internal discourse on European identity, as the EU also projects its vision of European identity beyond its own borders. In particular, the EU promotes its identity in the so-called European neighborhood (ENP), both within the Southern or the Eastern dimension of the ENP. It relates mainly to the external democratization dimension of the EU, which focuses on democracy promotion in third countries through the support for human rights, good governance standards and modernization projects. The EU's external actions and

programs can also be interpreted as the EU's quest to legitimize its own policies by shaping rules, norms and institutions in third countries in accordance with the EU standards; that is, with the EU's institutional identity embodied by the acquis communautaire. In this sense, the transfer of the EU's institutional identity can be viewed as a reflexive strategy related to the construction of the EU's own collective identity (Karolewski 2011). The research on codes of collective identity (Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995; Eisenstadt 1999; Giesen 1999) suggests that communities transferring domestic institutions to non-members can strengthen their own weak collective identity. This applies mainly to communities regarding the Others as potential members and attempting to include them by using persuasion and conversion strategies (cf. Morozov and Rumelili 2012). As the non-members are considered inferior as long as they are not converted, the strength of this type of collective identity is partially dependent on crossing the boundary and transferring the collective identity to others outside the collectivity. Thus, the missionary strategies of the community act as a reassurance of its own insecure collective identity. As new members or quasi-members convert to the collective identity, it can restore confidence to the collectivity and be used as a strategy of increasing legitimacy of the elites.

In the context of the EU, it can be argued that the EU externally promotes its institutional identity consisting of its own procedures, regulations and institutions, which become transplanted into third countries. This institutional identity differs from the symbolic European identity being produced within the EU. Whereas symbolic identity draws on shared symbols of commonality such as common currency, common anthem, common holidays or even common past (Section 4.1), institutional identity is based on specific institutions (in the larger sociological sense including norms, procedures, regulations) and on the belief in the superiority of these institutions. In this sense, the EU acts vis-à-vis its neighbourhood as an identity hegemon, as it might have higher attractiveness outside of the EU than it does within, given the EU's current internal crisis. On the other hand, identity hegemony might equally generate resistance to the EU identity politics, particularly if the policies of the third countries towards the EU are instrumentally motivated (Karolewski 2011). The EU promotes a European identity in its European neighborhood by "shaping conceptions of the normal" (Manners 2002) as well as conceptions of the superior. While "conceptions of the normal" legitimize the implementation of the EU's own institutional rules, norms and standards (as the appropriate ones) in neighboring countries, the "conceptions of the superior" promote the EU self-images of normative superiority. Thus, the EU aims at spreading both norms of appropriateness and norms of superiority in third countries. As a consequence, European institutions, procedures, norms and values become new rules of conduct for non-member states; their internal institutions as well as policies are judged by the EU's norms. Thus, by adopting these norms, third countries also assume the institutional identity of the EU.

The external aspects of the EU's identity generation, identity promotion and identity projection pose a certain dilemma for the EU. The identity transfers take place successfully in the case of countries to which the EU offers a membership perspective. However, the EU refuses to offer the prospect of formal membership to some countries in its neighborhood such as Belarus, Ukraine or Moldova but expects the countries to adopt the EU's acquis communautaire. Regardless of whether these countries are capable of joining the EU or even whether the EU is able to integrate them, the lacking membership perspective undermines its credibility as a benevolent European identity hegemon and thus the effectiveness of the EU's external identity politics. Using the terminology of S.N. Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, the EU shows a missionary zeal on the one hand but refuses to grant complete conversion on the other. Therefore, the EU weakens its own chances of promoting the European identity abroad.

5   Conclusions

This Living Review discussed the issue of European collective identity in the context of EU governance. The literature on the subject is growing fast and becoming complex. Some issues – for instance the debate on the relationship between the national and European identity – could not be discussed in this Living Review in full length (see, however, Section 3.2.1). In this branch of research on European identity, different models (including a competition model, a concordance model and a sandwich model) are proposed and examined. More information on this debate can be found in the Living Review by Loveless and Rohrschneider (2011).

Despite the growing complexity, there are still numerous problems with the research on European collective identity which have to be solved. While facing enormous challenges pertaining to the lack of strong support among European citizens and the gulf between the elites and the EU population, the European Union is vulnerable to unpredictable stress. However, the research on European collective identity as a solution to this problem is still inconclusive. Even though the emergence of a sense of community among European citizens is said to be a means of overcoming centrifugal tendencies of the EU and its legitimacy problems, the EU is facing a serious dilemma. On the one hand, EU governance has reached an advanced stage in which further European unification increasingly depends on the citizens' consent. On the other hand, more democracy at the European level is accompanied by the risk of tightening legitimacy problems of EU governance as long as there is no resilient European sense of community among European citizens. There are various proposals offering (sometimes implicit) solutions to this dilemma, including European public space and European citizenship.

In addition, the very research on collective identity and EU governance is facing a number of conceptual, methodological and normative challenges. First, problems still exist concerning how to define collective identity. The ambiguity of the term "identity" is one of the greatest impairments when it comes to its usefulness as an analytical category. Second, there are methodological problems concerning the operationalization and measurement of collective identity. Not only can collective identity be regarded as both an independent and dependent variable, but the measurement of the very concept is still in its infancy, regardless of the large number of publications. Third, we are facing normative issues as to how to assess the construction of an EU identity. Because the identity technologies applied by the EU are administered in a top-down manner, citizens become "receivers" of collective identity and the resulting identity construction might not be easily discernible from collective brainwashing, which has the potential to exacerbate the legitimacy problems of EU governance.

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