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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 focussing 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 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 does the family hold 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 crunch. 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.

Other students on 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 by accepting 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).

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 focussing 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 on. However, this matter of course 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. 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 recently 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 the 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). The very literature on the euroscepticism phenomenon fortifies the fact that Europe suffers from the 'Post-Maastricht Blues' (Eichenberg and Dalton 2007) and the permissive consensus has been displaced by a 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe and Marks 2006: 248). Moreover, empirical research also confirms that the 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, Pacek, and Berinsky 2002; McLaren 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Eichenberg and Dalton 2007). In the course of the Post-Maastricht process these considerations have been complemented by another dimension centring 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; 2004; 2005). Yet this utilitarian kind of 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 2006; McLaren 2006; Bruter 2005; Kaina 2006, 2009). 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

[1] For public perceptions of the EU as a system of governance see the Living review by Loveless and Rohrschneider (2008).

still be sufficient in order to continue the European story of success. Research literature which deals with the landmarks of European unification (Laffan 1998; Thomas 2006) agrees that today's European Union 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, Hooghe, and Blank 1996; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997; Kohler-Koch 1999; Jachtenfuchs 2000; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, and Fligstein 2001; Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch 2004). Thus, the question arises: what are the good reasons for rule, since every sort of governance limits the self-determination and individual freedom of people? The long tradition of democratic thinking makes clear that *democratic* governance has to be based not only on certain core principles but also on the citizens' consent.

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). 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 sceptical views of some students on 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 necessitates 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; Scharpf 1999; Zürn 2000; Dahrendorf 2003; Offe 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 show already 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; Hurrelmann 2005; Deutsch 2006). 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 prove in reality. From this follow two further challenges for research on this topic. First, there is 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 European Union 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 whether and, first and foremost, *why* 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; Habermas 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 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 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 (Schlesinger 1999: 263–279). 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 deliberations which are also part of the publics (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, the EU it is the European Parliament (EP) fulfil the function of a strong public. In contrast to the Council, the EP is rather more strongly 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

[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 Finke (2007).

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; 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 the 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, dominanting 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 in the EU a growing communication network, 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 specific 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 how, for instance, the Commission communicates with the public. The study conducted by 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 result even 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 precondition 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 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).

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 1968; 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 behaviour. 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 behaviour within a collectivity (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 (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 socialising 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 to a certain extent the debate on how cohesive 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 behaviour 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 (2009b) regards European citizenship 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' behaviour 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 chapter 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 collectivism as an 'identity-signifier' that is a response to insecurity and that provokes attempts at reaffirmation of self-identity, decreasing insecurity and existential anxiety.

3 Concepts, notions and methods of research

3.1 Collective identity and the problem of definition

Despite the multi-disciplinary relevance of the identity concept, there is no definition that every scientist would agree on. 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). 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). What is more, there is a comparatively broad consensus that the presence of an 'other' is an indispensable part of the identity concept (for many: 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).

Given the problems of defining identity commonly, the broad field of social sciences provides

a variety of conceptualizations of both individual and collective identity. There are at least three main ideas of identity: first, identity as something collectives or individuals *have*; second, identity as something a group or a person *is*; and third, identity in the sense of personal resources that people use, as something they *do* (Kaina 2006: 12).

Political science literature on collective identities is strongly influenced by sociological concepts which are interested in the individual's relationship to his/her social environment. According to the most prominent sociological approach, *collective* identity is equivalent to the 'emotional sub-dimension' of *social* identity which, in turn, is part of the individual's self-concept (Esser 2001: 342, 345). Collective identity in this sense describes one's identification with a group one *feels* attached to. Consequently, most 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). However, 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.

As for the first problem, some scholars suggest that the notion of identity consists of two levels or dimensions: an individualistic dimension and a collectivistic one (Smith 1992: 59f; Harrie 2006: 62). The *individualistic dimension* of collective identity describes the identification of a person with a collective which is regarded as significant and precious for the individual's self. The self-attribution of a person to a collective does admittedly need the group's acknowledgment (Meyer 2004: 22). Therefore, the individualistic level of 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. Compared to that individualistic level, the *collectivistic dimension* of collective identity refers to the *self-image* of a *group* (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001: 754). The group's self-image is used to present the group outwardly as a community and enable others from outside the group to recognize it as a collective. That is, collective identities are both internally and externally defined (Schlesinger 2000: 1875; Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 6). This process of identity formation, however, 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 acknowledgment as *equals* (Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995: 74). Consequently, the collectivistic dimension of collective identity is based on horizontal relationships between the group members (Westle 2003b: 129).

As for the second problem of conceptualising collective identity, the overemphasis of the affective component of attitudes is attended by a conceptual truncation. So, several students assume that *feelings* of belonging to a group cannot emerge before the individual is aware of his/her group membership or 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). Many years ago, Henri Tajfel (1974, 1978, 1982) had 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' on the one hand and designate dissimilarities between 'me' and 'other others' on the other.

Some sociologists who support a social constructionist view on collective identity challenge this view (Jamieson 2002; Fuss and Grosser 2006). They emphasize the distinction between processes of categorizing self and others versus processes of coming to feel a sense of common identity

or belonging 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; likewise: Kantner 2006: 507). Cognitive perceptions in terms of categorization and attribution are obviously not sufficient in order to conceptualize collective identity. This general detection, however, does not rule out that cognitive orientations are a necessary element of the collective identity concept. 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 by 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).

Regardless of the scholars' disagreement on the significance of cognition for the conceptualization of collective identity, research on this subject continuously deals with yet another crucial question: how do cognitive perceptions of belonging mutate into emotional bonds? In other words, what turns the people of 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 does 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). Due to these feelings of commitment, the *awareness of belonging* is tantamount to the *awareness of togetherness* which, in turn, provides the background for one's willingness to show solidarity as well as the 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 the development of feelings of commitment depends on the people's belief that the group is a significant collective whose state affects the fate of its members and which is valuable enough to give them 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). Collectives 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 the 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 collective identity 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 to 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) as well as 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), originated by Henri Tajfel (1974, 1978, 1982), 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.

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, Gerhards, and Roller 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; 1999: 268; see also Jamieson 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' of the obvious others. 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.

Summing up the most important arguments of this chapter, collective identities can be seen as complex constructions which comprehend emotional facets as well as cognitive, evaluative and behavioural aspects. Accordingly, it might be helpful for further research on collective identities to change the definition at the individual level, in that we speak of one's *identification with a group* rather than of *feelings of belonging.* The identification term includes several parts of individuals' orientations 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). Moreover, there are at least three other characteristics of collective identities which might be useful in reducing the intricacy of conceptualizations. First, collective identity is both an individual and a group property. Second, collective identity is first and foremost an artificial phenomenon because it is a social construction. Third, this kind of construction is based on strategies of inclusion and exclusion, demarcation and the definition of commonality and dissimilarity.

Evidently, these characteristics 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, the problems of defining collective identity commonly hamper systematic inquiry on this subject. This problem is complicated even further by the difficulties of operationalization and measurement.

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

A brief survey of the research literature on European identity reveals a two-fold significance of citizens' shared sense of community (for the content of this chapter see also Kaina 2006, 2009). In the first place, it can be analyzed as a *dependent variable*. The increased scientific interest in a European sense of community among citizens has generated a multitude of publications that seek to understand and explain the emergence of a collective identity at the European level. In the second place, the shared sense of community that functions as an indicator of a common European identity can be examined as an *independent variable*. Empirical evidence for the degree and forcefulness of we-identity Europeans express shall substantiate assumptions on both the promising chances and severe obstacles of the endurance of the European integration project by indicating the strength of a common European identity.

3.2.1 Studying European identity as a dependent variable

Research that deals with a European collective identity as a *dependent variable* can be arranged in order of two batteries of questions. The first group deals with the possible content of a common European identity (e.g. Delanty 1995; Bruter 2004b; Citrin and Sides 2004; Meyer 2004). Referring to the European unification process, these studies search for answers to the classical questions of collective identity formation: 'Who are we?', 'Who does and does not belong to us for what reasons?' and 'Who is us?'. However, that debate is not the focal point of this *Living Review* (see, however, Section 4.2).

The second group of researchers dealing with European identity as a dependent variable is interested in the prospects of a self-sustaining development of a European identity among citizens and the obstacles to a shared sense of community at the European level. Although it is hardly possible to look through all the literature available, most studies obviously vary between doubt and scepticism on the one hand and optimism and confidence on the other. Whereas some scholars claim that 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), 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).

Regardless of the large number of publications, systematic and longitudinal empirical research on this topic is still in its infancy. This is true both for 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 distinguish between factors referring to individual and non-individual aspects (see also Figure 1). 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 an increasing competition pressure from outside – may strengthen the group members' sense of community (Simmel 1955; Huntington 2004: 24; likewise: Förster 2007: 149).

Endogenous opportunity structures could be based on cultural, institutional or process-related features. It is impossible to list completely 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). 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, Hellmann, and Trenz 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 (see Section 3.1). 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. 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

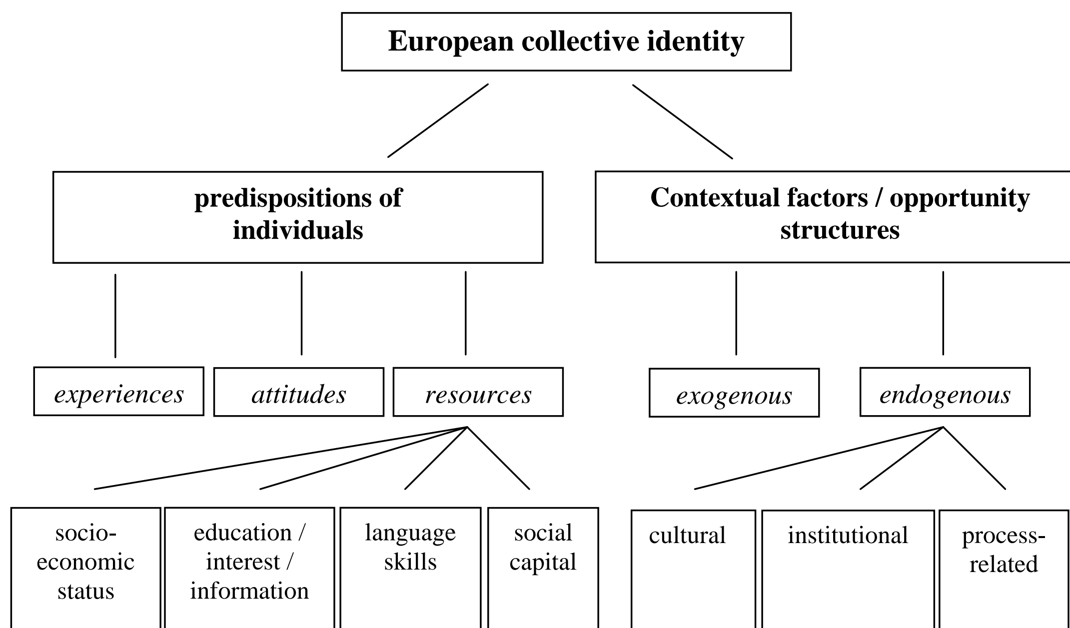

Figure 1: Systematizing possible influences on developing a European collective identity

2004; Fuss and Grosser 2006; Weßels 2007).

3.2.2 Studying European identity as an independent variable

Looking at the possibilities of studying a shared sense of European community as an independent variable, there are already several studies focussing on a common collective identity within EU-Europe (e.g. Citrin and Sides 2004; Mau 2005; Weßels 2007). These approaches are interested in the impacts of a European sense of community, for instance on the citizens' support of the integration process and the European Union.

Based on the supposition that a collective identity refers to affective attitudes of people, standardized questionnaires frequently contain questions which emphasize *feelings* of attachment or belonging in order to operationalize a common sense of community among Europeans. However, answers to such general questions do not reveal much information about the degree or the sturdiness of a shared sense of community. The strength of any we-identity has to be proven in the case of conflicts, danger and threat.

On the whole, the current development in quantitative empirical research on a European collective identity is still unsatisfying because of 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. One consequence of compromises detrimental to the latter goal is the fact that wide-ranging surveys often neglect the abstract nature of concepts in social research. Theoretical constructs like trust or collective identity are abstractions and cannot be observed in a direct way. Therefore, such concepts require reference

to noticeable variables by defining appropriate indicators (see Figure 2). The following offer is focused on individuals' orientations 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, this suggestion is mainly based on three points of view.

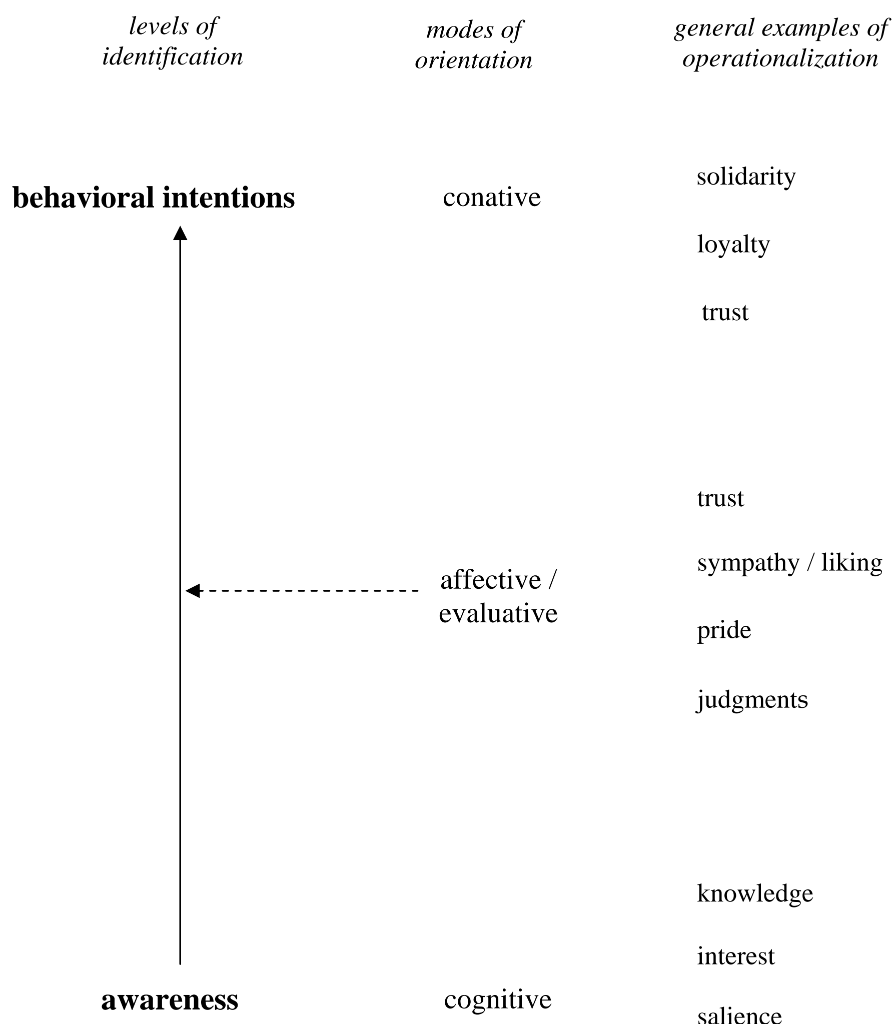

Figure 2: Systematizing citizens' orientations regarding a common European identity

First, based on literature on national collective identities, we suggest that the quantitative empirical inquiry of citizens' orientations regarding the development and extent of we-feelings among Europeans can also provide knowledge about the *intensity* of those sentiments and the levels of identification with the European community (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 2). 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 behavioural intentions (although Tajfel 1982 argues otherwise). As a rule, cognitions need some permanence to evolve habits that produce familiarity which, in turn, encourages social action. Moreover, before cognitive orientations become relevant for individual behaviour, they are generally influenced by the affective as well as the evaluative orientations of the individuals. Hence, we suppose that both behavioural 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 2 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 could be measured, for example, by their willingness to accept a tax increase in order to support their poorer neighbours financially. Mutual sympathy could be measured by certain statements – standardized or open questioned – which reproduce distinctive images and reciprocal stereotypes. At the same time, findings of such kind 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 of the maintenance of barriers.

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 in a top-down manner at collective identity, 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 and the promotion of positive self-images. 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 2009a).

4.1 Manipulation of symbols

It is believed that the EU practises manipulation of cultural symbols pertaining to collective identity. One example of the EU's manipulation of cultural symbols is the introduction of the common currency in the EU (Hymans 2004: 5–31). The establishment of a 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 in the daily lives of the citizens (see also Cerulo 1995).

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, besides euro notes and coins, 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 the 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 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 a 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 2009b).

4.2 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 (Payrow 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 for instance from the USA. Jürgen Habermas and Derrida (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, scepticism 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 fulfils 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 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 use of force. The civilian power Europe would act primarily in accordance with ideas and values, and 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 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, rather than particular interests. 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 neighbours. As opposed to the US, which defines its civilizing mission more internally, EU member states revert to deliberative and institutionalized 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, for instance in rejecting death sentence or in promoting and implementing environmental policies. By so doing it asserts its leading role and depicts, for instance, the US 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 are especially useful for the EU's identity constructing processes, since being a global power with their own normative appeal, they 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.

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.

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 (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009). Some issues – for instance the debate on the relationship between the national and European identity (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; Caporaso and Kim 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2009: 13) – could not be discussed in this Living Review in full length. 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. However, more information on this debate can be found in the Living Review by Loveless and Rohrschneider (2008).

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 lacking 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 of 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 aim 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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