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**Multiple identities in Europe:
The EU - a multi-national or post-national community or none at all?**

Summary

The lack of a European demos in the sense of a collective identity tied to Europe as a political community is usually decried. What are the unifying boundaries and commonalities people refer to in the European context? How do subnational, national and European identity relate to each other? These questions concern citizens' self-image as political actors and especially their relationship with others within the political community and across its borders. In an effort of conceptual clarification it is discussed what shape such a community on the European level can take by looking deeper into identification processes and the possibility of multiple identities on different levels.

The emergence of a European identity does not automatically mean the disappearance of national attachments. The fundamental question is in which relation to each other such identities co-exist. Theoretically there are various ways which are presumably related to the way identity is constructed. I develop a theoretical framework distinguishing different conceptions of community based on the underlying code of identity construction. Three such conceptions are differentiated: a (primordial) ethno-national, a (traditional) multi-national and a (universalistic) post-national one. These conceptions have close links to different normative ideas of political community known in democratic theory. They prescribe different commonalities, boundaries and subsequently different relationships of identities to each other. To the extent that one of these conceptions of community is predominant within member-states, among groups of member-states and among European citizens in general, we can sketch the possible path the EU will take on this identificative dimension of its integration.

Introduction

The self-proclaimed aim of the European Union is „Unified in diversity“. However it is not yet so clear what is uniting European citizens except for institutional and economic cooperation. There is no doubt that cultural diversity is a major characteristic of the EU and the prospect is that it will become greater rather than smaller in terms of language, ethnicity, religion and political tradition of the various states. Is there a common ground or source on which a European identity can be built? The lack of a „European demos“ is usually decried. In my paper I want to tackle the question what shape such a political community on the European level can take by looking deeper into the possibility and factual existence of multiple identities on the regional, national and European level.

The emergence of a European demos does not automatically mean the disappearance of national attachments. The psychological research literature underlines that identities are multiple. The fundamental question is in which relation to each other such identities coexist. Theoretically there are various ways which are presumably related to the way identity is constructed on other levels as well. Therefore I will first distinguish different conceptions of community based on the underlying code of identity construction in general. I will differentiate three such concepts: a (primordial) ethno-national, a (traditional) multi-national and a (universalistic) post-national one. These conceptions have close links to different normative ideas of a political community known in democratic theory. They prescribe different commonalities, boundaries and subsequently different relationships of identities to each other. The construction codes do not necessarily have to be the same ones on all levels, however not all combinations are equally possible. Above all, by means of this conceptual framework, it shall be possible to interpret the relationship between European and national or other identifications as exclusive or not.

It is an essential question if there are, in this respect, differences between member-states or between groups of countries such as older member states, new and potential ones. The official and usually institutionalized way of framing „us-them“ relations does not have to be presented by the orientations of the population. However, supposedly they have a great impact on them. To the extent that the presumed boundaries of a multi-national Europe are consensual, or that one of the other orientations is predominant, we can sketch the possible path the EU will take on this identificative dimension of its integration.

I. The concept of collective identity

The concept of identity is subject to a large field of research. It is necessary to differentiate different meanings. Speaking about European or national identity demands to define the phenomenon of collective identity. I will treat the emergence of collective identities in more detail later on; at this point I want to retain some fundamental features in contrast to other meanings, especially to those of personal and social identity. Personal identity refers to traits that differentiates an individual from others, to self-definitions in terms of personal or idiosyncratic attributes. In vain with psycho-analytical approaches some continuity in time and consistency in different social contexts is assumed, since the development of a unique personality is seen as the result of the internalisation of and identification with the values and norms of the significant socialisation agents (Erikson 1980). Thus, a multiple identity in the sense of a fragmented personal identity is interpreted as pathologic, culminating in psychoses.

Social identity in contrast is that part of an individual identity that is shared with others. A dynamic process of categorization, including self-categorization, shapes social identity such that “at any point in time, we define who we are by placing ourselves in specific categories, thereby establishing a basis of social comparison” (Conover and Hicks 1998: 13). Put another way, social identities can be defined as “self-definitions in terms of social category membership” (Turner 1999: 10). They are formed in the negotiation between ascription by others and assessment by oneself. Ascription and assessment vary by context and social setting.

Lastly, collective identity is an identity shared among members of a group. How it is conceptualized is based on one’s orienting perspective. There are two major perspectives in the study of identity: essentialist and constructionist. The first sees identity as being an essential part of an individual and theorizes that individuals naturally identify with certain inherent traits or characteristics. This encompasses both primordial and structural logics. Primordialists understand identity as based on shared attributes such as a common past or biology and automatically developed. Alternatively, structuralists understand identity to be rooted in elements of the social structure, such as in roles, networks, and groups (Stryker 1980). These theorists see the salience of identity as depending on biological, historical and social conditions. Other theorists, such as Snow, Berger, and Strauss, use a constructionist perspective on identity. From this perspective, collective identities are not seen as something naturally given, but rather as something that is constructed through interactions with others.

This approach focuses on the construction and maintenance of collective identities through negotiation, interpretation, and presentation.

In vain with the latter school of theorists, I conceptualize collective identity as a shared and interactive sense of „we-ness“ anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences, in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of others and a corresponding sense of community (Snow 2001; Easton 1965; Nisbet 1966). Thus, the identity of a collective consists on the one hand of the common consciousness of individuals to belong to a social entity that is marked by specific characteristics (Turner et al. 1987: 19), on the common consciousness of shared social identity which is the result of cognitive categorization processes. On the other hand it consists of a feeling of belonging together (Weber 1972: 21), thus an affective loading of the cognitive operations.

Such a shared and interactive sense of we-ness is by definition not static. Once an identity is adopted it must be maintained in an ongoing process. Berger theorizes that it is produced from a continuous dialectical relationship between one's psychological reality and the social structure (Berger 1967: 106). Individuals engage in identity negotiation in order to give meaning to themselves and others. In this way, identities are interactionally constituted, they are constructed, reinforced, and transformed through interactions between individuals (Hunt/Bedford 1994). In the view I adopt thus, the understanding of identities arises from the individual's actions and interpretations, which are embedded in but not determined by objective structures with inherent meaning; social interaction in its specific context is the core medium of identity construction. With regard to the concept of collective identity, the following general features can be retained:

1. *Collective identity is not naturally generated, but socially constructed*

Collective identity is the intentional or un-intentional consequence of interactions, which are then socially framed and structured in patterns. The construction of social collectives involves the generation of equality among insiders: the members of the collective have to see each other as equal in some respect, otherwise no trust and solidarity develops.

2. *Collective identity is produced by the social construction of boundaries*

Boundaries divide the factual diversity of interaction processes and social relations; they mark inside from outside, stranger from commoner, friend from foe (see Barth 1969). Boundary

drawing automatically involves processes of inclusion and exclusion, thus the building of in- and outgroups.

3. *The construction of boundaries needs symbolic differentiation codes as preconditions, it is however not only symbolic*

Such symbolic codes help us to recognize differences in the fluidity and chaos of the world (see Cohen 1985). These codes are in the center of the construction of collective identity and will be discussed further. In addition these symbolic constructions are usually also connected to the division of labor, the control of resources and social differentiation. Collective identity is a social construction with real consequences, produced by social groups employing particular codes of identity construction (Eisenstadt/ Giesen 95: 77).

II. Codes of collective identity construction

Different codes of collective identity can be differentiated depending on the way the boundary is drawn and on the mode of boundary maintenance, on the structure of internal relations and its rituals, on the conception of the world outside and the treatment of strangers. They can be seen in relation to other symbolic structures, such as hermeneutical and esthetical principles, institutions of political power and economic distribution (see Giesen 99: 31). Giesen distinguishes three such codes and calls them primordial, traditional and universalistic.¹

Primordial Codes

Primordial codes² bind the basic difference between us and them to original and supposedly unchangeable differentiations connected to those structures of the world, which we regard as given and not subject to changes by discourse, exchange or choice. Primordality focusses on gender, generation, family ties, ethnicity and race in order to draw the boundary between inside and outside. By tying collective identity to nature, sometimes even physically experienced, primordial codes provide themselves with a secure and stable basis beyond voluntary actions. They seem objective and unquestionable. Furthermore they are characterised by a basic equality of their members. Physiognomy and origin, gender and descent are sound bases of collective identity since they underline within all diversity of

¹ In spite of a different accent, Giesen here builds on Edvard Shils (1975) and further develops his former distinction between primordial, conventional and cultural codes (Giesen 1993: 48ff).

² See for the following Giesen 1999: 32-37.

differences the natural sameness and similarity – members recognize each other as “of the same kind”. This elementary sameness and equality is reflected in interaction principles within the community that are characterized by widespread symmetry and reciprocity, every member is supposed to be equally committed to the community and its co-members. Thus feelings of solidarity emerge relatively easily and members can rely on others if necessary.

The price of this natural equality and homogeneity of the members of primordial communities is the radical difference between inside and outside. The boundaries of primordial communities are not only exclusive and stable, but shall be exactly and sharply drawn; middle positions and fluid transitions, those crossing the boundary and undecided ones are not foreseen. Just a limited form of boundary crossing is possible, if this becomes necessary. This process is usually controlled by elaborated and important social passage or purification rituals (wedding, exclusion etc.). Therefore outsiders are not missionaried, they are just different and this difference is usually connected to inferiority and danger. The construction of a dangerous outside and its demonization becomes necessary especially if the heterogeneity of community members is so obvious, that their commonality can hardly be defined positively. This implies to keep a distance of security from others or even to prepare for war. Thus, the boundaries of primordial communities are strong lines between an unreconcilable inside and outside.

Traditional Codes

Traditional forms of collective identity³ rely on the basis of knowing the implicit rules of conduct, traditions and social routines, which mark the boundaries of the collective. The fundamental difference between us and them is tied to the difference between the continuity of routine and the extraordinary. Collective identity is not represented by an external reference such as nature or divinity, but routines, traditions, memories and institutional or constitutional arrangements of the community are its core elements. Collective identity refers to temporal continuity, to repetition of social practices and to the constitution of the community. Traditional identity thus rests on local rules of the life-world and is constituted only in social interaction. Commemorative rituals represent the past in particular personalities, localities and events; behind traditional rituals of memory is usually a myth of origin of the community. Fundamental modes of identity building are memorisation, localisation and personalisation.

³ See for the following Giesen 99: 42-48.

These elements are exempt from rules of argumentation or debate and constructed by rituals of remembrance. Since and to the extent that traditional identity is not functionally or principally legitimated but only by habit, its obligatory nature and community founding power grow: argumentation and principles open up the possibility for amelioration and change. By force of the self-evidence of routines and traditions community is secured only as long as foreigners and outsiders are not too numerous and do not ask provocative questions. They therefore depend to a certain extent on some reserved space.

The boundary of traditional communities is vague and is rather a diffuse boundary area. Identity is constructed by memory, locally valued routines and daily perspectives; temporal continuity and local difference are the two constructing axes of these communities. Mobility is somewhat slowed down, one can approach the core of these communities by gradual respectful participation in local life forms and traditions.

Universalistic codes

Universalistic codes⁴ start with a particular idea of redemption or paradise. In place of the unchangeable nature or past we find here the absolute religious conviction, the sight of god. But also secularised movements show this kind of codification: Enlightenment and socialism, absolute belief in modernisation, emancipation or reason⁵. Universalistic communities regard all outsiders as potential members. There is however a difference between the categorical possibility of redemption, which is valid for everybody, and the factual consciousness of being redeemed, only valid for members of the community. That is why universalistic constructions of collective identity are basically intolerant towards outsiders. Violence, however, is from this perspective only the last and regrettable mean of inclusion; more appropriate are pedagogy, missionary and persuasion.

In order to draw boundaries nevertheless, there is most of the times an internal stratification in center and periphery (see Eisenstadt 1979). Thanks to a stratification by education within universalistic communities, the boundary drawing between the knowing ones with a strong identity and those in the periphery with a weak identity is repeated. Revolutionary universalistic communities have repeatedly committed rituals of sacrifice, like the cleansing by Stalin or the Jacobin terror for a better world – a reflexion privilege is postulated for the avantgarde. Great empires – and today in parts the United States – developed often a similar

⁴ See for the following Giesen 99: 56-62.

⁵ See the work by Eric Voegelin (especially 1956).

expansive dynamic, legitimised by a task founded in the cosmic and transcendent order and the real interest of everybody. Military confrontations with communities, which resist the mission of redemption of universalistic empires, seem sometimes unavoidable. In sum, internal tensions are managed by external missionarizing, pedagogic inclusion, internal stratification, public sacrifices, the dynamic of renewal and progress as well as the establishment and uncoupling of value spheres with their own logic.

These codes can be regarded as idealtypes. Empirically collective identities, such as regional, national or European identities, are always a specific combination of primordial, traditional and universalistic codes. Their weighted importance however makes a difference, especially for the way of relating to other identities. These relationships influence the strategy an individual chooses in order to manage its multiple social identities.

III. The management of multiple identities

It is no longer controversial among scholars that individuals hold multiple social identities. As a result, people can feel a sense of belonging to Europe as well as to their nation-state, their gender, etc. Beyond this rather simple statement, the more interesting questions are how exactly these multiple identities go together and how they relate to each other. Depending on their form of relationship different identities are either reinforcing, indifferent to or in competition with each other. „Insofar as group membership and orientation towards a collective identity demands individual attention, commitment, even some kind of active support or participation, there is always some kind of competition.“ (Peters 1993: 12) Regarding collective identities as loyalty towards different collectives, they can relate in at least three ways: they are either separate, nested or cross-cutting.

1. If the basic collectives are *separate* or *exclusive*, the individual can order its collective identities to different domains in such a way that they are not activated at the same time. This is the case if, for example, one identifies with the nation in the international arena, with one's profession when economic interests are at stake and with the ethnic community in the cultural arena. If several identities are however exclusive but not separable, their relationship is most probably a very conflictive one.

The possibility to separate out identities pertaining to different domains or spheres of life is inherent in the classic liberal idea to differentiate between the private and public sphere. Cultural matters and identities are assumed to belong to the private domain, while in the public sphere only political interests and identities are supposed to be appropriate and legitimate. However, especially social and political identities in the real world are seldom neatly separable and conflicts of interests emerge regularly. Under such circumstances one of the following ways of combining multiple identities has to be chosen.

2. Identities can be *nested* or *embedded*, conceived of as concentric circles or Russian Matruska dolls, one inside the next. This model suggests some hierarchy between people's sense of belonging and loyalties. An individual commits oneself to one dominant group identity and subordinates other identities in a hierarchical manner to this one. For example, if one considers national identity to be the most important which shall dominate other identities in all respects and therefore supports the interests of subgroups only insofar as they converge with national interests. It becomes clear, however, that the more abstract the dominant identity is the more it can nest other identities. The nature of this relation is supposedly harmonious and mutually supporting or reinforcing.

This relationship assumes that the contents of the different identities are compatible. The content of the inner circles must fit entirely into the outer circles, which are more abstract in order to incorporate different inner circles. The image of a Russian Matruska doll is thus not totally correct since every outer circle contains more than one inner circles. Especially for the European context there is no such thing as a centre, but the outer European frame is filled with many centres within. Legally this image is institutionalized in the conception of European citizenship: every citizen of a nation-state that is a member state of the European Union is automatically considered as a European citizen.

3. Identities can also be *cross-cutting* or *overlapping*. In this configuration, some, but not all, members of one identity group are also members of another identity group. When multiple group identities that involve overlapping but not equivalent sets of persons at the same time and under the same circumstances are salient, two strategies are at hand to combine the identities of the groups to which one belongs:
 - A. *Inclusion*: The inclusive strategy is additive: the shared ingroup identity is enlarged to include all members of the involved identity groups. If, for example, one feels a sense

of belonging to Europe and to the Catholic Church and identifies with all Europeans and all Catholics worldwide.

- B. *Exclusion*: The alternative is a conjunctive strategy, in which the ingroup is defined as the intersection of multiple categories including only those that have the overlapping group memberships in common. Examples are Catholic Europeans who only feel close to fellow Catholics sharing a European identity.

The consciousness of multiple identities can thus have the effect of either increasing the inclusivity of the social identity of an individual or of narrowing the group identification depending on which combination rule is used (see Brewer 2001: 122). If the claims of different group memberships are not in conflict with each other, the additive strategy is relatively easy, only limited by restraints of time and attention individuals can sacrifice to different groups. If however multiple groups have competing claims or incompatible agendas, the management of combined identities becomes more problematic and strenuous. When all identities of the combination are equally strong, the individual will probably try to find compromises and to reach reconciliation – efforts that consequently reduce conflicts and increase tolerance. The alternative solution of conjunctive identity has the effect to save the individual from conflicting claims within its own identity by narrowing the boundaries of the group identification and enlarging the outgroup; this again reduces tolerance and the potential for cooperation, thus increases the conflict potential with others. It is usually assumed that in a large pluralistic society multiple criss-crossing of social identities would have a stabilising effect (see e.g. Lipset 1992), but this discussion shows that it can be the source of increased stability or increasing fractionalism, depending on the management of multiple identities (Brewer 2001: 123).

While the concept of nested identities implies a distinct hierarchy, the concept of cross-cutting identities assumes that the various components of an individual's identity can be neatly separated on different levels. Risse and his colleagues (2003) however point to a third way of conceptualising the relationship between collective identities, in their case between European and other identities which people might hold. They call it a “*marble cake*” model of multiple identities, in which the various components of an individual's identity are seen to influence each other, to *mesh* and blend into each other. Thus someone's self-understanding as German would inherently contain aspects of Europeanness or a Catalan cannot be separated out from a

European identity. A corollary of the “marble cake” model is that European identity might mean different things for different people.

With respect to the relationship between multiple identities and the strategy an individual chooses to manage them, the *variable degree of intensity* of the specific identities is a crucial point. Collective identities are differently forceful in binding their members. Accordingly the role characteristics tied to the respective identities are unequally intense and they can be given up relatively easily or with more difficulties, foremost depending on socialisation processes (as is the case with family or sometimes national ties). Against this background it becomes understandable that regional and national, cultural and religious identities with different forces to bind can coexist next to each other within an individual without creating contradictions. How forcefully an individual is bound to a community is largely determined by age, experience, personality and social context. Within communities we find members with a differing extent of identification. This becomes manifest in the degree the individual subscribes to the collective discipline and internalises collective views and characteristics. The boundaries between active and passive identification, thus the readiness to commit oneself to the community or the sheer perception of group dynamics are fluid and form a spectre which allows for following stages of identification with a collective idea:

1. Passive approval: readiness to sympathize with, to approve and recognize the group contents and aims
2. Active Participation: readiness to engage with the group contents and aims, thereby actively taking part in group building processes
3. Ideologism: readiness to identify with and to direct one’s life entirely according to the philosophy and aims of the group
4. Fanatism: readiness to sacrifice oneself and to die as a martyr for the sake of the survival of the group

The first form of identification is still quite passive, the others are active with a constant increase in intensity, which usually goes along with specific claim-making and therefore with an increasingly exclusive framing. The acceptable degree of critique towards the group by oneself or by others is reciprocal to these degrees of identification.

We can also apply these degrees of intensity to the description and self presentation of communities. It is obvious that defensive communities with a weak collective identity can easily accept the co-existence of other collectives, while more offensive and aggressive ones

try to gain power over others or fight for their destruction. But what are defensive or aggressive communities? Is the relationship between the strength of identity and its compatibility with other identities always so straightforward? In view of the previous discussions on the way of identity construction and the relationship between multiple identities, this has to be regarded in a more differentiated way. Primordial identities can be nested in a traditional one and traditional identities can be nested in a universalistic one without too much contradiction. The other way around is however not possible. On one hand, universalistic codes are by definition able to incorporate different elements however under the condition that they are compatible with or assimilate to the basic universalistic idea. Once this condition is fulfilled strong identities on either level reinforce each other. On the other hand, in spite of their inherently exclusive construction method, primordial identities often cut across each other by nature of the composition of human beings – they are male or female, black or white or mestizo etc. That is why they have to combine with traditional elements in order to strengthen their binding power, as ethnic groups usually do by combining common descent with cultural and social elements. Once this combination is adopted and ingrained in the members of the community with a strong primordial component, the collective identity becomes the more exclusive the stronger it is.

What does the picture of orientations of European citizens actually look like?

IV. Multiple identities in Europe

There is meanwhile a considerable body of research on the phenomenon of multiple identities in Europe. Research in social psychology and anthropology shows that individuals often choose to identify with several territorial communities simultaneously (Brewer 1993, 2001; Citrin and Sides 2003; Diez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001). As case study after case study affirms, it is possible and not at all unusual for citizens to have multiple identities – to feel, for example, strongly Catalan, Spanish and European at one and the same time (Llera 1993; on multiple identities in Belgium see e.g. Billiet, Doutrelepon and Vandekeere 2000).

Thus, multiple identities in Europe are normal (Bruter 2003, Duchesne and Frogner 1995; Laffan 1996; Marks 1999; Risse 2003). When asked directly about their identities in fall 1992 (Eurobarometer 38), 62 percent of respondents considered “a sense of European identity as being compatible with a sense of national identity”, while 23 percent envisage their

“country’s identity disappearing over time if a European Union came about” (see Marks 1999; Reif 1993). Moreover, comparing national and European attachment through the nineties, Citrin and Sides find that a dual sense of attachment increased from 46 percent in 1991 to 56 percent in 1999, while exclusive attachment to the nation decreased from 41 to 31 percent. They conclude that “even in an era in which perceptions of the European Union as successful seemed to decline, the tendency to identify with both nation and Europe increased” (Citrin and Sides 2003: 8f).

Concerning the relationship of these identities to each other, the most widespread proposition is that national identities are embedded or nested in, rather than antithetical to, European identity (see e.g. Marks 1999; Diez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001). If European and other identities pertaining to territorially defined entities are nested into each other, Europe forms the outer boundary, while one’s region or nation-state constitutes the core: someone’s regional identity is nested in her national identity which is again nested in her “Europeanness”. The survey data that mass publics in most countries hold national and regional identities as their primary sense of belonging, while Europe runs a distinct second, are consistent with such a concept of how multiple identities relate (Bruter 2003; Citrin and Sides 2003). In Eurobarometer 54.1 from fall 2000 conducted in the 15 member states of that time, 40,5 percent describe themselves as “national only”, 50,2 percent as “national and European”, 6,2 percent as “European and national”, and 3,1 percent as “European only” (see Hartung 2002).

What about the strength of the respective identities? One could expect the stronger the national identity is the weaker the European one. This is however contested. On the one hand it is obvious to anyone who reads the newspapers in Britain or Denmark, that opposition to European integration is often couched as defense of the nation against control from Brussels (on Britain Usherwood 2002; on Denmark Buch and Hansen 2002). Populist right-wing political parties in a growing list of countries, including France, Denmark, Italy and Austria, tap nationalism and ethnocentrism to reject further integration. Sean Carey shows that national identity at the individual level had a significant negative effect on support for European integration (2002).

On the other hand, several writers argue that high levels of national identity are consistent with a high level of European identity. Marks finds that attachment to one’s country is positively associated with attachment to the European Union (1999; see also Bruter 2003,

Citrin and Sides 2003). Identities to different territorial communities are, in this view, mutually inclusive, rather than mutually exclusive. This is what Diez Medrano and Gutiérrez found for Spain, where “people who identify strongly with Spain or/ and their region also identify strongly with Europe. Spaniards have thus developed a sort of hyphenated identity with respect to Europe” (2001: 772). We can thus state with Marks and Hooghe: “Whether one conceives of the relationship as embedded, nested or enmeshed, there is broad consensus that a strong sense of national identity is consistent with European identity and support for European integration.” (2003: 20) Among those who feel attached to the nation-state and to Europe, the strength of these identities reinforce each other.

Some Europeans however report an exclusive national identity (national only). Marks and Hooghe find that those who attest exclusive national identity are distinctive. Average support for European integration is just 52,2 for these respondents on their thermometer scale of 100 points, but varies between 74,1 and 79,5 percent across the remaining categories (2003: 20). Even more interestingly they find that the effect of exclusive national identity on support for European integration varies sharply across countries. In some countries, citizens who have exclusive national identity are only slightly more Euroskeptic than those with multiple identities. In others, exclusive national identity is powerfully associated with Euroskepticism. In the UK, citizens with exclusive national identity have a level of support for European integration that is on average 32,4 points lower (on a 100 point scale) than those with some kind of multiple identity. In Portugal, at the other extreme, the difference is 9,7 points.

Consequently there is something about the country context that mobilizes – or dampens – the effect of exclusive national identity for support for European integration. Several authors explore the subtle ways in which national identity is framed and politically mobilized in relation to European integration (Bruter 2003; on Denmark: Buch and Hansen 2002; Carey 2002; Fuchs, Gerhards and Roller 1995; Hermann, Brewer and Risse 2003; Kriesi et al. 1999; Marcussen et al. 1999; McLaren 2001, 2002; Risse 2001; on Britain: Usherwood 2002). Countries vary widely in this respect, not at least because of their different treatment of EU politics, such as some hold referenda on membership in the EU or on major EU treaties. The debate over European integration is more or less politicized. EU referenda and their campaigns increase the salience of European issues and limit the capacity of political parties and their leadership to control the debate. They politicize national identity with respect to European integration because they facilitate, unlike general elections, the open expression of

conflicts within as well as among political parties and lead to single-issue Anti-European protest movements. They are unconstrained expressions of preference, with a reputation for spinning out of elite control (Leduc 2001). In fact, Marks and Hooghe find that countries where exclusive national identity has the greatest bite tend to be those in which a referendum on European integration has taken place (2003: 21-24). They summarize:

“exclusive national identity is a powerful brake on support for European integration, and its power is greater in countries where political divisions on European integration run deeper. National identity is framed in national contexts by the mobilization of opposing views on European integration. Political events and discourse may – or, in some countries, may not – construe for individuals that national identity is contradictory with support for European integration. In short, national identity is profoundly shaped by politics.” (ibid. 24)

A similar contextual story can be told for perceived cultural and economic threat. The causal influence of their variables ‘Perceived Cultural Threat’ and ‘Perceived Economic Threat’, like ‘Exclusive National Identity’, varies widely across countries, and there is a common pattern of variation among the three. Lauren McLaren’s thesis that opposition to European integration taps deep-seated fears (2002) is supported here. “Yet the connection of such emotions to European integration is not automatic. It is mobilized in political conflict. Exclusive national identity and cultural and economic fears are interpreted – **constructed** – in contrasting national contexts.” (original, Marks and Hooghe 2003: 25)

Thus, one way of resolving the conflicting expectations on the influence of strong national identity is to inquire into the conditions under which national identity is politically mobilized into nationalism that sustains stark opposition to European integration (see Marcussen et al. 1999). In some contexts, national identity may exist alongside, or even reinforce, support for European integration. In others, national identity is mobilized around the contested claim that the EU threatens national institutions, weakens the national community, and undermines national sovereignty (Risse 2001). Just as the politisation of European identity becomes evident in referenda campaigns, we can focus on the politisation of cultural difference and its relationship to different conceptions of the national and European political community. I hypothesize that – tied to the way the political community is constructed – it is also the national frame of treating cultural diversity in general that influences perceived threats to national identity and the compatibility of different identities. In order to test such a hypothesis a clear conceptual framework is necessary which can be elaborated on the basis of the foregoing detailed discussion of sociological and socio-psychological insights into identification processes.

V. Conceptions of the EU as a political community

Different conceptions of political community, in our case of the European Union, can now be distinguished referring to the underlying concept of collective identity and code of identity construction: a (primordial) ethno-national, a (traditional) multi-national and a (universalistic) post-national one. These concepts prescribe different commonalities, boundaries and subsequently different relationships of identities. The construction codes do not necessarily have to be the same ones on all levels, however the construction on one level triggers consequences for other levels and, above all, for the relationship of different collective identifications. In the end, I will develop hypotheses concerning the European context.

Is the dominant construction code of a political community close to the primordial idealtype, membership is tied to common ancestry, evident in the 'ius sanguinis' rule for citizenship acquisition. A high degree of assimilation to the well defined ingroup and its inherent traits is expected. On this basis the solidarity between members is strong and unquestioned, critique or difference is treated intolerantly and the outside is regarded with suspicion. This is the case in democracies, in which one ethnic group has implemented its values and traditions in the institutional order without recognizing cultural differences. If there are, however, other ethnic groups on the same territory, it is – within democratic rules of the game – difficult to justify and to uphold their constant exclusion from the political community.

A little less assimilation is needed if the community is defined in traditional terms. This still implies many cultural commonalities and identification with a common held conception of a good life, at least in the public sphere, but it is not necessarily based on common descent. This is how classic republicans conceive of the political community. They furthermore assume that such strong identification with the common good and solidarity among its members goes along with the norm to participate in the political community (see e.g. Sandel 1982). State structures are not very encompassing since the citizens themselves are active and self-responsible. The constitution of such a political community is the expression of the founding societal community, the *demos* is the political expression of a cultural nation.

A traditional code of constructing political community in a more plural variant would mean to have loose ties between different cultures and regions, as it is the case in classic empires or federations of states with weak control structures. Political power and governance is largely shaped by local and cultural diversity of ethnic groups and religious minorities. The

heterogeneity of habit rules and privileges are the judicial frame of reference, while there is a difference between one big and a number of small traditions in order to make community building possible in spite of diversity (see Giesen 99: 49f). In pure traditional communities this integration is ensured mainly by the personality of the ruler who represents the unity of the community and the continuity of tradition. In democratic systems such personalisation of authority is in general problematic. Yet, if traditional authorities and cultural particularities are highly valued, this kind of community construction involves principles of multicultural pluralism and the protection of minorities. The majority rule encounters its boundaries in the right of minorities to collective self determination in cultural and religious matters, while the proof of longstanding claims to a particular locality is central.

This conception of political community is close to communitarian (Taylor 1992) and consociational (Lijphart 1971) ideas. The basic idea is more the co-existence of autonomous cultural entities under one umbrella, in the first case still with more cohesion of political *and* cultural community than in the second. Though communitarians demand recognition of cultural communities, they still assume an encompassing cultural umbrella under which conflicts between traditional life-worlds can be negotiated, at best by the communities themselves – following their republican routes, participation is regarded as a norm. However, one has to be conscious about the little gap that lies between the protection and recognition of cultural entities as traditional communities on the one hand and their conception as primordial entities on the other hand. The more the sub-units are defined in primordial terms, the more they become rigid and unreconcilable among each other as soon as interest conflicts emerge – and conflicts between defenders of primordial identities are often destructive. This is the reason why consociational approaches, claiming to have a more realistic world view, prefer elite representation and negotiations resulting in compromises among them in order to integrate different ethnic or cultural communities in one political community.

If democratic systems subscribe more to the universalistic kind of codifying their collective identity than to the traditional one, they emphasize abstract justice principles constituting a reasonable common good – as opposed to the pure opinion of the majority or the sum of individual wills, which would come close to libertarian ideas, but also as opposed to the common good as expression of a cultural entity as in the classic republican conception.⁶ The

⁶ I depart here from Giesen's conception. His elaboration of a universalistic identity in the political realm, also incorporates many republican ideas with his reference to the "volonté générale", the mediation of problems in public discourses and the priority of public aims and education in favor of the community over the promotion of

universalistic identity advocates an unpersonal, abstract order of justice and reason, which cannot be reduced to personal interests or cultural characteristics of single citizens. Therefore the private and the public has to be separated. In consequence the state is strong and reason oriented, resources are distributed by the state according to justice principles.

This obviously comes close to liberal conceptions of a political community (e.g. Rawls 1971) – as opposed to libertarian or republican ones. A liberal political community usually propagates a universalistic outlook founded on the basic liberal values of individual autonomy and equality of chances. In order to enhance the identity building force of universalistic values, it is proposed to base the identity of a political community on the legal principles anchored in the political culture, and not on any general ethnocultural way of life (see Habermas 1994). Thus the specific way of implementing the universalistic values shall serve as reference of identification, caught by the term ‘constitutional patriotism’. This conception is deliberately tailored in order to include cultural diversity. Individuals are usually the only legal subjects entitled to rights. If however in reality discrimination because of cultural characteristics is obvious, some group rights can be justified within this framework for a limited amount of time in order to ensure real equality of justice. The aim is thus not, as in communitarian or consociational approaches, to secure or even promote cultural communities as such, but ultimately the autonomy of the individual.

There are obviously different ways of conceiving of the political community, as being culturally monistic or plural, and different ways of identity construction, the primordial, traditional and universalistic way. The combination of both result in different types of political communities, ranging from a monistic conception to plural conceptions in different forms. If we differentiate different cultural obligations towards the political community on one hand and the status of national communities on the other hand as two dimensions we have a conceptual room in which different conceptions of the EU in the sense of idealtypes can be located. This illustrates the following figure:

private wealth and consumption (see Giesen 99: 65). Liberal and republican conceptions have certainly many things in common, but it is for analytical clarity advisable to keep them apart.

Figure 1: Conceptions of the EU as a political community with reference to the treatment of cultural difference

		Conceptions of political community (cultural obligations towards the political community)	
		<i>Culturally monistic</i>	<i>Culturally plural</i>
Legal subject: national community or individual? (Code of identity construction)	<i>Community</i> (primordial)	Ethno-national (domination by or fusion into one nation)	
	(traditional)	Multi-national (political assimilation by recognition)	(political integration by segregation)
	(universalistic) <i>Individual</i>		Post-national (political integration by abstraction)

The monistic variants of primordial and traditional ways to construct community are already difficult to imagine in a consistent way on the national level since they ideally depend on small structures; the more this is difficult to imagine on a European level, given its obvious diversity. However, in history there have been the ideas of a Europe of a common descent and heritage, dating back to the Roman-Greek civilisation. The invention of a historical continuity between the ancient Roman Empire and the Carolingian empire represented the first construction of a European unity and identity.⁷ Such historic ideas of Europe with reference to the idea of hegemonial empire can today hardly provide a distinct European identity without major reservations, not at least from the outside world. Assuming a human tendency for cognitive consistency, we can expect that as long as one of these codes is predominant on the national level, the development of a European identity is little probable. The adoption of a nationalist-exclusivist approach towards European integration is more likely.

The traditional multi-cultural in its two variants as well as the universalistic code of identity construction represent inclusivist visions, ordered in an ascending way from political assimilation by recognition as in liberal communitarian thoughts, over political integration by segregation to political integration by abstraction. The three of them are thinkable on a

⁷ Yet, this imagination of a European descent as represented by a cultural heritage was challenged by the devastating confessional wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

transnational level, such as the European Union. The universalistic way would conceive of the European Union as an exclusively civic, not cultural project based on post-national, liberal values, which would mean that the inclusion of every country subscribing to these values would be possible. If cultural particularities are in conflict with these values, they are not entitled to protection. In contrast, the multi-national way by segregation would mean not to touch national particularities and identities and to have only a minimal intrusion by the European level insofar as there is no conflict with the national level. If other countries join, the parameters of the common ground, conceived of as a compromise, would have to be discussed again and maybe new compromises are found – if not, Europe would desintegrate again. Therefore there is in the latter conception a considerable tendency for immobilism, opposing change or new entries. Both conceptions involve a nested kind of relationship between European and national identity, however in a different order: the first would give priority to the European identity, the second to the national.

The official European policy is to combine both codes: the EU is a self-proclaimed civic community that respects and promotes its cultural diversity, ‘unity in diversity’ is the motto. Political decisions are taken on the European level only after respecting the subsidiarity rule: if they can be taken on a lower level, this has priority – thus a traditional way of community construction in certain areas with a high amount of recognition of cultural and national differences. However, the fundamental values of the whole project of European integration are universalistic in their essence (there is for example no reference to God in the draft for a constitution) and open to new adherents who will have the right to keep their particularities as long as they do not contradict these values. This effort corresponds to what liberal communitarians try to do: to bridge the gap between particularistic and universalistic values. Yet, if people conceive of the European identity either in the primordial, traditional or universalistic way, the effort to incorporate different conceptions of community and to meet every expectation may be the source of confusion or may be without any effect on community building processes.

Although the communitarian kind of community construction is in some respects close to the primordial and the classic traditional one, it is compatible with a limited amount of diversity. The European Union is in fact repeatedly trying to enhance its self-proclaimed aim of “unity within diversity” by employing symbols that represent the cultural diversity of its member states and are expected to unify nevertheless, such as the flag with one star for each member-

state or the anthem mentioning Europe's cultural diversity. This can be regarded as a way of trying to re-compensate the so far dominant consociational elements in the construction of the EU: at least up to Maastricht, the European integration can be regarded as an elite project only and legitimacy of the EU was based on compromises national representatives had negotiated.

Above all, a central difference between the communitarian and the consociational concept of multi-culturalism has to be taken into account. The first hopes to constitute a strong community by recognising cultural differences in a limited way: the extent of recognition and decision on who is entitled to it is thought to be the result of extensive participation and deliberation processes of the respective communities. Taylor (1992) refers in this respect to Gadamer's idea of fusion of horizons ("Horizontverschmelzung"). The emphasis on participation as a norm and civic virtues are tributes to their republican tradition. In contrast to this normatively heavily loaded conception of a strong political community the multi-cultural integration by segregation which is close to consociational conceptions of political community lays emphasis almost exclusively on representative structures, too much participation is even regarded as dangerous. In light of the previous discussion that collective identity is built and maintained through interaction, the inherent tendency of this community conception to implode becomes evident.

So far, I have following hypotheses: A (primordial) ethno-national conception of community is related to anti-European sentiments or a lack of European identification. In this framing both national and European identity exclude one another. A post-national conception on the contrary, which is principally based on universal values, is so global that neither the national nor the European level are necessarily considered to be the relevant one to constitute community, boundaries are quite fuzzy. If a multi-national one is based on segregation and representation alone, community on the European level is hardly enhanced since little common experiences are at hand to refer to. Some more emphasis of the multi-national conception on common values and participation – which brings about more exclusivity than the universalistic and the segregative approach – is a more promising basis of community building in spite of diversity. National or regional identities can co-exist with European identification with this Europe having a circumscribed boundary.

VI. Conclusion

The current multiplicity of identities poses particular difficulties in terms of research, but it also creates opportunities for the formation of European identities. It is not convincing to conceptualise European identity in zero-sum terms, as if an increase in European identity necessarily decreases one's loyalty to national or other communities. Europe and the nation are both "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991) and people can feel as part of both communities without choosing some primary identification. Analyses from survey data suggest and social psychological experiments confirm that many people who strongly identify with their nation-state, also feel a sense of belonging to Europe. "Country first, but Europe, too" is the dominant outlook in most EU countries.

Some however manifest a nationalist-exclusive identity. There is thus a cleavage between those who only identify with their nation, on the one hand, and those perceiving themselves as attached to both their nation and Europe, on the other hand. From this many scholars conclude that the European polity does not require a "demos" that replaces a national with a European identity, but one in which national and European identities coexist and complement each other. Yet, this can still take different forms, the basic ones are the multi-national – in its two variants of either recognising and integrating or recognising and segregating – and the post-national European community with each of them exposing different potentials to enhance a collective European identity. I assume that the way collective identity is constructed on the national and European level and to the way these multiple identities relate to each other strongly influences the probability of one of the possible scenarios of further development of the European Union: Europe as an exclusive (quasi) ethno-national state, as a still relatively exclusive multi-national state or as a more inclusive federation of nations or, lastly, as a very inclusive loose community of liberals.

The EU increasingly defines what it means to be "European" by filling "Europeanness" with distinct post-national civic and liberal substantive values. However, identification with Europe is made difficult especially by the lack of clear boundaries. It depends on the political context whether Europe's "others" are perceived in geographical terms (other regions of the world and their culture, politics, religion, etc.), in historical terms (the continent's own past of militarism and nationalism), or in social terms (the "enemy within", e.g. xenophobia). This is an unsatisfying state of affairs. This task should not be left over to politics alone since it is prone to involve emotions, which are more easily manipulated by political entrepreneurs and

which harden political conflicts to an extent that makes reasonable and future oriented decisions more difficult, in turn rendering Europe even less democratic and less effective – altogether processes likely to intensify citizens’ “fatigue” with Europe.

As a lesson of the previous discussion it can be assumed that a European identity cannot be based on (universalist) values alone but has to include also elements of a European (traditional) cultural foundation, without however adopting a (primordial) essentialist definition of a European civilisation. In this context, the resilient weight of nation-states and the construction code of national identities has to be emphasized in order to understand when a European identity emerges on the foundations of these multiple national identities.

I am grateful for constructive suggestions concerning this theoretical framework and/or possible empirical avenues to test it!