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in the Public Sphere and in
Foreign Policy

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Abstract

While in political debates identity is often considered as given, scholars of social sciences concentrate on the formation of new and particularly transnational identities. Insights from nationalism reveal mechanisms of identity formation but European integration has taken its own way. We introduce different concepts of identity formation on the European level arguing that multiple identities are common and may take different forms. To observe identity formation, it is not only useful to look at elite and mass surveys but also to consider the public sphere. Though media are predominantly national, different studies show that their coverage Europeanizes. We think that valuable empirical evidences of European identities can be gathered from comparative media analyses focusing on common European frames and references made to a European imagined community. These identity formation processes take place in different policy fields. We argue that foreign policy is particularly appropriate to witness identity narratives at work. In search for a role in world politics, the EU has to revisit its fundamental values thereby contributing to European identity formation.

Keywords

Common Foreign and Security Policy - Constitution for Europe - Democracy - European Identity - European Public Space - Europeanization - Legitimacy

Why ask for a European identity?

Issues of European identity have become quite popular among scholars from different disciplines and among politicians from different countries and parties. Since the project of a European constitution was initiated, the debate has also become politically salient, e.g. with regard to the references in the constitution's preamble. The research community has mostly focused on identity-related questions in the context of the legitimacy of European integration. The more policies are transferred to the European level, the more the European Union's (EU) political system has to rely on the acceptance of the affected citizens. The higher the sense of loyalty toward a political community among its citizens, the more they are prepared to accept inconvenient decisions and policies by its government.

Focusing on democratic legitimacy, many authors argue that the European Union lacks a *demos*. As far as output legitimacy is concerned, "government for the people" seems to be guaranteed, to use Abraham Lincoln's famous quote. But a democracy is also a government "by the people" and "of the people." While there is much discussion on the EU's democratic procedures especially with regard to the European parliament, conventional wisdom holds that the EU lacks a *demos* mainly because there is neither a European identity nor a European public sphere (Kielmansegg 1996; Scharpf 1999).

This paper claims that European identity formation becomes visible empirically in increasingly Europeanized public spheres. We argue in this paper that empirical research on European identity as well as European public sphere has moved far beyond the normative debate (for a detailed discussion see Herrmann and Brewer 2004; Risse forthcoming). Thus, we want to show that European identity and public sphere are closely connected and European identity is particularly visible in debates on foreign and security policy. Scholars have demonstrated empirically on the levels of both mass public opinion and of elite discourses a gradual Europeanization of national identities in the sense that "Europe" and the EU have become an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) in addition to and interacting with one's sense of belonging to a national imagined community. Moreover, we can also observe the Europeanization of public spheres whenever European issues are discussed in the national media. We show that the public sphere plays an important role for the emergence of a common identity. Yet, empirical research also demonstrates that the Europeanization of identities and public spheres varies widely across EU member states and across ideological orientations. Finally, this paper uses European foreign policy as a particularly relevant policy field in which we can observe identity narratives at work.

Concepts and findings of European identity

Instead of complaining about the low visibility of European identity compared to national identity, it is worth looking into concepts of multiple identities and identity formation as well as empirical findings. Social constructivism tells us that social identities are no eternal facts but changing in composition and content. Who is part of the group to which the identity refers and what it is that binds the group and also separates it from others is redefined time and time again. A social identity in general can be described as "that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or social groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981: 255). So

identity concerns the personal affection to a social group as well as the integration of the group's value to the individual concept of self. Collective identities draw attention to the in-group and its consensual understanding of a shared identity. As for political identities, the group to which this emotional value is attached concerns salient political communities (Herrmann and Brewer 2004).

In Anderson's influential definition nations are "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991) but the same can be said about other large groups holding a common identity such as regions – or Europe. Individuals hold multiple identities which is particularly interesting in the case of a European identity. These identities can form different relations to each other (cf. Kantner 2004a: 86). As for *separate* identities, I could be the only German in my sports club, as a result of which my identification as a soccer club associate would be independent from my national identification. These two social groups do not overlap in this case. Second, there are *cross-cutting* identities when two social groups overlap but are not integrated. I can feel a strong attachment to my soccer club and to Europe at the same time. And some but not all associates feel European and not all Europeans are in my sports club. Third, identities can be *nested* like concentric circles so that every member of the smaller group also feels attached to the larger one. Inhabitants of Berlin might identify with their city and region, but also with Germany as a whole. In this case, multiple identities are conceived analogous to Russian Matruska dolls. A fourth concept (Risse 2004) of a *marble cake* is related to the models of cross-cutting and nested identities but refrains from its hierarchical conceptualization since the various components of an individual's identity cannot be neatly separated. Rather, they influence each other, mesh and blend. This becomes particularly evident with regard to political identities. Regional identities of Berliners contain important elements of German identity and maybe even European identity referring to similar values or historic references. The marble cake model refers not only to the composition but also to the content of multiple identities. And it suggests a Europeanization of identities pertaining to distinct political communities rather than the addition of a European layer to other political identities that people might hold.

Statistical analyses in particular confirm the multiplicity of identities pertaining to political communities. Over the past decades, identification with Europe has become a significant secondary identity for citizens who also identify with their national communities. While the ratio between "exclusive nationalists" who only identify with their nation-state, and "inclusive nationalists" who also identify with Europe, varies widely across the EU, it can be demonstrated that this cleavage is extremely salient as a predictor of attitudes toward European integration (Citirin and Sides 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2005). It is important to note in this context that the new Eastern European member states do not differ much from "old Europe." East Europeans on average do not tend to be more Euro-sceptic than, say, Scandinavians or British, and they are also not more Euro-philes than, say, Italians or Portuguese.

As to what it means to identify with Europe, Bruter shows that European citizens distinguish between a cultural and historical Europe, on the one hand, and a political Europe, on the other (Bruter 2004). Political Europe refers to the EU as a result of which the EU now occupies the identity space for modern statehood in Europe (Laffan 2004). Cultural Europe refers to a broader concept of Europe as historically and culturally embedded entity. With the EU's enlargement to 30+ member states, the boundaries of cultural and political Europe increasingly overlap leading inevitably to tensions between the two concepts. This is already visible in the public discourses

about Turkish EU membership (cf. Wimmel 2006). Those in favour of Turkish membership define the EU in largely political terms as a post-nationalist and constitutional entity. As long as Turkey implements human rights, democratic rule, and market economy (the so-called “Copenhagen criteria”), there cannot be principled objections against its EU membership. In contrast, many opponents invoke cultural visions of Europe focusing on religion and Christianity as distinct civilizations. As a result, a predominantly Muslim country could never qualify for EU membership, no matter how secular its political system.

While it has been shown that Europeans – elites and masses – alike, hold multiple identities incorporating the EU in their concepts of community, we know less about how these various identities pertaining to local, national, and supranational communities interact. Yet, the “marble cake” model mentioned above can be used to demonstrate how concepts of Europe and Europeaness resonate with different conceptualizations of the nation-state in France, Germany, Spain, Poland, and Great Britain (Risse 2001). In each of these cases, the nation-states and the identity constructions pertaining to them have been around much longer than the EU as a result of which “Europe” resonates differently with each of these constructions. Moreover, it usually took severe challenges (critical junctures) leading to identity crises to open up identity space for Europe and the EU.

In the (West) German case, for example, the defeat of nazism and World War II led to a thorough re-building of national identity. German post-war European identity has been constructed as overcoming the country’s own past of nationalism and militarism. In the Spanish case, Europe and the EU were framed as part of a comprehensive economic and political modernization program in the post-Franco era (Diez Medrano 2003). Following various crises of the French Fifth Republic, policy-makers in Paris constructed Europe as an extension of French Republican values writ large. The Polish case is one of an ongoing identity crisis in which various ways to re-construct the Polish nation and to overcome both the Nazi occupation and subsequent Communism resonate very differently with Europe and the EU. Finally, Europe has not made many inroads into British (particularly English, to be precise) identity discourses. In this case, Europe still constitutes the “friendly other.”

A major problem for the emergence of a collective European identity concerns the lack of psychological existence of the EU in people’s mind (Castano 2004). While the EU is “for real” for European elites who have to deal with it in their daily lives, it is more remote for the European citizens. The well-known European blame-game of policy-makers (“Europe made me do it”) strengthens a sense of alienation from Europe. In addition, the EU is only slowly developing identity markers that are typical for nation-states. The European flag has recently become such a marker, and the Euro has assumed center-stage in people’s identification with the EU (irrespective of whether they like it or not) (Risse 2003; Hymans 2004). However, a major problem for the psychological reality of Europe for the citizens concerns the lack of clearly defined borders and boundaries of the European Union. From this point of view, the various levels of integration can be very confusing for people: “Euro-land” (identity marker: single currency) only encompasses thirteen members. “Schengenland,” another visible identity marker (passport-less travel) consists of non-EU members such as Norway, while the EU member Great Britain does not participate in it.

Related to the unclear borders is the question of the “other” of a European identity. Whenever something is integrated and included, by definition something else is excluded and left out. Since European borders are unclear, it is as difficult to define who is out as it is to say who is in. Yet, depending on context, people use the mechanism of “othering” in different ways so that the ingroup is more coherent than the out-group. The most important “othering” in elite narratives about the EU does not refer to out-groups in the contemporary international system, but to the continent’s own past of wars, nationalisms, and autocratic rule, whether fascist or communist (Risse 2001; Risse and Engelmann-Martin 2002). In this sense, the construction of modern Europe serves to overcome the continent’s own past. Such identity narratives are particularly salient in Germany and Spain, but also in many of the new Central Eastern European member states. In addition, historical accounts differentiate between Europe and other powers (Neumann 2006), people in German border communities refer to “the East” as a threatening “other” (Meinhof 2004) and EU officials in the EU Committee on Employment and Social Affairs identify the United States and Japan as the out-group (Wodak 2004). Particularly the latter indicates that in the economic field where European integration is most advanced, the market competition helps to differentiate between a European model, on the one hand, and the American and Japanese systems, on the other.

Explaining identity change toward Europe

Just like the question of what identity is, the question how it evolves is mostly discussed with reference to the emergence of national identities¹. The classical studies by Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawn emphasize particularly the importance of political elites (Hobsbawn 1990; Anderson 1991). According to Anderson, the social identity within political institutions predates the political identity of a nation. The identity is translated to the whole population through the emerging newspaper market where latest events are framed in a national context.

For Ernest Gellner it is the market economy that makes people integrate to take advantage of opportunities (Gellner 1983). Gellner’s student Anthony D. Smith tries to explain why people are so passionate about their nations that they are willing to sacrifice their lives for them. He argues that pre-existing history – though it may be re-interpreted for a nation – is important on the emotional side (Smith 1991; Smith 2001). With the concepts so different it can still be said in a constructivist view that they all shape the belief of what a community has in common (Herrmann and Brewer 2004). In a way they can be differentiated according to different contents of identities.

As for the European identity, the first scholars of European integration such as Karl W. Deutsch and Ernst B. Haas already thought about identity in their integration theories (for further discussion cf. Risse 2005). Deutsch saw identification as resulting from a process of integration (Adler and Barnett 1998). Yet, he also drew on communication and common language as keys to identity formation (Deutsch 1957). Haas is more precise on the different effects of European integration with regard to new identities naming three mechanisms: identity as a spill-over from instrumental behaviour towards integration, identification with Europe as driving force behind integration

¹ However, European identity formation can also be discussed in the context of international institutions and their capacity to generate trust between actors.

and a pressure to conformity as a process of habitualization (Haas 1958). The first mechanism with its functionalist logic would mean that those (interest) groups that profit most from integration, identify most. However, there is no indication that farmers identify more than other groups with the EU despite the high expenditures for the Common Agricultural Policy.

For Haas' second mechanism that the "good Europeans" are those who promote European integration, there is some evidence that this played a role in the early days of integration (Parsons 2002; Parsons 2003). Empirical evidence with regard to mass public opinion also appears to suggest that identity strengthens support for integration and not vice versa (Citirin and Sides 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2004). But this mechanism cannot answer our question, since it does not explain how a European identity emerges.

Haas' third mechanism of socialization is based on the logic of appropriateness in contrast to the first mechanism which draws on a more instrumental logic of consequences (March and Olsen 1998). As institutions matter and play a role in people's lives, people get used to them and are willing to transfer loyalty. This also incorporates socio-psychological arguments that identification needs "psychological existence" (Castano 2004) to become real - though still imagined - for people. Of course Europe, i.e. the European Union, is most real for those directly involved in EU politics in Brussels as their work experience is closely related to EU institutions and rules. As far as empirical data are concerned, there is evidence that those who are directly involved in daily EU business identify more with Europe (Egeberg 1999; Lewis 2000; for national administration Wessels 2000; Laffan 2004; for EU correspondents Siaper 2004; Wodak 2004). Their European identity is intertwined with their professional identities. This would also correspond to theories of national identity formation which is said to evolve among political and functional elites first.

Differences in socialization would also explain the higher degrees of European identification among elites as well as among better educated and better informed citizens (Hooghe 2003), since they deal more with the EU or at least know of its significance. As to mass public opinion, (secondary) identification with Europe increased since the 1990s (Citirin and Sides 2004) when the EU became more visible and mattered more in people's lives. The visibility of the EU increased with a common European passport design, the end of border controls and a common currency.

Persuasion constitutes a final mechanism that is complementary to socialization. Here the active role of agents such as EU institutions to construct a European identity is emphasized. Europe may not only become real for people but EU actors and others seeing themselves as Europeans deliberately promote European identity. Propaganda that stresses values and interests in a particularly European manner and refers to a common past and future gives people concepts to make sense of the increasing salience of Europe. Some examples can highlight the deliberate goal of EU actors to promote European identity. EU education policy, for example, aims at forming a sense of European identity in European schools (Savvides 2006: 177). Flying the European flag alongside national flags also serves to construct the EU as an imagined community in conjunction with the nation-state (Laffan 2004). In sum, there is a process of deliberate identity promotion by European institutions that aims at persuading Europeans of their commonness.

Having introduced different mechanisms of identity formation, we conclude that people have to be aware of Europe on a daily basis in order to identify with it. Public spheres constitute one form of social space in which attempts at increasing the visibility of the European Union as well as at persuasion take place. It is in public debates that Europe and the EU become meaningful. Thus, questions of European identity and of the emergence of a European public sphere are closely related.

European identity and European public sphere²

For quite some time, the debate about a European public sphere, just like the debate on European identity, was largely confined to normative reasoning in the absence of valid empirical data (Schlesinger 1993; Grimm 1995; Kielmannsegg 1996; Abromeit 2003). Grimm (1995) saw a public sphere as a pre-condition for a viable European democracy. Kielmannsegg (1996) argued that the EU lacks basic premises to develop towards a 'community of communication', because language differences inhibit Europeans from speaking meaningfully to each other. One of the first empirical studies on the subject matter came to a similar conclusion, namely that there is a European "public sphere deficit" as part of the larger democratic deficit (Gerhards 1993).

Almost fifteen years later, a veritable research community has formed studying the emergence of a European public sphere from a variety of perspectives (for an overview see Meyer 2004). This research mostly concentrates on mass media (and the internet) as – albeit problematic – proxies for the European public sphere (see Meyer 2002; Trenz 2002; Diez Medrano 2003; Kantner 2004b; Koopmans and Erbe 2004; Pfetsch 2004; Oberhuber, Bärenreuter et al. 2005; Trenz 2005; Sifft, Brüggemann et al. 2007). These studies no longer search for a European public sphere outside of and separate from national public spheres. Rather, the emphasis is on the degree to which national public spheres are gradually Europeanized and European issues are regularly dealt with by the various national media (on the one hand Trenz 2005; and Sifft et al. 2007 on the other). Moreover, the existing literature can be distinguished according to the role attributed to the media. First, one can analyze media as political actors in their own right that contribute to and comment on European policy-making. Studies then typically analyze editorials and other opinion articles in the media (e.g. Pfetsch 2004). Second, one can also study media – as the term implies – as observers, mediators, as well as reflections of a larger public discourse. This approach is chosen by the majority of research teams who then often use frame analysis to examine particular debates concerning the degree to which issues are debated from merely national perspectives or from a common European point of view enabling transborder communication. It is through these frame analyses that questions of European identity formation can be put to an empirical test.

The older literature on the subject assumed that identity is a pre-condition for the emergence of a public sphere. A community must be in place in order to be able to communicate with each other. Claims about the absence of an EU public sphere, therefore, usually contain the argument that since there is no sufficiently strong European identity, there cannot be a public sphere (for example Kielmannsegg 1996; Offe 2003). This argument is based on the assumption that citizens enter the public sphere with a given identity and that the debate in the public sphere should be aimed at tran-

² The following draws on (Van de Steeg and Risse 2007). See also Risse (forthcoming).

scending differences in identity, position, or interests (see Calhoun 2002 for a critique). Here, identity is treated as a given, established prior to, and outside of the public sphere. If there is no collective identity, there cannot be a public sphere almost by definition.

Yet, a public sphere does not pre-exist outside social and political discourses, but constitutes a social construction in the strict sense of the word (see also Kantner 2004b). It is being constructed through social and discursive practices creating a common horizon of reference, and, at the same time, a transnational community of communication over issues that concern “us as Europeans” rather than “us as British, Germans, French, or Dutch.” From this perspective, the question of whether we can observe the emergence of Europeanized public spheres enabling transnational communication is very closely related to issues of collective identity.

Thus, the relationship between identity and the public sphere is less troublesome from a social constructivist understanding of collective identities (see, for example, Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995). Here, public spheres and identities are not treated as a given. Public spheres emerge in the process during which people debate controversial issues. The more we debate issues, the more we engage each other in our public discourses – and the more we actually create political communities. This is related to Calhoun’s argument that identities are defined and redefined in the public sphere, which makes them open to change: “Participation in democratic public life is not, however, separate from the processes through which culture is produced and reproduced in modern societies; it is integral to them, and likewise part of the process by which individual and collective identities are made and remade” (Calhoun 2002:157).

This implies that similar meaning structures and frames of reference constitute a necessary condition to enable transnational communication across borders, but they are not sufficient per se to constitute a public sphere. In order to communicate meaningfully, we need to be aware of each other. Engaging in a debate requires listening to each other’s arguments and trying to persuade each other (cf. Habermas 1981). It certainly implies contestation, and it may or may not lead to consensus. But a community of communication in a public sphere implies, at a minimum, that speakers in a public sphere recognize each other as legitimate participants in a debate. We might disagree fundamentally, but we take each other’s statements seriously in a democratic polity. Nationalists deny this legitimacy. Polarizations along national lines by definition create boundaries using national “self-other” distinctions. A certain degree of collective identification with the European Union is necessary to treat fellow Europeans from other member states as legitimate voices in one’s own national public sphere. It does not imply a deep sense of loyalty toward each other, but some minimum sense of belonging to the same political community is required.

However, this sense of community ought not to be treated as a prerequisite of a communicative discourse. Rather, it emerges *in the course* of a debate in the public sphere, in the process of arguing and debating. Actively engaging in a discourse on issues of common concerns actually leads to collective identification processes and creates a community of communication rather than pre-supposing it. Why should Europe be an exception? This line of thought implies that “debating Europe” actually builds the community of fate in a European public sphere. It constitutes Europeans *as Europeans* who can no longer remain neutral observers, but have to take a stance in a community of communication. Thus, identity formation is closely related to the public sphere which constitutes the arena in which identities evolve and gain meaning for the citizens.

While most empirical studies on the Europeanization of public spheres mentioned above use frame analysis to investigate the emergence of similar meaning structures across national public spheres, some go a step further and try to analyze references to a collective European identity. E.g., Sifft, Brüggemann et al. (2007) analyzed newspaper editorials and searched for the usage of the word “we”. They conclude that compared to nations Europe is distant and ranges way behind nations as objects of identification. Yet, it is remarkable that a European “we” exists at all that goes beyond national boundaries. Here, further studies are useful of what and whom the national identity consists of and against whom the “we” is constructed. Oberhuber et al. (2005) find with regard to the debate on the Constitutional Treaty that many newspapers differentiate between the reality of Europe as struggle for power and a vision of Europe that solves problems. Here a community of purpose is imagined and wished for. An analysis of media reports on the “Future of Europe” debate sparked by Joschka Fischer’s famous speech at Berlin’s Humboldt University also showed ample references to a European community of fate, precisely because visions of the future of European integration were so contested (see Trenz 2007).

Last not least, the analysis of the so-called “Haider debate” in five EU member states (including Austria) in 2000 largely confirmed the emergence of a community communication (Van de Steeg 2006; Van de Steeg and Risse 2007). The debate about Haider was about what constituted the EU as a political community. Irrespective of one’s view of the so-called European sanctions, the EU was constructed as the new, modern, and united Europe based on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The modern EU’s “other” was Europe’s own past of World War II, the Holocaust, Nazism, and xenophobia, represented today by Jörg Haider and his party. In other words, a particular European identity was constructed in the course of the debate itself that depicted core values of the European “in-group” against which the “other”, the “out-group” was positioned. Those who supported the EU ‘sanctions,’ used this identity construction to expel Haider and his followers discursively from the community as “ghosts from the past.” Those who argued against the sanctions, did not deny the vision of a Europe of moral and legal standards, but focused particularly on the legal issue to suggest that sanctions were an inappropriate answer to Haider. Interestingly enough, this identity construction of the EU as a legal community also featured very saliently in a European-wide debate about a completely different issue, namely the question of participation in the US-led intervention in Iraq in 2002/2003. An analysis of British, German, and U.S. newspapers demonstrated that the emphasis on (international) law distinguished European (British and German in this case) from U.S. media (Renfordt 2007a).

Overall, it can be stated that not only a European public sphere is emerging but that there is some evidence regarding a collective European identity as being constructed in the course of transnational debates about European issues of common concern to Europeans. While the future of the EU and its institutional composition are hotly contested throughout Europe, debating these questions in a transnational public sphere as issues of common concern already constitutes Europe as a community of communication. We do not have to look much further for a collective European identity.

European identity and foreign policy

So far, we have argued that we can empirically observe the emergence of European collective identities at both levels of mass public opinion and among European elites. At the same time, a gradual emergence of a European public sphere through the Europeanization of national public spheres is also taking place leading to transnational communities of communication which reinforce collective European identities. While these communities are still in the making and vary from issue to issue as well as from member state to member state, this is a far cry from claims in the literature according to which a European *demos* is not only empirically non-existing but also theoretically impossible. But identities do not emerge out of thin air. Rather, they are actively created, reinforced, and strategically constructed, usually by political elites. One issue area in which we can observe such active identity construction concerns European foreign policy.

There is nothing special about the EU being actively engaged in creating a unique foreign policy identity. Nation-states have always used foreign and defense policy to distinguish themselves from others, to claim a special purpose, “*une mission civilisatrice*,” and to promote as well as externalize their own values toward the outside world. Foreign policies then serve to reify national identities internally and to establish oneself in the international system as a force to be reckoned with. In that sense, each and every great power – from the Roman to the British empires, from the U.S. to the Soviet Union and even to China – inevitably becomes a “normative power” (referring to Manners 2002; Diez Medrano 2003).

The term “normative power” already illustrates how close foreign policy and identity issues are related. The norms form the substantive identity content of an international actor and are transported to the outside world. While the concept of normative powers is often only vaguely defined (cf. Sjursen 2006: 236), it also fails to specify the means by which certain norms are realized. Thus, civilian and military powers are introduced as two opposite concepts with regard to the means of foreign policy: while military powers rely on coercive means to ensure their goals, civilian powers prefer political and economic power over the use of force as incentives and sanctions to realize their objectives (Manners and Whitman 2003: 388). As far as the discussion about the EU’s foreign policy identity is concerned it is probably more reasonable to speak of a civilian identity (cf. Börzel and Risse 2007).

A civilian identity has the following preferences of means and goals in foreign policy (Maull 2001: 124–126; Sjursen 2006: 249): security arrangement to constrain the use of force through cooperation; integration up to partial supranationalism; democracy and human rights promotion; non-violence in conflicts; social equity and sustainable development; interdependence and the division of labor; cosmopolitan international law. These values are complementary to a certain degree but they may also conflict. It is particularly in the cases of conflicting values that a polity’s foreign policy identity becomes visible. Take Germany: It was only during the late 1990s with the Kosovo crisis that its “civilian identity” was put to a test (Harnisch and Maull 2001; Maull 2001). The EU is no exception. The more the EU acquires military means in the context of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the more we can ascertain whether it remains a “civilian power” prioritizing conflict prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts over the use of military force. In opposition to some researchers that proclaim the end of civilian identity with this “militarization” (Manners 2006; Howorth

2007), Börzel and Risse argue that "...the EU is only recently emerging as a civilian power, precisely because it only now disposes of the entire spectrum of policy instruments necessary to effectively promote 'civilization' of international relations [...by...] actually taking 'effective multilateralism' seriously..." (Börzel and Risse 2007: 25)

With regard to the values of a European civilian identity the question emerges of how particularly "European" the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are. Only when defined distinctly European, the values can be differentiated from those of the US to form the content of a particularistic European identity. For decades, the United States was the biggest norm exporter and promoter in international relations and especially in Europe, e.g. after World War II in Germany with educational and financial programs. But Europe has developed a specific European version of these values stressing social and economic rights as well as the welfare state and categorically opposing the death penalty. These European interpretation of universalistic values combined with the focus on effective multilateralism contribute to a particularistic identity content for the EU in foreign policy (see also the European Security Strategy European Council 2003).

The core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law thus interpreted in a European way are exported by the EU since the 1990s to other countries. EU development policy, neighbourhood policy and most explicitly the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights are the most important instruments to export European values. These civilian values were also considered for conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-keeping missions of the European Union (Börzel and Risse 2007). Thus, over the last decade or so, the EU has tried to develop and promote a distinctive foreign policy identity in its external relations.

Apart from the external dimension, foreign policy also influences identity processes internally. Inner reification is particularly evident in EU enlargement policy, which is probably the most successful instrument for value export. Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall the historic chance of "reuniting Europe" was emphasized (see the European parliament's information brochure 2003 on Eastern enlargement) suggesting that the countries of central and eastern Europe had somehow left the continent. This framing in the historic context already reveals the identity dimension of enlargement. Accession candidate states have to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria that include democracy, human rights, the rule of law and minority rights as political criteria. Progress reports check on the development in these areas with the powerful possibility to freeze the accession process altogether (Maresceau 2003). The policy practice of Eastern enlargement gave the EU the possibility to develop an explicit role and identity with regard to its values. Furthermore, the EU reassured itself of its own foundations and changed its treaties. The treaties now explicitly state values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights (Sedelmeier 2003: 10).

Another example of internal identity construction through foreign policy is the European Security and Defence policy. Since the Anglo-French St. Malo decision, the EU has built a military structure when in 1999 the member states set a goal to have an EU intervention force ready within 60 days (Howorth 2007). With the military and its use in military interventions not only the European identity as civilian power is put to a test, but also a core national policy is touched. Traditionally perceived as high politics and at the heart of national sovereignty, security policy is becoming more and more institutionalized on the European level. Here the identity question will inevitably

arise: what should these soldiers die for? This is the “real-life” test for common European values in the future. Thereby, European foreign policy identity is touching not only on questions of legitimacy (who decides who is to die for Europe?), but also on the emotional and affective processes of identification with values and the willingness to make sacrifices.

Thus, the EU’s foreign policy is part and parcel of a process of identity construction during which the EU exports its values externally and reifies its identity internally. Once again, there is a strong link to the Europeanization of public spheres. The Iraq war is an excellent illustration of the link between European identity, the public sphere, and foreign policy. During the 2003 US-led intervention in Iraq Europe was not only divided between “old” and “new”, as US secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld put it, but also very united. The European support for the use of military force was in general considerably lower in EU member states than in the US, as the willingness for transatlantic cooperation (Isernia and Everts 2006). Hundred thousands of Europeans gathered in huge anti-war demonstrations – demonstrations for their values and in some instances against the US. Together with public opinion judging the intervention as unjustified (European Commission 2003) it was here that a European public sphere became visible. This moment was stressed by Habermas and Derrida in their essay publicized in major European newspapers (Habermas and Derrida 2003) thereby contributing themselves to the new construction of European identity in the context of foreign policy. The fact that certain values at discussion with the Iraq intervention lead to mass mobilization throughout Europe – old and new – affirms that foreign policy identity links up with personal identification. Moreover, as Swantje Renfordt has shown in detail, a common legal discourse emerged even between supporters and opponents of the U.S. interventions which further distinguished European from American public spheres (Renfordt 2007b).

Conclusions: European identity, the public sphere, and foreign policy

Identity, public sphere and foreign policy are closely linked research areas. To study identity formation on the European level it is conceptionally and empirically promising to focus on debates in the public sphere, particularly debates on foreign policy. Identity theory based on constructivist approaches focuses on social dimensions in building forms of legitimacy for an evolving European polity and policy-process. It is no longer controversial that multiple identities exist with European identity interwoven with national identities. In this context and with regard to the substantive content of European identity, we can observe the emergence of two distinctive constructions: first, a political, modern, and secular EU Europe built upon universal values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and social market capitalism; second, a more exclusionary and traditional Europe emphasizing Christian values against immigrants and non-Christian candidate countries such as Turkey. The two identity constructions are increasingly contested in the public sphere and become visible through the emerging politicization of the European political process.

As to the mechanisms of European identity formation, we do not have a good explanatory theory yet. Institutionalists, of course, point to the identity-shaping nature or institution-building and refer to the interlinked history of nationalism and modern state-building. With regard to the EU, some limited evidence points to processes of

socialization, learning, and persuasion. Moreover, the emergence of Europeanized public spheres also contributes to identity formation, the more EU issues are contested and debated as questions of common European concern. There is increasing evidence that European issues are indeed debated at the same time across the EU using similar frames of reference. Moreover, a transnational community of communication appears to be forming no longer treating fellow Europeans as “foreigners,” but as legitimate speakers in the public sphere. Last not least, media analyses of particular debates such as the “Haider case,” the future of Europe and the constitutionalization of the treaties appear to indicate that identity-related frames and meaning constructions become increasingly salient across Europe.

Foreign policy is particularly interesting for identity formation since questions of content and composition can be well observed here. As we have argued, the EU is actively promoting a “civilian identity” through exporting its values abroad – from enlargement to neighbourhood policies and association agreements and so forth. Moreover and the more the EU acquires military means, this identity construction has an internal component which is linked to the question of what people are willing to sacrifice for “Europe.”

Having shown the close link between European identity formation and European public spheres, we encourage researchers on European public sphere to look more closely at incidences of identity formation to contribute to discerning mechanisms of (European) identity formation. On the other hand, we call researchers on European identity to put theoretical conclusion on the possibility of a European identity formation to a test by analysing debates on hard issues such as foreign policy.

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