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Pathways to European identity formation: a tale of two models

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This article argues that there are two distinct logics that underlie existing studies on European identification. These are grounded in models of collective identity formation that stress either *messages inscribed in discursive processes* or *practices situated in socio-spatial relations* – respectively, the "culturalist" and the "structuralist" models. The first of these models considers identification as a direct outcome of the exposure to content-specific symbols, narratives, and messages; the second, as an emerging property of socio-spatial interactions that are content-free of identity references. The first is logocentric, while the second is democentric and topocentric. This article focuses particularly on the second and less-developed research tradition which explores the effects of cross-national practices. The limits and potential of this model are discussed, setting an agenda for empirical research aiming to better elucidate the causal dynamics of European identity formation and adjudicate between these competing explanations.

Keywords: identification; Europe; structuralism; culturalism; transnationalism; political socialization; cross-border practices

Introduction: a map of European identity research

Studies on European identity fill up several bookshelves in academic libraries. At a closer look, they span over a heterogeneous nebula of research themes at the crossroads of different disciplines. Most of them do not speak to one another and have in common nothing more than a buzzword. As has been observed, under the rubric of "identity" many enlist what are "simply different possible ways of measuring knowledge of Europe, participation in Europe, opinions about Europe, perceptions of Europe, etc." (Favell 2005, 1113). In this article, I concentrate on those studies that pertain to empirical social research on personal identities and touch upon only tangentially speculative works dealing with putative collective identities on the basis of cultural, historical, political, or legal materials. In this smaller realm, I draw a broad distinction between inquiries concerned with *identity contents* ("What is Europe in people's minds?") and those dealing with *identity formation* ("What makes people feel European?").[1] Only the latter group of studies is examined in what follows. Their common focus is "European identity as a psycho-sociological or socio-political process of citizens' attachment to the European space or to the political community designed by integration" (Duchesne 2010b, 7; Figure 1).

This article is organized in three sections. First, I set out to illustrate the two explanatory models – the *culturalist* and the *structuralist* – that, I argue, underpin

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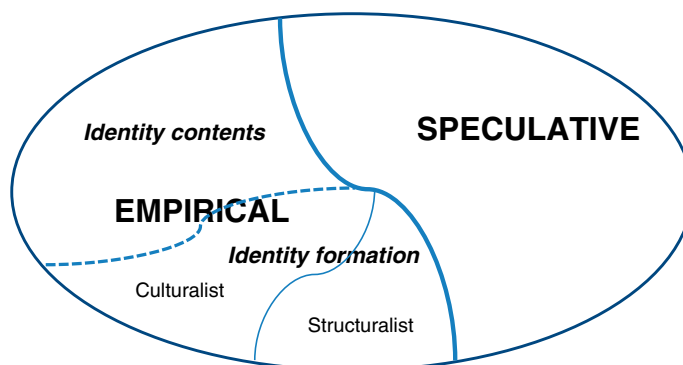*Email: ettore.recchi@sciencespo.fr

Figure 1.   A map of research on European identity.

research on European identification, aiming to unravel their theoretical backgrounds. Second, I outline the patterns of identification that follow from the premises of each model and critically revisit the literature in the light of these patterns. Special attention is paid to research that applies the structuralist model, as this has been thus far underdeveloped. Third, and finally, I discuss the prospects for a more fine-tuned use of this latter model and the conditions under which its explanatory power vis-à-vis the alternative model can be tested.

Where do collective identifications come from? Culturalist vs. structuralist models

In sociology, there is a mainstream tradition that links collective identities to the exposure to influential messages – in a word, socialization. This can occur in childhood, when influence stems from parents' words, or at later stages of the life course, through schoolteachers, peers, books, and media discourses. This dominant approach to "political socialization" – as this area of research is more precisely termed – originates chiefly from the sociological reception of psychoanalysis. Elaborating on its core idea as applied to politics, a number of American and European scholars have reached the conclusion that political attachments have three levels – the community (e.g., the nation), the regime (e.g., democracy), and political actors (e.g., parties; Dawson and Prewitt 1969, 96 ff.). Orientations toward these develop in sequence, one after the other, from the early years of life onward (Easton and Hess 1962; Greenstein 1965). While the original studies of political socialization concentrated on childhood and adolescence, the notion that political identities can be recast over the life course has subsequently gained increasing attention – otherwise, political change would equate with generational change only (and even that would be hard to explain; Marsh 1971; Searing, Wright, and Rabinowitz 1976). Bringing "secondary socialization" in paves the way to more sophisticated constructionist accounts of political identities that draw on sociolinguistics (e.g., Mole 2007). There is no need to go into the details of this literature, which must be credited with trying to open the black box of political attitudes. What I intend to outline here are not its findings, but the underlying premise: *symbols, mostly targeted through verbal messages, mold collective identities*. Such identities are cultural phenomena generated – or mostly reproduced and transmitted – by culture itself. This research tradition assumes that discourse (*logos*) shapes identities. And even if the political socialization framework is not so frequently mentioned, its core assumption lies behind the bulk of empirical research on European

identity.[2] Hereafter, I will refer to this as "the culturalist model of collective identification".

At the same time, when political socialization entered the agenda of empirical sociology (in the 1950s–1960s), in social psychology the processes of identification were studied with different methods – mostly experimental – and with a stronger emphasis on relational dynamics. The focus was placed on small group contacts and their impact on individual attitudes. Hundreds of field and laboratory experiments have proven the irresistible seduction of the in-group – even when individual belonging to groups is temporary, forced or maneuvered (for a summary and overview, Pettigrew 1998). Allegedly, the scope of these studies was limited to boy-scout or platoon-size human associations. Nonetheless, I would contend that the validity of the general idea behind these studies can be expanded to the sense of belonging to larger collectives. Briefly, associative relations (*demos*) and shared spaces (*topos*) shape identities. As I see it, experimental social psychology has translated and specified to micro-level patterns a "structuralist model of collective identification" that can be originally found in two classics of sociological thinking: Karl Marx and Georg Simmel, whose seminal ideas on the issue at stake I would like to disentangle from the thick theoretical bundle in which they are inserted.

Marx's original take on collective identity is well known and needs only a quick recap.[3] Its reference is to social classes. In Marx's jargon, the only meaningful "collective identity" is class consciousness. No other possible identification really endures, being only a fake, provisional, and usually manipulated ideology bound to melt in the air of class struggle. In fact, it is not the content of identification that matters here, but rather the conditions that bring about the sense of unity within social classes. Unfortunately, Marx died before drafting the chapter on classes in *Das Kapital*. Sociologically minded interpreters, however, have specified these conditions (Elster 1986, 129 ff.). In a nutshell, the first basic condition is *physical proximity and ease of meeting* – which, as Marx outlined, is enhanced in the workplace by the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society. The second is the *understanding of joint interests through association* – which eventually leads to class-based collective action. Even if more conditions are sometimes discussed, also building on Max Weber's insights on the emergence of a *Klasse für sich* (Weber 1998, 184; among contemporaries, see Giddens 1973, 92–93), these structural factors are arguably the main triggers of class identification. Now, such a model of subjective identity formation can well be transferred and generalized out of the "class" framework. Once stripped of its revolutionary tone and context, it can be applied to make sense of the emergence of collective identifications in a ghetto, a colony, a unifying nation or – in tune with the primary interest here – a super-national community.

Simmel's contribution to a structuralist explanation of collective identities consists in his focus on the spatial anchorage of social relations. A key insight of his essay on "Space and the Spatial Ordering of Society" points to the psychological salience of places where significant interactions occur. Co-presence in an emotionally charged location invests this same location with a special quality that marks one's memory and identity. Moreover, Simmel (2009, 557) hints at the importance of spatial "pivots", around which individuals fix a cohesive bond. "The strengths that radiate from such an apparent center" – Simmel insists – "also reawaken the consciousness of belonging" (Simmel 2009, 559).

Testing the culturalist and structuralist models: the case of European identification

In this context, "culturalism" is meant to categorize social science approaches to attitudes formation that impute them to internalization stimulated by transmitted meanings, while my usage of "structuralism" is in line with a standard definition of approaches that "emphasize the causal force of the relations among elements in a system or of emergent properties of their patterning" (Schneider 2007, 4856). On the one hand, the process of identity formation is accounted as a within-culture mechanism; on the other, it is a byproduct of some configurations of social interactions. The key difference between culturalist and structuralist explanations of collective identifications lies in the conditioning factors: the *exposure* to influential messages (discourses and symbols) or the *involvement* in space-situated associative relations (independent of their specific content).

It must be clear that the culturalist and structuralist models of collective identification need not be seen as mutually exclusive. In the case of Europe, indeed they can both work and "join forces" in the long-term process of Europeanizing national societies (Díez Medrano 2008; for a converging argument, see Acuff 2012). However, existing research on European identity tends to assume one or the other as its underlying theoretical premise for identification. Moreover, which of the two is more powerful (and in which domain) remains a major empirical question that has not even been formulated so far.

The two models entail different mechanisms when applied to different phases of the life course (Table 1). If exposure to Europeanizing messages takes place in the early years of an individual's life, it activates the socio-psychological, nonreflexive dynamics of "primary socialization". In adulthood, the process is more likely to be mediated by emotionally more distant socialization agencies – primarily, the media – and falls within the scope of secondary socialization (or *persuasion*), with a larger room for agency-driven and reflexive identity-taking processes. The structuralist avenue of identity formation works through the acquisition of a behaviourally related disposition through Europe-wide interactions during childhood (what, following Bourdieu, can be called *habitus*), while it spurs the emergence of *interest affinities* when such interactions occur at a later stage of the life course.

Research on European identity can be framed as exploring or, more often, assuming one of these four pathways to collective identification. To the best of my knowledge, studies on family socialization to a sense of Europeanness do not exist. There are in fact a few investigations of national differences in incorporating European issues in primary and secondary school curricula (Schissler and Soysal 2005; Hinderliter Ortloff 2005; Faas 2010). Even if they do not directly test the socialization effect of European history textbooks and EU-wide educational agendas, these studies expect the culturalist model to be effective among students – an expectation that is also shared among European policy-makers.[4] The socialization outcomes of enrolments in "European schools" are accounted

Table 1.   Patterns of European identity formation.

	Model	Culturalist	Structuralist
	Trigger	Exposure	Association
Life course stage	Childhood, adolescence	Primary socialization	Habitus
	Adulthood	Secondary socialization, persuasion	Interest affinity

in Savvides (2006) that, however, lacks the scope and the design to reach any firm conclusion.

An even deeper, albeit mostly implicit, reliance on the socialization paradigm lies at the heart of the bulk of speculative work on civilizational identities in Europe. Adopting a "top-down" perspective (Bruter 2005, 4–5), from Sully and Novalis to our days, philosophers and historians (but also some sociologists and linguists) have sought to outline cultural *Leitmotive* that represent the quintessential themes of Europeanness (for example, Delanty 1995; Lűtzeler 1997; Mikkeli 1998; Strath 2002; Eder 2009; Ivic and Lakicevic 2011).[5] My argument is that these studies are predicated on the assumption that the cultural bricks of "Europe" – whatever they are – survive because they are expounded and passed from generation to generation, forming "identities" because of their persistent sameness over time. In this research tradition, identities are scripts that are taught, learnt, and enacted. Sometimes they are described as cognitive traits, like Morin's (1987) "doubtfulness", other times as moral stances, like Brague's (1992) "secondariety". Such identities reproduce themselves basically via socialization dynamics. Their "emotional thickness" – on which, for instance, Eder (2009) insists – is key to guaranteeing their durability and success, like for any value transmitted through affective attachments.

The distinction between "primary" and "secondary" socialization in processes of collective identification is not always easy to draw. Broadly speaking, secondary socialization involves a stronger agency and sits better with constructionist accounts of malleable identity-taking. Yet, it can also be framed as manipulative, being the "outcome of power games and political actors' strategies pushing towards differing identification objects" and thus reflecting a "political" rather than a "sociological" logic of identity formation (Duchesne and Frognier 2002, 366). Regardless of a differing emphasis on negotiation and suasion, what these variants have in common is their focus on factors of Europeanization that incorporate the transmission of EU-friendly cultural contents. This is the case with studies that test the reaction to exposure to the EU flag and the EU anthem (Bruter 2003) or the use of Euro banknotes and EU passports (Risse 2003; Cram, Patrikios, and Mitchell 2011), measure the impact of organizational norms in EU institutions (Beyers 2005; Hooghe 2005; Lewis 2005), or assess the effectiveness of EU publicity strategies (Hűller 2007) and EU cultural policies like the "European Capitals of Culture" (Sassatelli 2002). Less directly, studies dealing with the EU's treatment in the media (Stoeckel 2008), the support or opposition for European integration in political party manifestos (Hooghe 2007; De Vries and Edwards 2009), discussions about the EU's future in Internet forums (Wodak 2007, 82–90), and the conceptions of European identity in politicians' speeches (Gould 2011) also imply that the exposure to EU-related messages shapes the propensity to identify with Europe.

The range of studies adopting the "structuralist model" to capture the determinants of European identification is more modest. This means, among other things, that thus far they have not ventured into a fine-tuning of structural effects by life course stage, as ideally feasible and depicted in Table 1. In spite of its relative marginality, this alternative approach emerged earlier, in the pioneer years of European studies, when Karl W. Deutsch crafted his "transactionalist thesis" on European integration. Deutsch started his academic career as a scholar of nationalism. In his view, nation-building was largely predicated on the creation of infrastructures that ease social and economic exchanges within neat territorial boundaries (Deutsch 1953). Infrastructures create "societies", while communication and culture create "communities". The latter cannot exist without the former. Feelings of belonging to a nation – that is, a "national community" or a "people" –

grow out of this intensification of societal relations in conditions of functional "complementarity".[6] On the world map, "each cluster of intensive social communication is a people" (Deutsch 1953, 188). Its members interact with one another more than with persons outside their own community, thus reinforcing their sense of solidarity and common destiny. Later in his life, turning his attention to international affairs, Deutsch adjusted his theory of nationalism to processes of super-national integration.[7] Similar to nation-building, the emergence of stable "security communities" derives from the amplification of economic, social, and cultural exchanges expanding across national boundaries.[8] The newly born European Economic Community (EEC) was taken as a prime instance of a security community with the potential for nurturing a common identity via increased transactions among its corporate and individual actors (Deutsch et al. 1957).

Deutsch's insight on the conditions for a "bottom-up" growth of European integration *and* identity has not been taken seriously by empirical research until quite recently.[9] A reappraisal of Deutsch's legacy is indeed the core point of Neil Fligstein's (2008) sociological fresco of European integration. Fligstein sets out to ask whether there are *real Europeans*, that is, individuals with a solid we-feeling as distinctly "European". This is, after all, the Litmus test of a nonephemeral and deep-seated success of European integration. Eurobarometer measurements of "attachment to Europe" and "support for EU integration" offer only a partial answer. Yes, they attest that about 13% (in 2004) of EU citizens feel "mostly European" (Fligstein 2008, 141). But, in neo-Deutschian fashion, Fligstein argues that the capacity of the EU to sustain and spread people's identification further must rely on the engine of cross-border interactions.

To be sure, Fligstein is not able to prove the linkage between cross-border practices and European identification fully. Through a heroic patchwork of data, he can only assemble indirect clues. Since transnational interactions and European identification are equally stronger among the same social categories – namely the young, the more educated, the better-off – he concludes that there is an association between the two phenomena. This association would manifest itself more clearly in a fraction of the upper-middle class that acts as a carrier of Europeanization from below. The most compelling test of the hypothesis comes from an earlier study, which was only partially known to Fligstein: the 2003–2006 Pioneer project (Recchi and Favell 2009). The project concentrated on what was considered to be the single most engaging cross-border action: migration. Theoretically, it built on intergroup contact theory, positing that European identification could be an emergent property of interculturation, serving as an "umbrella" for transnational living (Recchi and Nebe 2003). Based on a large five EU15 country survey, this comparative study proved that intra-EU mobility and European identification are closely correlated. While the causation sense could not be tested in an ultimate way, the fact that "feeling European" gains momentum the longer EU citizens have lived abroad is taken as a good proxy of the structural determination of identity (Rother and Nebe 2009). Additional local (Verwiebe 2004; Block 2004; Gaspar 2008) and comparative (Roeder 2011) researches have corroborated these findings: people who move across the EU are also more likely to share a European identity than the general population.

But free movement does not exhaust the cross-border opportunities created by European integration and, in sync, by globalization. (In fact, untangling the relative impact of the two processes is highly problematic.) In his *Social Transnationalism*, Steffen Mau (2010) explores cross-border individual interactions, investigating whether they transform the lifeworlds of individuals, weaken bonds to the nation-state, and are being replaced or complemented by cosmopolitan outlooks. The study of

transnationalism among nonmigrants is Mau's key step forward, inspired by Hannerz's (1996, 29) question: "Who are globalizers?" and by Habermas' (2001) argument that greater connectivity would boost a new understanding of global interdependency. His empirical findings are based on a survey carried out on 2700 German residents in 2006. They show that cross-state private relationships are part of the everyday life of approximately half the sample. Excluding connections to co-nationals living abroad, still 29% of respondents are involved in communications with foreigners in another country. Moreover, almost 60% have visited a foreign country in the previous year. Geographically, the transnational social relationships of the German population are highly concentrated, namely in western Europe and the USA, with very few reaching South America, Asia, and Africa, as a consequence of history, proximity, economic, and technological development, as well as cultural preferences and prejudice. Linking transnationalism to identification, cross-border activities and social networks are found to be good – but not the best – predictors of "feeling European only" and "feeling German and European" (Mau 2010, 118). Overall, objective transnationalism is empirically associated with subjective cosmopolitanism (Mau, Mewes, and Zimmermann 2008, 9) – even though the indicators of this latter concept are questionable as they mingle a cognitive item ("understanding of collective fortunes that require collective solutions" at the global level) with a relational attitude ("openness towards difference, diversity and hybridity"), with no reference to the affective-identitarian dimension. Mau's more recent work seeks to specify the macro- and micro-determinants of individual transnationalism (Mau and Mewes 2012). However, the impact of "horizontal Europeanisation" – as he proposes to call intra-EU cross-border interactions (Mau and Verwiebe 2010, 303 ff.) – on European identification remains untested outside the German case.

In 2010, rising scholarly interest in the topic spurred the European Commission (EC) to investigate the issue directly with a special Eurobarometer survey on "new Europeans" – i.e., "people who live in the EU and have connections with more than just the country where they live" (TNS 2011, 3). More precisely, transnationalism is unpacked as being formed by four components: family descent (including grandparents), personal relationships (relatives and friends abroad, as well as friends coming from abroad), personal experiences (travels and stays abroad), and sociocultural links (knowledge of foreign languages, ethnic food tastes, interest in news, culture, and sports of other countries). Survey results show that cross-border connections through personal relationships are the most common feature of transnationalism. In particular, 40% of European residents have a close friend or relative who lives in another country (TNS 2011, 28). Highly educated people and those who live in large towns show the highest levels of cross-border connectedness.

When it comes to self-categorization, the survey investigates feelings of attachment to foreign countries, finding – not surprisingly – that "new Europeans" are twice more likely than "old Europeans" to have such feelings (mostly mentioning another EU member state). Clumsily, however, the survey does *not* use the established Eurobarometer indicator of national and European identification, missing the opportunity to test the relationship between cross-border practices and identity. Rather than tapping self-identification per se, a second-order assessment of respondents' own "scaling of identity relevance" is examined. A newer Likert-scale question is thus posed: "Thinking now about the fact that you are European, how important is being European to you personally?" Possibly, this question tackles the salience of European identity, but fails to measure it against the crucial yardstick of national identity – which was in fact grappled with in past Eurobarometer indicators. Even worse, the trustworthiness of this operationalization seems to be dramatically weakened by the value-laden introducing

sentence ("the fact that you are European"), which forces respondents into a precooked identity attribution as "European". Possibly as a result of such operationalization of identity, "no significant differences [are] found between 'new Europeans' and 'old Europeans' in terms of their opinion on the importance of being European" (TNS 2011, 101).

More aptly, exploring older Eurobarometer data, recent research sheds additional light on the transactionalist thesis. Kuhn (2011) and Recchi and Kuhn (2013) demonstrate that, *ceteris paribus*, individual transnationalism has a positive and significant effect on pro-Europe attitudes. In addition, Roeder (2011) and Kuhn (2012) find that cross-border practices play a *stronger* part in structuring European identity among the low educated. The reason for this is that the highly educated have such a large likelihood of self-classifying as "European" that transnational networks and mobility cannot enhance much. This is also an explanation for the apparently puzzling finding of the modest impact of Erasmus experiences on attachment to Europe (Sigalas 2010; Wilson 2011): recipients of Erasmus grants are all university-educated people, among whom the sense of being European is more widespread than in the general population. In fact, cross-border practices can make up for educational differences in European identification. This is a lesson with deep policy implications when designing future EU mobility programs or devising further policies to bolster cross-border exchanges of any kind. As Kuhn (2011, 828) concludes, "for Deutsch's theory to become reality in the EU today, it is not that the total amount of transactions needs to be increased, but rather that a broader share of the population ought to be involved".

Toward a more fine-tuned test of the structuralist model of European identification: concluding remarks

In this article, I have argued that there are two distinct logics that underlie existing research on European identification. These are grounded in models of collective identity formation that stress either *cultural messages inscribed in discursive processes* or *practices situated in socio-spatial relations*. I call them the "culturalist" and the "structuralist" models. The first one considers identity as an outcome of the exposure to content-specific symbols, narratives, and messages; the second, as an emerging property of socio-spatial interactions that are content-free of identity references. The first is logocentric, while the second is democentric and topocentric.

The focus was particularly placed on the second research tradition which studies the effects of cross-national practices on European identity. In relative terms, this approach seems to be underdeveloped. Existing studies pursuing this research line, reviewed in the previous section, show at least four noticeable limitations:

(1) They analyze a reduced set of transnational activities. Mobility (either migration or travel) has been often taken as the core component of cross-border activities. Personal friendship with nonnationals is another. But the range of such activities is much larger, especially if we consider the possibility of virtual mobility and interactions. With few exceptions (in particular, Berezin and Díez Medrano 2007; Recchi and Kuhn 2013), a Simmel-inspired attention to the spatial dimension of these practices is also missing from the literature.

(2) They suffer from a trade-off between object specification and target population. More fine-grained research on transnational behaviors has focused on a single nationality (Mau 2010), whereas studies relying on larger sample designs have

adopted rougher measurements of cross-national practices (Fligstein 2008) or European identification (TNS 2011).

(3) When tracking cross-border behaviors, they fail to specify life course effects, which – as argued – may trigger different mechanisms of identity formation (habitus or interest affinity). For instance, are individuals enmeshed in trans-European interactions engendered by family roots more or less inclined to European identification than others who have established similar relations later in their life through their work or leisure? Period and context effects could equally be relevant in defining additional structural conditions favoring or buffering identification.

(4) The relative impact of the exposure to EU-imbued messages (flag, events, school-teaching, parental cues, etc.) and intra-European cross-border practices on identifications has never been assessed. What is the effect of the cultural transmission of European identity *net* of cross-national relations, and vice versa? And are there intervening forms of super-national identification – namely cosmopolitanism – that alter European identity-taking?

To advance this research agenda, the first challenge is to draw a comprehensive classification of cross-border individual practices (Table 2).

Attention must be paid to the spatial dimension of each kind of practice, especially aiming at distinguishing those rooted within the EU and those that span over non-EU countries. Moreover, in line with previous research (Duchesne and Frognier 1995, 2008; Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001; Marks and Hooghe 2003; Westle 2003; Risse 2004, 2010; Citrin and Sides 2004; Bruter 2005), I stipulate the compatibility of subnational, national, and super-national identities which is ultimately grounded in the notion of "polyphonic identities" (Evans 1998). In this light, it can be hypothesized that:

(1) Each cross-border practice fosters a stronger attachment to the areas within which interactions take place.

(2) The more permanent and personal cross-border practices exert a more marked effect on super-national identifications.

Broadly speaking, border-crossing is also border-tearing. The very existence of the EU reinforces the distinction between European and cosmopolitan identity – but again, not necessarily entailing their incompatibility. This leads to formulate one more hypothesis:

(3) Cross-border practices feed both 'general' (i.e., cosmopolitan) and 'specific' (i.e., European) super-national identifications.

Finally, in line with Deutsch, I deem that collective identities are strengthened when there is a political infrastructure – like the EU – that encapsulates and eases cross-border interactions within given boundaries. As a consequence, a fourth hypothesis can be stated:

(4) European identification emerges out of intra-EU practices more than cosmopolitanism out of extra-EU experiences.

Having said this, unless one strictly endorses "structural determinism" (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994), a focus on transnational practices as triggers of identity changes does not

Table 2.   Classification of cross-border individual practices.

Physical border-crossing?	Dimensions	Indicator
Yes → Physical mobility	High permanence	Long-term stay (>3 years) abroad for work, study, retirement
		Medium-term stay (3 months-3 years) abroad for work, study, retirement
		Short stay (3 weeks-3 months) abroad
		Holidaying, short trips abroad
	Low permanence	Cross-border shuttles (for shopping, work, schooling, etc.) without overnight stay
No → Virtual mobility	Personal	Commanding foreign languages.
		Having a foreign spouse or family member
		Having family/relatives in a different country
		Having foreign friends/neighbors
		Having friends abroad
		Having foreign business partners, clients, colleagues
		Adhering to international associations
		Consuming foreign culture (music, literature, cinema, arts, cuisine, etc.)
		Buying foreign products online
		Making foreign investments (house, bank account)
		Sending children abroad
		Interacting with foreigners through web networks
	Impersonal	Using foreign media and cultural products

obliterate the alternative avenue of identification illustrated earlier – i.e., the culturalist model. What has still to be assessed is their relative effectiveness and interrelations. And, more precisely, within each of them, which kind of messages and which kind of practices affect identification more strongly. This is a priority for future empirical research on the formation of European and other forms of super-national identities.

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning that the two models also have distinct policy implications in view of a deeper and more widespread identification with Europe of EU citizens. "European identity technology", as Kaina and Karolewski (2009) dubbed it, is a recurrent concern of the EU itself. In a normative framework, the culturalist model encourages policy-makers to develop narratives and symbols that "sell" the Union to citizens. In brief, it forms the theoretical backdrop of a cultural marketing strategy. In fact, the structuralist model would suggest a content-neutral emphasis on the facilitation of cross-border practices. On both fronts the EU has been active over the last decades, though lacking any worked-out sense of the causes and consequences of different policies. Knowing from rigorous research findings which of the two policy lines might be more fruitful can be dramatically important in concentrating efforts and investments at a time in which EU legitimacy and solidarity face unprecedented challenges.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. European "identity contents" are sometimes investigated as "frames" (Díez Medrano 2003), "meanings" (Grundy and Jamieson 2007), "perceptions" (Gaxie et al. 2011), "discourses" (Meinhof 2004), "reactions" (Duchesne et al. 2013), or "positioning" (White 2009, 2010; see also the essays in Duchesne 2010a). Most of them fit into post-positivist epistemologies and interpretative constructivist approaches (in EU studies, Checkel 2007). Whatever the label, research on European identity contents is likely to prefer *Verstehen* over *Erklären* and thus adopts in-depth interviewing, focus group, or other nonstandardized research methods.
2. A notable exception is Checkel's edited volume (2005), which is grounded in a rather accurate treatment of socialization theory.
3. My reading of class consciousness here is especially in line with Wright (1985, 243 ff.). Interestingly, in a pioneer piece on European identity, Kohli (2000, 117) observes that the sociological study of collective identities "continues the basic theoretical agenda set by Marx in the domain of class." The origin of collective identity research in the classics of sociology is highlighted also by Cerulo (1997) and Snow (2001).
4. Significantly, "after the rejuvenation of the Community with the signing of the Single European Act, the Education Ministers of the Member States approved, in 1988, a resolution on fostering the European dimension in education that aimed, among other things, to 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity'" (Haus 2009, 920).
5. While not necessarily normative, many of these contributions walk the thin line between description and prescription.
6. This requirement may well lead to view Deutsch as a "functionalist", inasmuch as his theory entails a cultural "spillover" from interest-driven transactions and thus fits in with Haas' (1958) account of European integration. However, social–psychological dynamics of learning and self-adjustment to others' norms are also mentioned in Deutsch's work, establishing a bridge with Allport's (1954) contact theory of ethnic relations. Briefly, this theory postulates that the intensity of positive intergroup interactions weakens cognitive distinctions between in- and out-groups (see also Tajfel 1974). As a consequence, individuals become aware of commonalities up to eventually developing a common identity.
7. In fact, in the final paragraphs of his Ph.D. thesis, Deutsch was already hinting at the possibility of higher-order types of community building in the form of super-national regional blocks (Deutsch 1953, 193).
8. Consistently with his transaction-based view of social and political life, Deutsch notes that "boundaries are not just lines on a map … what really makes a boundary is a sharp drop in the frequency of some relevant transaction flow" (Deutsch 1969, 97).
9. Deutsch's rediscovery in sociologically inspired EU studies was probably triggered by Jan Delhey (2004) who, taking the transaction thesis to its extremes, concluded that "European social integration would be fully achieved if intergroup relations between the EU nationalities were mutually as frequent and cohesive as in-group relations within these nationalities –in this case, the component parts of the European social space would be dissolved because Europeans act (and think) like citizens of one single nation" (Delhey 2004, 21; see also Trenz 2011, 206–208).

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