# I.  Die Europäische Union als politischer Akteur

## Challenges to the external identity making in the European Union

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### Introduction: The problem at hand[*]

Many authors have discussed issues connected with the EU's quest for more legitimacy through the establishing of collective identity (of many: Checkel / Katzenstein 2008; Karolewski 2009). Internally, the EU is facing considerable challenges, since there has been a continuous dwindling of support for the EU among European citizens. Hence, the research on European integration deals increasingly with two questions: how much pressure the EU can withstand in order to persist and what type of collective identity the organization would need in times of economic crisis and conflict. In this context, a number of publications stress the necessity of societal and political cohesion via collective identity among EU citizens and the EU elites. A collective identity among Europeans is believed to be an instrument of overcoming centrifugal tendencies resulting from increasing heterogeneity in the European Union of 27 member states (soon to be more) as well as growing international demands for the EU to act as a unified actor in international politics (Kaina / Karolewski 2009).

Against this backdrop, the EU is said to apply identity technologies towards its citizens in order to generate collective identity: citizens become 'receivers' of a collective identity whose orientation is constructed or strengthened by the political

authorities of the EU. In order to generate collective identity, the EU reverts to various identity technologies including the promotion of positive self-images (such as the 'green Europe'), the generation of common symbols (such as the European anthem and the common currency) or visibility enhancement of common values (in the form of, for instance, the Charter of Fundamental Rights). However, the effectiveness record of the EU's identity technologies is mixed at best. Moreover, citizens' support for European integration has been decreasing since the early 1990s (e. g. McLaren 2007; Eichenberg / Dalton 2007; Hooghe 2007; Kaina 2009) and the research on euroscepticism highlights that the "permissive consensus" has been replaced by a "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe / Marks 2006: 248; Eichenberg / Dalton 2007; Kaina / Karolewski 2009; Kaina 2009). The lack of support for the EU among its citizens was secondary as long as the permissive consensus allowed the national and European elites to push ahead with European integration. However, as the European Community and afterwards the European Union have expanded territorially and deepened institutionally, European integration has increasingly become vulnerable to the instability of public support, in particular in times of crisis.

Against this background, the issue of collective identity appears to be increasingly relevant for the current European Union. Apart from the challenges the EU is facing in its politics of internal identity generation, it also diffuses its visions of collective identity beyond its own borders. In particular, the EU promotes a collective identity in the European countries neighbouring it. Even though it might sound paradoxical (as the EU promotes something beyond its borders that is still in the process of being generated within the EU), one can argue that the EU promotes externally its 'institutional identity' consisting of its own procedures, regulations and institutions, which become transplanted into third countries. This 'institutional identity' differs from the 'symbolic' European identity being produced within the EU. Whereas symbolic identity draws on shared symbols of commonality such as common currency, common anthem, common holidays or even a common past, institutional identity is based

on specific institutions (in the larger sociological sense including norms, procedures, regulations) and on the projection of the superiority of these institutions.

This contribution reflects mainly upon the external identity promotion by the EU regarding its neighbouring countries. By so doing, it deals with external aspects of the EU's identity generation, identity promotion and identity projection. The EU promotes a European identity in its European neighbourhood by "shaping conceptions of the normal" (Manners 2002) as well as projecting its institutional and normative superiority. While the former legitimizes the adaption and implementation of the EU's institutional rules, norms and standards (as the appropriate ones) in neighbouring countries, the latter promotes the EU self-images of normative superiority. Thus, the EU aims at spreading both norms of appropriateness and norms of superiority in third countries. As a consequence, the EU's institutions, procedures, norms and values become a frame of reference for the conduct of non-member states: their domestic institutions as well as their policies are judged by the EU's norms. Thus, by adopting these norms, third countries assume the institutional identity of the EU.

Concerning its external identity politics, the EU is stuck in a *twofold* identity dilemma. First, the EU aims at transferring its institutional identity to countries in its neighbourhood such as Belarus, Ukraine or Moldova but refuses to offer them the perspective of formal membership. Regardless of whether these countries are capable of joining the EU or even whether the EU is able to integrate them, the lacking membership perspective undermines the EU's credibility as a benevolent 'identity hegemon' and thus the effectiveness of the EU's external identity politics. Therefore, the EU weakens its own chances of promoting the European identity abroad. Second, the EU frequently fails to live up to its own positive self-images, which additionally raises questions about its credibility as an 'identity hegemon'. Normative cracks in image consistency promote an instrumental approach to the EU by third countries, which poses an additional challenge to the EU's external identity politics.

The contribution starts with the discussion of approaches to the external identity promotion by the EU. Next, it reflects upon the general trend of the EU's identity promotion abroad, consisting of the creation and promotion of positive self-images. Here, specific problems of the positive self-images such as cracks in the normative consistency of the EU will be discussed. Then, the paper moves on to discuss the EU's identity promotion regarding the post-soviet countries. Here, it elaborates on some general problems of the EU vis-à-vis these countries and then discusses specific instruments of identity promotion, mainly within the European Neighbourhood Policy.

## Approaches to EU's external identity making

In this section will discuss both the mechanisms of the EU's external identity making and the theoretical approaches to it. The 'identity transfer' to third countries refer mainly to causal workings of norms in relation to identities. The theoretical approaches deal in turn with the larger theoretical context, which oscillates between rationalist and constructivist explanations.

### *Mechanisms of external identity making*

As the external identity politics of the EU relate to the penetration of European norms into the domestic spheres of non-EU countries, the notion of 'identity transfer' concentrates on the domestic adaptation in the non-member nation-state as a result of the normative and institutional influence of the EU. However, there is no agreement concerning the mechanisms through which norms operate in promoting and creating the 'institutional' identity in countries outside the EU. The main issue of disagreement is whether actors (the EU and national governments) use norms genuinely or instrumentally. In the former case norms become a part of actors' new European identity, whereas in the latter actors merely act in tune with norms as long as it is in their

interest. Against this background, we can identify three major assumptions about causality of norms in relation to identities.

*Firstly*, 'identity giving' actors can apply incentives and rewards to change the behaviour of other actors in tune with the norms of identity givers. As a result, a learning process on the part of the 'identity-receiving' actors can ensue, as they show behavioural adaptation regarding the transferred norms. This expected mechanism is rooted in actors' rationality, which questions the autonomous role of norms vis-à-vis the creation of identities. In this context, the so-called conditionality policies are believed to be the proper tools for the transfer of norms, provided they are applied in an effective manner – that is, incentives are stable and lead to a durable conditioning of actors' behaviour. In particular, conditioning is supposed to work when the targeted governments expect the promised rewards to be greater than the costs of norm compliance. However, the rationality perspective also implies that the identity receivers can be aware of conditioning processes and resist them by pretending that identity transfer took place. In this case, actors reap the benefits of following the identity transfer but the transfer itself is merely simulated. This can be observed, for instance, in cases where third countries adopt EU norms but do not implement them. In this context, identity generation outside the EU is dependent on the two-sided credibility. On the one hand, the subjects of the EU identity politics have to be certain that they will receive the promised rewards after meeting the EU's demands. On the other hand, they also have to believe that they will receive the reward only if they fully meet the requirements (Sedelmeier 2006).

*Secondly*, it is believed that social interactions and communication between the identity-giving actors and the identity-receiving actors can lead to the internalization of norms, rather than their manipulative pseudo-adaptation. This expected mechanism is in tune with the neo-functionalist perspective pointing out that the long exposure to norms of the EU can draw other countries into the EU's identity orbit (Haas 1958; Deutsch et al. 1957; Risse 2005). A means to ascertain a durable exposure to EU norms is the establishment of common institutions, which fuels inter-

actions between the EU and the objects of identity transfer and thus conveys the EU norms. However, one can argue that it is not only the durability and intensity of exposure to the EU's norms that is crucial for an effective identity transfer but also the consistency of the EU's normative communication and behaviour. If the EU communicates inconsistently regarding its own norms, for instance by using diverging normative standards for different countries, it undermines its identity-making potential. This also holds true for the consistency of the EU's normative behaviour, which has to correspond with the normative self-images. Cracks in the normative consistency of norms and normative self-images of the EU render the exposure to the EU norms less effective and might even question the very appropriateness of a given norm.

*Thirdly*, we can discern the mechanism of normative persuasion, which is based on the notion of exchange of arguments with a goal of finding consensus, rather than negotiating on the basis of individual interests. Whereas the rationality-orientated and the neo-functionalist perspectives imply a one-directional identity-giver/identity-receiver framework, the persuasion mechanism includes both parties in the identity-making endeavour. According to Checkel (2007: 227) normative suasion takes place, when "agents actively and reflectively internalize new understandings of appropriateness". As a consequence, this perspective suggests inclusive socialization, where all actors act according to the logic of appropriateness of shared norms and by exchanging arguments. In the process, the institutional identity is not only subject to transfer to third countries but also becomes strengthened in the EU itself.

## Theoretical approaches to the EU's external identity making

In radical versions of the rationalist perspective, normative statements of the EU belong to the category of the so-called 'cheap talk', which only severs the purpose of the instrumental concealing of the EU's self-interested motives (Austen-Smith 1992). For other scholars such as Schimmelfennig (2001), actors do primarily follow the logic of self-interested calculation, but the

boundaries of their rational interest calculation are constrained to a certain extent by norms. As a result, the relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries are characterized by the *strategic* use of norms on both sides, by appealing for instance to common identities, democratic values and communitarian reputation. The EU uses norms instrumentally to change the behaviour and institutions of the non-member states.

In the case of the EU Eastern enlargement, it had steered the member states into a *rhetorical trap*, as the EU member states had to support enlargement against their interests in order to save the EU's reputation as a trustworthy community. In this view, strategic behaviour of the EU member states was constrained by the constitutive ideas of the EU as a community of certain values. But also the 'receivers' of the EU institutional identity are driven by pragmatic self-interests and strategic calculation of costs and benefits when considering institutional change in tune with EU demands. These countries are also likely to use norms-related arguments to favour their interests (Schimmel-fennig 2001: 58). Against this backdrop, rationalists view conditionality as a far more effective mechanism of identity transfer than the generation of interactions or normative suasion. The latter might, however, be useful if applied instrumentally.

In contrast, from the radical constructivist perspective, conditionality can produce merely short-term results in behavioural and institutional adaptation, whereas socialization through normative persuasion can lead to a durable identity transfer. In order to make it work, common institutions are necessary, as the normative persuasion cannot occur in an institutional vacuum. Therefore, constructivists could argue that the interactionist perspective lays institutional grounds for the normative persuasion, but stops short of making the right prescriptions concerning the external identity construction. For instance, Sjursen (2002) emphasizes the autonomous role of internalized norms which constitute the identity of actors. In this sense, norms are cores of actors' identities, rather than having a merely regulative function. She argues that decisions are made as actor's reason together and assess the moral validity of arguments, rather than through bar-

gaining on the basis of fixed preferences. Since in the constructivist perspective conditionality fails to generate durable institutional change, the belief in legitimacy of the norms appears to be central. Against this backdrop, the identity transfer has to be supported by mechanisms increasing the legitimacy of the transferred norms. Therefore, the EU is likely to promote its normative supremacy as a support mechanism for its institutional identity in order to enhance the legitimizing effects. From the constructivist perspective, such a discursively constructed identity of the EU as, for instance, a democracy promoter can have a significant effect on actors, their identities, interests and behaviour, not only in the targeted countries but also in the EU itself.

Beyond rationalism and constructivism we can identify a theoretical middle ground. For instance, Sedelmeier (2001: 16) suggests that in order to understand the specific relations of the EU with the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), we have to take account of the EU's *specific* collective identity towards the CEEC. Regarding the CEEC, the EU activated general identity-orientated norms, embedded in the EU's institutional structure, rather than only its interests. These norms are not always present in EU foreign policy, but they contributed to an activation of collective EU identity towards the CEEC, rather than a mere instrumental treatment of these countries. According to Sedelmeier (2001), the core of this European identity can be traced back to the notion of the broader European vocation of the EU and its particular role in supporting democratic and market economic transformation, in particular in the CEEC. During the pre-accession phase of the CEEC, the EU permanently stressed its obligations towards this region, the EU's solidarity, as well as the forced exclusion of the CEEC from the European integration process. This commitment orientation gave the EU's own integration policies a normative twist, which discursively integrated the CEEC into the core of the EU's identity. As a result, the EU socialized itself into policies of commitment, rather than pursuit of interests.

Given this specific activation of European identity, we could argue that the EU can apparently change its mode of operation regarding the methods of identity transfer from rationalist to

normative logic of action or even use both modes of operation simultaneously, depending on the country or the policy field in question. A question remains; however, as to whether the same degree of normative commitment of the EU can be activated regarding other countries or whether the CEEC remains a *singularity* of the EU's identity politics. On the one hand, the EU is using conspicuously similar methods to bring the post-soviet countries (PSC) closer to the EU as those used towards the CEEC, since the formal instruments and incentives to promote norm compliance vary only slightly between the PSC and the CEEC.

On the other hand, beyond its institutional impact the EU uses a discourse of *'identity light'* by promoting notions such as *the circle of friends*, rather than formulating a definitive membership perspective. The politics of 'identity light' involves far fewer pledges to solidarity, less loyalty and commitment orientation, and fewer arguments related to common history and European togetherness. In addition, the EU takes a diverging geopolitical stance towards the post-soviet space, in particular regarding the role of Russia in the region. For instance, Ukraine represents a great challenge for the EU external identity politics, as this country is of special political importance to Russia. Some scholars argue that the EU's influence in Ukraine is confronted by the conflicting influence on the part of Russia. In this view, Russia's policies seem to be directed at destabilising Ukraine, which would allow Russia to exercise its influence in the post-soviet space to full extent and legitimize its own regime of so-called 'managed democracy' at home. Some even suggest that the 'Russian factor' resulted in a Russia-first policy of the EU and a lack of a value-based approach towards Ukraine (Solonenko 2009; Dimitrova / Dragneva 2009).

Against this background, we can argue that the EU can apply both conditionality and socialization strategies. It remains an empirical question which instruments the EU uses to promote the identity transfer. In the following section, I will discuss some instruments of the European neighbourhood directed at the PSC and tentatively assess whether these further conditionality or socialization.

## The EU's external identity promotion

In general, it is rather difficult to empirically establish the genuine motivation behind the actors' actions in the EU. It also concerns the motivation for the identity transfer to non-EU countries. The EU espouses an entire range of policies towards third countries, many of which have purely instrumental goals, such as fending off migration. However, some of them merely have identity effects, whereas others are clearly directed at the transfer of the EU's institutional identity.

One of the main instruments of identity promotion is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which embraces the remainder of the former Soviet countries including Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. We could systematize different ENP instruments with regard to their usage of mechanisms of conditionality and socialization. The socialization strategies are mostly used through political dialogs, participation proposals and the conclusion of treaties. In contrast, conditionality strategies are applied through grants and other funds, which are accompanied by certain conditions as well as by monitoring and sanctioning. Regarding socialization through normative persuasion, the constitutive European norms and values such as standards of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law offer a point of reference for external countries seeking closer involvement with the European institutions.

However, since normative persuasion is a process based on interaction, one could argue that the success of socialization strategies concerning the identity transfer will depend to a large extent on the density of institutional ties and contacts between the EU and the third countries, and on the legitimacy of European norms and policies as perceived by the external actors. Therefore, the EU-induced institution building in third countries not only has the goal of increasing the efficiency of domestic governance in the countries in question, but is also linked with identity transfer. In addition, in the case of socialization the EU relies more strongly on networking strategies, rather than on hierarchical modes of governance that are associated with condi-

tionality. As Richard Youngs (2009: 213) argues, the EU continues to use conditionality in membership candidate states, since they have a clear membership perspective. However, concerning the 'circle of friends' (Ukraine or the southern Mediterranean) there is a strong preference for networking, rather than strict democratic conditionality. Here, the EU supports gradual political reforms and is cautious about pushing for radical and thorough democratization.

While the Balkan states are exposed to the accession conditionality, Ukraine has been denied a membership prospect. Therefore, in the case of Ukraine the EU rather supports more technical cooperation aimed at democratic consolidation and tries to avoid alienating Russia or Ukraine's pro-Russian East. The technical and network-like character of the ENP is even stronger in the southern Mediterranean, where the EU's goal is the liberalization of the autocratic regimes. Here, the EU believes that the conditionality could even worsen the autocratic tendencies of the regimes in question. Therefore, we could argue that the socialization strategies of the EU towards third countries go hand in hand with the so-called external governance of the EU, which includes horizontal instead of hierarchical governance features, is focused on process rather than output, highlights voluntary instruments in contrast to legal obligations, and provides open and inclusive forums for different types of actors (Lavenex / Schimmelfennig 2009).

The socialization through which European identity is promoted appears against the background of the EU self-definition as a 'community of values'. At the core of this identification lie principles of democracy, human rights, rule of law, and 'good governance'. These values and principles build the frame of reference for the EU's internal and external governance, which is reflected in numerous declarations, EU treaties, European Commission communications as well as all bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries. However, it is not only networking through which the EU engages third countries and enacts its external identity politics. The self-definition of the EU as a 'community of values' is associated with the self-

images of the EU, which convey normative supremacy. On the basis of the self-images, the EU exports 'European' values by setting standards, shaping conceptions of the 'normal' as well as by identifying deviant behaviour. Christopher Knill and Jale Tosun (2009) have shown in their research that in the area of environmental policy the EU uses mainly hierarchical governance through conditionality strategies regarding third countries. Moreover, hierarchical governance appears to be the most significant and robust determinant of norms adoption and therefore institutional transfer.

The positive self-image of the EU with regard to environmental issues is projected by the EU as a reflection of distinctive societal values of European societies. Therefore, the EU as a 'green' normative power defines itself through the difference mainly to the US, which becomes a constitutive factor pertaining to European identity (Falkner 2007: 507-526). However, this image of green normative power appears to be empirically inconsistent. Robert Falkner (2007: 521) argues that the EU's stance in environmental politics was not simply the outgrowth of a deep-rooted normative orientation but frequently the result of domestic conflicts over the future of biotechnology. For instance, in the debate over genetically modified foods, the EU offered international leadership only after strong anti-GM sentiments appeared among the public. Prior to this, the EU attached little importance to the bio-safety talks. However, even after the EU claimed international leadership in that field, it sought to export its own domestic regulatory model, which would ensure that international rules would not damage the EU's economic interests in medical biotechnology.

*The ENP policy instruments*

As mentioned above, the main institutional platform for the external identity transfer is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), even though the EU applies networking and therefore fosters socialization also through other policies such as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), for instance

through missions such as the EUJUST Themis Rule of Law mission to Georgia, the EU Police Mission to the Palestinian authority (EUPOL COPPS) or the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EU BAM).

Within the ENP the EU prepared so-called ENP Actions Plans, which were the core instruments of the ENP. Twelve ENP Action Plans were adopted, implemented and monitored by the EU. Moreover, the EU promotes trade liberalization with its neighbours as a way of enhancing the density of interactions between the EU and third countries. Therefore, the EU launched in 2007 a new financial assistance program for neighbouring countries – the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Since the ENP Action Plans are not legally binding agreements, they present political documents outlining a joint set of objectives and measures for the EU and its neighbours to undertake. They aim at providing a normative framework for the harmonization of norms and standards of the countries neighbouring the EU. We could argue therefore that this harmonization of norms and standards in the non-EU countries through declarations of common political objectives would fit the socialization strategies, rather than the conditionality strategy of the EU. For instance, the action plans include enhancing the strategic partnership with neighbouring countries "beyond cooperation and towards significant integration". The language suggests a value orientation, rather than measurable benefits.

In 2007, after the EU oversaw free and fair parliamentary elections in Ukraine, Ukraine has been offered to start negotiations on a new 'enhanced agreement', the new contractual framework of the EU-Ukraine relations, which would not only replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), the ten-year anniversary of which has already been passed, but also represent a step forward in the relations. However, in addition to the political declarations, the new action plan, on which negotiations started in 2008, also contains new incentives and offers Ukraine the visa-free regime such as the deep and comprehensive free trade area. This suggests that the EU applies both the socialization and conditionality strategies within one instrument.

The aim of socialization is also highlighted by the fact that the ENP is not a legal contract on its own. The hard law of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) signed with all Eastern European neighbours offers the legal framework to the ENP that includes a multiplicity of 'soft law' instruments adopted since 2003, which also differ between countries. The core soft law instruments are the bilateral action plans outlining the reform timetable that each partner country has committed itself to undertake in the various policy domains. The action plans are process-orientated as they do not prescribe a specific end, such as legal homogeneity, but promote the ENP countries' approximation to EU standards, which suggests socialization strategies by the EU.

In institutional terms the ENP is relatively centralized. Ministerial representatives of the ENP countries meet with the EU Troika in yearly Association/Partnership and Cooperation Council meetings at the ambassadorial level on a yearly basis. Thus, these bodies do not have the objective of aligning the legislation in the third country to EU standards; instead their main function is to exchange information on the progress achieved in the realization of the action plan commitments. The fact that the discussions in the joint Association Councils are the central monitoring device shows that the highest political level wants to keep a grip on the development of the ENP, hence preserving the centralized characteristics of the policy. An important innovation of the ENP is the introduction of technical subcommittees in most policy fields. In contrast to the diplomatic macro-structure, they are composed of civil servants of the ENP countries and EU member states, and the European Commission and meet at the expert level to discuss joint priorities and problems encountered during implementation. In this case, we could argue that the EU's primary activity is monitoring and therefore is associated with conditionality strategies.

Furthermore, the EU offers networking through the establishing of institutions in neighbouring countries through such policy instruments as the Technical Assistance and Information

Exchange Office (TAIEX), which provides legal advice in the context of legislative approximation with the acquis communautaire, or twinning mechanisms for the ENP countries, which enables officials to be sent from EU member state administrations to work together with their counterparts in the administration of a partner country, in order to prepare together for the implementation of the EU norms and regulations in a particular sector (Lavenex/Lehmkuhl/Wichmann 2009: 821). This, in turn, could suggest that through the increasing institutional and personal density of interactions, the EU promotes socialization effects rather than conditionality.

The EU already applied this mixture of conditionality and socialization in the pre-accession process in 2004 regarding Central and Eastern Europe. However, the conditionality strategies of the EU were accompanied by strong normative arguments of reuniting Europe in the 'return to Europe' of the CEEC, while this type of commitment is absent with regards to the contemporary ENP. The EU applies socialization towards the PSC mainly through networking, in which the adoption of EU norms is not a legal obligation but a political commitment. Thus, the commitments provided for in the EU Action Plans are relatively vague. This stems from the flexibility of the approach, according to which the EU's acquis communautaire can, but does not have to, serve as a model for stimulating third countries to adopt European regulations, rules and norms. Notwithstanding the lower degree of obligation and precision, monitoring is assured at the political level. ENP countries' progress in fulfilling their action plan commitments is assessed every 18 months by the European Commission in 'progress reports'. This unilateral assessment is complemented by a consensual monitoring structure in the joint Association Councils. Therefore, the EU also uses both socialization and conditionality strategies in this case as well.

While conditionality was important in terms of making the political elites in the Central Eastern European States comply with EU requirements, it is also clear that the society of these countries and the political elites shared a strong desire and con-

sensus on the need to 'return to Europe' and to 'break with the communist past'. The EU and the western states also played this common identity card by emphasizing that "we are all Europe and belong together" and used it to reinforce and legitimize the requested reforms.

Regarding the ENP countries, both conditionality and socialization strategies are weaker, since the EU is not offering EU membership to these countries. In this sense, the identity transfer is not backed up by a genuine identity offer. Therefore, the conditionality requirements cannot be easily supported by decisive identity transfer. Such identity transfer is associated with ambivalent feelings in such countries as Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Unlike the CEE countries, these three countries lack the notion of breaking with the past and returning to Europe, and also have closer links to Russia. Most EU scholars take this for granted, and suggest that the EU's transformative power seems to be limited with respect to states with divided societies and ambivalent political elites. In addition, the identity transfer by the EU is further complicated by the fact that the ENP societies (in addition to their governments) also remain ambivalent about the identity choice between the European identity and its alternatives such the Russian one, even though Russia does not offer a consistent system of norms and rules.

Against this background, one the one hand the EU can be facing political elites in the neighbouring countries who seek legitimacy and belonging to the club of European political leaders. On the other hand the societies of ENP countries are likely to be much more ambivalent about the perspectives of the European identity transfer. A partial solution could be the empowering of the civil society by the EU, rather than targeting only political elites and the bureaucracies that implement European rules and norms. Beyond that the EU could try to more strongly Europeanize societal actors on different levels with different incentives and different outreaches. Involving civil society could help to spread European identity; since it can serve as a "sluice" between the EU and the societies of ENP countries.

## Conclusions

The EU use both conditionality and socialization in order to transfer its institutional identity. However, the application of these methods varies depending on the countries in question, as the EU distinguishes between candidate countries (stronger conditionality) and the 'circle of friends' (stronger socialization) as well as according to the policy field, whereby the EU espouses stronger conditionality in the area of environmental policies across candidate states and other third countries. In contrast, in foreign policy the EU relies more strongly on non-hierarchical networking, in particular regarding non-candidate countries, whereas candidate countries are subject to stronger conditionality. The question, however, is which method is more reliable and effective concerning the identity transfer. In the cases of authoritarian non-candidate states the EU relies on partial identity transfer via modest socialization techniques with the goal of basic liberalization, whereas in candidate states with democratic aspirations stricter standards are used and conditionality is more common.

Nevertheless, the EU is facing an external identity dilemma. *First*, the EU refuses to offer a perspective of formal membership to neighbouring countries such as Belarus, Ukraine or Moldova, undermining its credibility as a benevolent 'identity hegemon'. *Second*, the EU does not always live up to its positive self-images, which raises questions on the EU's credibility as an 'identity hegemon'. Cracks in image consistency therefore promote an instrumental approach to the EU by third countries, which poses a challenge to the EU's external identity politics. As the term suggests, this dilemma cannot be easily resolved. It becomes particularly relevant in the context of the hitherto low effectiveness of the EU's internal identity construction. Therefore, more research is needed on the link between the EU's internal identity politics and the external identity transfer.

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