



COHESIFY

The Impact of EU Cohesion Policy
on European Identification

The Impact of Media Representations of the EU and its Policies on European Identity

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this paper is to review the literature on the impact of media representations of the EU and its policies on processes of European identity building. More specifically, the central scope of the review is to discuss previous studies using methodological frameworks similar to the COHESIFY project with the aim to examine their usefulness as well as their weaknesses in order to assess how media representations of the EU policies impact on citizens' identification with the EU. Based on the existing typologies for the analysis of media effects, the last section proposes an analytical framework for a more systematic study of media representations of the EU Cohesion policy and their effect on citizen's identification with the EU.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.Introduction.....	4
2.Methodology	5
3.European integration, identity and the role of the media.....	5
3.1.Empirical findings: Media representations of the EU and their implications for European Identity	10
4.Concluding remarks: Towards a framework for analysis	14
References	16

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the “Brexit” vote in June 2016, citizens’ support for the European Union (EU) project re-emerges as a key element providing legitimacy to the European integration process. The decision of British citizens to support UK’s withdrawal from the European Union not only indicates their dissatisfaction with the EU, but also signifies the prevalence of national over European identity and the emergence of nationalist and anti-EU feelings among citizens. In fact, contemporary debates on European integration emphasize the importance of the development of a European identity, as a prerequisite for further integration (Carey & Burton 2004; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009) and discuss the impact of European identity on popular support for EU policies. In the same vein, several scholars focus on mass media representations of Europe and their impact on the development of a European identity and contend that the Europeanization of political communication and the development of a European public sphere are essential for European identity building (Van Os, 2005).

In line with these studies, COHESIFY aims to assess the impact of EU cohesion policy on European identity building and to determine whether representations of the EU cohesion policy contribute to a positive identification with the EU. The focus on cohesion policy is based on the assumption that this policy area involves several characteristics that favour the development of a “sense of community” among European citizens, as it includes policies for funding and investment in all EU regions, mainly focusing on the less developed areas and countries (Mendez and Bachtler 2016). Therefore, it is expected that EU cohesion policy promotes a sense of European solidarity that enhances citizens’ everyday lives, and thus should raise the level of citizens’ identification with the EU.

Nevertheless, answering these questions poses a significant challenge as there is a lack of relevant research analysing EU cohesion policy communication and its effects on European identity. Although several scholars have examined the effect of media representations of the EU on European identity, as well as the effects of identity on support for European integration, these studies focus on various policy areas other than EU cohesion policy. However, theoretical and empirical findings regarding other policy areas can be used to construct a framework of analysis for media representations of EU cohesion policy and their effect on identification with the EU.

The objectives of this paper are to review the literature on the role of media in European identity-building and to propose an analytical framework for analysing media representations of EU cohesion policy and their potential to impact public identification with the European Union. The key research questions addressed are:

RQ1: How has the issue of EU identity been conceptualized and understood in current research?

RQ2: What are the main analytical approaches for investigating media effects on European identity?

RQ3: What are the main empirical findings regarding media effects on European identity?

The paper is structured as follows. The first sections review various theoretical assumptions and empirical findings regarding European identity, media effects and media representations of EU policies. Subsequently, the paper discusses the main typologies for analysing EU policy representations. The concluding section proposes an operational framework of analysis for EU cohesion policy.

2. Methodology

In order to assess current research attempts to understand the impact of mass media on citizens' identification with the European Union, this paper employs a comprehensive literature review identifying the main theoretical and methodological approaches used to study mass media effects and European identity. Relevant literature was identified through a literature search in several academic databases (i.e. Scopus, Academic search complete, Sage), using various combinations of related keywords (Cohesion policy, European identity, media, framing, communication). The search yielded numerous results which were then evaluated for their relevance to the topic, eventually leading to a set of articles focusing on EU media coverage and its effects on public attitudes towards EU policies and integration. The articles were then studied and analysed in terms of their theoretical foundations, methodological approaches and main findings and conclusions.

The analysis revealed two main strands of research focusing on media content and media effects respectively. More specifically, several research papers offer in-depth analyses of media content aiming to identify the EU's visibility, as well as the ways in which the EU is framed and represented in news media. On the other hand, several authors have focused on the effects of media content on citizens' attitudes towards the European Union, as well as on their sense of belonging to and identifying with the European community. Additionally, the analysis identified a few articles focusing on the development of identity in Europe and the contributions of related communication policies in the identity-building process. The following sections offer a more detailed analysis of these findings and propose a framework for analysing EU cohesion policy's media coverage.

3. European integration, identity and the role of the media

The assumption that the construction of a European identity is essential for the process of European integration has been thoroughly investigated and documented by numerous studies. In fact, several authors have argued that popular support for EU policies is closely associated with citizens' sense of belonging in a European community (Carey & Burton 2004; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Jürgen & Rittberger, 2008). Moreover, it is widely accepted in scholarly discourses that citizens' identification with Europe is affected by the ways in which the EU is depicted by the news media (Olausson, 2010). However, there is still an ongoing debate regarding the nature of European identity, the elements that comprise it, as well as the most appropriate methodological devices for empirical measurements of identity. In the following sections, we review the main theoretical approaches regarding identity construction, the dimensions, and determinants of identity formation including the core factors that facilitate or impede the development of a European identity.

The puzzles of European Identity

Understanding the meaning of European identity is not a straightforward procedure because it involves how citizens perceive and define the European community (Bruter, 2003). In fact, Bruter (2003) contends that traditional instruments for assessing European identity are highly problematic, as they measure European identity in relation to national identity. As Powell argues "identity is spontaneously expressed rather than analytically conceived" (Powell, 2009: p. 1499), in such a way that it cannot be perceived in universally acceptable terms, as individuals may assign different

meanings when they declare that they feel “European”. Similarly, Olausson (2010) operationalizes European identity as a discursive construct that is embedded and concealed in media discourses, arguing that a European identity is formulated unintentionally as an established discursive habit. In that respect, it is widely accepted by most scholars to conceptualize identity in terms of a self-pronounced sense of belonging to a group or community, which in turn implies a distinction between the community and the out-groups. This entails that the meaning of identity is discursively constructed according to the particular sense that each individual makes of the community and the specific characteristics she/he feels and shares with the other members.

In their review of relevant research on European identity for the COHESIFY project, Mendez and Bachtler (2016) summarize the main conceptualizations, measurements, explanations and methodological approaches in European identity research. Moreover, their review attempts to assess the impact of EU cohesion policy on European citizens’ identification with the EU and proposes a general frame. This section outlines COHESIFY’s output 2.1 main findings and conclusions which are relevant for understanding how identity is constructed and defined and how it can be influenced by media representations of the EU.

European identity studies tend to distinguish two ontological approaches, originating from primordial or essentialist and constructivist theories respectively. According to the essentialist approach, identity is predetermined and fixed in cultural terms and cannot be modified or transformed, while constructivists perceive identity in civic terms as a political construct based on shared goals, ideas, and interests and bound together by a central administrative authority (Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011). Therefore, identity can be understood as being comprised of a cultural component, reflecting shared values, common history and a sense of belonging in a human community, and a civic component, expressing a top-down approach and individuals’ identification with a political system or governing authority (Jürgen & Rittberger, 2008).

On the basis of this classification, the formulation of a European identity can be understood as a result of identification with entirely different aspects of the EU. As Bruter (2003) argues, European civic identity refers to the identification with the EU as a political project and to the development of a sense of belonging to a political system as an institutional framework. On the contrary, individuals who perceive the European community as a human group, regardless of the nature of the political system, feeling that Europeans are closer to them than non-Europeans, have a more developed cultural component of European identity. The significance of these two aspects of European identity lies on the fact that civic and cultural components of identity respond to different stimuli and therefore are affected by various types of media content and require separate analytical tools (Bruter, 2003). More specifically, news concerning the EU, which is more likely to refer to the European institutions rather than to the European civilization, affects individuals’ perceptions regarding the political system, and consequently the civic component of their identity. In that respect, news on the European Union is expected to have a stronger impact on individuals’ civic identity and reinforce the legitimacy of the EU, while symbols of European integration appeal to the cultural component (Bruter, 2003; Powell, 2009).

Another theme that is extensively discussed in Mendez and Bachtler (2016) literature review on European identity is the existence of an ongoing struggle between citizens’ national and European identity (Olausson, 2010; Bruter, 2003; Clement, 2015). The recognition of the existence of multiple identities does not entail a struggle for elimination, but rather a creative and transformative process through which these identities interact and are mutually reconstructed (Olausson, 2010). Thus, although it is commonly accepted that stronger feelings of national identity affect levels of identification with and support for the European Union (Carey & Burton, 2004), it is important to

understand how these multiple identities interact into forming a collective identity in which elements of national and EU identifications coexist.

In this process current literature identifies and analyses several problematic areas, originating from the fact that the EU was introduced as a union of nation-states with pre-existing historical, cultural and linguistic bonds, and well-established educational and media systems designed to reinforce national identities. The hegemonic status of national identity is confirmed by Olausson (2010), who also suggests that national identity provides a more familiar interpretative framework for citizens. As a result, despite the administrative transformation of Europe and the establishment of pan-national governing structures, this was not accompanied by a shift in the way citizens perceive their identities (Clement, 2015). As Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi (2011) point out, EU integration is understood by European citizens as a project reflecting the will of political elites rather than the will of the people. In other words, the notion of European identity was introduced based on top-down constructivist approach, despite the fact that the cultural components that would allow European citizens to identify with Europe as a human community, rather than as an administrative authority, were not strong enough.

Additionally, Mendez and Bachtler (2016) review relevant research investigating how European citizens' sense of belonging to a European Community is affected by EU Cohesion policy. The limited research on Cohesion policy is grounded on quantitative measurements focusing on citizens' self-reported identification with the EU in quasi-experimental settings or quantitative analyses examining citizens' awareness of the EU Cohesion policy projects in their region and support for the EU. Although these research approaches provide us with an overall account of public support for the EU and the visibility of its Cohesion policy projects, they do not offer any insight explaining how citizens become aware of Cohesion policy projects, how they internalize relevant information and how this shapes their identification with the EU. Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of the identity formation process, it is essential to focus on the communicative characteristics of EU policies and to assess whether these characteristics have positive or negative influences on identification with Europe.

In fact, as Clement (2015) indicates, the absence of a single European language, a common European media system and a European public opinion, results in communication about European matters that is seen through the prism of the nation. Meanwhile, Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi argue that people do not understand the EU due to its "failure to imagine a European identity through anything other than national identity" (2011: p. 519). Additionally, they stress that in the case of nations the development of a sense of belonging to a unified community can be achieved through means of cultural expression such as a national educational system or national media. As D'Haenens points out "in order for the EU to shape its collective identity, it needs to establish a dominant ideology" (D'Haenens, 2005: p. 425). D'Haenens bases her hypothesis on Melucci's theory which suggests that the formulation of collective identity requires i) common culture ii) the existence of a community and out-groups, iii) common historical time and iv) a common geographical, political, economic or cultural setting (Melucci, 1989; cited in D'Haenens, 2005: p. 425).

Moreover, drawing on Habermas' proposition that the development of a public sphere is essential for the process of building and reinforcing national identity, Polonska-Kimunguyi and Kimunguyi (2011) contend that the EU not only was too late in creating a pan-national media system that would promote a European sense of belonging, but also that their top-down approach in identity building was mistaken and outdated. Similarly, Trenz (2004) contends that there is a public sphere deficit resulting to a communication system that provides limited information regarding the EU,

while Kandyla and De Vreese (2011) argue that a supranational public sphere is missing some key ingredients, such as linguistic homogeneity and common media. Therefore, they suggest that the formulation of a European public sphere can be achieved by the Europeanization of national public spheres, through the “increased presence of European issues and actors in the national news media and the evaluation of those from a European rather than a national perspective” (Kandyla & De Vreese, 2011: p. 54; Van Os, 2005). Similarly, Olausson (2010) suggests that frequent discussions about EU topics, as well as “hidden” identity constructions in the news media, promote the sense of belonging to Europe among citizens by making them actually think of themselves as European citizens.

According to Bijsmans and Altides (2007), relying on national media for addressing citizens with issues regarding the EU seems like a natural choice since they are readily available, while the EU has not yet managed to build the necessary structures for creating widely-used and popular pan-European media. Nevertheless, they recognize that national media may not be able to provide an appropriate communication environment for the EU, as they focus primarily on issues of domestic interest. Moreover, as Clement (2015) discusses, national public spheres are dominated by nation-based media narratives, through which EU integration is seen as an illegitimate process, posing a threat to national identity. Thus, national news media are inclined to present EU-related events, as if they are taking place in a domestic, rather than in a European, setting (Clement, 2015). The fact that “journalists in Europe are themselves members of national societies and conceive their identities and roles in largely national terms” (Heikkila and Kunelius, 2014; cited in Clement, 2015: p. 125), might offer a possible explanation for this tendency. Considering that European integration requires nation states to abandon some of their sovereignty, journalists’ interpretations, driven by their national identity, may perceive that as an external menace and, thus, result in reports that portray EU integration as a threat to national identity (Clement, 2015). Therefore, journalists’ tendency to focus on the conflict between the EU and the member states’ sovereignty may influence the public to conceive the process of European integration as a potential source of political crisis.

Media Influences

The impact of public communication on popular support for European integration and the construction of a European identity is regarded an undisputed fact by communication scholars. As far as EU Cohesion Policy is concerned, the European Commission has devoted many resources in order to increase the visibility of Cohesion policy projects on the media and social media, aiming to raise citizens’ awareness of EU Cohesion policy. Mendez and Bachtler (2016) refer to research attempts to assess the effectiveness of the Commission’s communication strategies and contend that policy communication is a key factor for promoting the image of the EU among beneficiaries and citizens. However, these analyses focus mainly on the quantity and inherent valence of communicative messages, while they lack any insight regarding the communicative strategies employed by the media when presenting EU Cohesion policy – related news.

The media have the potential to influence public opinion in a variety of ways and a great amount of research, focusing on the development of European identity, investigates the mechanisms through which journalistic practices, choices and professional norms affect citizens’ attitudes towards the EU (De Vreese, Boomgaarden & Semetko, 2011; Vliegenthart et al, 2008; Clement, 2015; De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Powell, 2009; Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011; Bijsmans & Altides, 2007; Jochen et al, 2003). The main processes employed by mass media in order to influence the public attitudes are agenda-setting, framing and priming (Jürgen & Rittberger, 2008).

The agenda-setting process refers to journalists' decisions regarding the newsworthiness of particular events or issues. This relates to the (commercial) news value of issues, and it involves the amount of coverage, the length of news stories as well as their placement compared to other news items (Jochen et al., 2003). In that respect, decisions made by journalists and media organizations can affect the visibility of particular issues, and determine the flow of information that reaches the public. As far as the European Union is concerned, several authors have focused on the visibility of European issues and have identified various troubling aspects of EU coverage. Kandyla and De Vreese (2011) point out that although the EU attracts significant media coverage during key events, such as European elections, referendums, and Eurogroup summits, it remains almost invisible during regular periods. Moreover, Jochen and his colleagues (2003) contend that journalists often consider EU affairs to be of insignificant news value, while they also diagnose a communication deficit of the EU due to a lack of transparency in EU decision-making.

Similarly, Bijsmans and Altides (2007) argue that the European Commission refrains from communicating its opinions and activities in an attempt to avoid political controversy. This results in an almost complete absence of public debate before the decision-making process, which is however of little news value and does not attract significant media coverage. In the same vein, Bijsmans and Altides (2007) point out that, although the salience of European politics has increased during the last years, the characteristics of EU politics do not comply with news media formats as they involve highly technical details and usually have no profound impact on national politics. In addition, the tendency of European politics to focus on consensus, rather than conflict, does not comply with media attention criteria, as journalists are mostly drawn by stories about crisis and conflict which are more interesting and appealing to audiences (Clement, 2015; Bijsmans & Altides, 2007). In fact, as D'Haenens (2005) underlines "European stories appear to be a hard sell among the peers in the newsroom" and therefore "increased competition among the media has led to a tendency towards sensationalism and trivialization" (D'Haenens, 2005: p. 421).

Other processes through which journalists can influence the ways that the EU is portrayed are framing and priming. Framing refers to the process of selecting, organizing and placing emphasis on certain aspects of an issue or event at the expense of others, in such a way that it can be portrayed in very different ways. Frames can be understood as organizing themes or principles that structure news stories and thus affect how the audiences receive and understand the issue in question (De Vreese et al., 2001; De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; De Vreese, Boomgaarden & Semetko, 2011). In other words, frames place emphasis on some aspect of an issue, making that particular aspect the focal point around which the issue is structured, generating priming effects by influencing the criteria citizens use in order to evaluate political issues. Thus, frames can be distinguished with respect to the particular aspects they emphasize. For instance, frames are classified in issue-specific when they can be applied to specific events or topics, and generic when they can be applied in various topics and contexts (Van Cauwenberge et al., 2009). Similarly, thematic framing involves placing emphasis on contextual factors, whereas episodic frames focus on the event itself, resulting in different evaluations on the issue in question (Iyengar, 1991). Moreover, journalists may use framing to shift the focus on some particular attributes of an event, in order to make their stories more attractive to audiences. Valkenburg and Semetko (2000) propose a framing typology for European politics that distinguishes five generic frames with relevance for various EU related topics. More specifically, their typology includes (i) *conflict* (ii) *human interest* (iii) *economic consequences* (iv) *morality* and (v) *attribution of responsibility* frames.

Furthermore, news frames are classified in terms of their inherent valence, which generate positive or negative impressions on the framed issue (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; De Vreese, Boomgaarden & Semetko, 2011). In other words, valenced news frames emphasize on positive or negative aspects

of an event or issue resulting in positive or negative evaluations and thus having significant implications on citizens' attitudes (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Powell, 2009).

However, in spite of the multiple generic typologies for news framing, understanding the effects of media representation on the development of a European identity, requires analyses that focus specifically on those characteristics of media content that facilitate or impede the development of a sense of belonging among the members of the public. The following sections present empirical findings concerning media framing typologies and their impact on public's identification with Europe and support for the EU.

3.1. Empirical findings: Media representations of the EU and their implications for European Identity

Based on the fact that the media are identified as the primary source of information for the majority of European citizens (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009), a significant amount of research has focused on the ways in which the EU is represented in the mass media, as well as on media effects on public attitudes towards the EU and its policies. A review of current literature reveals numerous attempts to record and explore whether the ways in which Europe is represented in the media contains elements that are relevant for citizens' identification with and support for the EU, and assess the ways in which citizens' perceptions of Europe are shaped by the media.

A research approach that has significant relevance for COHESIFY's objectives is Perez (2013) analysis of regional newspapers in Yorkshire and Galicia, focusing on the domestication and politicization of the EU. The methodology combines framing and content analysis with a network analysis approach examining whether regional and EU interests are presented as legitimate or conflicting in news reports. The importance of this approach lies in the fact that it places emphasis on the national/ European dimension, which is, as described above, an important determinant in the process of European identity formation. Moreover, Perez's approach presents additional methodological interest since it combines both deductive and inductive techniques for the development of a coding scheme, thus overcoming the narrow boundaries of generic frames that dominate framing research on European identity.

A significant body of relevant research analyses the salience of valence frames regarding the EU and their impact on citizens' evaluations of European integration. The central assumption in this strand of research is that positive assessments of the EU and its policies lead to citizens' positive attitudes towards the EU and, thus, promote a sense of belonging to a European community as well as the construction of a European identity (Vliegthart et al, 2008). In that respect, these studies analyse EU framing in terms of costs and benefits (Vliegthart et al., 2008), risks and opportunities (De Vreese & Kandyla, 2009; Kandyla & De Vreese, 2008; Schuck & de Vreese, 2006), and advantages and disadvantages of the EU enlargement (De Vreese & Boomgaarden 2006).

Schuck and de Vreese (2006) investigated individuals' cognitive responses to valenced frames and their effects on attitudes towards EU enlargement. In order to observe framing effects, they used a multi-method design including a content analysis of German press to explore whether European integration was framed in terms of risk or opportunity, and an experiment aiming to assess framing effects on subjects' attitudes towards the enlargement. Risk framing refers to an emphasis on potential disadvantages of EU enlargement, whereas opportunity framing focuses on the positive consequences from new member states' accession to the EU. The content analysis revealed that

German newspapers used both risk and opportunity frames in their reporting on EU enlargement, with no significant differences in frame salience. Following this, an experiment was conducted in which subjects were exposed to risk or opportunity framing stimuli, and which revealed that both frames had significant effects on subjects' evaluation of EU enlargement. It should be noted though that framing effects were moderated as a function of political knowledge, which is in line with past research findings suggesting that politically aware individuals are less susceptible to media manipulation (Zaller, 1992).

Risk and opportunity framing of the EU have also been studied by Kandyla and De Vreese (2011), from a comparative perspective, with respect to media coverage of news related to the EU common foreign, security and defence policy (CFSP). The authors analysed CFSP coverage on quality newspapers in eight European countries with the aim to assess the visibility and media evaluations of CFSP. The study demonstrates that CFSP was more frequently framed in terms of opportunity, rather than risk, suggesting a potentially positive impact on citizens' attitudes. However, Kandyla and De Vreese (2011) emphasize that positive evaluations and opportunity framing referred to the EU rather than to the nation-states. This is an important finding, which introduces another dimension to the EU media coverage, as the fact that media depict CFSP from a European rather than a national perspective indicates the Europeanization of the foreign policy debate, and the potential emergence of a European public sphere. This assumption is also supported by the increased visibility of European actors, compared to national decision-makers.

Similarly, De Vreese and Kandyla (2009) employed an experimental design in order to identify framing effects on public opinion attitudes towards the EU common foreign, security and defence policy. They focus on framing of CFSP in terms of risk and opportunity and they provide empirical support that valenced news frames influence public attitudes towards the EU CFSP. Nevertheless, in line with Zaller's (1992) theory on the role of political predispositions, they point out that risk and opportunity framing effects are not omnipotent but they are rather moderated by individual predispositions towards globalization.

Drawing on marketing theories, Vliegenthart and his colleagues (2008) analysed EU framing in terms of benefits or disadvantages expecting to find an effect on citizens' evaluations of their country's membership in the EU. Moreover, they focus specifically on news framing in terms of conflict and disagreement, arguing that although conflict framing makes news more attractive to the audiences and contributes to a more balanced image of reporting, in the European context conflict-driven news conveys an image of not well-functioning political system and thus should have negative effects on support for the EU. In their analysis, they compare their findings on framing to Eurobarometer measurements on EU support revealing significant effects for both benefit and conflict frames.

Another common approach in analysing media coverage of European issues involves the use of generic frames, aiming to capture the main themes around which media discourses on Europe are structured. As noted earlier, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) have introduced a typology consisting of i) *conflict* (ii) *human interest* (iii) *economic consequences* (iv) *morality* and (v) *attribution of responsibility* generic news frames in order to analyse news on Dutch press and television. Their analysis reveals that, when framing news on European integration, Dutch media tend to present it in terms of attribution of responsibility, followed by the conflict, economic consequences, human interest and morality frames. This entails that Dutch media most commonly seek to assign responsibility for a problem or an issue to the government, a group or an individual, while they often tend to present news in terms of conflict which make them more attractive to audiences.

Semetko and Valkenburg's typology (2000) was also employed by D'Haenens (2005) in order to analyse EU-related news on quality newspapers in seven countries. Her analysis demonstrates that all five frames in Semetko and Valkenburg's typology are significantly present in the news regarding the European Union, although there were differences in frame salience across countries, while framing also seemed to be affected by article characteristics such as article length, origin, tone, and timeliness. Additionally, based on Servaes' (1989), Melucci's (1989) and van Dijk's (1995) definitions, D'Haenens examines the prevalence of four types of discourse, namely culture, expansion, inclusion/ exclusion and power, revealing that although all four discourses are statistically significant there appear to be again significant cross-country differences. These findings contradict Kandyla and De Vreese's (2011) assumptions for the emergence of a European public sphere, as EU news seem to be represented in different ways across national public spheres.

A similar approach was followed by de Vreese and Semetko (2001), who investigated media coverage of political and economic news on television, in four EU member countries. Their analysis sample included news items from two different time periods, including a five-day period around the introduction of the EU's common currency, the Euro, and a five-day routine period in order to make comparisons in media framing. Based on previous research that had "established the predominance of the conflict and economic consequences frames in different national contexts" (de Vreese and Semetko, 2001; p. 109) the authors focused on only those two generic frames. The analysis demonstrates that although the conflict frame was dominant in most political and economic news reports, news concerning the launch of the Euro was framed predominantly in economic terms, as the economic consequences frame was most commonly used.

Equally, a cross-national analysis of quality newspapers Van Cauwenberge and his colleagues (2009) employed Valkenburg and Semetko's (2000) framing typology in order to analyse media coverage on the EU constitution. However, in order to capture the salience of two additional discourses related to the EU, namely the power and nationalization discourses, they extended Valkenburg and Semetko's (2000) typology by introducing two additional frames. The power frame emphasizes the division of power and the relations between national and European actors, whereas the nationalization frame refers to presenting EU-related news from a domestic angle, which contradicts the development of a European sense of belonging. Empirical findings clearly show that the EU constitution was framed by the media predominantly in terms of economic consequences and power relations, while conflict, nationalization and human interest frames were used less frequently. Moreover, the authors underscore the fact that frame salience did not exhibit any significant differences cross-nationally. According to their analysis, these types of similarities in news agendas and framing are criteria for the existence of a public sphere indicating that to some extent a European public sphere begins to emerge.

Based on the above discussion, it is apparent that research on valenced and generic framing of European issues provides us with substantial empirical evidence on media representations of Europe and enhances our understanding regarding the effects of the media on popular support for the EU, its enlargement, and its policies. These types of research are relevant for improving our understanding of the mechanisms that drive the development of a European identity, based on the assumption that public support for the EU results in higher levels of identification with the EU and thus contributes to the construction of a European identity. Nevertheless, these types of frames affect citizens' identity only indirectly, since they are moderated by support for the EU, while they do not shed light on media influences on the key factors that contribute to the construction of European identity.

Probably the most significant determinant for the construction of a European identity is associated with the Europeanization of public discourses and the representation of EU-related issues in European rather than national terms. In that respect, Van Cauwenberge's nationalization frame (Van Cauwenberge et al., 2009) makes an important contribution to Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) typology, as it enhances its potential to capture effects on identity. In line with that, Van Os (2005) investigates whether European issues are approached from a national or a European perspective, despite the fact that his analysis focuses on political parties' websites rather than on mass media content. More specifically, his analysis examines whether the information found on the websites of French political parties is framed in terms of European or national interests and whether the emphasis is placed on European or national identity and culture. His analysis demonstrates important differences between parties, as expected; nevertheless, his research is relevant for understanding the role of media in the construction of European identity as it emphasizes the importance of a nationalisation frame.

An alternative approach that addresses the question of media effects on European identity directly focuses on EU framing in civic and cultural terms. In line with this, La Barbera (2015) explores how civic and cultural frames contribute to citizens' identification with the EU, by employing them in an experimental setting. More specifically, he examines how citizens' identification with the EU is affected when they are presented with stimulus material that frames the EU as Europeans' common project, or regarding their common heritage. According to the common project perspective, identification with the EU occurs in civic terms, since it is based on shared political, economic and social future goals, whereas the common heritage frame perceives the EU in cultural terms and as a result of shared values and traditions. The results demonstrate that framing the EU as a common project engenders higher identification with the EU, as well as more positive evaluations for European integration, providing empirical support to the assumption that European citizens identify with the EU mostly in civic terms, while the cultural component of European identity is still under-developed.

Bruter's (2003) experimental study investigates the effects of valence frames, along with EU framing in civic and cultural terms, on participants' identification with the EU. On the one hand he explores whether positive and negative news regarding the EU generates positive and negative evaluations respectively, while on the other he assesses how different stimuli affect different aspects of the subjects' identity. This approach allows for separate investigation of media effects on the civic and the cultural identity components. Bruter's (2003) model is based on the assumption that good and bad news regarding the EU affects citizens' evaluations of the political system. Therefore, it affects their civic identity. By contrast, exposure to the symbols of the EU provides citizens with shared images and a sense of belonging in a human community, activating their cultural identification with the EU. Findings demonstrate that respondents identify with Europe on both civic and cultural terms and are influenced by news on and symbols of the EU respectively. These findings are also confirmed in Powell's (2009) three-wave experimental study, which not only demonstrates that news and symbols affect citizens' civic and cultural identities, but also reveals that media effects are reinforced over time, acting like a time bomb.

Finally, de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko's (2011) study focuses on issue-specific and valence frames, while also assessing their impact on citizens' attitudes on EU enlargement with Turkey. Following an inductive analytical strategy, they identified five frames namely a) geopolitical security advantages, (b) economic benefits, (c) economic threats, (d) cultural threats, and (e) (national) security threats. Then, they explored the impact of those frames in an experimental setting, confirming that attitudes towards Turkey's accession were affected by the frames' inherent valence. However, it is also important to emphasize the diversity of frames that were identified, since they

do not match with any of the above-described typologies. Therefore, it seems that the question of European integration exhibits several particularities which require more complex analytical tools than those available in the commonly-used typologies.

4. Concluding remarks: Towards a framework for analysis

This paper has focused on the question of European identity and has reviewed how identity is conceptualized and understood, as well as what is the role of the media in this process. One of the most puzzling particularities in this quest for understanding European identity is that identity can only be measured as an individually expressed sense of belonging in a community of people. Nevertheless, relevant literature identifies some key factors that affect citizens' political identities which can be used to capture how they are constructed and how they are shaped by media influences.

A key conceptual insight that determines how the concept of European identity should be understood and treated empirically is that identity is comprised of a civic and a cultural component. Civic identity refers to citizens' sense of belonging in a political system, while cultural identity entails identification with a human community. This is of particular importance for understanding how European identity is constructed, what the role of the media is, and how it can be empirically assessed, as these two components respond to different media manipulations and require separate tools for capturing their impact on individuals' attitudes towards the EU.

Another conceptual theme that underpins the construction of European identity in a multi-level polity is that national and European identities coexist while at the same time are in a competitive struggle. The fact that citizens identify with both their national and the European community has important implications for how to conceptualise and measure European identity. Furthermore, there are significant implications for the ways in which the media present EU-related news. The relevant literature demonstrates that national media tend to frame news on Europe through a national prism, thus reinforcing national over European identity, although empirical evidence shows that on some particular issues this trend is reversed. Several scholars emphasize the implications of this struggle of identities, arguing that the Europeanization of national public spheres is essential for the development of a European identity.

Additionally, this literature review analysed media framing of Europe demonstrating that the media employ a multiplicity of framing devices in their representations of Europe, including valence, issue-specific and generic frames. Apparently, media framing of Europe can be examined from many different perspectives, all of which offer various insights regarding media representations of the EU and how they affect public support for European integration and the construction of a European identity. Based on that, to gain a better understanding of how the media depict the EU and the implications on citizens' evaluations and identities, it is essential that analytical tools that can simultaneously capture multiple dimensions of EU framing are employed.

However, it should be noted that an overwhelming amount of research focusing on EU framing follows a deductive methodological strategy, as frames are theoretically predefined, followed by an analysis aiming to assess their prevalence in the study material. However, as Van Gorp (2010) argues this approach involves a significant amount of objectivity as framing typologies are arbitrarily selected, and cannot capture the specificities of every news topic. Thus, he proposes an alternative framing analysis method in which he inductively identifies relevant frames, followed by a deductive phase in which coders record the emergence of frames in news reports.

The question of media representations of EU cohesion policy and their implications for citizens' identification with Europe constitutes an uncharted academic territory, as there is a significant lack of research on EU cohesion policy and its impact on identity (Mendez and Bachtler 2016). At the same time, the complexities of the notion of European identity call for an analytical tool that has the potential to capture a multiplicity of factors that contribute to the construction and reinforcement of a European sense of belonging. In that respect, an analytical framework for media representations of EU cohesion policy needs to adopt an exploratory approach to be able to capture the particularities of cohesion policy media coverage. Meanwhile, it also needs to address the factors that act as determinants of European identity, namely the Europeanization of news reports, as well as the civic/ cultural identity components. Therefore, following Van Gorp's (2010) approach, rather than focusing on predefined framing typologies, we propose an inductive analytical strategy to identify relevant frames. This approach will allow us to construct a frame matrix, which will be evaluated in relation to identity determinants and then used to assess frame prevalence in the deductive phase of the analysis.

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