EUᴇɴs – THE RISE OF A NEW IDENTITY DRIVEN BY SOCIAL MEDIA

Domagoj Bebić :: Dijana Eraković :: Milica Vučković

ABSTRACT *The goal of this study is twofold: firstly, we want to explore specific identity that has been emerging as a consequence of many EU-related changes (e.g. development of transport, ICT, increasing number of different EU programs and new EU policies); secondly, we want to test the role of social media in building this new identity that we call EUens (European Union citizens). Conducting in-depth interviews with 25 EUens we find that some issues which are commonly seen as important factors in European identity construction, such as class and political attitudes, do not play any significant role in constructing European identity for members of our group. Secondly, our analysis suggests that social media have potential of becoming important driver of European identity.*

Authors Note

Domagoj Bebić :: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb, Croatia **::** domagoj@edemokracija.hr
Dijana Eraković :: PhD student in Political Philosophy at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Rijeka, Croatia **::** dijana.erakovic@windowslive.com
Milica Vučković :: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb, Croatia **::** milica.vuckovic@fpzg.hr

INTRODUCTION

European identity as a concept, designed and decided at the Copenhagen European Communities summit (Commission, 1974), has been widely studied and examined in several disciplines (political science, anthropology, history, sociology) (Habermas, 2001), and from many different aspects, including studies in which authors tried to reveal what motivates citizens from different European countries to support idea of European integration (Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998).

Neil Fligstein (2008) and Fligstein and Alina Polyakova and Wayne Sandholtz (2012) in their work find that people who are likely to adopt European identity are those who speak second languages, report having traveled to another member state in the past 12 months, and who have joined European wide organizations. Author also finds evidence that these groups tend to come from the most privileged strata of society and are managers, educated people, young people, professionals, white collar workers. Relying on the Fligstein's (2008) definition of European identity and his arguments explaining how it happens that some people adopt a European identity and some do not, the intention of this paper is twofold. Firstly, using qualitative research method (in-depth interviews) we want to examine what impacts on constructing European identity certain factors have. These factors are already recognized as important constructors of European identity in Fligstein's studies (2008). Secondly, we question if ICT and social media have any role in building European identity. Bearing in mind Fligstein's finding (*Ibid*.) that interaction among people from different European countries is crucial in explaining why some people adopt European identity, we believe that social media as a mean for interaction can be recognized as important factor in building and maintaining European identity. Following Mark Granovetter's (1973; 1982) theory about strong and weak ties, we tried to examine if EUens (short for European Union citizens) who we define as a specific population of European Union citizens who adopt European identity, connect with alike-minded people abroad via social media and if yes, how does it influence their sense of the European identity. Furthermore, in the European Commission Policy Review it is explicitly stated that more research should be done on a project centered on the "effects upon European identity of the new digital communication media" (2012: 8).

While most of the studies about the European identity use quantitative research methods, we decided to conduct in-depth interviews with 25 persons selected with an assumption to have strong European identity in order to illustrate what role social media play in constructing their European identity.

EUROPEAN IDENTITY – A MYTH OR A REALITY?

Treaty of Maastricht from 1992 is seen as a benchmark in achieving European Union citizenship (Maas, 2007). The idea of European Union citizenship has been seen as a way of combating democratic deficit on the one hand and as an opportunity for open labor market on the other (*Ibid*.). Treaty of Maastricht granted four benefits:

the freedom to move and reside anywhere in European Union; the right of all EU citizens to vote and to be candidate in all European elections; the right of EU citizens to enjoy consular and diplomatic protection by the foreign services of other member states; and the right of EU citizens to write petition to European Parliament. (Ibid.)

Since then, many institutions of European Union have been established. According to neofunctionalist strategy, institutions were one of the ways in promoting the development of shared identities, and reducing exclusionary commitment to nation state (Risse, 2010; Risse et al., 2004). Moreover, as Chris Rumford finds, since then, EC has been trying systematically to give a substance to the idea of European citizenship (Rumford, 2007: 4). In the EC's Policy Review (2012) two models of European identity formation are proposed: "a 'culturalist' model in which an orientation to Europe derives fundamentally from core, established European values and their expression in public practices, most notably in governance and the operation of the legal system" and "in which identity is internalized and comes about through the exposure to influential discourses and symbols" while a 'structuralist' model understands that "an orientation to Europe derives fundamentally from association with other Europeans" (European Comission, 2012: 33). In congruence with structuralist model, "identity arises from interacting with others" and coming to the realization that one has much in common with them (*Ibid.*).

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Social media are most often defined as Web 2.0 platforms that enable social interactions among users; content (co)creation, including text, videos, or pictures; and the sharing of status updates and news (Mergel and Bretschneider, 2013: 390). Danah M. boyd and Nicole B. Ellison define these platforms as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd and Ellison, 2007: 211). In their study about the youth participation and use of technologies, Shelley Goldman, Angela Booker, and Meghan McDermott define technologies as communicative vehicles that serve as platforms for dialogue, discourse, and connection (Goldman et al., 2008: 202-203). Furthermore they explore the role of technologies on different levels: digital, social and cultural, and find that combination of technologies play a vital role in identity building experiences (*Ibid.*). Relying on these definitions and specific (unmediated, interactive, without time and space limits) nature of social media, we wanted to explore if social media have any role in building and maintaining European identity.

Generally, many scholars tried to examine which factors and in what way form and influence European identity (Bruter, 2003; Carey, 2002; Eder, 2009; Kantner, 2006; Risse, 2010; Vidmar Horvat, 2012). Research on European bi-national relationships (Van Mol et al., 2015), the effectiveness of intergroup contact during ERASMUS year abroad (Sigalas, 2010; Kuhn, 2012; Mitchell, 2015; Oborune, 2013), study about the role of EU institutions'

communication on new media platforms with young European citizens and reinforcement of their European identity (Karantzeni and Gouscos, 2013) are only a few attempts that shed some light on the understanding of European identity.

Conclusions from the Open Forum Discussion at Utrecht University about the 'bEUcitizen' (Wetzer, 2013), a multinational research-project on European citizenship, say that the idea of European citizenship faces many shortcomings and challenges, and that there is still no agreement on the concept of European citizenship. Yet, it is noted that future projects concerning European citizenship will depend on exchange of different perspectives (*Ibid*.). In the EC Policy Review (European Commission, 2012: 8) further research within the structuralist paradigm on the effects of popular culture on identification with Europe (e.g. on the effects of new digital communication media upon European identity) has been recommended. Also, Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell find it is important to examine and reflect on technologies now, because "technologies are becoming more deeply integrated into ever widening areas of our lives, while at the same time their roles as mediators of identities and learning are likely to be taken for granted, perhaps becoming almost invisible." (2008: 44) This was one of the reasons why we especially focused on the role of social media in constructing European identity in our research hoping that our study could be one small part of this complex puzzle with uncountable pieces.

In this context, through insights in social interactions of our interviewees, identified as EUens and strength of their ties with social media contacts, we wanted to assess the role of social media in creating and sustaining European identity. Applying Granovetter's (1973; 1982) theory about strong and weak ties, which suggests that among strong ties – our close friends and family, there is a willingness to collaborate together and to share all information, resources and contacts, while weak ties – acquaintances with whom we are rarely in touch, are valuable because they have access to different social circles, information, resources and contacts, we believe that weak ties especially, but also strong ties have great role in creating European identity.
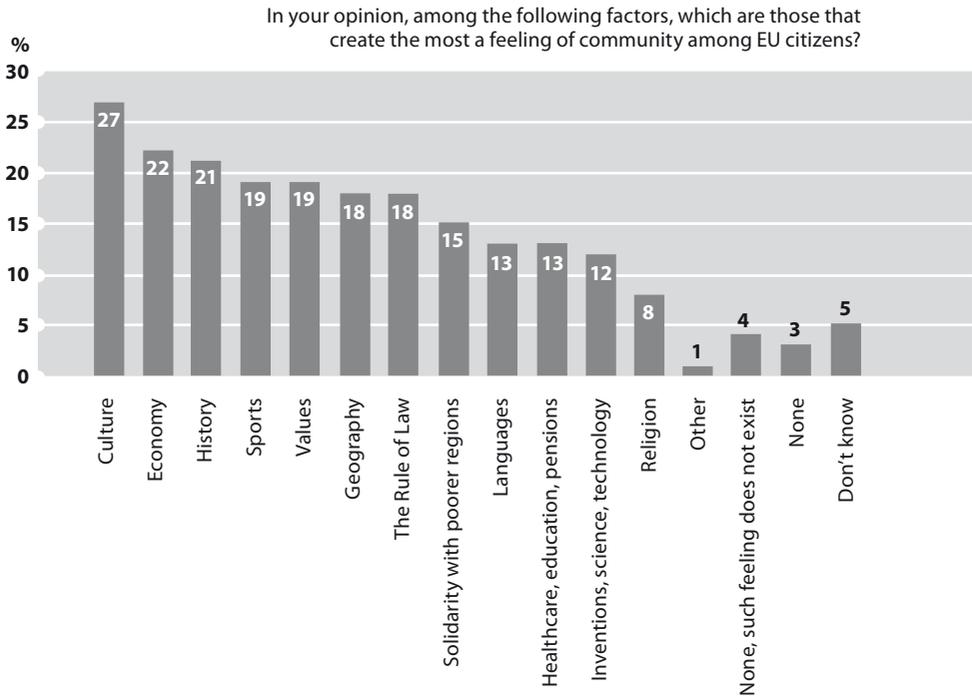
CITIZENS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN NUMBERS

According to the most recent available data from Standard Eurobarometer Report conducted in spring 2015, 67 % of Europeans feel that they are citizens of the European Union (Eurobarometer, 2015). The proportion of Europeans who consider that they are "definitely" citizens of the EU is 27 %, while the proportion of those who see themselves as EU citizens "to some extent" is 40 % (*Ibid*.: 19). Yet, when it comes to defining different levels of citizenship, 38 % of respondents say that they feel only national identity, while only 2 % feel only European identity (Graph 1). In the focus of our research will be European Union citizens who feel European identity in the first place, whether they feel or not their national identity too. We aim to disclose what factors make them feel European identity stronger than their national identity.
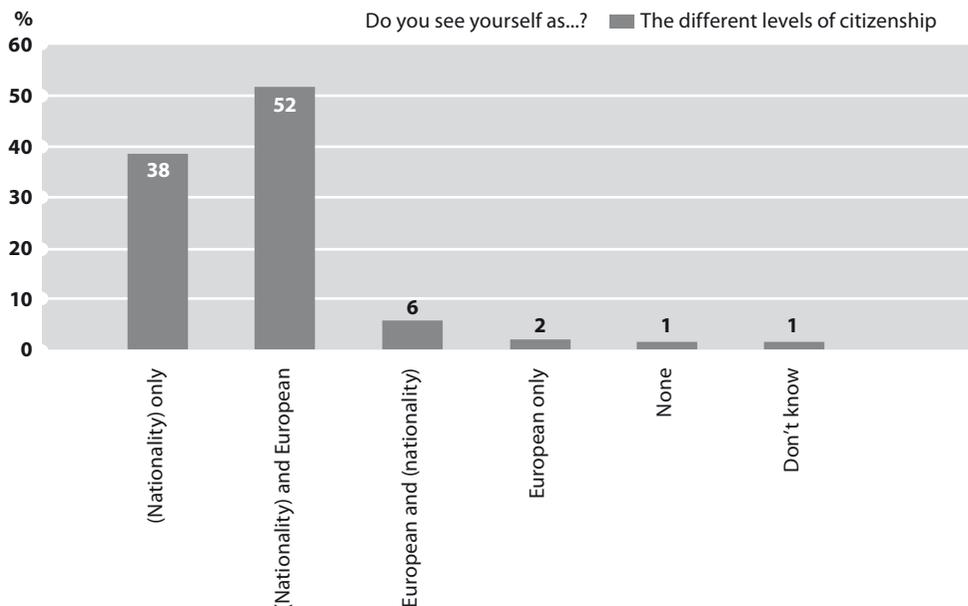
▲ *Graph 1*
The different levels of citizenship
Source: Eurobarometer, 2015: 21.

Eurobarometer Report (2015) brings data on the most important issues in creating a feeling of community. Culture, economy, history, values, geography and the rule of law are just some of them that are believed to have influence on creating a feeling of community among EU citizens (Graph 2). Following these results, in our research we wanted to reveal how EU citizens who feel European identity in the first place recognize and define some of the issues which have been stressed as important in creating a feeling of community. For instance, even 27 % of respondents think that culture contributes the most to creating a feeling of community among European Union citizens (Graph 2).

Yet, it is rather vague and not clear what does culture mean for the European Union citizens, especially as a factor in this context. For this reason, in our research we examined general cultural interests of our interviewees in order to see what culture is for them. Furthermore, category "Inventions, science and technology" is recognized from 12 % of respondents as important component in creating a feeling of community. Although information and communication technology (ICT) is not specified in Eurobarometer Report (2015) as an independent category, we believe that social media can have important role in creating European identity, for which reason we explore this component in depth.

In your opinion, among the following factors, which are those that create the most a feeling of community among EU citizens?

▲ *Graph 2*
The factors which do the most to create a feeling of community
Source: Eurobarometer, 2015: 27.

METHODOLOGY

Research questions and method

Relying on previous quantitative studies and results of Eurobarometer Report (2015), in our study we want to imply qualitative analysis in order to try to reveal which values are recognized and associated to the European identity by the specific group of people that we call EUens. The goal of our study is twofold. Firstly, we want to examine if certain factors have any role (RQ1) and if they have some, what role they have in constructing European identity among this specific group of interviewees (RQ2). These factors are already recognized as important constructors of European identity in Fligstein's study (2008). Secondly, we explore if social media have any role in building and maintaining European identity (RQ3) and if they have, what kind of role they have among our specific group of Europeans (RQ4).

As European and national identities are a part of complex and diverse self-identity of our targeted group, in-depth interview appeared to be the most effective form of research that may result in valuable insights on our topic. "In-depth interviews are used to discover shared understandings of a particular group" (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006: 317). The in-depth interviews that we conducted in the research included closed-ended questions (personal information questions, dichotomous/two-point questions and scaled questions) and open-ended questions (completely unstructured question and word association questions) (more in Edwards and Holland, 2013; Arksey and Knight, 1999; Kvale, 1983; Mann and Stewart, 2000; McCracken, 1988). Interviews were conducted online via Skype, telephone or e-mails. Due to the distance, face-to-face interviews were not conceivable in most of the cases. Interview is divided into three sections. First section asks personal information about respondents, including many factors and characteristics that are recognized in previous studies as important in constructing European identity. Second set of questions looks for information on the direct connections and identifications with the European identity. Third set of questions deals with the role of social media in identity creation and maintenance within group of participants.

Sample

In order to find appropriate sample, we used a method of criteria selection (Brajdić Vuković et al., 2012: 139). Main criteria for their selection was a list of characteristics that Fligstein (2008) and Fligstein et al. (2012) identified in their studies as main features among people with strong European identity. As this group makes a small proportion of the EU population, it was not an easy task to spot people with all characteristics that Fligstein (2008) lists in his work for those who are likely to adopt European identity. They speak foreign languages, travel to another member states in the past 12 months, join European wide organizations, and come from the most privileged strata of society. Their main profiles are managers, educated people, young people, professionals, white collar workers. We succeeded to select 25 candidates, students and young professionals in the age range of 20 to 44, for our interviews that in a great respect correspond with many of these characteristics, but we also observed that his list of characteristics cannot be taken for granted.

Thirteen out of 25 of our respondent come from EU member states which entered EU before 2000 (three respondents from Italy, two from France, one form Belgium, one from Netherland, one from Finland, two from United Kingdom, one from Austria and one from Greece) and EU member states which entered EU after 2000 (one from Slovenia, four from Croatia, one from Lithuania, one from Latvia, three from Hungary, one from Bulgaria and one respondent from Romania) because we intended to examine if this feature influences a sense of European identity in selected group of interviewees. Interviewees in the first group were born or at least live most of their lives in the European Union, while the former group is more aware of political and historical events in their countries during the pre-EU period (communism/socialism, national independence, etc.). Yet, this analysis did not show any difference between these two groups of our respondents.

Limitations

Before moving to the discussion and results of this study, it is important to stress limitations of the sample and research. First of all, study is limited with the possibility of generalization. Although, we believe it could serve as important base for further research on this very important topic, it has to be stated that this study cannot give wider picture about the role of social media in building and maintaining European identity. Main shortcoming of the sample is that majority (23 out of 25) of respondents are educated in social sciences, political science and humanities, while students and young professionals whose fields of expertise are science and engineering technologies were not included. One of respondents was student of medicine, and one studied geology. In this respect our findings should be taken with cautiousness and rather as illustration of what role social media maybe have in creating European identity and not as evidence.

RESULTS

First set of question – personal information

First set of questions was dedicated to unveil personal information of interviewees. Most of them speak English and one more European language, besides their mother tongue. For instance, Daiva from Lithuania speaks English, German, Russian, Hebrew, Japanese and Swedish. Furthermore, they travel a lot. Question about travelling was important to us because many author stress that travels as a transnational social interaction have a great influence on building an integrated community of Europeans (Mau and Verwiebe, 2010; Recchi and Favell, 2009; Rother and Nebe, 2009). For instance, Karina from Latvia visited eight countries in last twelve months.

We were very interested to see answers on cultural interests of the respondents as by purpose we did not define what we mean by culture, while as reported by Eurobarometer (2015) – culture is the most significant factor for creation of communal feeling (Graph 2). These answers we divided into two groups, among some belong to both groups at once. First group relates cultural interest to exploring new, different cultures, other than their own, and second group related cultural interest to enjoying activities among own European culture (Berting, 2006) such as film, art, political values, historical heritage and so on. It is worth to mention that the respondents have strong cultural interests, and some developed very specific ones. Zoi from Greece named politics and social interests – environmentalism, social injustice, charity work, human rights, social justice, activism, as her cultural interests.

One of our main thesis that we aimed to test through the research is that socializing and intensive interactions (direct or via social media) with people other than compatriots greatly influences a sense of European identity. Respondents answered that most of their friends come from all around Europe and the world. To give one exemplary answer, Ioana from Romania said that her friends come from all around the world. According

to the relevant studies on European identities such as from Jeffrey Checkel and Peter Katzestein (2009: 141), young people who are left-wing politically tend to embrace their European identity stronger than right-wing who prefer nation and national discourse. It is very interesting that most of our respondents (21 out of 25) refused to place themselves within left-right wing constellation, and explained their position through political values, doctrines and prominent political philosophers. They also stressed that their approach to politics is more complex and deliberative why the given political orientation cannot truly catch their stands and believes. This attitude we would label as a genuine indicator for further research on identifying EUens. Dino from Croatia provided a thought-provoking explanation for his difficulty to specify political orientation:

If I had to choose, I would go with being a liberal and left-wing-oriented but I feel like neither one of those options are able to fully describe and encompass my personal believes and blindly supporting just one cause would be against what I stand for.

According to EU Research on Social Sciences and Humanities (European Commission, 2005), young people who have European identity are likely to pursue career beyond their national borders and are oriented toward Europe. Following most of our respondents already had an experience of participation in an EU program/institution/organization or European wider association/firm and are interested in further involvement within EU related jobs and careers. Alexandra (France) as her first association on the European identity recalled her experience as an Erasmus student. Anita from Hungary said she considers the whole EU to be her labor market where she can pursue her career.

When we posted a substantial question on their career goals, we received an interesting feedback. For instance, Rita from Hungary said that her main career goal is life-long learning. Daiva from Lithuania expressed the following:

To make a living by using my best skills and working up to 6 hours a day only.

This discovery was interesting for us because it shows that some of our respondents do not want to fit in within the given bureaucracy and working conditions, but want to work as freelancers and according to their personal dynamics.

Second set of questions – European identity

In the second set of questions we directly asked the interviewees about their attitudes, emotions and deliberation on Europe, European Union and national identity. To get this valuable insight in interviewees' personal understanding of fundamental topics related to their self-identity, in-depth interview yield the most precious output. We started with a question on Europe and find out that most of the respondents defined Europe emotionally as their homeland. They described it as a community of nations with common culture, history and values. Furthermore, all of 25 of respondents differentiate Europe from the European Union, first defining in geographical and cultural terms, while the former one in political, institutional and economic terms.

We also tried to determinate strength of the respondents' European identity in relation to their national identity. Answers of the participants support Peter Golding's notion that "nationalism could be a symptom of rather than obstacle to a common European empathy." (Golding, 2007: 725) It also follows the definition in EC Policy Review that identity has an individual as well as collective component, where individual component is a result of active choice while collective component is driven with the context and can be multiple, which is why it could be more accurate to speak of "a mosaic of situation-specific identity rather than identities being nested one within another." (European Commission, 2012) In order to detect how the respondents see and define their European identity, we posted more substantive questions on first associations and what makes them feel belonging to the European identity and to the national identity. Two groups of answers dominated which are both in coherence with the Eurobarometer study (Graph 2), but there is a subtle difference. First group enthusiastically choses more sentimental, colored terms such as Erasmus program in which they participated, plurality, diversity, unity, feeling of commonness and unity, while the second one has more rational approach and lists associations such as Schengen, opposition to American, Christianity, civilization. Alexandra's (France) answer illustrates the first group:

Identifying to Europe is the awareness of a greater collective culture that my country tied itself and its destiny to, historically and geographically.

Contrary to Alexandra, Ana from Croatia gives a rational second group-style answer which expresses neither EU-patriotism, nor nationalism saying that her first association on the European identity is opposition to American identity.

As a final question in this set of questions we asked the respondents to stipulate pros and cons of being European. As main pros of being European, respondents pointed out having benefits given by the EU (free movement of people, services, goods and capital), being stronger together on the global scene, economic prosperity, diversity of cultures and languages, traffic of one currency, euro. According to the answers of 25 participants cons include a rise of new fascism, disability of the European identity to replace national identity, xenophobia, new conflicts between countries, negative image after the financial crisis in Greece which showed that some countries are way too dominant in comparison to others, complex EU bureaucracy, and so on. To illustrate some of sharp answers, according to Stefan from Austria, pros and cons of being European are the following:

Pros: culturally and historically diverse; economically prosperous (if one is lucky to be in the right part of Europe). Cons: European civilization is in a phase of decay and pessimism; Police states are being built. Discrimination and exclusion of ethnic minorities rise. The political union falls apart.

The feedback reveals that the respondents carry their European identity with a full awareness of benefits and difficulties that come out from it, lacking ideological and one-sided views.

Third set of questions – role of social media in building and maintaining European identity

This set of questions was constructed to test if social media platforms have any role in creating European identity among the respondents and if they have, what role they have. We assumed that the use of these platforms for communication with friends abroad, active usage of foreign languages through social media and informing on the state of affairs in the EU and other member states could influence a sense of belonging to the European identity.

We revealed that main online activities of the respondents include news reading, communication, leisure time, studying, job-related researches and social networking. Great majority of respondents read besides domestic, international and other EU member states' news. Most of them have two and more profiles on different social media, mainly on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and most of them use social media in the first place for keeping in touch with friends abroad, with whom they communicate mostly on a daily or weekly basis.

Furthermore, although most of the answers about the connection between social media and European identity were straight saying that there is rather weak connection or that there is no connection at all, several interviewees contacted us after interviews were conducted due to this question and gave a higher value to the connection between European identity and activities on social media than the one they gave during the interview. One of them was Ivor from Croatia who firstly said that there is no connection between his usage of social media and his European identity. After certain considerations, he said that there is a great connection, stressing that without activities on social media, especially when in his homeland, not much was left to tie him intensively to the European identity. Cornelia from Austria said that social media have impact on her European identity because she does not have it as long as her national identity. These and several alike answers led us to further investigate the nature of relationships among the participants maintained through social media. Moreover, we wanted to verify if strong and weak ties among them maintained through social media play an important role in creating their European identity.

We asked them about a shared history between them and their friends/acquaintances with who they maintain relations through social media, if it is a strong or a weak relationship in terms of communicational intensity, intimacy, number of common friends, common interests, common groups of interests on social media, collaboration on a certain project or similar, where and how often do they meet these people face-to-face. Most of these ties from abroad the interviewees have met during their studies, internships, certain shorter business meetings or academic events. With some of them, they maintain a strong tie, and with some of them a weak tie. They usually have a lot of common friends and they are often members of the same groups of interests on social media related to their field of expertise and career goals. With strong ties, they collaborate on the same projects, or are on disposal to help each other for giving feedback on their projects, applications and similar. Related to both weak and strong ties, they also share important information and

invite each other to events that may be relevant for their career or gaining a valuable social capital. They usually meet face-to-face once in two years on events such as conferences, summer schools, certain meetings which are organized by institutions, institutes, or other organizations that are related to their field of expertise, though with strong ties they try to meet more often and in private arrangements too.

Most of them (23 out of 25) answered positively that they use different means of social media communication for interaction with close friends and acquaintances. One of the most typical answers that we received come from Cecilia (Italy):

With those who I have a strong tie, I communicate more often, mainly through e-mails, Skype, Viber or Messenger (Facebook). On the other side, with those who I have a weak tie, I communicate through following their news feed on Facebook, sometimes liking it and commenting it. For their birthday, I send them on Facebook a birthday message, or for Christmas – a Christmas message.

Relying on these answers, we find that our group of interviewees maintain strong and weak ties with other alike-minded young people abroad through social media. This informal mode of connectivity via social media supports and plays a crucial role in maintaining European identity among our participants, whom we call EUens.

Lastly, although conclusions from this part of the research are derived from rather small sample, we have strong beliefs that these findings may be crucial for further researches on related topics, because they support the idea of the significant role of social media in building European identity.

CONCLUSION

Widely discussed and researched, European identity has been drawing attention of many scholars for many years. Identity itself is a complex concept or "ambiguous and slippery term" (Buckingham, 2008: 1) which is studied in many disciplines (sociology, psychology, political science). Adding to the concept of identity prefix European, although dozens of studies are dedicated to clarification of what makes European identity, we get even more complex concept which lacks unique definition. However, it is clear from previous studies and Eurobarometer (2015) results that some individuals feel as Europeans while others do not. Literature suggests that these individuals who feel European identity have many features in common. Intention of this study was to reveal what role certain factors have in creating European identity among one specific group of 25 interviewees (RQ1 and RQ2) and secondly to find out if social media have some role in building European identity and if it does what kind of role they play (RQ3 and RQ4).

Conclusion of the analysis of 25 in-depth interviews conducted with respondents that we identified as EUens (European Union citizens) has four main points which due to the shortcomings and size of the sample in this research cannot be generalized and serve more as illustration, and could be further researched. Firstly, although most of the categories that we questioned support existing literature (Carey, 2002; Eder, 2009; Fligstein, 2008;

Kantner, 2006; Risse, 2010) identifying features like other languages, education, travels, participating in different EU programs, culture, etc. as important factors that construct European identity, we find that some factors which are commonly seen as important in European identity construction, such as social class, political attitudes, country of origin, do not play any significant role in constructing European identity for the specific group of respondents that we call EUens. We believe that this notion should be further researched because we think that reason for this could be an achievement of EU's aim to provide equal opportunity for all.

Secondly, we find that participants in this study have rational and deliberative attitudes towards Europe and European identity. Although some of the respondents have romantic views on European identity, most of them think that the identity is constructed with a help of many directives, institutions and programs. They are well aware of all pros and cons that European Union brings, and despite that, they claim to have strong European identity.

Thirdly, moved by ideas that "the creation of permanent networks brings ordinary people together in a multitude of ways is important for the emergence of a shared identity" (Deutsch et al., 1967 in Mitchell, 2012: 504) and that "friendship ties in particular help to build a common identity" (Fligstein, 2008: 13), we tested how important is the role of social media in constructing European identity for the interviewees. As they maintain strong and weak ties with other alike-minded young people abroad, through social media on daily or weekly basis, we claim that this informal mode of connectivity via social media often supports and plays an important role in creating and maintaining European identity among the group of participants in this study.

Finally, we believe that our findings could serve as a base for further research on a specific group of Europeans. Relying on answers of 25 respondents, we call this group of participants EUens and we describe them as following – they are citizens of European Union who feel European identity stronger than their national identity, they come from different class backgrounds, are well educated, travel extensively, speak other languages and have strong cultural interests. Their political attitudes very often cannot fit in any traditional category, although many of them tend to be left-wing oriented. They have usually taken advantage of at least one EU program and are willing to work and study abroad. Finally, our respondents' best friends (strong ties) and acquaintances (weak ties) that are alike-minded people mainly live abroad and they keep in touch with them mostly via social media. Moreover, social media is sometimes the only tie that keeps our respondents connected with the "Europe."

References
>Arksey, Hilary and Knight, Peter T. (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists: An Introductory Resource with Examples*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE. DOI: 10.4135/9781849209335.
>Berting, Jan (2006) *Europe: A Heritage, a Challenge, a Promise*. Delft: Eburon Uitgeverij B.V.
boyd, danah M. and Ellison, Nicole B. (2007) Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-mediated Communication* 13 (1): 210–230. DOI:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.

>Brajdić Vuković, Marija; Došen, Karmen; Ghazzawi, Lejla and Tarokić, Sonja (2012) Može li pornografija pozitivno utjecati na žensku seksualnost?: utjecaj učestalog konzumiranja pornografije na spolni život mladih obrazovanih žena: kvalitativno istraživanje (Can Pornography have a Positive Influence on Female Sexuality?: Influence of Frequent Pornography Consumption on the Sexual Lives of Women: a Qualitative Study). *Revija za sociologiju* 43 (2): 133-158. DOI: 10.5613/rzs.43.2.2.
>Bruter, Michael (2003) Winning Hearts and Minds for Europe. The Impact of News and Symbols on Civic and Cultural European Identity. *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (10): 1148-1179. DOI: 10.1177/0010414003257609.
>Buckingham, David (2008) Introducing Identity, pp. 1–24 in Buckingham, David (ed.) *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
>Carey, Sean (2002) Undivided Loyalties. Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?. *European Union Politics* 3 (4): 387–413. DOI: 10.1177/1465116502003004001.
>Checkel, Jeffrey T. and Katzenstein, Peter J. (2009) *European identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/cbo9780511806247.
>Commission (1974) 'Concerning European Identity', in Seventh General Report on the Activities of the European Communities in 1973. Brussels-Luxemburg: European Union Commission.
>Dicicco-Bloom, Barbara and Crabtree, Benjamin F. (2006) The Qualitative Research Interview. *Medical Education* 40, 314-321. http://ltc-ead.nutes.ufrj.br/constructore/objetos/qualitative%20 research%20interview.pdf (20.02.2017). DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x.
>Eder, Klaus (2009) A Theory of Collective Identity Making Sense of the Debate on a 'European Identity'. *European Journal of Social Theory* 12 (4): 427–447. DOI: 10.1177/1368431009345050.
>Edwards, Rosalind and Holland, Janet (2013) *What is Qualitative Interviewing?* London: A&C Black.
>Eichenberg, Richard C. and Dalton, Russell (1993) Europeans and the European Community: The Dynamics of Public Support for European Integration. *International Organization* 47 (4): 507-534. DOI: 10.1017/s0020818300028083.
>Eurobarometer (2015) "European citizenship" No. 83, Spring 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/public_ opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf (06.02.2016). DOI: 10.2775/534854.
>European Commission (2012) *The Development of European Identity/Identities: Unfinished Business*. Policy Review. https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/development-of-european-identity-identities_en.pdf (02.02.2016).
>European Commission (2005) *Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity*. EU Research on Social Sciences and Humanities. DG for Research. http://cordis.europa.eu/docs/publications/1001/100123871-6_en.pdf (05.02.2016).
>Fligstein, Neil (2008) *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199580859.001.0001.
>Fligstein, Neil; Polyakova, Alina and Sandholtz, Wayne (2012) European Integration, Nationalism, and European Identity. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 50 (1): 106-122. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02230.x.
>Gabel, Matthew (1998) *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion and European Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. DOI: 10.3998/mpub.15828.
>Golding, Peter (2007) Eurocrats, Technocrats, and Democrats. *European Societies* 9 (5): 719-734. DOI: 10.1080/14616690701412897.
>Goldman, Shelley; Booker, Angela and McDermott, Meghan (2008) Mixing the Digital, Social, and Cultural: Learning, Identity, and Agency in Youth Participation, pp. 185–206 in Buckingham, David (ed.) *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
>Granovetter, Mark (1982) The Strength of Weak Ties: a Network Theory Revisited, pp. 105-130 in Marsden, Peter V. and Lin, Nan (ed.) *Social Structure and Network Analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
>Granovetter, Mark (1973) The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (6): 1360–1380. DOI: 10.1086/225469.
>Habermas, Jürgen (2001) Why Europe Needs a Constitution. *New Left Review* September-October (11): 5–26. https://newleftreview.org/II/11/jurgen-habermas-why-europe-needs-a-constitution (06.02.2016).

>Kantner, Cathleen (2006) Collective Identity as Shared Ethical Self-Understanding: The Case of the Emerging European Identity. *European Journal of Social Theory* 9 (4): 501-523. DOI: 10.1177/1368431006073016.
>Karantzeni, Dimitra and Gouscos, Dimitris G. (2013) eParticipation in the EU. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy* 7 (4): 477 – 500. DOI: 10.1108/tg-01-2013-0003.
>Kuhn, Theresa (2012) Why Educational Exchange Programmes Miss Their Mark: Cross-Border Mobility, Education and European Identity. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 50 (6): 994–1010. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02286.x.
>Kvale, Steinar (1983) The Qualitative Research Interview: A Phenomenological and a Hermeneutical Mode of Understanding. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 14 (1): 171-196. DOI: 10.1163/156916283x00090.
>Maas, Willem (2007) *Creating European Citizens*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
>Mann, Chris and Stewart, Fiona (2000) *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. DOI: 10.4135/9781849209281.
>Mau, Steffen and Verwiebe, Roland (2010) *European Societies. Mapping Structure and Change*. Bristol: Policy Press. DOI: 10.2307/j.ctt1t89j6j.
>McCracken, Grant (1988) *The Long Interview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. DOI: 10.4135/9781412986229.
>Mergel, Ines and Bretschneider, Stuart I. (2013) A Three-Stage Adoption Process for Social Media Use in Government. *Public Administration Review* 73 (3): 390–400. DOI: 10.1111/puar.12021.
>Mitchell, Kristine (2015) Rethinking the 'Erasmus Effect' on European identity. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (2): 330–348. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12152.
>Mitchell, Kristine (2012) Student Mobility and European Identity: Erasmus Study as a Civic Experience? *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 8 (4): 490-518.
>Oborune, Karina (2013) Becoming more European after ERASMUS? Impact of the ERASMUS Programme on Political and Cultural Identity. *Epiphany (Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies)* 6 (1): 182-202. DOI: 10.21533/epiphany.v6i1.60.
>Recchi, Ettore and Favell, Adrian (2009) *Pioneers of European Integration. Citizenship and Mobility in the EU*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. DOI: 10.4337/9781849802314.
>Risse, Thomas (2010) *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
>Risse, Thomas; Herrmann, Richard and Brewer Marilynn (eds) (2004) *Transnational Identities. Becoming European in the European Union*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
>Rother, Nina and Nebe, Tina M. (2009) More Mobile, More European? Free Movement and EU Identity, pp. 120-155 in Recchi, Ettore and Favell, Adrian (eds) *Pioneers of European Integration. Citizenship and Mobility in the EU*. Cheltenham: Elgar. DOI: 10.4337/9781849802314.00011.
>Rumford, Chris (2007) Introduction: Cosmopolitanism and Europe, pp. 1–15 in Rumford, Chris (ed.) *Cosmopolitanism and Europe*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
>Sigalas, Emmanuel (2010) Cross-Border Mobility and European Identity: The Effectiveness of Intergroup Contact during the ERASMUS Year Abroad. *European Union Politics* 11 (2): 241–265. DOI: 10.1177/1465116510363656.
>Van Mol, Christof; de Valk, Helga A. G. and van Wissen, Leo (2015) Falling in Love with(in) Europe: European Bi-National Love Relationships, European Identification and Transnational Solidarity. *European Union Politics* 16 (4): 469-489. DOI: 10.1177/1465116515588621.
>Vidmar Horvat, Ksenija (2012) *The Predicament of Intercultural Dialogue: Reconsidering the Politics of Culture and Identity in the EU*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. DOI: 10.1177/1749975511401280.
>Weber, Sandra and Mitchell, Claudia (2008) Imagining, Keyboarding, and Posting Identities: Young People and New Media Technologies, pp. 25–48 in Buckingham, David (ed.) *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
>Wetzer, Thom (2013) EU Citizenship – Many Pieces, But What Should The Puzzle Look Like? http://beucitizen.eu/theme/categories-of-citizenship-2/page/7/ (15.01.2016).

EUᴇɴs: RAST NOVOG IDENTITETA POTAKNUT DRUŠTVENIM MEDIJIMA

Domagoj Bebić :: Dijana Eraković :: Milica Vučković

SAŽETAK *Cilj je ove studije dvostruk: prvo, želimo istražiti poseban identitet koji se pojavio kao posljedica mnogih promjena povezanih s Europskom unijom (mobilnost, IKT, rastući broj različitih EU programa i novih EU politika); drugo, želimo testirati ulogu društvenih medija u građenju ovog novog identiteta koji mi nazivamo EUens. Provodeći dubinske intervjue s 25 EUensa, pronašli smo kako pojedine kategorije koje su obično smatrane važnim faktorima u građenju europskog identiteta, kao što su klasa i politički stavovi, ne igraju važnu ulogu u građenju europskog identiteta među pripadnicima naše grupe. Drugo, rezultati našeg istraživanja pokazuju kako društveni mediji imaju potencijal da postanu važan pokretač europskog identiteta.*

Bilješka o autorima

Domagoj Bebić :: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Fakultet političkih znanosti, Zagreb **::** domagoj@edemokracija.hr
Dijana Eraković :: doktorandica na Poslijediplomskom sveučilišnom studiju Filozofija i suvremenost na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Rijeci **::** dijana.erakovic@windowslive.com
Milica Vučković :: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Fakultet političkih znanosti, Zagreb **::** milica.vuckovic@fpzg.hr