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Schroedter, Julia H; Rössel, Jörg; Datler, Georg

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**European Identity in Switzerland: The Role of Intermarriage, Transnational
Social Relations and Experiences**

Contact information:

Julia H. Schroedter

Address: Institute of Sociology

University of Zurich

Andreasstrasse 15

8050 Zurich

Switzerland

Email: schroedter@soziologie.uzh.ch

Phone: 0041 44 635 23 53

Jörg Rössel

Email: roessel@soziologie.uzh.ch

Georg Datler

Email: datler@soziologie.uzh.ch

ABSTRACT

In this paper we analyze the impact of intermarriage, transnational social relations and experiences on the emergence of European identity. According to the structuralist theory of identification, European social relations, with European intermarriage as an especially important relation, and experiences should explain European identifications. Our empirical analysis is based on a survey in Zurich, Switzerland, providing a broad array of data which allows testing the impact of a European partner on European identification for Swiss and how transnational social relations and experiences contribute to both Swiss and non-Swiss feeling European. Overall, a partner from another European country (for Swiss natives) and transnational social relations and experiences have an important role in explaining European identification. The most important differences are those between Swiss and EU citizens living in Switzerland, where the latter construct the meaning of Europe differently from Swiss. Specifically, EU citizens see less conflict between national and European identification.

Keywords: European identity, intermarriage, transnational social relations, Switzerland, Europeanization

Introduction

In this paper we study the impact of European intermarriage¹, transnational social relations and experiences on the emergence of European identity on the basis of original data from a survey among couples in Zurich, Switzerland. Sociologists have only recently begun to take a serious interest in processes of Europeanization and the formation of a European society (Gerhards and Hölscher 2006, Díez Medrano 2008, Fligstein 2008, Schroedter and Rössel 2014). Hitherto, sociology has tended to regard society as an all-embracing and self-sufficient social system within the territory of a nation state. This assumption has led to the problem of methodological nationalism and the neglect of transnational forms of social integration and sociation (Chernilo 2007, Rössel 2012). This problem is heavily discussed in migration research on the one hand and in more general research about internationalization and transnational relations on the other hand.

The dominant perspective in migration research focuses on the process of migration from one national society to another and the ensuing dynamics of integration into the host society, usually conceived of as taking place in several dimensions, such as acculturation (language and culture), structural assimilation (positioning in the educational and economic system), social integration (social networks, friends and intermarriage) and identificational assimilation (identification with the new society) (Alba and Nee 1997, Berry 1997, Esser 2009). This nation-based paradigm in migration research has been challenged by the transnationalism concept. Several authors have argued that contemporary migration is not a one-way process of migration from a country of origin to a country of destination and a subsequent process of integration

(Portes et al. 1999, Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). Instead, migration today is depicted as a process characterized by several steps, including travelling to the destination country, commuting and sometimes finally returning to the country of origin. These flows of people are taking place in transnational social spaces without reference to political borders, often connecting geographically distant regions (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992). Thus, it is claimed, integration into the country of destination is replaced by integration into transnational social fields, which connect the countries of origin and destination (and possible others too) and are characterized by different forms of economic, political and social transactions (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Subsequent empirical research has shown, however, that transnational relations are not as prevalent among migrants as originally envisaged, and that the national society of the destination country is still the most important framework for analyzing processes of integration (Portes 2003, Schunck 2014).

Prior to this discussion in migration research, empirical studies on more general processes of internationalization and transnationalization have been conducted in the social sciences (Katzenstein 1975, Deutsch and Merritt 1979, de Swaan 1995, Gerhards and Rössel 1999). They started from the assumption that national societies exhibit only a relative degree of closure with respect to different forms of interaction and exchange, be they economic, political or social (cf. for a theoretical position Giddens 1984, Mann 1986). Spatial mobility, social networks, transactions and organizations have always crossed the borders of societies and nation states, and the necessity to take this into account has become more pressing with the onset of Europeanization and globalization processes (Gerhards and Rössel 1999, Mau 2010, Delhey et al. 2014). Current social science research does not only study Europeanization on an institutional level, but also

on the level of systemic exchanges (economic transactions), and social exchanges like migration, social networks and binational marriages. Research is also undertaken on the emergence of a European outlook and identity (Gerhards and Rössel 1999, Favell 2008, Fligstein 2008, Díez Medrano 2010, Kuhn 2011, Mau and Mewes 2012).

In this paper, we build on these discussions by studying the relationship between intermarriage, transnational social relations and experiences on the one hand and European identity on the other hand. We rely on Recchi's (2014) structuralist explanation, which focuses on European social relations and experiences as main determinants of European identification. Kuhn (2011) and Delhey (2007) have shown that it is the interpersonal exchanges between persons from different European nations in sociable gatherings, in friendships and in marriages that are decisive for the development of trust, identity and pro-European attitudes. So along with the effect of intermarriage, we study the degree to which transnational social relations and experiences contribute to the more encompassing, supranational identity of feeling European for people in different types of partnerships. With our data, we are able to compare respondents from different origins (Swiss, EU citizens, non-Europeans) in either mono-national (Swiss–Swiss) or binational partnerships (Swiss–EU citizen, Swiss–non-European, EU citizen–EU citizen, EU citizen–Swiss, non-European–Swiss). In our analyses we will firstly analyze their degree of identification with Europe. Secondly, we will investigate how people construct the meaning of Europe (e.g. Europe as European Union, Western Christendom, a geographic entity) which should help us to detect whether individuals in the different types of partnerships differ with respect to the meaning they attach to Europe. Thirdly, we will analyze which factors contribute to a European identity and which might explain existing differences between the groups.

Theory

“Identity” is a contested concept in the social sciences (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Identity can refer to both what distinguishes us from others and what we share with others. The identity of every individual is made up of aspects that make her different (the personal aspect) and of aspects that he shares with others (the collective/social aspect). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) distinguish between the mere membership in a group, the characteristics of a group and the individual degree of identification. This is very similar to the discussion by Abdelal et al. (2006, see also Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001), who differentiate between the content of a collective identity and its degree of contestation. The first refers to the meanings and characteristics attached to the collective and its collective identity, the second refers to the degree of support a certain notion of identity has in the group. In our paper we study both the degree of identification with Europe and the characteristics and meanings that are attached to it.

European identity is a special case of collective identity, since although it can denote identification with a group (feeling European), in contrast to other group identities like gender or class it is mainly a territorial identification. In general, social or collective identities have to be conceptualized as plural phenomena, since people usually belong to different categories or groups (e.g. gender, class, occupation), to which they feel a certain degree of attachment and identification. However, in the case of territorial identification, they are not only plural but are often nested within each other. Being an ardent Bavarian does not rule out being a strong German patriot or supporter of Europe. The latter may simply encompass the former (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001). However, the extent to which this is true usually depends on the meaning of the

respective type of identity. If for example the meaning of national identity is constructed as being in opposition to regional identity, there should be a negative correlation between the degree of national and of regional identification.

The literature on the meaning of European identity often assumes a distinction between a civic and an ethnic/cultural dimension (Bruter 2005, Fligstein et al. 2012). The focus of the ethnic/cultural dimension is on common values, language, religion and myths – a kind of common national or European culture – whereas the civic concept emphasizes the common rights and duties that go along with the citizenship of a certain polity. Since the respective meaning of European identity may be important for the attachment to Europe in relation to the identification with the nation, we take it into account in our study. Especially the more civic aspects of a European identity may be present to a higher degree for EU-citizens in contrast to Europeans from non-EU countries like Switzerland.

Since territorial identities can be weak or strong on different levels of territorial identification, in our empirical analysis we follow Delhey et al. (2014) in using a relational measurement of identification. For instance, to justify the thesis of a rise in European identification, not only does the absolute level of European identification have to increase but so too does the level of European identification in relation to the level of national identification. In addition to the absolute level of Europeanization, Delhey et al. (2014) therefore suggest three indices to measure Europeanization of social phenomena in a strictly relational way. *National openness* measures the relative strength of European identification in contrast to national identification. *European closure* indicates the degree of transnational identification that is directed toward Europe versus the world. *Relative Europeanization* captures the overall importance of European identification with regard to the national and the global level. We adopt these indicators

for our study and explain them thoroughly in section 3. This enables us to give a comprehensive assessment of European identification in relation to other territorial identifications and its determinants.

Empirical studies of European identification show rather stable, but only moderate values of identification in European countries (Kohli 2000, Fligstein 2008). According to the Eurobarometer survey little more than 10% of respondents only feel European, whereas roughly 50% feel both European and national. Thus, only a small fraction of Europeans exhibit a mainly European identity. How can we explain the emergence of an individual identification with Europe? Based on survey evidence, we know that highly educated persons, males, professionals and managers have a stronger European orientation than other social groups (Fligstein 2008). There are two main explanations for these results: firstly, these groups may profit more than others from the emergence of a European transnational field, which offers labor market and educational opportunities, the chance to travel and move freely within Europe and to make friends and acquaintances all over Europe (Fligstein 2008). Thus, this is mainly an interest-based explanation. Fligstein has forcefully put forward this thesis, but because of data limitations he was only able to show that the groups that exhibit a stronger European identification are also the groups which travel more, know more languages and move more within Europe. This brings us to the second explanation, which Recchi calls the structuralist theory of identity formation (Recchi 2014). This structuralist perspective takes up the Deutschian thesis that the emergence of social relations in a society leads to more communication and thus to a feeling of belonging to a community (Deutsch and Merrit 1979, Gerhards and Rössel 1999, Fligstein 2008). This thesis is clearly applicable to the emerging European field, where there is unquestionably a variety of social relations and experiences that are likely to facilitate the formation of a European

identity (Recchi 2014). Based on statistical results from an analysis of survey data, Díez Medrano et al. (2013) claim that such transnational relations and experiences do not explain the socio-demographic distribution of European identity, whereas Recchi (2014) argues that such relations and experiences are especially important for explaining the emergence of such identities among less well educated persons. We are able to contribute to this debate on the basis of high-quality data, which covers a broad array of European experiences and social relations among our respondents.

We expect especially strong impacts of intermarriage on the formation of a European identity. Intermarriage is usually taken as a key indicator of social integration of immigrants into a host society, since marriage is a strong, intimate and durable social relation, the impact of which is felt beyond the couple because it brings together the family and friends of both partners. We depart from and extend the classical migration view of intermarriage and identification as core indicators of social integration within a national society and study them instead as indicators of integration into transnational fields, in this case the European society (Gordon 1964, Lieberman and Waters 1988, Kalmijn 1998, Nauck 1989, for the underlying field concept see Fligstein 2008). Moreover, intermarriage can be seen as a source of solidarity and an indicator of the social distance between groups (cf. De Valk and Díez Medrano 2014). We assume that partnerships between persons from different European countries have a strong impact on the enhancement of European identity. Partners, as significant others, contribute to how individuals identify and perceive themselves and others. The idea that identities emerge as the result of social interactions and social relations is a very basic assumption of identity theories in sociology (Stryker and Burke 2000). This does not only apply to intermarriage, but also to other social relations like friendships or family relationships, thus theoretically supporting Recchi's structuralist perspective. However, this also

implies that different relationship patterns lead to different identifications depending on the origin of the partners. Thus, for a Swiss married to a person from another European country, we expect a higher degree of identification with Europe and the world, however, for a Swiss married to a non-European person we just expect a higher degree of identification with the world. Identity theory generally expects a homology between the pattern of relations and experiences on the one hand and the pattern of identifications on the other hand.

Building on this discussion, we will study the following hypotheses on European identification. Since our survey mainly contains European respondents from EU countries, we had to exclude the few Europeans from non-EU countries, and thus refer in the analysis only to persons from EU countries.

For the reasons explicated above, we expect intermarriage (to another European of different descent) to have a positive effect on identifying as European and as world citizen.

H₁: People in intermarriages, i.e. with partners from another country, exhibit a higher degree of identification with supranational entities (which encompasses their partner's country) than people with partners from the same countries as themselves.

H_{1a}: More specifically, Swiss with a partner from an EU country exhibit a higher degree of European identity (referring to all four indices) than Swiss with Swiss partners or partners from non-European countries.

H_{1b}: Swiss with a partner from a non-European country exhibit a lower degree of European identity (mainly with respect to European closure and relative Europeanization) than Swiss with Swiss partners or partners from European countries.

The effect of intermarriage should also apply to people who grew up in intermarriages. Again, we hypothesize that these individuals tend to attach more relevance to a supranational category, as their identity will have been shaped by the experience of having two nationally diverse parents.

H_{1c}: Individuals whose parents are intermarried (and from different European countries), exhibit a higher degree of a European (or other supranational) identity.

Based on identity theory we will take account of other, in comparison to intermarriage possibly weaker, forms of integration into transnational social fields. Friendship relations, for example, are normally another indicator of social integration in migration research, therefore we also hypothesize that a network of friends within Europe strengthens European identity via the same mechanisms as intermarriage.

H_{2a}: People with a European friendship network tend to have a stronger identification with Europe. The stronger the social ties to other European countries are, the stronger the European identity (referring to all four indices).

At the same time, people can have social relations with non-European countries. Here – as with a non-European partner – we expect a reverse effect on European identification vis-à-vis the global reference frame.

H_{2b}: People with a non-European friendship network tend to express a lower identification with Europe in relation to the world (with reference to European closure and relative Europeanization).

Another negative effect on European identity should result from close friendship networks in Switzerland. The more someone is embedded in social relations with people from the same country of origin, the more important the national reference frame is

likely to remain. In order to take account of this, we also analyze the effect of having friends in the country of residence.

H_{2c}: The higher the share of friends from the same country of origin, the lower is the identification as European with respect to national openness and relative Europeanization.

Besides such direct social relations with spouses, friends and acquaintances from other European countries, indicators like knowing foreign languages, and travelling and moving within Europe should shape more open, transnational experiences. Such experiences make people aware of European commonalities and the importance of European institutions and thus promote European identity (Stryker and Burke 2000, Bruter 2005, Díez Medrano et al. 2013, Fligstein 2008, Recchi 2014).

H₃: The more transnational European experiences (speaking foreign languages, travelling in European countries, long stays in European countries) people have, the stronger is their European identity.

H_{3a}: The more foreign languages someone speaks, the higher is his/her level of European identification.

H_{3b}: The more diversity of European countries someone has experienced in short trips, the higher is his/her level of European identification.

H_{3c}: The more long stays abroad someone has had in European countries, the higher is his/her level of European identification.

The hypotheses are formulated without referring to individuals of one particular nationality. We assume that transnational experiences should have the same effect on Europeanization for all people living in Switzerland.

Again, reverse effects might be possible due to trips to, or stays in non-European countries. Experiences outside of Europe should foster a broader supranational identity and reduce the effect on European identification. Particularly more extended stays abroad, when reflected in actual contact with the people and culture abroad, should have the most pronounced effect. But also travelling to various world regions should promote an inclusive reference frame for identity formation (identification as a world citizen).

H_{3d}: The more continents someone has visited for short trips, the lower is his/her level of European identification (especially in respect to European closure and relative Europeanization).

H_{3e}: The more long stays abroad someone has had in non-European countries, the lower is her level of European identification (mainly with respect to European closure and relative Europeanization).

Data

Our empirical analysis is based on data from an online survey which ran 2012 in Zurich as part of the project “Toward a European Society: Single Market, Binational Marriages, and Social Group Formation in Europe (EUMARR)” (Schroedter and Rössel 2013). The inquiry was addressed to persons in mono- and binational partnerships (both marital and non-marital). The sample included individuals living together with their partners and holding citizenships from Switzerland, the EU27 countries or other European and non-European countries. The couples consisted either of two Swiss partners, one Swiss partner and a partner from one of the countries of the aforementioned foreign groups, or two EU27 citizens from different countries. The basic sample was drawn randomly from several predefined strata of persons from the population register of the city of Zurich. Within each couple, one partner was chosen randomly. All selected persons were contacted by mail in German and English and

invited to participate in the online survey (also in German or English). At increasing time intervals we sent three reminders to the sampled individuals. By following this procedure we were able to achieve a response rate of about 40 percent (cf. Schroedter and Rössel 2013).

In order to test the effect of intermarriage on European identification, we run our analyses on couples in different *partnership combinations*. The country of birth of the respondent and of his/her partner is the main criterion for assignment to one of the groups (Switzerland, one of the EU27 countries, and non-European countries) as it does not change throughout the life course (as might citizenship). We differentiate six groups: Swiss-born with a Swiss-born partner (1), Swiss-born with a partner from one of the EU27 countries (2), Swiss-born with a partner born in a non-European country (3), individuals born in an EU27 country with a partner either born in another EU27 country (4) or in Switzerland (5), and individuals born in a non-European country with a Swiss-born partner (6). Furthermore, we restrict the analyses to those respondents who possess the citizenship of their country of birth and indicate it as their most important citizenship in case of double citizenship. This decision was taken because for non-Swiss we only surveyed identification with the country of (first) citizenship, not with the country of birth. As the country of birth did not always correspond with the citizenship, the procedure led to the exclusion of almost 13% of the cases.

The item on European identification was embedded in a battery of corresponding items. On a scale from zero (“strongly disagree”) to 10 (“strongly agree”), individuals were asked to indicate how much they would agree or disagree with certain statements on identification, e.g. “I feel European.” The list of statements ranged from smaller

political and regional units (Zurich, German speaking Switzerland) to larger ones. We included “I feel Swiss” as well as the respective national category for foreigners and individuals with double citizenship. Besides feeling European, the item battery also comprised feeling as a citizen of the world. These items are used to construct the dependent variables, i.e. the four indices of Europeanization applied to identification as proposed by Delhey et al. (2014). *National openness* measures the attachment to Europe in relation to the nation. The value of identification with Europe is divided by the sum of the values of identification with the nation (of first citizenship) and with Europe. The denominator ensures that the index can only vary between zero and one, with “0” indicating that only the national reference frame is relevant and “1” indicating that only the European reference frame is salient. A value of 0.5 signifies that the nation and Europe are both equally (ir)relevant. The following indices share this attribute, i.e., the range of variation between zero and one, with values higher than 0.5 indicating the greater relevance of Europe in relation to the respective reference frame.² *European closure* addresses the salience of Europe relative to the world. Here, the identification as European is put into relation with the sum of both the identification as European and the identification as a world citizen. *Relative Europeanization* measures the salience of identification with Europe as a share of the accumulated relevance of all three reference frames (nation, Europe, and the world). *Absolute Europeanization* is the directly measured level of identification with Europe divided by 10, resulting in the same range of values as the other indices (from zero to one).

Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate how much they would associate various terms with Europe. The list of terms reads as follows: common history, geographic region/continent, European Union, Christian religion, cultural diversity,

dominance of economic interests, political cooperation, tolerance, the welfare state/a strong social network, separation of church and state, and loss of our own national identity. The scale ranges from one (“not at all”) to seven (“very much”). The terms were used for measuring the meanings our respondents associate with Europe.

The explanatory variables were constructed as follows: *born in intermarriage* is coded one if the countries of birth of the respondent’s parents vary, zero otherwise. The two variables on *friendship networks abroad* have three categories. They are coded one if respondents indicate that they have friends a) in a country belonging to the European Union or b) outside the EU (but not in Switzerland) and coded two if they have regular personal contact with them (i.e. personal visits at least once a year, but often more regularly), otherwise zero. The *share of friends from the same country of birth* represents the percentage of friends born in the same country among the (up to five) closest friends in Switzerland (ranging from zero to 100). As we partly expect different effects for the different nationality groups, a net interaction effect is used to account for the citizenship of the respondent (Swiss, EU27, and non-European). The *number of languages* refers to all languages respondents reported as those they speak fluently. A value of “1” indicates that a person only speaks his mother tongue and no foreign languages. The maximum of the variable is five or more languages. The two variables on short trips refer to short term mobility lasting a minimum of one overnight stay and up to three months. The *number of European countries visited in short trips* ranges from zero to 34. The *number of continents visited in short trips* is restricted to six, including Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Oceania, and Asia. *Stays abroad* refer to long term mobility, i.e. stays that lasted at least three months. Depending on whether it was in a European or non-European country, the stay is counted within *number of*

stays in European countries or *number of stays in non-European countries*. *Education* is a categorical variable with four values. As the majority of the respondents are highly educated, we distinguish between secondary education or less, postsecondary, non-tertiary education, and two levels of tertiary education. Higher tertiary education applies to persons holding a PhD or an equivalent degree. The size of our sample in the analyses is 1,918. Different case numbers result from list wise deletion of missing values in the dependent variable.

Results

Table 1 shows an overview of the average absolute level of identification with the different reference frames: Europe, the nation and the world. We find that in the sample the level of feeling as a European is relatively high for all individuals born in Europe. European migrants show the highest level of identification with Europe, even more so when their partner is from a different EU27 country. Respondents born in non-European countries show a markedly lower level of European identification. However, Swiss with a Swiss partner do not significantly differ from Swiss with a partner from the EU, although the latter show a slightly higher level of European identity. As far as the nation is concerned, we find the highest level of identification within Swiss-Swiss couples. But here too, the difference between these and Swiss with a European partner is negligible. With regard to identification as a citizen of the world, we do find rather high mean values between 6 and 7 and no significant variation over the groups. In sum, we find that Swiss and non-Europeans rate identification with their own nation higher than identification with Europe, while European migrants put more emphasis on identification with Europe.

– TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE –

Table 2 presents the means of the four indices of European identification for the various partnership combinations. With respect to national openness we find the highest salience of Europe in relation to the nation for EU citizens. However, there is no significant difference between those in partnerships with other EU citizens and those with a Swiss partner, the exception being the absolute level of Europeanization. For the Swiss, we do find a slightly significant effect of European intermarriage only in respect to national openness. But even intermarried Swiss rate their national identity more highly than their European identity (values below 0.5). Furthermore, no difference is discernible as regards European closure and relative Europeanization. So far, the data hardly supports hypothesis 1a. Yet, for hypothesis 1b, we find partial empirical evidence: Swiss intermarried with non-Europeans score markedly lower on European closure than Swiss who do not have a partner from another country. In spite of the fact that we did not ask for identification with the European Union but with Europe, EU citizens show a significantly higher degree of identification with Europe than Swiss (and non-Europeans).

– TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE –

The relative measures of European identity demonstrate that Europe is a more meaningful category for EU citizens than the respective national category. On average, the EU citizens in our sample have a value higher than 0.5 on national openness. It seems that, at least for EU citizens who live in a European country other than their country of birth, national identity loses relevance as the ultimate point of reference,

which points to the importance of migration experiences. Nevertheless, the high mean of European closure (0.59) demonstrates that the boundary against “the other” remains important. It should be noted that the vast majority of EU citizens in our sample were born in Germany (approx. 45 percent). They are followed by Italians (nine percent), Spaniards (seven percent), and French, Austrians and Britons (five percent each). This implies that many of the European migrants in our sample come from countries that are founding members of today’s European Union and as such probably more familiar with the European reference frame and the idea of a united Europe.

However, we find that a non-European partner has a pronounced weakening effect on European closure and the absolute level of Europeanization; so far, we can conclude that the foreign partner of a Swiss does not necessarily enhance or reduce identification with Europe. Still, feeling as a European might mean different things to different people, depending on what their concept of Europe is. We will therefore take a look at the meaning of Europe for persons in the different types of partnerships. We exclude the non-Europeans from the analyses because they are not our primary interest and their case numbers are on the low side.

As described above, the survey included 11 questions on the meaning of Europe. Exploiting that some related meanings go together more often than others a factor model with just six latent variables proved sufficient to represent the data structure (see Datler et al. 2015). The dimensions can be subsumed under the headings: “Egalitarian Values,” “Common Ground,” “Politics,” “Christianity,” “Loss of National Identity,” and “Dominance of Economic Interests”. Figure 1 shows the latent mean values of the factors, i.e. the levels on those factors relative to Swiss-Swiss couples. Positive

deviations indicate that a dimension is more important for a group compared to Swiss with a Swiss partner, and negative deviations indicate that a dimension is less important.

– FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE –

With regard to the meaning of Europe, too, we do not find a significant difference between Swiss that are intermarried and those that are not. EU citizens living in Switzerland have a different image of Europe. Compared to the Swiss, they are more strongly geared toward “Common Ground,” and put more emphasis on the political dimension of Europe. This is even stronger for EU citizens with a partner from a different EU country. Europe as a threat to national identity is less of an issue for EU respondents than for Swiss. Though both Swiss with an EU partner and Swiss with a non-European partner do not differ significantly from the Swiss-Swiss couples, those two groups do differ significantly from each other, i.e. Swiss with a partner from outside Europe are more afraid that Europe means a loss of national identity than Swiss with an EU partner.

If we compare the correlations of the dimensions of meaning with the four indices of European identification (results not shown), we find rather similar patterns for all indices except for European closure (see Datler et al. 2015). Whereas “egalitarian values,” “common ground,” and “political cooperation” work as attractors for European identification, loss of national identity is a clear repeller. The dimensions “dominance of economic interests” and “Christianity” are neutral with respect to the level of European identity. This analysis shows quite clearly that identification with Europe depends

strongly on the meanings attached to the nested national and European levels and their interrelation (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001).

Our next step is to test the explanatory hypotheses. Table 3 presents linear regression models for national openness (models 1 and 2) and European closure (models 3 and 4). Apart from the main effects of type of partnership, models 1 and 3 include only the socio-economic control variables. The variables on transnational networks and experiences are added in models 2 and 4. For national openness we firstly find a positive and slightly significant effect for Swiss with an EU partner controlling for socio-demographic variables (H_{1a}) (model 1). We also find empirical evidence for hypothesis 1c: having intermarried parents enhances national openness. The social networks do not seem to be important for identification with Europe in relation to the nation (H_{2a} , H_{2b} , and H_{2c}). The variables on transnational experience show mixed results. The number of languages has the predicted effect: the more languages someone speaks, the more salient becomes the European reference frame relative to the national (H_{3a}). For the most part, the predictions concerning the influence of mobility on European identity do not seem to hold. There is, however, one exception: every stay abroad in another European country increases the level of national openness (H_{3c}).

– TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE –

For the explanation of European closure other variables prove to be important. Here, we do find an effect of the social networks, at least with respect to friends outside the EU: respondents who have regular personal contacts to friends in non-EU countries show a significantly lower degree of European identification in relation to the global reference

frame (H_{2b}). Similarly, the number of continents visited (H_{3d}) and the number of stays in non-European countries (H_{3e}) both have a considerable negative effect on European closure, indicating that global experiences and networks lead to more global identifications. An interesting result is the significant, positive effect for the share of friends of the same country for EU citizens. The more the circle of closest friends consists of same nationals, the higher is the distinction of Europe vis-à-vis the world.

Table 4 shows the results for relative Europeanization (models 5 and 6) and absolute Europeanization (models 7 and 8). Again, apart from the main effects of type of partnership, models 5 and 7 include only the socio-economic control variables, while the variables on transnational experience are added in models 6 and 8. With respect to relative Europeanization, we find only two of the hypothesized effects. While the effects all (except for friends in the EU) point in the expected direction, the number of stays in European countries turns out to have a small, though significant effect (H_{3c}). For absolute Europeanization, i.e. the only non-relational measure of identification, the total of languages and the number of European countries visited in short trips also have a positive effect.

With respect to education we find in general rather small effects, with less well educated persons exhibiting a somewhat lower degree of European identification (relative, absolute and with respect to national openness). The inclusion of variables, which measure transnational relations and experiences, decreases the impact of education somewhat, but they do not fully mediate the relevance of education.

– TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE –

The models with controls for the socio-economic variables reveal a slight difference between Swiss-Swiss couples and Swiss with a European partner, indicating that these marital unions are socially selective, such that the effect was not visible in tables 1 and 2 (cf. model 1 and model 7). What we also find is that nationals from countries that are (often founding) members of the EU show markedly higher levels of identification as Europeans. The reason for this could, of course, be that they associate Europe much more strongly with the EU than do the Swiss, as demonstrated in the factor analysis (dimension “Politics”). Furthermore, EU citizens, unlike Swiss citizens, are much less likely to construct European identity as conflicting with national identity. Transnational networks and experiences have much less influence on the four indices of European identity than expected. A plausible explanation is that these variables have been conflated with the types of partnerships, resulting in some issues of endogeneity.

Summary and Discussion

We analyzed the impact of European intermarriage and transnational social relations and experiences on European identity. It is an empirically well-founded result from migration research that intermarriage is an especially important indicator of social integration and often also leads to identificative integration (Lieberson and Waters 1988, Alba 1990). We studied this idea from a transnational perspective and discussed whether European intermarriage, i.e. binational unions between individuals from different European countries, also leads to a stronger identification with Europe. According to the structuralist explanation of identification (Recchi 2014) and identity theory (Stryker and Burke 2000), this should be expected on the grounds that intermarriage is an especially strong, durable and intimate social relation. In addition,

the theories also predict that different patterns of social relations and experiences predict different types of identification. We based our study on survey data from Zurich, Switzerland.

The structure of the meaning of Europe was similar for Swiss and EU citizens and thus for individuals in different partnerships. However, the importance of the dimensions differed between the groups. Respondents from EU countries placed more emphasis on common ground and politics in contrast to Swiss respondents; this was even stronger for EU citizens with a partner from a different EU country. Furthermore, as suggested in the discussion about nested identities (Díez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001), Swiss respondents constructed the meaning of Europe as more in conflict with national identity, whereas EU citizens saw less of a conflict here and thus identified more strongly with Europe. This was also evident in our statistical analysis, where EU citizens showed much higher levels of identification with Europe than all other groups.

In contrast to the considerable importance of category membership (EU citizens versus Swiss and citizens of non-European countries) our measures of transnational social relations and experiences had only a small number of significant statistical effects. Intermarriage between Swiss persons and individuals from the EU led to slightly higher levels of European identification, but only after controlling for socio-demographic variables, indicating that these partnerships have a rather selective social profile. Swiss that are married to non-Europeans exhibit clearly lower levels of European identification. Furthermore, having parents who are intermarried also leads to a somewhat stronger European identification. Thus, there is some support for the impact of European intermarriage on European identification. With respect to other forms of

European social relations and experiences there are only some significant effects. The exception was that having non-European friends leads to a lower level of European closure and for EU-citizens having more co-national friends increases the level of European closure. With respect to other forms of transnational experiences we find that proficiency in different languages does indeed increase identification with Europe. The same is also true for longer stays in different countries, whereas stays in different continents tend to decrease European identification. Thus, the pattern of transnational relations and experiences are homologous to the respective patterns of identification. In previous publications there has been discussion whether transnational relations and experiences also explain socio-demographic differences in identification (Díez Medrano et al. 2013, Recchi 2014). Recchi's assumption was that more highly educated persons show a stronger European identification because they have more transnational relations and experiences. We studied this question with respect to education and our results did not support this conclusion, since the already rather weak effects of education were not statistically mediated by the indicators measuring transnational social relations and experiences. Thus, overall, transnational relations and experiences do shape the degree of identification with Europe, but not to the extent expected by the structuralist approach. This approach seems to underestimate the importance of category membership (EU citizenship) and the construction of the meaning of Europe. However, our study is limited insofar as the sample consists of rather highly educated people. As the structuralist approach particularly makes assumptions on the effects of transnational social relations and experiences for the less educated, further research is needed to substantiate our conclusion.

Nonetheless, especially the empirical differences between persons of different origin point towards other explanations. We found stronger European and lower national

identification only for migrants from EU countries. Migrants from EU countries, in contrast to migrants from non-European countries clearly profit from their EU citizenship, because mobility for them is not only easier within EU countries but also to and within Switzerland. Thus their citizenship gives them privileged access to the European, including the Swiss, labor market and educational system. Thus, they have interest-based reasons to identify more strongly with Europe and less with their country of origin. This lends support to Fligstein's ideas (2008, Fligstein et al. 2012) about the roots of European identity. European identity seems to be more about interests and less about social relations and experiences. However, this explanation has to be tested in a much stricter design, e.g. comparing EU citizens with and without migration experience within Europe.

A further important point that must be taken into account is the fact that our conclusions are based on cross-sectional data. Thus, we are able to determine if our statistical results are in accordance with our hypotheses, but we cannot infer the direction of causality. Intermarriage, transnational relations and experiences may be endogenous and may themselves be the result of more open and supranational outlooks. Thus, we are only able to conclude that identities and social relations to a certain degree form a coherent pattern, but not the causal relations. Therefore, future longitudinal or quasi-experimental research ought to take into consideration early socialization experiences, as these may foster open attitudes, which in turn could encourage intermarriage, transnational relations and European and global identification.

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Notes

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- ¹ Intermarriages in the following encompass marital and non-marital partnerships alike. We expect the same mechanisms to be at work because both forms of relationships have a similar legal standing in Switzerland (especially for EU citizens not in need of a special residence permit). The notion Europe refers to Europe as a whole and not only to the European Union.
- ² If respondents indicate “zero” for both identification with Europe and the nation, national openness is set on 0.5 as both reference frame are weighted equally. The same procedure is done for European closure and relative Europeanization if both the numerator and the sum in the denominator are “zero” due to non-identification.

**European Identity in Switzerland: The Role of Intermarriage, Transnational Social
Relations and Experiences**

Tables & Figures

Table 1: Identification with different Reference Frames for different Types of Partnerships (means)

Type of partnership	Identification with...			<i>N</i> ^a
	Europe	The nation of first citizenship	The world	
Swiss – Swiss	7.0	8.9	6.6	614
Swiss – EU27	7.3	8.6	7.0	295
Swiss – non-European	6.2**	8.1***	6.9	190
EU27 – EU27	8.3***	7.0***	6.4	266
EU27 – Swiss	7.8***	6.7***	6.2	311
Non-European – Swiss	4.3***	7.9***	6.5	97
Total (n)	1,871	1,918	1,805	1,773

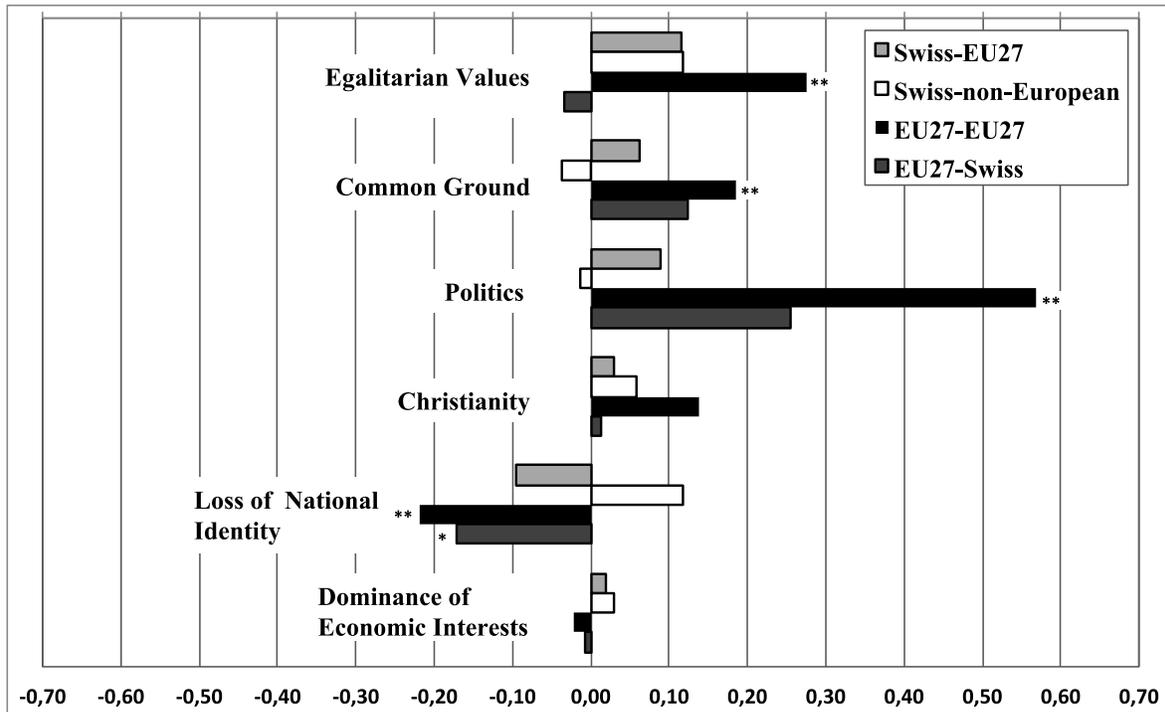
Source: Swiss EUMARR survey 2012; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 (compared to Swiss-Swiss couples); dependent variable ranges from 0 to 10, ^a minimum case number for all reference frames

Table 2: Overview of four Indices of European Identification depending on Type of Partnership (means)

	National openness	European closure	Relative Europeanization	Absolute Europeanization
Swiss – Swiss	0.42	0.53	0.30	0.70
Swiss – EU27	0.45*	0.53	0.31	0.73
Swiss – non-European	0.42	0.47***	0.28	0.62**
EU27 – EU27	0.56***	0.59***	0.39***	0.83***
EU27 – Swiss	0.54***	0.58***	0.38***	0.78***
Non-European – Swiss	0.33***	0.40***	0.22***	0.43***
Total (n)	1,860	1,780	1,773	1,871

Source: Swiss EUMARR survey 2012; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001 (compared to Swiss-Swiss couples); dependent variable ranges from 0 to 1

Figure 1: The Meaning of Europe (latent mean values)



Source: Swiss EUMARR survey 2012; ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Note: Confirmatory factor analysis with invariance constraints (scalar invariance is a prerequisite for unbiased comparison of latent means, see Van de Vijver and Leung 1997), model fit: Chi2=344.1, df=153, CFI =.93.

List of Factors (indicators, cross-loadings in *italics*): Egalitarian Values (welfare state, tolerance, secularity, *EU*), Common Ground (region, history, *EU*), Politics (*EU*, political cooperation); Christianity, Loss of National Identity, and Dominance of Economic Interests are single-item factors.

Table 3: Explanation of National Openness and European Closure

	<i>National Openness</i>				<i>European Closure</i>			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β	SE	β	SE	B	SE	β	SE
Type of partnership (Rf. Swiss – Swiss)								
Swiss – EU27	0.03*	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02
Swiss – Non-European	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	-0.04*	0.02	-0.01	0.02
EU27 – EU27	0.14***	0.01	0.10***	0.03	0.07***	0.02	0.04	0.03
EU27 – Swiss	0.12***	0.01	0.09**	0.03	0.07***	0.01	0.03	0.03
Non-European – Swiss	-0.10***	0.02	-0.14***	0.03	-0.13***	0.02	-0.07	0.04
Age (centered at 37 years)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00
Gender (Rf. male)	0.03***	0.01	0.03**	0.01	0.03**	0.01	0.02*	0.01
Born in intermarriage	0.03**	0.01	0.03**	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Education (Rf. tertiary)								
Upper secondary or less	-0.02	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
Post-sec., non-tertiary	-0.04**	0.01	-0.03*	0.01	-0.00	0.01	-0.00	0.01
PhD	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02
<i>Networks</i>								
Friends in EU (Rf. no)								
Yes			-0.01	0.02			-0.04	0.02
Yes, with regular visits			-0.01	0.01			-0.01	0.02
Friends outside the EU								
Yes			0.01	0.01			-0.02	0.01
Yes, with regular visits			0.02	0.01			-0.05***	0.01
IA: Share of friends CoB								
Swiss			-0.04	0.02			0.02	0.03
EU27			-0.02	0.03			0.10**	0.03
Non-European			-0.02	0.05			-0.10	0.06
Number of languages			0.01**	0.00			-0.00	0.01
Short trips								
No. of European countries			0.00	0.00			0.00	0.00
No. of continents			-0.00	0.00			-0.02***	0.00
Stays abroad								
No. of European countries			0.01*	0.00			0.01	0.01
No. of non-Eur. countries			-0.00	0.00			-0.02**	0.01
Constant	0.40***	0.01	0.38***	0.03	0.50***	0.01	0.58***	0.04
R ²	0.16		0.18		0.07		0.12	
AIC	-1273.61		-1285.58		-706.06		-764.60	
BIC	-1209.13		-1156.60		-642.06		-636.61	
N	1,594		1,594		1,530		1,530	

Source: Swiss EUMARR survey 2012; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Abbreviations: Rf. = Reference; post-sec. = post-secondary; IA = interaction effect; CoB = country of birth; non-Eur. = non-European

Table 4: Explanation of Relative and Absolute Europeanization

	<i>Relative Europeanization</i>				<i>Absolute Europeanization</i>			
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	β	SE	β	SE	B	SE	β	SE
Type of partnership (Rf. Swiss – Swiss)								
Swiss – EU27	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04*	0.02	0.03	0.02
Swiss – Non-European	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.03
EU27 – EU27	0.10***	0.01	0.07***	0.02	0.13***	0.02	0.08	0.05
EU27 – Swiss	0.09***	0.01	0.06**	0.02	0.09***	0.02	0.05	0.05
Non-European – Swiss	-0.07***	0.01	-0.08**	0.03	-0.26***	0.03	-0.26***	0.06
Age (centered at 37 years)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gender (Rf. male)	0.03***	0.01	0.02***	0.01	0.07***	0.02	0.06***	0.02
Born in intermarriage	0.02*	0.01	0.02*	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02
Education (Rf. tertiary)								
Upper secondary or less	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.05**	0.02	-0.02	0.02
Post-sec., non-tertiary	-0.03**	0.01	-0.02*	0.01	-0.07***	0.02	-0.05*	0.02
PhD	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.03	0.02	-0.03	0.02
<i>Networks</i>								
Friends in EU (Rf. no)								
Yes			-0.02	0.01			-0.05	0.03
Yes, with regular visits			-0.01	0.01			-0.03	0.02
Friends outside the EU								
Yes			-0.00	0.01			0.01	0.02
Yes, with regular visits			-0.01	0.01			-0.01	0.02
IA: Share of friends CoB								
Swiss			-0.01	0.02			-0.02	0.04
EU27			0.02	0.02			0.02	0.05
Non-European			-0.04	0.04			0.01	0.10
Number of languages			0.01	0.00			0.03**	0.01
Short trips								
No. of European countries			0.00	0.00			0.00*	0.00
No. of continents			-0.01*	0.00			-0.00	0.01
Stays abroad								
No. of European countries			0.01**	0.00			0.02*	0.01
No. of non-Eur. countries			-0.00	0.00			-0.01	0.01
Constant	0.28***	0.01	0.29***	0.02	0.67***	0.02	0.58***	0.06
R ²	0.17		0.18		0.10		0.12	
AIC	-2197.91		-2201.23		598.30		588.40	
BIC	-2133.97		-2073.35		662.86		717.52	
N	1,523		1,523		1,604		1,604	

Source: Swiss EUMARR survey 2012; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Abbreviations: Rf. = Reference; post-sec. = post-secondary; IA = interaction effect; CoB = country of birth; non-Eur. = non-European