Political Identity Building in the EU: A Constructivist Approach

Avrupa Birliği'nde Politik Kimliğin Oluşumu: Yapısalcı Yaklaşım

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Abstract

The EU is an important economic and political figure in global politics and its sui generis presence has been analyzed both from a rationalist approach and by integration theorists. Despite the rationalist material ontology, when we examine the social constructivist reading, the EU has achieved many gradual improvements that foster and strengthen its position as an actor; in particular, the Treaty of Lisbon has emphasized the political identity of the EU. These developmental steps have mostly been constructed on civilian concepts rather than traditional material oriented approaches. This civilian ground has been reinforced by EU treaties and other forms of legislation, giving flesh and bones to the political identity. As a consequence, these efforts have formulated the political identity of the EU; moreover, the EU has begun to export these political identity components, which are fundamental freedoms and the rule of law and democracy, towards other countries. The addressee states generally have some historical or cultural bonds to the EU. Therefore, this research will try to examine which integration theory best answers the EU's political identity setting and its representation. This paper argues that first the Copenhagen Council in 1993 and then the Treaty of Lisbon have acted as starting points for EU's self-image; in legal terms, these political steps have given the EU a stable political identity. This consensus in political identity has consolidated the actor profile on the international stage. When considering this progress from a theoretical perspective, traditional integration theories fail to comprehend and clarify this formative process, as they are immersed in the early economic integration process. Interestingly, although this shaped political identity became a robust and constant part of the EU, in recent years the EU has come face to face with the Eurozone

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Bu makale iThenticate sistemi tarafından taranmıştır.

economic crisis. In this context, a social constructivist approach, which makes use of social relations as a tool and references social ontology, seems the best approach to intervene the EU political identity and its presence, particularly after the EU gained legal status.

Keywords: European Union Integration, Social Constructivism, European Political Identity

Özet

Avrupa Birliği, global politika da önemli bir ekonomik ve siyasi figürdür ve kendine özgü yapısı hem rasyonel yaklaşımlar hem de entegrasyon kuramcıları tarafından analiz edilmektedir. Rasyonel maddeci ontolojiye karşılık, sosyal konstrüktivist (inşaacı) okumaları incelediğimizde, Avrupa Birliği, bir aktör olarak kendi konumunu besleyici ve güçlendirici çok sayı da tedrici ilerlemeler kaydetmiştir, bilhassa, Lizbon Antlaşması Avrupa Birliği'nin siyasi kimliğine vurgu yapmaktadır. Gelişmeye yönelik bu adımlar, geleneksel maddeci yönelimli yaklaşımlardan ziyade, daha çok sivil kavramlar üzerine atılmıştır. Bu sivil zemin, siyasi kimliği canlandırarak, Avrupa Birliği antlaşmalarıyla ve diğer yasal yollarla güçlendirilmiştir. Sonuç itibariyle, bu çabalar Avrupa Birliğinin siyasi kimliğini hazırlamıştır, üstelik, Avrupa Birliği, temel özgürlükler, demokrasi ve hukukun üstünlüğü olan bu siyasi kimlik bileşenlerini diğer ülkelere ihraç etmeye başlamıştır. Bu alıcı ülkelerin, genellikle Avrupa Birliğine bazı tarihsel veya kültürel bağlılıkları vardır. Bundan dolayı, bu araştırma, hangi entegrasyon kuramının Avrupa Birliği'nin siyasi kimlik düzenine ve onun temsiliyetine en iyi şekilde cevap vereceğini incelemeye çalışacaktır. Bu makale, önce 1993'teki Kopenag Konseyi, ardından Lizbon Antlaşması'nın Avrupa Birliğinin imajı için roloynadığını, hukuki açıdan, siyasi adımların Avrupa Birliği'ne bir siyasi kimlik verdiğini tartışmaktadır. Siyasi kimlik üzerindeki bu fikir birliği, uluslararası sahnedeki aktör profilini pekiştirmiştir. Ekonomi kentegrasyon, bu şekillendirilmeye çalışılan Avrupa Birliği siyasi kimliğin daimi ve güçlü bir parçası haline gelmesine rağmen, son yıllarda Avrupa Birliği Eurozone (Euro bölgesi) ekonomik krizlerle karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bir araç olarak sosyal ilişkilerden faydalanan ve sosyal ontolojiye referans veren sosyal konstrüktivist (inşaacı) bir yaklaşım, özellikle Avrupa Birliği'nin yasal statü kazanmasının ardından, Avrupa Birliği siyasi kimliğine ve yapısına aracılık edecek en iyi yaklaşım olarak görünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Avrupa Birliği Bütünleşmesi, Sosyal İnşaccı Yaklaşım, Avrupa Siyasi Kimliği*

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a distinctive entity that has attempted to develop progress in all fields, progress which is influential both inside and outside its borders. Its legitimacy, in both internal and external relations, has generally led many scholars to question whether the EU is a state or an international organization. Particularly after the 1990s, the literature has mainly focused on the EU's external relations and institutional changes, as well as how the academic world has interpreted this process. Originally, the EU consisted of regional cooperation that includes certain policy areas in its integration; the EU is an entity composed of unified states which are the loyal friends and permanent allies of the USA. This kind of view occurred during the Cold War era, however in today's environment, the EU's reputation is not that restricted. Rather, the consolidated multi-layered political structure in both internal and external policies, which are intertwined, is what is most often mentioned. In particular, the EU continues to be recognized for its economic successes, although there are continuing upheavals in the economic realm; in recent decades, the identity of the EU has been questioned. Within this context, it is useful to remember that the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012; it was nominated for its advancements and efforts to consolidate peace, democracy and human rights not only among its 28 states, but also by exporting these values to third parties. The EU not only makes internal laws for its 28 member states, but also acts as a concrete and growing external contributor in negotiations with third parties and in international practices in some important foreign policy areas.

Many improvements demonstrate that the European Union is not merely a vague regional entity; particularly after the 1990s the EU has developed its institutional structures and taken up an irrevocable role in a number of different areas of global politics.

Since the foundation of the European Community, a gradual increase in the EU's stance in all policy areas has occurred. Although the Single European Act of 1985 and the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 both upgraded the image of the European Community, it was the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993 which posed a breaking point in the destiny of the EU in its efforts to establish a political

identity for European states on a supranational level. At this council, with the representation of political criteria of Copenhagen, the EU took on a new identity and shouldered important responsibilities, standing out from other actors in international politics. The universal principles and values that the EU took up were articulated and institutionalized by articles and amendments of the treaty; finally, these were enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. In line with the new legal status, the EU did not hesitate to put itself forward with these values and principles, and not only has taken up this role, but has also started to fulfill it. Merely being an economic giant or a rising security actor, two roles that are still debatable for the EU, is not enough to explain its recent performance. The most important thing that can be said is that the EU has become an actor that possesses universal values and principles as part of its political identity. In fact, the ideational roots of the EU are not new phenomena; indeed they have been nourished by the era of European Enlightenment, based on the general discourse of liberty, philosophy and fundamental freedoms. These values are what the EU has inherited from the philosophical approach of modern history, ideas that were mentioned by important intellectuals like Rousseau or Voltaire.

In line with the developing political identity and visible influence of the EU, this paper will try to shed light on the construction of the said political identity and how this process has been interpreted with integration theories. In this study, in addition to changes that have occurred since the Cold War, on both the global scale and with expansion to the east on European scale, how the European Union has changed its exterior, particularly politically, will be examined. At the beginning of the integration, the desire was merely to generate an economic model, and the theoretical approaches in this process were related to this intention. However, in due course, the European integration project witnessed situations at many diverse levels, as well as many other challenges from within and outside the EU; the EU presence was expressed on the international stage with the political identity that it is still constructing today. It is important to answer how these norms, values and principles have become institutionalized and constitute political identity in the EU. This investigation will concentrate on the developmental process of political identity rather

than an in-depth examination of role concepts in the EU. During this historical overview, this study will also consider how the integration theories have been re-interpreted alongside the political setting of the EU.

Analyzing the Historical Development Process of the European Political Identity

After World War II, European countries became enthusiastic about two things; first to generate a 'community' based on peaceful grounds (Bretherton&Vogler, 2006) and second to recover the devasted European economy via a new integration model. Hence, the overt need of Europe was to reconstruct state economies and establish a secure environment. This concern for security occurred for two reasons; one was to prevent any prospective war between European countries that had previously been at conflict, and to prevent any prospective attack by Germany. This situation led to the formation of the European Defence Community in 1950, a pan-European defence project; however, the activities of this community were disbanded by De Gaulle. The second concern was to protect themselves during the Cold War as a unified power against the Soviet Union. In particular, this situation led to Europe becoming an ally of NATO and a supporter of the USA in the bipolar chaos environment. However, during the formation of the Community, the priority was to form an economic integration; the European countries realized that they would be secure under the NATO umbrella and that security integration was a major task for the member states.

Thus, to create a unified security and defence policy among the European Community states was not part of the European integration until the 1990s. Within the foreign policy context, it "had little ambition to create a new kind of international power" (Peterson, 2008: 202) and the European Community (EC) was a small player in the world politics (Hettne&Söderbaum, 2005). Some federalists did, and still do, argue that the main objective of the European States must be a fully integrated European army for any future war, and for aspects of security and defence. Contrary to this assumption, the prior aim of the European states was to reshape the economic structure by getting closer under a sector based model, and to create an internal market. Under these circumstances, the EU's foreign policy remained weak for many

decades; in later processes, the reluctant attitude of member states was also an important reason for the non-unified security foundation.

When the issue is political identity building, the overall approach during the 1960s in creating such a collective identity seems to be come up against inter-conflicts; in these periods the core problem was how the member states could pool their sovereignty into a supranational body. In the 1950s, the European Convention on Human Rights was a crucial movement in the Council of Europe; the European Community states were contributors to this convention. The convention was to become important in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Later on, this document became a guideline for the political identity setting of the EU. By being a member of NATO and Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights, the founder states of the European Community carried out their duty and showed their true colors on the international scale. This led them to focus on the economic developments at home, rather than emphasizing security or political issues; in any case, these issues were taken for granted as they were being guaranteed by other institutions, of which they were members.

However, although promoting democracy inside of the Community was significant, it is important to remember two things. First; De Gaulle's supportive attitude to democracy has led some scholars, such as Moravcsik (2012) to see him as the founder of the Constructivist approach. De Gaulle's attitude can be observed when, at the beginning of 1960s, some states, such as Turkey, wanted to be a part of this fledgling interaction. Countries that were perceived as having problems with democracy were not welcomed by statesmen of the Community. Secondly, in this period it would also be valid to remember the recognition of fundamental rights by the European Court of Justice (Denon, 1999). These were basic rights, including constitutional democracy, rather than comprehended rights, as has been the case in recent debates. However, this was an important stage in standardizing democracy as a component of the integration.

During the Cold War era, the great aspiration of Europe was to become able to play an important role in the post-war world (Bretherton&Vogler, 2006). This led the European countries to create two important and specific patterns: The first one was the Western

European Union (WEU), which was a kind of collective security initiative taken by some European countries. The second was the European Community, which was responsible for formulating an internal market; in due course, with the Treaty of Lisbon[1] in 2009, this formation gained legal status as the 'EU'. The WEU was a relatively dysfunctional body (Ginsberg, 1999) and had no say or capacity to interfere with any external actions. On the other hand, the EC was a productive entity in economic realms due to its determined economic integration; however, any other issue that was not economic was not as interesting to them as the dream of an internal market.

In the 1970s, the EC created a new intergovernmental framework known as the the European Political Cooperation (EPC); this was in order to coordinate the foreign policy of the member states. This cooperation was not so effective, and even then it was hard to debate on security and defence issues at the European level. Despite the non-active nature, the EPC implemented economic aid and sanctions against third countries, referred to by Duchene (1972) as 'Civilian Power Europe'. The role of the EPC proved to be inadequate during the 1980s when there was continuing disorder. In addition, the Cooperation faced some important stalemates during events such as the Gulf War and the transition of Central and Eastern European Countries. The EPC acquired a treaty status with the SEA in 1986, and then again when the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993 (signed in 1992). In those years, the EC demonstrated, to a remarkable extent, that it "could uphold multilateralism, liberalism, and human rights as values and be a powerful advocate for peace and conflict resolution" (Peterson, 2008: 203).

Later on, these fundamental rules became deeply fortified and came to be used as a motto in the union's relations. In fact, the Single European Act (SEA) engendered a significant growth in external affairs in 1986, when the "completion of internal markets greatly increased its attractiveness to third parties, bringing demand for privileged market access from all regions of the world" (Bretherton&Vogler, 2006: 4). In

1 Prior to the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, in every formal document, the official name of the Union was the European Community. In this study, these concepts are used interchangeably, in relation to before and after the Treaty of Lisbon.

addition, the SEA was the revision of the Treaty of Rome. With this act, the EC revealed that it was concerned with some important universal principles, such as democracy and compliance with the law and human rights (SEA, 1986), and declared that these principles formed the core components of its external relations. In time, these units have become the norms of the EU (Manners, 2002) and function as conditions in its relations with third parties, especially in the accession process. As far as the promotion of human rights and democracy, the declaration of the Luxembourg European Council in June 1991 was a silent, but crucial move. In this Council it is stated that 'the Community and its member states undertake to pursue promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world' (Sedelmeier, 2006). This phrase was fateful, and it can be observed that they set the Community on its course.

With the Treaty of Maastricht, the EC rearranged its foreign policy and political standing. But still there was no single EU foreign policy that could consolidate the union's presence as an actor in global politics. With the Treaty of Maastricht, the EC established a new settlement known as the Three-Pillars. The EU united its foreign policy dimensions and institutionalized these in the second pillar, which includes two paths; foreign policy (which includes human rights, democracy and foreign aid) and security policy (which includes common security and defence policy, EU battle groups, Helsinki headline goals and peacekeeping). In this classification, it can be seen that the EU does not aim to foster military capacity; rather this is the articulation of political identity. This was exemplified in the Balkan conflict. Due to poor foreign policy performance in the Balkan War in the mid-1990s, the EU was accused of being unable to coordinate military intervention; the precise nature of the European foreign policy started to be contested by many parties. There are two reasons for this inability; first the reluctance of the member states to act, as they did not want to be directly involved in any war issue and secondly due to the fact that member states did not want to delegate their security and defence control into the hands of the Community.

After the mid of 1990s, the European Community started to give clear signs that unified states would further their international stance on a civilian basis and their role as a promotor of democracy

and fundamental rights, the rule of law, became sine quo non for the Community. This was a remarkable step, after which these civilian foreign policy components evolved into the 'Copenhagen Political Criteria', confirmed in June 1993. It was time for the EU to represent itself as an actor in the international arena. The reason for this was that there was a great deal of policy arrangements, from law to the economy, as well as political grounds, that were to be formed and reinterpreted. The Copenhagen Criteria are rules that were generated by the EU as preconditions for preparing a potential candidate country for EU membership. The criteria are threefold; political criteria, economic criteria and the adoption of the acquis. The political criteria stipulate that the candidate states have institutions which preserve democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law, while the economic criteria require that the states have a functioning market economy and the potential to compete with third countries. When it comes to the adoption of the acquis, the states are obliged to accept the obligations, legal procedures (such as resolutions in treaties) and the intent of the EU.

In fact, these criteria were envisaged for Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC) and their accession process to EU integration. For both parties, the mainstream approach of enlargement lies in their mutual economic and political interests. From the aspect of the CEEC, becoming an EU member consolidates their democracy and creates a more stable market economy. From the aspect of the EU, CEEC accession to the union allows the EU to become more effective in the rest of Europe by developing a stable economy and democracy. Choosing universal principles and fundamental rules such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, etc, as a conditionality tool can be interpreted to mean that with a common identity and sharing in political means creates a belonging for these countries. Thus, this solution could prevent any war threat inside Central and Eastern European Countries.

In the Presidency Conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council, the EU explicitly indicated its enthusiasm to develop the infrastructures of these countries both politically and economically. The articles of the Copenhagen Political Criteria are repetitions of political

principles stated in the Single European Act, which can be considered to be an integral part of European identity. Having a European identity or collective identity was the new title; however, there are the subtitles of political identity that was constructed by the establishment of the Union. This should not be confused with collective identity, and should not be compared to national identities of the states. Political identity is socially constructed, and negotiated through the practices of daily life (O'Byrne, 2003). Political identity is a part of European integration, and touches upon how this constitutes the basis of the EU being an actor in the international system, beyond a national or collective identity setting.

While these criteria have been designed for the associated Eastern and Central countries in Europe, at the same time, the Copenhagen Council once again upheld and strengthened democratization, human rights and the rule of law discourse. As Sedelmeier (2006) argues, when one looks at the conception of the EU's role, there is no doubt that Eastern enlargement was an important driving force of the EU's current identity setting and according to this, every political criteria is political conditionality and can be described as a reinforcement of reward and the reinforcement of support. Solidarity, respect for human rights and equality are important universal values and rules which Europe possesses; in the conditionality process, the Union supports and guides countries to implement those criteria that pave the way for receiving the award, i.e., membership. If the candidate state refuses to implement or hinders the process, then there is a punishment. The Union thus, with this formal process, has an opportunity to spread throughout the world. Moreover, it intends to create and raise a coordinated consciousness in these fields. In due course, by virtue of Eastern enlargement, and beyond, these issues have gained a legal status; this is particularly true in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was drafted in the European Convention and proclaimed in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009.

In order to understand the formal and institutional forms of the civilian-based actor ship of the EU, it is vital to mention the 'Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the EU' when speaking about the consolidation of these universal norms and principles. Together with

the Treaty of Lisbon, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms constitutes the institutionalized dimension of the European Union. The rights set out here establish a wide range of civil, political and social rights, welcomed by the EU's citizens. These rights are divided into six chapters; dignity, freedom, solidarity, equality, citizenship and justice. According to Sedermeier, in this process," the EU's policy-makers, not only complied with the principles of human rights and democracy as membership conditions for candidate countries, but also articulated and institutionalized them as characteristics of the EU's collective identity" (2006, p.118). The fifty-five articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union deal with certain political, social and economic rights for both European Union citizens and residents through the medium of EU law.

Until the Treaty of Lisbon, there was a need to formulate and institutionalize these rights at the EU level, hence by adopting the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the EU started to concentrate on issues of democracy and fundamental rights, making them legally binding. Previously, in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, the EU used these principles to give new powers to the Council of the European Union and the European Court of Justice to protect fundamental rights within the institutional sphere of the EU (Treaty of Amsterdam or ToA, 1997). At the Cologne European Council held in 1999, it was decided that work on drafting the Charter of Fundamental Rights should begin; later at the European Council in Nice in December 2000, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the heads of state and government of the EU member states announced the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was a part of the Treaty of Nice (2001). A few years later, the Charter was included in the agenda of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, by which it became legally binding for EU member states as of December 2009. Member states like Poland, the Czech Republic and the UK negotiated the right to opt out of the Charter with a specific protocol. The Charter is significant for comprehending to what extent, with the help of the European Law; the EU articulates universal values in its internal affairs on a supranational basis. It is obvious that both inside and outside, the EU tries to pursue a coherent presence and different type of actor concern by incorporating fundamental rights, freedoms, the rule of law and democracy in its own identity.

Theoretical Insights of Integration and Political Identity Building

Theoretical interpretations of European integration can best be analyzed within two phases; before and after the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was a turning point not only due to its positive and negative consequences in global politics, but also due to its unwitting reflection on the destiny and political identity building of the European Community. Before the Cold War, theoretical studies on integration were mostly examined by rationalists, or as they are also known, the positivists, as well as by integration theorists. In the Post-Cold war era, the member states of the European Community were faced with new paradigms, such as a widening and deepening identity building and efforts to form a constitution. There are various approaches and studies that scrutinize the new world order from different perspectives, however in the European context, there are a number of nuances when compared to other countries. This is to a large part due to the fact that many of the ex-Communist or Eastern and Central European states are neighbors of the Western European states and both sides share the same continent. Due to many reasons, which are open to debate, it is clear that Eastern and Western parties shared the same history and were challenged by the same, fighting against Ottoman Empire together; this may also be a reason for the constitution of a common identity. It is for this reason that these countries have come together and been integrated under the same umbrella.

In theories of international relations, until the 1980s the general theoretical views were pioneered by rationalists according to their state-centric concepts. For instance most realists, where realism is a part of the positivist/rationalist view, adopt two important suggestions: The first is the notion that power in global politics stems from the zero-sum game, and the second is that all 'alliance related relations' are temporary (Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 2002; Peterson, 2008). The latter can currently be refuted if one examines the Community's 'Union Building' attempts in Europe during the last half century. The realist approach considers high politics as major headlines. For instance, according to them the essential addressee of institutions and people in foreign affairs are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomats, military structures, and the security issues that are directly related to the martial

capacity of the state. From a narrow perspective, this belief establishes the EU's civil political identity setting; that this identity is represented in external relations as an actor is a vague term (Bull, 1982). The argument is that foreign policy is widely associated with nation states (Ginsberg, 1999) and their material ontology. These grounds make the political entity the actor. This assumption is one of the important views of the Westphalian state-system mentality, which perceives "the notion of the sovereign territorial state as the subject of International Law" (Bretherton&Vogler, 2006: 14).

This insight of the realist account proved deficient when the issue came to interpreting the gradually integrated Europe. In the Westphalian order, only states can make treaties, because it is this that makes them legal actors gives them the political reality that allows them to take responsibility for other states. However, in the modern world, it is hard to argue that this perception is still functional. Particularly after the Second World War, the scope of international relations has broadened and new political actors have appeared on stage. States have tended to collaborate particularly in intergovernmental institutions which were established to regenerate economic prosperity and peace; for instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), or the United Nations, which was recognized by the International Court of Justice and gained legal status in 1948. However, there is a need for new interpretations in global politics. Contrary to the Rationalist account, the EU's gradual increase in its presence along with the appearance of its political identity in global politics can be given by as an example. Having acquired a legal status with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, the European Community is another important example for such structures. The formal status of the EU was previously acknowledged only in a limited context, as it has a limited legal competence in some specific policy areas; in general terms, it is a regional integration that can only act within an intergovernmental sphere. Thus, it is crucial to examine the scope of activity that the states pursue. It is also important to take into account the fact that there are small states which do have a limited capacity to act within political systems. However, the EU, as an integrated polity, can make a remarkable contribution on various levels of internal and external political and economic arenas, and it

still tries to continue this development. In Vogler's view (1999), the European Union is an actor in international environmental politics; an actor is an autonomous organization that has the ability to employ policy instruments for recognition by other actors.

The beginning of the European integration in the 1960s can be analyzed in two parts. Firstly, the rationalists, who attacked the ideas of building the Community and then by some of the integration theory scholars and important political figures, such as Monnet, who tried to find formulas by which to conduct and designate the integration. As mentioned above, creating a political identity was not a prior aim, but an important segment of the integration. Diez and Wiener (2009) categorized European integration in three stages, and this proved helpful to the integration theory researchers for finding their way. From the general to the specific, their categorization scrutinizes the integration process and helps when examining the political identity setting that the EU began. In their research, both schools of authors tend to classify the process in three groups. The first of this is Explaining the European Integration, which was the approach in the 1960s, the second is Analyzing European Governance, from the 1980s, and Constructing the European Union during the 1990s and onwards. Their grouping provides a tool to understanding the role of the institutions and how these roles and content have been changed. This change can particularly be seen during the construction of the European Union stage in the 1990s, the period when the EU established its political identity.

In the 1960s, in addition to the realists, there are three dominant theories that examine the reasons and prospective future of the integration: Liberal inter-governmentalism, functionalism and federalism. According to the federalists, such as AltieroSpinelli, the main assumption is that this unification could evolve into a United States of Europe, creating a House of Representatives (Hodges, 2003). Federalists considered important foreign policy issues to be core subjects for integration. In the identity formation, the federalist's approach laid emphasis on a collective identity; however, in the last decade it was not a political identity that was the object of the EU. Contrary to the bold federalists' approaches to integration, the Functionalists, who had an important place at the beginning of the integration, proposed

the pool of duties belonging to the Community to be placed in the hands of the technocrats. Monnet was the originator of this idea. They rejected ideational-based integration, while Functionalists set forth that this integration would evolve in itself and spill-over from sector to sector, finally establishing a fully-integrated Europe. In some sense, in the beginning years, the predictions of the Functionalists actualized an integration in which the discourse was centered round a strong economic integration. However, since the enlargement process started, EU considered political identity first as a security tool and then as the key phrase for its being. In the 1980s, neo-functionalists like Haas (2003), developed this content and took into account the role of political parties and interest groups, as well as their function in the integration model. The content of the analyses have been given life by pragmatic theorists. Hence, by including the other important factors in the integration process, such as the attitude of the elite, Haas enlarged the interpretation scope of the integration.

From the intergovernmental institutionalist perspective, Moravcsik is an important theorist. Intergovernmental institutionalism adopts the mainstream ideas of the realists, but also nourishes the liberals' cooperation myth. In the EU's political identity setting, and by exporting the debate of these identity components, a clear divergence between the institutionalists and the realists appeared. As mentioned above, realist theory does not utilize 'change' in its literature but avoids focusing on structural changes in the political system. The term 'realist' suggests that the states are always ready to compete in the field of security (Mearsheimer, 1994) for any prospective war. Although states sometimes cooperate through institutions, cooperation only under an institutional structure is temporary; however, in an anarchic realm, no state would absorb the autonomy of a higher body in its domestic functioning system. Thus, institutions are the organs that reflect the self-interests of the state, with the norms of the institutions being augmented and shaped by the interests of the states. However, institutionalists pursue a different perspective. Liberal institutionalists (Keohane& Nye, 1977) believe that institutions have a vital role in ensuring international stability; in addition, seeking economic cooperation is also thought to be crucial for states to cement their

relations and foster a stable environment. In addition, the predominant idea is that "institutions provide contexts where actors can drive a relatively higher proportion of positive-sum bargain" (Rosamond, 2000: 114). It is claimed that states have to be operative on the world stage where other actors are important; gathering under the umbrella of an institution provides transparency and greater credibility. Actors can have similar expectations in a specified regime; they have to cooperate and formulate their interests in an anarchical order. However, both theories concentrate on state centric attitude, and go beyond to grasp political-identity building in the European context. In particular Moravcsik was criticized, as in his account interests and preferences can be kept apart from the social integration process, thus expelling the norms and ideas from the identity-setting analysis.

Unlike institutionalists and realists, Wendt (1995) argues that most of the reflectivist theories, such as Neo-Marxism, Constructivism, Post-modernism, Feminism and Critical theory focus on how the world politics is 'socially constructed'. Although Diez and Wiener indicated the social constructivist title in Analysing European Governance, this paper is loyal to their categorization, but they examine Constructivism in the third group, which is Constructing the European Union. Systematic attention is given to constructivism, particularly after the 1990s (Christiansen et al, 1999; Risse, 2009), because in the 1960s, after the beginnings of intergovernmental activities in the economic grounds, the ontological and epistemological interpretation of the EU has shifted to another debate. So the question here should be how did European integration arrive in this process? As mentioned in the part on historical context, Eastern enlargement is an important milestone for answering the latter question. According to Risse (2009), "[t]he Eastern enlargement of the European Union has not only represented a major challenge for the EU itself, but also a puzzle for conventional theories of European integration" (p. 156). Wiener and Diez (2009) indicated that after war broke out in the former Yugoslavia, the European Community decided to include many of the Eastern European Countries as EC member states. This kind of attempt would eliminate any prospective war in the Balkans and would reduce the harsh criticisms that were made by many countries with regards to the European Community's lack of performance during the war.

When considering Eastern enlargement as a vital point in the building of the EU's political identity, the constructivist approach, with its focus on social ontology, seems to be the contributor that best fits into this research. According to Wendt, constructivism relies upon two essential claims: The first suggests that the fundamental structures in the global politics are 'social', and that the structure consists of social relationships (Wendt, 1995); secondly, these structures shape the identities and interests of the actors (Wendt, 1992; Wendt, 1995; Rosamond, 2000; Risse, 2004). Constructivist theory consists of three components: shared knowledge, material resources and practices. With shared knowledge, the states trust each other in the resolution of any dispute; this is a reference to social relationships. By using material resources, theory defines the material capabilities (for instance, the nuclear weapon potential of a state). According to the constructivists, material capability affects social relations (Mearsheimer, 1994; Wendt, 1995), but only to a certain extent. However, this material concern differentiates the constructivist theory from that of the reflectivist stance, while also bringing it closer to the rationalists' approach. Thus, it can be said that constructivism is located in the middle of these theories (Christiansen et al, 1999).

Lastly, in 'practice', constructivists believe that social structure exists in a process, and that in practice any structure can stop acting. Wendt claims that the culture of friendship is influential in the philosophy of European external relations. From the constructivist standpoint, the EU is an actor and it uses economic and commercial means, cooperation and negotiations in its relations with third countries (Bretherton&Vogler, 2006). It employs soft instruments, which are nourished by the EU's political identity, and in which the political identity of the EU is exported via conditionality in its economic policies, with a view to achieving goals both at the national and the EU level. Moreover, the EU tries to resolve regional or international disputes through peacekeeping operations. The union has an international progress (Manners, 2002) and both internally and externally institutionalized norms. Constructivists perceive the social structures as the products of constantly changing historical process, and assume that states always remain as a given entity. On the other hand, it is also vital to take into account institution-building and cooperation.

These states are also important components of the system as they share common values and practices, collective identities and common rules which have been patterned through socialization (Krasner, 1988).

Political identity constitutes the direction of external relations and "[m]any social norms not only regulate behavior, they also constitute the identity of actors in the sense of defining who 'we' are as members of a social community" (Risse, 2009, p. 148). From another perspective, Schimmelfenning (2001) argues that the values of the community are constituted by its members, as the members shoulder a normative obligation and start to share the identity of an international community; this in turn causes the member states to adhere the constitutive values and norms of the community. The EU made this attempt after the Balkan War and started to make strategies to include these CEEC's in the EU. Thus, while arranging a formula for these conflicting countries, the EU adopted norms and values and represented them as conditionality in the Copenhagen Criteria. Unwittingly or not, the EU played an amalgamating role to terminate the war, while on the other hand took on a new role on the world stage, thus constituting a political identity. Rather than using material assets to prevent the war, which would have served the realists' ideology, the EU solved the problem by using soft power accompanied by intelligent steps. In the constructivist reading, social relations worked in this context and with the help of this prevention, the EU constituted its political identity.

Conclusion

Since the European Copenhagen Council in 1993, it has been understood that these principles have become an important component of the European political identity. It is obvious that this kind of attempt has to answer some expectations for the internal and external actors. Due to the poor foreign policy performance in the Balkan War in the mid-1990s, the EU was accused of being uncoordinated in military intervention and the precise nature of European foreign policy started to be contested by many parties. Some important criticisms with regards to the EU's incapability on military grounds, both from academia and other political mechanisms, forced the European States to form their presence on the international stage; they chose to create a civilian-oriented identity among the European states. This was incontrovertibly

a pretentious step. In the political-identity building analysis, despite referencing material assets, the EU intended to use its newly generated identity, leading us to understand that in particular the European external relations were becoming the articulation of the EU's political identity. Without a doubt it would not be easy for them to carry this burden. Then, after the mid-1990s, the European Community stated to give clear signs that it would further its foreign policy approach on a civilian basis and would play an important role as a promoter of democracy and fundamental rights, in particular specific human rights. The Charter of Fundamental Rights, introduced at the Luxembourg European Council in 1997, were adopted at the Treaty of Nice and entered into force at the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009.

Through a set of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions, the EU consolidated and institutionalized the principal nature it presents within and outside the community. Manners (2002) called these principles the norms of the EU; there is a historical context as well as a normative basis in this. Manners further placed these into five groups, taking into account the vast body of union laws and policies under the AcquisCommunitaire. The first group is 'centrality of peace', which can be found in the Schuman Declaration of 1950. This is the basic component and sine qua non of the integration process. The second is the preamble to the Treaty of the European Union, which is based upon 'the idea of liberty', another fundamental principle. The third, fourth and fifth components make up the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. In other words, they are 'democracy', the 'rule of law' and 'human rights and fundamental freedoms', respectively. The last three are also important preambles in all the formal and judicial documents (such as Common Foreign Policy and Security provisions - Art. 11 of the Treaty of European Community), and "grew later when it was important to distinguish democratic Western Europe from Communist Eastern Europe" (Manners, 2002: 243).

Not only considering universal principles, but also social solidarity, anti-discrimination and sustainable development issues are the minor norms that may be institutionalized soon as a result of EU actions and practices. In fact, the EU tries to reflect these minor norms in its financial assistance programs as important tools for developing

partnerships and policies in the Member States and with third countries. In particular, these minor norms (as described by Ian Manners) are reinforced in articles of treaties, with the exception of 'sustainable development', which was expressed in the Copenhagen Criteria. The others, in particular, 'democracy', which is predominantly emphasized and referenced in Article D of the Treaty of Rome, suggest that any country willing to become a partner in the Community should have a democratic government based on the Western Democratic experience (Karluk, 2005).

Despite these ups and downs, the EU is still a major international actor, and its strength has increased in the political identity setting. This has paved the way for consolidated EU actorness. The EU is now a growing commercial power, being one of the largest exporters and importers[2] in the world; political economy is one of the national traditions of the member states. Moreover, the EU is also an important actor in the world's development of humanitarian aid. Market access and aid are directly related to political cooperation agreements, which have been designed to promote democracy and human rights. As mentioned above, some crucial universal principles have reinforced the EU's political identity both in internal and external affairs. It can be argued that the EU is a new model with its extraordinary political identity and this identity building process can best be analyzed by the constructivist approach, and reveals the importance of social relations and how these relations should be pursued.

2 http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Extra-EU_trade_in_goods

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