THEMATIC FOCUS

Instrumental Europe: Practices of Daily Engagement with the European Union

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Religious organisations that secularise their community outreach to gain European Union (EU) funding, border-city residents whose consumption practices exploit cross-border economic disparities, EU member states that protect their domestic labour market by restricting access to legal work and medical care for citizens of new member states, recently admitted citizens who nevertheless take advantage of increased opportunities for mobility to improve their economic and social standing, and even in some cases use their scepticism about membership to promote their personal or national interests within the EU – all of these examples point to the complex and varied ways in which instrumentality figures in day-to-day dealings with the European Union. This special issue of AJEC seeks to contribute to the anthropological study of the European Union by examining ways in which various individuals, groups and institutions use the EU to pursue their political, economic and social goals at local, national and transnational levels within Europe. The essays in this collection address issues of EU policy and practice in order to explore how Europeans approach the EU instrumentally, in their efforts to see what the EU can offer them in terms of such things as wealth, power, social and political standing, and culture and identity. Our contributors thus reflect upon incomplete, unequal or fragmentary membership in the EU, which often fuels these instrumental engagements. Further, they demonstrate some of the advantages of anthropological perspectives for revealing the uses to which the EU is put in local and regional life.

Anthropologists have in fact long examined the impact of and adaptations to the EU in the lives of diverse actors in Europe, and much evidence exists in ethnographic analyses to document how people see the EU as a source of funds, as a resource to use for and against the projects of nation and state, and as an inspiration to new productions of knowledge. However, there have

been few publications in anthropology, ethnology, sociology and other social sciences that directly address practices of daily engagement with the European Union in terms of instrumentality. To date, the scholarly debate about the EU and about instrumentality has been dominated by political science, where instrumentality is usually construed in terms of material self-interest in the tradition of rational choice theory. By contrast, the cases highlighted here show that instrumentality often encompasses a wider range of interests and values. Material self-interests, in the senses offered by wealth, money, political influence, social aggrandisement and many forms of security, certainly figure in these cases, but these are not the *only* material interests which drive much support and opposition to the EU, to other forms of European integration, and to the forces of Europeanisation. The materiality of culture and identity, which cannot be divorced from other forms of materiality in the study of social and political practice and agency in Europe, are also the stuff of ethnographic and anthropological inquiry. The papers in this collection thus also consider the instrumental uses of the *idea* of Europe as manifested in the EU. In other words, the papers are impelled by approaches to cultural influences and to issues of identity, areas of scholarship to which anthropology has been dedicated since the beginnings of the critical analysis of the Common Market as much more than just an economic system.

A further intention of the collection, and of the anthropological approach that is privileged more generally in this special issue, is its grounding of theoretical claims about the European project within empirical details of actual events, ordinary citizens' on-the-ground experiences, and their reflections about those experiences, all areas understudied in EU research generally. Thus, this collection emphasises the importance of ethnographic research for understanding the day-to-day effects, as well as reactions to, EU institutions, policies and practices. The focus on everyday experiences and instrumental responses also reveals unintended consequences of EU policies and practices, and in particular the kinds of exclusions that emerge in Europe despite the many forces that seem to drive European integration as an inclusionary process. Values of equality and freedom figure prominently in the twin domains of European integration and Europeanisation, even as processes of integration paradoxically institutionalise exclusions and reinforce hierarchical relations between groups.

Understanding instrumental responses to the European Union helps to explain how, even as EU citizenship becomes more and more a part of everyday

experiences, national, ethnic and religious divisions among many others continue to be produced and maintained. In other words, these papers provide further evidence that the EU may be transnational but it is not post-national (nor is it post-ethnic or post-religious). The instrumentalities explored here do not always work simply in support of or opposition to EU ideals and policies either. Sometimes they are reactions to the social hierarchies and fragmentary membership within European, national and subnational or regional frames resulting from the failure of policies to meet ideals of equality, inclusion, security and prosperity that are often associated with Europeanisation and with the programmes and actions of the EU. This is why we see instrumental approaches to the EU as fundamentally cultural activities, wherein the meanings and values of European integration and Europeanisation must be seen as powerful forces in social, political and economic life.

Despite the clear trends in all member states to treat the EU as something that matters in the general cost accounting of everyday life, where there are often clear winners and losers who owe something of their fate to EU actions, scholars seem too mired in their views of such things as constructivism, intergovernmentalism, functionalism and rationalism to see the many advantages offered to them through a more flexible approach to instrumentalism. In this introduction we shall outline some of the merits of our approach to instrumentalism and instrumentality, and position our perspective in relation to broader scholarship about instrumentality and European integration before returning to a review of how recent developments in cultural theory may inform the developing scholarship of everyday life in the EU.

Instrumentality

To judge by the comparative social science of European integration, it would appear that instrumentality, or at least some form of it, is generally regarded as a weaker basis for EU integration than are the cultural factors grounded in a shared European identity, or the civic factors grounded in commitment to a shared political structure. However, many of the architects of the integration process have been startled again and again at the various forms of instrumentality at work in national reception of EU initiatives. Since the political wrangling over the acceptance of the Maastricht Treaty, in fact, some regions, nations and member states have voted against the programmes of further integration which were agreed upon by their governmental leaders,

leaving leaders surprised and a bit embarrassed when their people, such as the Danes, the French, the Dutch and the Irish, voted to stall the processes of integration, if only for a time. The surprise and consternation which such efforts to delay EU Treaties have caused are often predicated on the simple assumption that these peoples do not or cannot see the material advantages which the new form of EU will bring them, in main part because of their own social and cultural constructions.

As we have introduced above, however, our perspective runs along these lines: the peoples of Europe who both support and oppose integration, at any point in space and time, are also acting as instrumentally as their national and European leaders. They act to satisfy or to expand their needs and wants, and that often entails disagreeing with those in power and influence. These instrumentalities, themselves aspects of identity and culture, are in our view part and parcel of European integration and Europeanisation at every level of society, polity and economy, but they do not always conform to the perspectives and actions of others. In other words, despite the hegemonic dictates of power holders at the apices of hierarchies across the EU, Europeans of all sorts may practice differential and divergent instrumentalities, which in turn may re-direct the processes of European integration and Europeanisation. Indeed, we suggest that understanding how the peoples of Europe act instrumentally as aspects of their roles in the EU may well reveal the strongest basis for European integration, as demonstrated continually by European elites since the Second World War, and as evidenced in a wide range of ethnographic and other studies of Europeans in various locales and in a variety of aspects of everyday life.

Anthropological approaches, grounded in a robust concept of culture and in fine grained ethnographic cases, have much to contribute to our understanding of instrumentality, and in particular instrumental engagements with the European Union. This is because ethnographic studies reveal what is happening on the ground, in ordinary peoples' lives. Close examination of everyday experiences and conditions can answer questions about the effects of EU integration on member nations and their citizens. A focus on instrumentality emphasises active ways of responding to the opportunities and restrictions that come with EU membership. Instrumentality, most broadly, points to the ways in which individuals, acting in their own interest or in the interest of various groups they belong to or institutions they represent, make use of the opportunities and resources provided by EU policies and insti-

tutions in ways that may complement, or challenge, the institutional goals of the EU. The point is that citizens do not just passively accept revisions of their day-to-day lives resulting from EU membership, but rather seek to work those conditions to their best advantage. An anthropological perspective on instrumentality broadens the notion of material interest beyond that of political or economic advantage into cultural and symbolic valuations of dignity, family, freedom and global standing. Ethnographic approaches can show how instrumentality is fundamentally cultural by exploring the values that underlie evaluations of interest and benefit, the dispositions that shape orientations towards mobility and opportunity, and the identifications that motivate allegiance.

Understanding instrumental responses to the European Union, as well as instrumental interventions in the processes of integration, is important because it provides explanations for how instrumentality and many other forms of belonging must be seen as inescapable aspects of Europeanisation. It also helps to explain how, even as EU citizenship becomes more and more a part of everyday experiences, national, ethnic and religious divisions continue to be produced and maintained. The instrumentalities explored here can sometimes support EU ideals and policies in surprising ways, as when EU citizens defend national and personal interests against continued social hierarchies and fragmentary membership resulting from the failure of policies to meet ideals of equality, inclusion, security and prosperity that are commonly associated with Europeanisation. Overall, the contributions to this special issue point to problems related to conflicting interests, persisting inequalities and ongoing ethnic, national and religious loyalties. They also show that, to the extent that personal and national interests are met by transnational practices and relationships, instrumental engagements with the EU might also forge stronger and more lasting bonds with EU policies, institutions *and* with the idea of a united Europe.

Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Instrumentality

As outlined above, a question commonly posed in the literature is whether it is possible for instrumental engagements to lead to long-term, meaningful, 'deep' connections with the European Union, and what these connections might look like. A related issue is whether a distinct European identity can emerge, and what kinds of identification are necessary for, or can best

support, the administrative integration of Europe. Below, we review perspectives on instrumentality developed in anthropology, sociology and political science to explain issues of political power, ethnicity and European integration and identity. We consider the shifting relations among categorisations of instrumentalism, constructivism, materialism and primordialism, show how instrumentalism has been alternately associated with and contrasted with constructivism, and seek to identify what is useful for a culturally attuned perspective on instrumentality.

A broad interdisciplinary trend in studies of the European Union involves the distinction between materialist and constructivist approaches. Whereas materialist approaches emphasise rational and economic interests that contribute to support for the EU, constructivist approaches emphasise the centrality of cultural and historical factors like shared values and common legacy. Materialist perspectives tend to focus on institutions and rules, and the extent to which they promote material interests of member nations and citizens (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Vachudova 2005), though some also explore the influence these factors have on identity (Bukowski et al. 2003; Herrmann et al. 2004; Fligstein 2008). Collapsed within the category of constructivism (at least as it has been used in political science) are two opposing models of culture: as fixed and stable versus negotiated via discourse and persuasion. To the extent that constructivists are preoccupied with Europe and the EU as social constructions, they are also interested in how the idea of Europe can be manipulated, via propaganda, media or other means and, correspondingly, how it can change (Demossier 2007). Some scholars emphasise the importance of attending to the views of individual citizens (Goddard et al. 1994; Robyn 2005; Pederson 2008). Others have done interesting work showing regional and ‘on-the-ground’ ways of conceptualising Europe in terms of local cultural categories (Bukowski et al. 2003; Meinhof 2004; Wilson 2000; Stacul 2006).

While we focus in this article on instrumentality, a concept usually associated with materialism, we take the position that theories based exclusively on material self-interest are too narrow and that culture, history and ideology figure strongly in everyday perceptions of the EU. At the same time, we also want to challenge constructivist theories that assume that because ideas change over time they can therefore be easily manipulated to produce a desired outcome. In the case of EU scholarship, this kind of prescriptive work has usually sought to identify ways of engineering greater support for the

EU, often via the strengthening of European identity so that it supersedes national and local identities (see Eder and Giesen 2001; Demossier 2007). As noted above, however, the European identity that seems to be growing is *not* weakening national identities. Rather, it seems to command a *different* kind of loyalty.

As previously mentioned, within the international relations literature that has dominated European Union studies, instrumentality tends to be narrowly defined in terms of the material self-interest of ‘selfish political actors’ (Schimmelfennig 2000). When culture is considered, it is usually placed in a category separate from instrumentality, and it is seen to provide a contrasting explanatory structure based on common history, customs, beliefs and values (Ruiz-Jimenez et al. 2004), and ‘taken-for-granted’ aspects of group categories that are sometimes described as ‘deep’ or ‘sticky’ (see Risse 2001). Culture tends to be viewed as static ‘raw material’ that remains relatively stable (Cederman 2001). Instrumental engagements, by contrast, are generally considered less stable and weaker than cultural attachments because the only loyalty they generate is dependent on how well they provide economic and social resources. Some recent scholarship, however, has attempted to operationalise a concept of culture that accounts for both continuity and change.

Theorising how instrumentality might lead to stronger affective connections to the EU, some political scientists have sought a fusion of materialism and constructivism via attention to socialisation, the social process through which norms, values and social roles are transmitted. Schimmelfennig (2000) seeks to fit socialisation within rational choice theory by proposing that ‘international socialisation’ can be explained in terms of rational action of corporate actors, namely states. He thus avoids substantive engagement with culture and cognition. Checkel (2005: 801), by contrast, develops an expanded theory of socialisation that accounts for mechanisms and conditions that lead to the ‘internalisation of new roles and interests’. He proposes links between instrumental and cultural practices, in part by noting there may be a cultural dimension to strategic calculation of costs and benefits, and also by recognising how over time instrumental actions can become habitual practices associated with ongoing social roles, and then eventually internalised. Risse (2001) proposes a ‘resonance argument’ to explain the instrumentalism of political elites who select and promote the identity constructions that are most likely to resonate – in other words, to be considered appropriate and legitimate – within the political public sphere. Elites thereby solidify their political power in ways

that also contribute to political socialisation, or the ‘stickiness’ of collective identities. Though variously employed by different scholars, socialisation suggests a mechanism by which political persuasion can over time become internalised in more taken-for-granted forms – a kind of materiality of culture.

Anthropologists have also explored instrumentalism in relation to political power dynamics. In the transactionalism developed by social anthropologists in the mid twentieth-century, the idea that people act in ways that serve their interests was applied to political action, and in particular to the relations between leaders and clients (see Barth 1959; Bailey 1960). Barth (1969) expanded this approach to the study of ethnicity, and went on to consider how distinctions among ethnic groups are maintained despite, and often by means of, movements across the boundaries that separate them. In the work of Barth, instrumentalism and constructivism are linked rather than in opposition. Instrumentalism provides an explanation for why group categories and ethnic boundaries are often constructed in politically charged situations where they serve to legitimate the inclusion of some but the exclusion of others, thereby controlling access to resources and power. The focus in most of this work continues to be on the power that political elites can wield to control popular perceptions and loyalties.

Barth’s work on ethnicity proved to be seminal for a wide range of scholarship that emphasised constructivist, in opposition to primordialist, notions of ethnic groups. Whereas so-called primordial approaches (‘so-called’ because this label is almost always used by critics and not self-ascribed by scholars) emphasise the stable ethnic core, constructivist approaches highlight discourse and ideology which are generally regarded as instruments of political interests. As Eriksen (2002) notes, however, even Barth himself can in some regards himself be regarded as primordialist, to the extent that he implies that ethnic categories remain constant, even as individuals may cross boundaries and as cultural content of categories may change (2002: 53). This can be seen, for example, when Barth writes: ‘categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories’ (1969: 9; emphasis in original). Furthermore, Barth accentuates that group categories – i.e. ethnic labels – will most often endure even when individual members move across boundaries or share an identity with people in more than one group.

Making sense of everyday encounters with EU practices and policies, as the papers in this collection do, entails the fusion of conceptual dichotomies between constructivism and materialism, and instrumentalism and primordialism, which have structured scholarship about political power dynamics, ethnicity and EU identity and integration. Just as we regard instrumentalism as fundamentally cultural, we seek to understand instrumental engagements with the EU in terms of material interests that may sometimes be defined by politically motivated constructions of Europe, nation, region, religion or other group categories, or that may alternatively or simultaneously seem to resonate with habitual or even internalised (material) notions of such group categories. We now outline in more detail what it means to say that instrumentality is cultural, and identify practices revealed in the ethnographic case studies featured in this issue, and through which culture emerges as an important component of instrumental engagements with the EU.

A Culturally-attuned Approach to Instrumentalities

Anthropology is emerging from a thirty-year period in which many new waves of intellectual and methodological introspection, such as the widespread critique of ethnography, made many anthropologists suspicious of the concept of culture. Correspondingly, constructivism in anthropology has tended towards deconstruction of essentialising categories. So-called ‘primordial’ patterns of thought and action have been critiqued in terms of the political strategies that naturalise and reproduce them in the interest of hegemonic power hierarchies. Feminist theory forged the way for social science research more sensitive to multiple points of view, especially the voices of those silenced by the dominant power structures. Emphasis in ethnographic research shifted to the study of discourse, ideology and identity – dimensions of culture explicitly linked to constructivism. Nevertheless, even as social scientists focused on the imagined dimensions of what Appadurai (1996: 28) calls ‘the paradox of constructed primordialism’, group categories like ethnicity and nation continued to have real effects in the world, including genocidal conflicts in Europe and Africa and terrorists attacks in New York City and Madrid (see Appadurai 2006; Hayden 2007; Kockel 2010). In recent years, the pendulum has been swinging back towards theory that accounts for more enduring aspects of culture – patterns of belief and action that are stubbornly held onto despite (or even in some cases because of) efforts to reveal their historicity and contin-

gency. Attention to practice is critical to understanding how and why certain constructs continue to be reproduced and to maintain their resonance, hence our interest here in ethnography of everyday life within the EU.

Practice theory, as may be found in Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (1990: 53), posits complex relationships between structure and agency, and helps to explain how social actors employ implicit, practical knowledge in their day-to-day practices. This knowledge is substantially shaped by institutional and structural dictates (about power, social status, norms, etc.), but not determined by them. As the ethnographic case studies that follow show, social actors' daily practices involve choices that can challenge or reinforce the structures within which they operate. De Certeau (1984) offers us a perspective on how this can occur. He identifies 'ways of using' – how social rules and public rhetoric are 'consumed' or used – in everyday practices, and describes 'tactics' as the spontaneous actions taken by those without recourse to official avenues of power. Further, he emphasises that these practices are not a product of intellectual synthesis, nor are they expressed in discourse, but rather in 'the decision itself, the act and manner in which the opportunity is "seized"' (De Certeau 1984: xvii). While not the same, instrumentality and agency are complementary concepts in that both involve the ways in which social actors make decisions about how to act and how to make use of the cultural and material resources available to them.

So what are the instrumental practices associated with membership in the European Union and how are they employed? What are the acts and the manner in which the opportunities offered by European integration are seized by the EU's residents and citizens? What are the tactics of everyday life, and of public and civic life, which Europeans use to consume Europe?

These are questions which provide a start to our approach to instrumentality, but we recognise that they are only a starting point. While our authors in this collection provide some explicit and implicit answers to these questions, they too serve as illustrations of what ethnography and anthropology may offer. These articles highlight a number of themes, such as mobility, consumption and commemoration, around which their anthropological approaches converge.

Mobility is critical for understanding how the EU is perceived, the influence the EU can have, and even how people shape what the EU is and can become. As Asher (this issue) points out, 'mobility [free movement and residence within the EU] is thus the core right of EU citizenship because it is

the right that most serves the common market'. Mobility may not, however, provide a pathway to greater equality. Bauman (1998) emphasises a 'global hierarchy of mobility' where power is increasingly mobile, and contributes to deeper stratification as some places, and the people bound to them, are excluded and lose control of resource allocation. In other words, degrees of mobility define a 'process of world-wide *restratification*, in the course of which a new social-cultural hierarchy, a world-wide scale, is put together' (1998: 70; emphasis in original). Bauman further distinguishes between 'tourists' and 'vagabonds':

The tourists move because they find the world within their (global) reach irresistibly *attractive* – the vagabonds move because they find the world within their (local) reach unbearably *inhospitable*. The tourists travel because *they want to*; the vagabonds because *they have no other bearable choice* (1998: 92–93; emphasis in original).

Bauman sees the powerless as mostly immobile within localities that are changed by global forces beyond their control, or if they travel, they do so as vagabonds, surreptitiously and illegally (1998: 89).

The papers in this collection show how restratification, usually defined in terms of nations of origin, can contribute to ambivalence about the integration process. Ilieva and Wilson argue that Bulgarians' opportunistic embrace of the EU in an effort to 'catch up' with Western Europe, and their simultaneous resistance to marginalisation within a Western-centric narrative about Europe, contributes to scepticism about European integration and Europeanisation. Ambivalence characterises, as well, the experience of migrants like Dorota (in Galbraith's essay) and Anna (in Castañeda's) who have seen benefits of EU membership, especially the ease of crossing borders, and opportunities for better and even legal employment, but they still feel like incomplete members. Dorota expresses it in terms of her dream of one day returning to her native place, and Anna in terms of her inability to have 'a real life' while living in Germany.

Instrumentality is perhaps best illustrated by efforts to obtain resources from the EU to satisfy a variety of tangible and intangible interests. The papers here document tactics for obtaining subsidies, jobs, healthcare, social advancement, dignity and equality. As the examples above show, migrants' ways of using opportunities to work and live in other EU countries can support or challenge (sometimes simultaneously) European integration. Access

to jobs, even legal ones, is not enough to make many feel like fully fledged citizens of the EU, especially when they cannot obtain affordable healthcare, earn less than native citizens doing comparable work, and face continued discrimination because of their nation of origin. One way of explaining this would be that while membership serves some of their material interests, it does not serve others, including desires for social promotion as individuals and as members of their nation of origin, or opportunities to obtain employment and a reasonable standard of living in their native place.

Another significant way of obtaining resources from the EU is through the many EU-sponsored programmes that provide funds for a wide range of economic and social projects. Asher describes formalised cross-border economic, political and cultural cooperation between the neighbouring cities of Frankfurt (Oder), Germany, and Slubice, Poland, that is funded by EU regional development programmes such as PHARE and INTERREG. While various forms of cooperation have been established, he shows how national interests nevertheless continue to structure cross-border interactions, and how economic disparities ‘encourage the development of variable and unequal “citizenship regimes” within the cities’. Murphy describes ways of using EU PEACE funding in Northern Ireland. The programmes, designed to promote EU values of ‘reconciliation’ after a ‘legacy of conflict’, have caused religious institutions to secularise their social outreach efforts, and to ‘rebrand’ traditional celebrations so they conform to funding criteria. In these changes in practice, Murphy sees further movement towards a ‘broader cultural revision of what it is to “be” religious in Belfast’. Thus, while religious institutions are using EU funds to promote their own interests, they do so in such a way that fundamental cultural practices and values are transformed.

The papers in this volume also show how corporate actors, such as states, municipalities and churches, may act instrumentally to advance their interests. For example, Castañeda highlights the German state’s implementation of healthcare and employment policies that advance national goals rather than EU goals of equal opportunity and access. Similarly, Asher highlights national and municipal policies on both sides of the Polish–German border designed to realise the greatest advantage from cross-border mobility and consumption. Murphy shows instrumental engagements on the part of religious organisations, aimed at preserving their relevance in the face of secularisation and integration.

The claim that Europeans are more likely to view the European Union favourably if they expect to benefit from it is perhaps obvious, but attention to cultural aspects of instrumentality helps to answer more interesting questions, such as what constitutes 'benefits' in the eyes of European Union leaders as well as for other European citizens, why some benefits are regarded more highly than others and how EU membership can be seen to challenge other values, even in the face of perceived benefits. Closely related to the acquisition of resources are consumption practices, which are studied most directly by Asher. The EU can be regarded as a site for material exchanges, where price and access are regulated in particular ways. Forms of consumption can mark degrees of inclusion within a united Europe or, by contrast, materialise exclusions, as when income differentials cut certain groups or nations off from the full expression of the prosperity promised by EU membership. Mobility, not only of people but also of media images, can make these distinctions more visible and thus make them more salient in social actors' assessments of their position in a social hierarchy of nations, and in their evaluations of European integration.

Practices of commemoration can also be arenas for instrumental engagement with the EU, as Murphy shows in the way that Protestant parades in Ulster become reframed in terms of broader European discourses of reconciliation, and tradition is rebranded as tourist spectacle in the interest of gaining EU support. He refers specifically to the EU-supported Orangefest, which seeks to depoliticise events that have in the past fed Protestant–Catholic conflict via, among other things, a new 'superhero' dubbed 'Diamond Dan the Orangeman'.

In addition to asking what practices are associated with EU membership, a culturally attuned approach to instrumentalities requires that attention be paid to the relationships involved: what kinds of hierarchies are deployed, reinforced or resisted? A theme that comes up in all of the papers is the problem of tiered membership in the EU, resulting in some members who feel like 'second-class citizens'. Often, this is expressed by citizens of the formerly state socialist countries when they compare levels of affluence between their home countries and Western European countries. In other ways as well, the papers here are concerned with continued re-inscription of East–West divisions, even as discourse of European integration and equality would seem to counteract them. Asher, Castañeda and Galbraith all address problems of bias and un-

equal treatment of migrants who travel to work, shop or even vacation in old member states. This situation exposes the contradiction between material economic benefit and social demotion. Further, to the extent that affluence is usually measured by comparison with others, even the economic benefit for migrants is tempered by increased exposure, via direct contact and media portrayals, to the lifestyles of citizens of more affluent member states. The papers address various ways social inequalities are structurally reinforced by EU policies and institutions, and also the instrumentalities that either sustain or challenge them.

Even as the East–West divide in Europe is re-inscribed in EU policy, discourse and experience, evidence of its simultaneous collapse can be found in that all member states contend with similar tensions between haves and have-nots in the Common Market. As Murphy relates in his essay, the laments of native Irish blogger ‘Trotter’, about his low income within the ‘new’ Belfast, show that being left behind is not just a concern of citizens of new member states. Similar concerns about income differentials within member states can be seen in Galbraith’s descriptions of the varied experiences of Poles who travel because they want to and Poles who are compelled by economic necessity to seek employment abroad. In other ways, as well, it is becoming harder to generalise about Eastern and Western Europe as distinct and contrasting units; comparisons between Poland and Ireland, for example, may well be in some instances more relevant than comparisons between, say, Poland and its more proximate Eastern European neighbour Bulgaria.

Culture, Instrumentality and Interests

The essays in this collection thus engage with instrumentality as an important mode of interaction with EU institutions and policies; practices of everyday engagement may well be the key manner in which EU integration and Europeanisation become meaningful entities for member citizens and member states. As we have argued, culture is relevant to instrumentality in a number of ways. Even at the most fundamental level, culture can help to explain what comprises material interests, how interests interact with values, how people determine what is in their self-interest or their collective interest, and how they weigh costs and benefits. Culture further helps to constitute appropriate and acceptable ways of acting to realise interests, and shapes the

expectations and demands that are placed on EU institutions and policies for facilitating access to opportunities, resources and other, less tangible, objectives. We have focused here in particular on practices of mobility, resource acquisition, consumption and commemoration. By way of conclusion, we suggest that exploring cultural dimensions of instrumentality also sheds light on another area of long-standing interest in European Union scholarship: issues of belonging. In particular, we consider what a focus on instrumentality can contribute to scholarly debates about whether, or what kind of, European identity is likely to emerge, and how it will support deeper federalism or, alternatively, continued autonomy of national governments, within the EU.

In our view, the overall interest which anthropologists and other scholars have shown in issues of identity in Europe contributes in an important way to an analysis of culture and perceived social and economic value. Scholars from a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives have probed what it means to be 'European' within (or at the margins of) the European Union. One controversy that has emerged is between those who argue that the future of the European Union depends upon increased federalism, wherein processes of centralisation progressively weaken the autonomy of member states, and those who argue for a more pluralist union, wherein member states maintain higher degrees of autonomy under the umbrella of the EU. Approaches that emphasise federalism focus on the strong supranational institutions that provide a uniform structure and rules for member nation-states. According to this view, as nation-states decline in power, it is expected that national identities will weaken and a broader European identity will become more salient. For instance, sociologists Giesen and Eder characterise European citizenship as both supranational and postnational, and consider 'strong persistent feelings of belonging to attached nations' a direct threat to the development of attachment to Europe (2001: 9). By contrast, more pluralist approaches fall along a continuum, emphasising greater or lesser degrees of national autonomy within the EU. For example, Zielonka (2006) points to the polycentric character of the European Union, and compares it to a neomedieval empire with various cross-cutting agreements that result in different rules and competing networks of clients in different places. He warns that 'pan-European identity will be blurred and fragile with no truly European demos' (2006: 1).

Our contributions in this issue show little evidence of movement towards a ‘post-national’ Europe. Even as EU policies and practices provide EU citizens with more opportunities to identify as European, instrumentalism helps to reveal ways in which, and suggest reasons why, national belonging can nevertheless remain strong. The individual and collective agents described in the ethnographic examples often use EU resources to promote national, ethnic, or religious interests. These interests are also maintained, in part, because EU practices and policies fail to erase, and can even reinscribe, inequalities and exclusions based on nationality and other historic divisions.

Whether they emphasise federalism or pluralism, most scholars agree that institutional unification has not led to a European identity with the kinds of emotional commitments that tend to accompany national identity (Cederman 2001; Hooghe and Marks 2004; Ruiz Jimenez et al. 2004; McLaren 2006; Pederson 2008). Recent empirical studies (and the papers in this issue) suggest that while European identity is growing, it does not appear to have much effect on the strength of national identity. Ruiz-Jimenez et al. (2004) explain this compatibility as a likely outcome of their difference; national identities tend to be cultural, while European identities tend to be instrumental. They suggest that the instrumental basis of attachment to Europe may also explain why European identity tends to be weaker than national identity. Some studies suggest this may not be a problem, but rather look for other bases of European identity and unity: shared culture and value¹ (Wintle 1996; Mach and Niedźwiedzki 2002; Robyn 2005; Pederson 2008); increased mobility across borders (Bruter 2005; Wagstaff 2007); common EU citizenship (Eder and Giesen 2001; Bruter 2005); shared economic interests (Berend 2009); common institutional rules and structures (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005); or unifying structures that simultaneously strengthen local political agency or regionalism (Bukowski et al. 2003; Kockel 2007; Wagstaff 2007). Fligstein recognises the combined effect of mobility, economic interdependence, and governmental and nongovernmental organisations in ‘European social fields’ where horizontal linkages become the ‘glue to connect people’ across national borders (2008: 2). In other words, as the EU figures more in members’ everyday lives, and as transnational contacts and interconnections become more common, identification with Europe should grow. A number of these scholars have called for studies of European identity in everyday lives (see Meinhoff 2004; Stacul 2006), but only a few have done the kind of close ethnographic analysis that characterise the papers collected here.

Studies focused on the meanings that emerge through everyday practices can help reveal the conditions under which national and European identities are taking shape. The papers in this collection contribute to this project by showing in particular how instrumentalism can support or challenge engagement with European, national and regional scales. Further, they provide insight into *how* and *why* nations can inspire different degrees and kinds of loyalties than those which the EU can. By understanding cultural processes like this, it becomes possible to see the basis for the legitimacy of EU authority, as well as its limits. The instrumentalities explored here sometimes reflect reactions to inequality, exclusion, insecurity and economic hardship that persist or even emerge out of processes of European integration and Europeanisation. Recognising the materiality of culture and identity, the papers in this collection thus also bring us to consider the instrumental uses of the idea of Europe as manifested in the EU.

This volume as a whole focuses on local, regional and national practices and relations that shape instrumental engagements with EU policies and institutions. These practices and engagements, in turn, shape the cultures and identities that are so inextricably intertwined across these levels of society, politics and economics in Europe, including that of the EU itself. While our papers explore cases of instrumentality involving material, economic and political calculation, they also show the power of other interests, especially security, inclusion and equality. As aspects of cultural process, instrumentalities include but are not limited to collective, political and symbolic interests. To the extent that it entails efforts to maximise these various interests, instrumentality constitutes an important source of agency, and a significant subject of anthropological analysis.

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Notes

1. Sources like Wintle (1996) use a normative concept of culture that generalises shared elements, rather than viewing culture as a dynamic process (as may be seen in Stacul 2006; Demossier 2007).

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