European Identity Formation in Central and Eastern European Countries after Accession by the European Union

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European identity, a notion with vague delineations, has been conceptualized in multifaceted ways. As a deriving point for analysis, this definitional divergence entails clashes among different schools that explain the phenomenon of European identity formation. Still, the sociopolitical notions of collective identity and multiple collective identities underlie every conceptualization of European identity. That is, its content framing in terms of culture, civic involvement, or common history changes, but its structural core as either of the two basic typologies remains. In Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper's threefold categorization of collective identity, European collective identity falls under the group membership heading.[1] Juan Diez Medrano clarifies the notion of multiple collective identities as a multitude of group identities that can exist in two structural positions to one another: horizontal (not exclusionary, coexisting) and vertical (mutually exclusive).[2] Although some scholars claim that the relationship between European identity and national identities is horizontal, others provide evidence that it may be vertical.[3] Regardless of their precise structural correlation, scholars agree that the two collective identities influence one another (e.g., European identity brings about Europeanization of national identities and collective memory as a result of expected solidarity with other member states).[4]

The majority of scholars view the Eastonian model of affective and utilitarian loyalties as relevant to European identity.[5] Thus, it provides a

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framework for classification of theoretical trends expounding the emergence of European identity by means of which one can categorize them as constructivist oriented, relying on the concepts of social learning and socialization (soft constructivists [i.e., modernists and postmaterialists] and hard constructivists [i.e., communitarians]), and rationalist oriented, emphasizing cost-benefit analysis and material incentives (utilitarians).

Modernism explains identity as either a cultural or historical construction. Scholars exploring the impact of modernity and globalization on the phenomenon of European identity formation apply the logic of national identity formation onto the emergence of a European Union (EU) postnational identity. In this respect, Gerard Delanty articulates the distinction between two types of collective identities in terms of design in regard to outsiders (i.e., exclusivist / guided by the formal notion of polity [state centered] and participatory / solidarity based).[6] Modernist authors argue that the European project as a universalizing idea should abide by the second type whereas the exclusionary type should be considered a feature of national identity, unfit for the supranational one.[7] Frequently, Émile Durkheim's model of a differentiated society, in which social integration calls for cultural cohesion by way of generalized values deriving from a common cultural framework, is mentioned as the basis for conceptualizing identity as a product of the modern organization of society.[8]

Characteristically, the modernist approach to collective identity specifies the cultural component as the main building block of identity. Thus, one views European identity as a social project that utilizes culture as a political instrument for its construction.[9] This modernist emphasis on culture opposes more utilitarian approaches by establishing that totalizing visions of unity should prevail over collectively mediated mercantile goals to ensure stability of loyalty towards the identity. Modernists conclude that the EU should not attempt to reproduce the national model of identity formation. Instead, it should ignore the demos and ethnos as irrelevant for the supranational level and focus on the emerging power of knowledge and the potential of culture to cause convergence of identities.[10] Symbols and common cultural discourse are the converging points whereas history and language should be downplayed.[11] The EU's successful appropriation of the European cultural identity will allow the union to mold it so as to achieve an "imagined" community.[12] In addition, modernists account for elite socialization.

Thus, Cris Shore argues that the EU elite, having acquired European identity, fosters spillover to create a cultural space and collectivity.[13]

Communitarians provide another modernist standpoint that determines formation of thick identity grounded in common history and culture as the foremost prerequisite for the perpetuation of collective European identity. They stress communal bonds and social interactions as a basis for the formation of loyalty and solidarity with a political community, which opens up culture to differences.[14] Soft constructivists (modernists and postmaterialists) differ from communitarians in their conviction that the thick identity so much featured in communitarianism is not an absolutely necessary precondition. For them, the increase in social interactions' facilitation of mutual understanding serves as the prerequisite for European identity formation.[15] Some soft constructivists claim that the EU has already started to generate this interaction by means of its mobility programs.[16]

Postmaterialists focus on European identity as a political identification with the EU. Again the emphasis here is on knowledge—not as a tool to raise awareness of common cultural characteristics, as in modernist writings, but as a means for acquiring aptitudes to think abstractly. Ronald Inglehart utilizes European identity (as referring to a supranational political community) to explain public support for the integration process. The author has contributed two fundamental theories, which supplement each other, to the postmodernist school. His Cognitive Mobilization theory claims that the more education and skill that individuals have in assimilating abstract information, the more inclined they are to have postmaterial needs related to identity fulfillment and hence satisfy those by reference to the common European identity.[17] The Silent Revolution theory looks into the link between EU identity and political and economic value orientations.[18] It underlines the role of the socioeconomic milieu that conditions the individual during preadult years and instills certain social values. That is, values concerned with economic and physical security are bound to entail a materialist way of thinking that impairs postmaterialist identification with abstractly constructed supranational identities.[19] In contrast to the utilitarian view, Inglehart acknowledges economic considerations as a factor influencing aptitudes for material/postmaterial thinking but not as a possible foundation for identity formation. Since identity is highly abstract, it can be de-

signed only in the realm of postmaterial cognitive patterns, where weighing of benefits is no longer a consideration.[20]

The utilitarian school, in turn, stresses loyalty and hence identity generated by an evaluation of perceived benefits or satisfaction with policy output. Matthew Gabel reasons that, because the EU is prevailingly concerned with economic integration, individual appraisals are connected mainly with economic gains. Therefore, those are the source of identification with the supranational entity.[21] Education/knowledge as a factor features in the utilitarian theory but not as a prerequisite for abstract thinking and, consequently, identity formation.[22] Rather, for utilitarians it is an element determining to what degree individuals can benefit from economic integration.[23] Analyses on national, individual, and regional levels that employed David Easton's concept of utilitarian loyalty deduced that economic factors have important influence on public attitudes.[24]

Despite the identified differences, all theoretical trends try to solve the same problem in regard to European identity: to conceive a model that will generate EU legitimacy, mainly because, as Jos De Beus argues, a common European identity can decrease democratic deficit as a cause for popular alienation.[25] Although the current article acknowledges the plausible validity of the utilitarian view, the greater endurance of political identity theorized by postmaterialists as an outcome of cognitive mobilization renders particularly important the scrutiny of Inglehart's hypothesis in regard to the new Central and Eastern European member states after accession.[26] Testing the validity of the hypothesis for these countries will contribute to the currently available literature on European identity formation through the accumulation of observations and qualitative comparative analysis for a group of states where the process remains unexamined.

Methodology

Drawing on previous research in the field, this article tests Inglehart's hypothesis of cognitive mobilization applied to the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) following accession to the EU.[27] The hypothesis in question specifies two steps of European identity formation: cognitive mobilization (becoming aware of the EU is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for supranational affiliations to emerge) and internalization of values (attitudes towards the EU depend on both exposure

to and content of information).[28] Inglehart's hypothesis deals with aspects of individual attitudes, such as value orientations and cognitive aptitudes. Thus, the behavioralist approach is most suited for the purposes of the current study because it provides for testing Inglehart's logic at the individual level.

In terms of method, this article employs the qualitative comparative method of fuzzy sets.[29] Thus, it avoids the disadvantages of purely quantitative/qualitative methods by conducting a qualitative comparative analysis of findings grounded in quantitative data. The method allows for testing the validity of Inglehart's hypothesis of cognitive mobilization for CEECs (i.e., determining whether awareness/knowledge of the EU and internalization of its values represent necessary and/or sufficient conditions for European identity formation in Central and Eastern Europe).

The method of fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) operates with membership of cases in conceptual sets constructed from the independent (i.e., causal conditions) and dependent (i.e., outcome) variables. Raw data on the selected variables is calibrated into scores of membership in the qualitatively defined conceptual sets. The fsQCA software translates the membership scores of those cases in both the causal conditions and the outcome into a truth table that offers both an overview of the different configurations producing the outcome and a measurement of the importance of each of those combinations in explaining the end result.[30] This truth table serves as the basis for developing the current qualitative analysis, both in regard to the overall pattern of necessary, sufficient, and irrelevant conditions for the outcome, and the exceptional cases diverging from those overarching trends.

In order to test the two aspects of Inglehart's theory, this study constructed eight variables: (1) perceived knowledge of the EU, (2) trust in the EU, (3) support for the euro (the common currency), (4) support for a common defense and security policy, (5) trust in national government, (6) perceived loss of cultural identity (due to EU developments), (7) meaning of the EU as freedom of travel, and (8) support for EU membership. Through the calibrated fuzzy sets corresponding to the eight variables, the article examines how membership in the sets of the seven causal conditions influences membership of cases in the set of the outcome (i.e., support for membership, used as a variable for measuring identity formation). The justifica-

tion for utilizing support for membership as an approximation for European identity formation in Central and Eastern Europe proceeds from the argument established in the literature on postcommunist politics that, for Central and Eastern Europeans, being European is perceived as a confirmation and an official recognition of national identity.[31]

The fuzzy sets constructed through the selection of variables allow for membership scores of individual cases between 0 and 1. Calibration of variables is the process of translating the raw data available on those variables for each case into fuzzy scores of set membership. This article employs the direct method of calibration conducted by the fsQCA software after setting three qualitative anchors chosen on the basis of theoretical knowledge of the cases, to allow for an objective assessment. The software used the following anchors to calculate set membership scores for raw data: (1) crossover point at 0.5 (maximum ambiguity of membership in a fuzzy set), (2) threshold of full membership, and (3) threshold of full nonmembership in a set. The thresholds correspond to different values from the raw data for the separate variables, whose selection is justified by objective knowledge of the peculiarities influencing set membership. The selection of qualitatively grounded anchors to determine scores of set membership guarantees the minimization of subjectivity and ambiguity of results. The study avoids possible criticism of the calibration as artificial by disregarding variation among members of a particular set, considering it irrelevant.

Eurobarometer surveys—standard, Special, and Flash—provide the data. The raw data on the constructed variables (expressed in percentages) stems from answers to selected questions, which also offer data for all years, with the exception of a few cases for which, in the absence of the relevant questions, the study uses proxies. Since for most years, the selected questions were asked in both spring and autumn Standard Eurobarometers, the author has entered the average of the respective percentages as a raw value for the variables so as to guarantee data precision. To retain consistency of data, the study takes each country per year as a separate case. To assess identity formation in CEECs after accession, the research looks at the span 2004 (accession of the first group of CEECs) to 2009 (last publication of Eurobarometer data).

Data Analysis and Findings

Aimed at determining causal conditions for European identity forma-tion in Central and Eastern Europe, this analysis does not explore correla-tional connections; rather, it examines explicit set-theoretic connections (i.e., connections that could be asymmetric).[32] The strategy adopted derives from the fsQCA truth table algorithm. The analysis bases its conclusions regarding the necessity and/or sufficiency of causal conditions/configurations on the scrutiny of cases producing the outcome, which establish subset/intersection relations between the outcome and the causes.

The truth table obtained indicates that one necessary condition deter-mines European identity formation: trust in the EU.[33] The necessity of this causal condition derives from the lack of instances in which the outcome occurs in its absence. Since, however, there is no case in which the condition generates the outcome on its own, it does not display both necessity and sufficiency. Therefore, identity formation is the product of the combination of the necessary but not sufficient condition of trust in the EU and other conditions that vary in different configurations, but without whose accom-panying effect the outcome does not occur.

Comparative estimation of membership values in the sets of causal conditions and the outcome determines three possible configurations for European identity formation:

- trust in the EU combined with support for a common defense and security policy and the meaning of the EU as freedom of travel;

- trust in the EU accompanied by perceived knowledge of the EU and support for a common defense and security policy;

- trust in the EU in combination with perceived knowledge on the EU and the meaning of the EU as freedom of travel.[34]

Levels of Cognitive Mobilization: Perceived Knowledge

Trust is interrelated with knowledge as part of a cognitive circuit. Russell Hardin argues that trust in a certain political actor amounts to a presumption of knowledge about it. Political trust occurs through a process of generalization of acquired knowledge.[35] Consequently, it is not so much actual knowledge that sways public attitudes but the perception of

knowledge, designated in Eurobarometer surveys as "subjective knowledge." Since this article seeks to explore identity formation at the individual level, it scrutinizes this particular type of knowledge.

Over the years, perceived knowledge across the entire EU has been fairly low, predominantly below 65 percent. A comparison of old member states and CEECs reveals relatively higher subjective knowledge in new member states. Interestingly, the percentage difference weighs in favor of CEECs when the data is analyzed in juxtaposition to the founding member states, a group of countries in which one expects the highest perceived and actual knowledge. Raw data variation also uncovers another peculiarity: in CEECs that joined in 2004, perceived knowledge dropped for the second year after accession (2005) and then gradually started to increase. This pattern coincides with the fluctuations in support for membership and indicates the relationship between levels of perceived knowledge and membership support. As regards Bulgaria and Romania, neither a decrease in levels of subjective knowledge nor a fall in support for membership occurred in the postaccession years. Seemingly, variation in trust follows the fluctuation of membership support. Hence, those three variables are interlinked: perceived knowledge, trust, and support for membership vary along coinciding patterns. This fact confirms that explicit connections exist between the conditions of trust and perceived knowledge in the causal configurations that include both. Since trust is a necessary but not sufficient condition, perceived knowledge enhances its effect and thereby produces the outcome.

Two components⸺media coverage and the positions of domestic political actors⸺feed into perceived knowledge. Their content affects attitudes towards the EU and thus influences the relationship between perceived knowledge and support for membership and trust (i.e., not only the amount of information but also its quality and subjective implications matter).[36] Hence, not all kinds of information increase perceived knowledge or necessarily result in the intensification of support for membership or trust. Framing the EU positively in terms of benefits increases support for membership, whereas framing it negatively (e.g., in terms of conflictual situations) decreases EU enthusiasm.[37] The media in CEECs has been unable to generate debate and increase the understanding of EU issues.[38] This inadequacy of media coverage also seems to influence perceived knowledge.

The differences between the issues underscored by the European Commission and the national media yet again reduce the legitimacy of the EU and thus affect individual assessments of the sufficiency of subjective knowledge.[39] Negatively tinged media coverage upon accession can account for the decrease during 2005 in both perceived knowledge and support for membership in CEECs from the 2004 accession wave. The importance of the content of information could explain the exceptional cases in which a surge in subjective knowledge did not accompany a rise in membership support and trust (Latvia and Hungary in 2005). Cases that did not involve a fall in support for membership following a drop in subjective knowledge (Czech Republic and Poland in 2005) imply that, occasionally, existing levels of support stagnate rather than decrease as a follow-up to a decline in perceived knowledge.

Consensus on EU membership as a priority among national political elites and intellectuals was present in all CEECs with the exception of Poland, which ascribed unpopular economic reforms to EU pressures.[40] The lack of strong challenges to the inevitability of membership created a monolithic discursive framework prior to accession; thus, the focus on aspiration for membership prevented debates on particular policy issues.[41] Neither the media nor political actors scrutinized the implications of membership until the realities of accession eventually brought them to the foreground. Citizens' realization of that lack of adequate knowledge about the repercussions of membership could account for the drop in support during 2005. Preaccession knowledge focused on cultural and political symbolism to such an extent that it practically equaled to minimum acquaintance with the political and economic mechanisms of the EU. Another possible rationalization of the emergence of soft skepticism following accession is the insurgence of radical anti-EU discourse from the fringes of the political spectrum. In the Bulgarian case, for instance, discursive uniformity was vulnerable to the emergence of radicalized alternative discourse upon accession.[42]

The Trust Factor: Cognitive Internalization of Values / Trust in the European Union and Trust in National Governments

Trust in the EU represents the necessary but not sufficient condition for identity formation in CEECs. In comparison to the other causal conditions,

it displays the strongest explicit connection to the outcome. The current findings indicate that identification with the EU occurs only in the presence of established trust and confidence in the union.

The notion of the union as a community of both political stability and liberal democracy is inherently linked to this trust. In Central and Eastern Europe, discontent with and in some states, aversion towards the communist regimes cultivated citizens' eagerness to embark on the democratic experiment anew. Due to the lack of successful previous democratic experiences (with the exception of the Czech Republic), for CEECs EU membership meant not only a return to Europe but also an opportunity to establish political stability that would prevent the resurgence of communist or authoritarian rule (e.g., Slovakia came very close to authoritarianism under Vladimir Meciar). The EU had played this role before (e.g., Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese accessions) an important one for the future stability of the region. Dismissing a purely liberal intergovernmentalist framework, Frank Schimmelfennig argues that eastward expansion presents a conscious endeavor of the EU-15 to integrate postcommunist countries into the community of liberal states, pursued even in contradiction with the logic of sound strategic calculations.[43]

Faced with the task of integrating the CEECs, the EU has attempted to generate reforms through conditionality so as to respond to Central and East Europeans' expectations for postcommunist changes and to prevent disillusionment.[44] The soft power of the union has manifested through the so-called phenomenon of Europeanization. Since most reforms occurred in the preaccession period, one can explain trust in the EU after accession by noting the perception of the EU as a guarantor for the continuation of the reform process, which the public views as necessary and favorable. This notion of the EU explains support for membership despite the near-absence of trust in national governments.

The protraction of the accession process, however, resulted in an eventual disillusionment with the actual benefits of membership, which provoked a less enthusiastic and more critical attitude on the part of CEECs.[45] The fall in support for membership in proximity to the time of accession lends empirical evidence to these allegations. In this respect, the EU's commitment to the process of CEECs' accession has been criticized in various ways. One strand of criticism exposes the lack of full-swing

liberalization of trade with candidate states in the Europe Agreements, which would have alleviated many of their persisting economic problems.[46] Others have condemned the biased utilization of conditionality whereby important issues for member states were prioritized in negotiations with CEECs.[47] Such criticism emphasizes that the EU's attitude towards CEECs could have decisively harmed popular trust in the union.

Despite the difficulties of the preaccession period, this study finds that trust in the EU not only has remained intact but also has established itself as a prominent factor in identity formation. The increase in support for EU membership in CEECs after 2005 and its steady values of more than 50 percent on average confirm the dimension of this trust. Also, the drop in public support for membership did not reoccur in 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined the union.

The practical implications of this trust have become evident on occasions when the public welcomed actions by the EU in cases of domestic political actors deviating from EU standards. Central and Eastern Europeans have accepted the freezing of funds, critical reports from the European Commission, and infringement procedures as a useful part of the postaccession monitoring system. Trust in the EU can explain why the union's requirements for domestic-level reforms are not seen as excessive interference but as benevolent assistance aimed at guiding national elites in the right direction.[48] The EU's imposition of disciplinary measures did not damage popular trust in and support for the union in CEECs. Conversely, in the older member states, popular opinion has prevented excessively negative evaluations and penalizing actions from the commission. Lower rates of trust in national governments in Central and Eastern Europe could explain the higher legitimacy of EU claims to protect common European and national interests by imposing penalties.

The union's record of successful economic integration and growth is yet another generator of CEECs' trust in the EU. Economic segregation from Western Europe has accompanied political isolation during the communist period. Membership in the EU is thus particularly important for economic development and trade creation in CEECs.[49] Answers to the Eurobarometer question on perceived benefits from membership place the contribution to the economic growth of the country among the first three options and thus support this claim.

Trust in national government has also been established as an important determinant of support for EU membership. Empirical studies on Western Europe have identified several alternative models of the interdependence between this trust and support for EU membership. One model postulates that with governments expected to cater to national interests and curb excessive integrationist efforts, the more trust in those governments, the more support for integration.[50] Another account claims that support for the EU results from the interplay between national and supranational politics. Within its logic, the worse the domestic political system works, the higher the support for the supranational governance because individuals perceive lesser costs associated with transferring national sovereignty to the supranational level.[51]

The present findings reveal that the connection between trust in national government and support for EU membership is much less important in CEECs than in the models developed for Western Europe. In those postcommunist states, trust in the national executive does not play an explicitly significant role for European identity formation. On the basis of the majority of cases, however, one can observe a negative connection between the two. High support for membership is most frequently accompanied by low levels of trust in the national government. This seems to suggest that Central and Eastern Europeans perceive the EU as a disciplinary factor able to monitor national elites and solve inherent problems present since the fall of communism (e.g., corruption scandals, abuse of office, dubious privatization of former state property, creation of circles of influential businesses connected to government officials, etc.). Although this last allegation echoes Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca's claim for a connection between trust in national government and support for EU membership in the West, the resemblance is only superficial and does not hold under all circumstances.[52] Since corruption and abuse of political power are particularly problematic in postcommunist countries, CEECs' citizens do not view integration as a transfer of sovereignty but as an opportunity to discipline national elites in safeguarding the nation-state's sovereignty more effectively. Therefore, public opinion supports penalizing actions from Brussels, which involve freezing funds or bringing cases against national governments before the European Court of Justice.[53]

One finds the only exceptions to the overall pattern of support for membership accompanied by distrust in national governments in the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). Here the explicit connection seems positive, and high levels of support for EU membership accompany high levels of trust in national governments. Cultural and performance theories account for this phenomenon of relatively consistent trust in the national executives (i.e., it results from a combination of high levels of interpersonal trust and satisfaction with government performance).[54]

Cognitive Feasibility of Multiple Identities / Loss of Cultural Identity and Freedom to Travel

In Central and Eastern Europe, the genesis and development of national identity are primarily rooted in ethnic consciousness and culture. That is, membership in an ethnically and culturally differentiated group is a prerequisite for acceptance in the political community.[55] The cases of Latvia and Estonia illustrate the importance of ethnic belonging attached to citizenship. Upon their independence from the Soviet Union, both countries initiated constitutional developments that constructed an exclusive concept of citizenship based on ethnic background to prevent further assimilation by the Russian speakers resettled in their territories during the Soviet period.[56] Although Latvia modified its naturalization and citizenship laws, Estonia has not yet introduced substantial changes.[57] Thus, Estonian formulation of citizenship still contradicts EU principles on nondiscrimination by categorizing the Russian minority as noncitizens.[58]

National cultural identity has hitherto been guarded by political and social rights attached strictly to national citizenship, by national symbols, and by border controls. Hence, the EU's facilitation of mobility (legal intra-EU migration) and attempts to establish common symbols of Europeanness could instill fears of loss of national cultural differences.[59] Simultaneously, the intensity of national identity has become an important factor that influences affiliations of individuals with the EU (i.e., feelings of strong national identity lead to lower support for the EU in Western Europe).[60] The perception of a threat to the national cultural identity, therefore, will likely translate into skepticism towards the supranational identity.

This interdependence in the West has been explicitly linked to migration. Since migration is the focal point of the interrelated dynamics of

identity, borders, and orders, migration inflows in older member states intensify the fear of losing cultural identity.[61] Hostility to other cultures and nationalist concerns are more influential than utilitarian cost/benefit analysis in relation to the decrease in support for integration.[62] Some scholars have debunked this allegation, claiming that although a large number of Western Europeans perceive the EU as a threat to national identity, this feeling does not have a unique impact on overall support for membership.[63] Although rejecting the exclusive effect of the fear of losing national identity in outweighing other factors, this later claim does not entirely discredit it as an important determinant. It simply notes that occasionally other factors can be of equal or greater importance.

This article's findings on CEECs resonate with Lauren McLaren's argument for Western Europe.[64] Loss of cultural identity is frequently outweighed by other considerations, and European identity formation occurs regardless of its presence. Given the relationship between migration and loss of cultural identity in the West, the lower levels of perception of loss of cultural identity due to EU membership indicate that migration does not affect EU affiliation negatively in CEECs. Since outward migration to richer member states is viewed as a necessary evil of economic transition in those countries, it is not framed as loss of identity but as a demographic problem.[65]

Similar to tendencies in the West, the fear of losing cultural identity is visible in marginal extreme-nationalist discourse, though geared towards national minorities and not towards the EU or migrants from other member states. A straightforward connection to the EU within such nationalist discursive framing in CEECs occurs when national policies concerning minority groups change as a result of Europeanization.[66] Even populist extreme-right parties seem to exhibit a cautious attitude towards the EU and a reluctance to depict it as a threat to national identity.[67]

For the most part, loss of cultural identity in Western Europe relates to the effects of the right to free movement. Still, paradoxically, a large portion of EU citizens perceives freedom of travel as one of the central meanings of the EU. The lack of a significant, explicit connection of the loss of cultural identity to European identity formation in CEECs, however, explains why freedom of travel appears as a relevant causal condition here. Two of the

configurations producing the outcome indicate that it facilitates the consolidation of a common European identity.

Some scholars suggest a connection between freedom of movement and identity formation, arguing that creation of EU citizenship with the Maastricht Treaty introduced a political aspect to the previously economically dominated concept of mobility by extending it to economically inactive individuals.[68] Still, in reference to CEECs, freedom of travel is predominantly associated with economic migration and "social welfare tourism."[69] Given the wage gap and the discrepancies in economic development between Western and Eastern Europe, for Central and Eastern Europeans this right presents opportunities for access to better living and employment. If the new EU citizens seized those opportunities, Western labor market developments could entail social dumping.[70] Thus, for the older member states, the eastward expansion of the area of free movement particularly the provisions of the Schengen Agreement replaced Cold War anxieties of military invasion with the soft-security considerations of immigration overflood and rapid growth of cross-border crime.[71]

Studies on repercussions of the Eastern enlargement predicted both a negligible aggregate effect on Western labor markets and large-scale implications due to economic migration in a quest for social benefits and better living standards.[72] The ones conducted in the aftermath of enlargements during 2004 and 2007 conclude that migration levels have indeed increased but that their impact was limited to certain member states (e.g., United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain) and did not display an overall sweeping importance for EU labor markets.[73] In practice, forecasts of large inflows of Central and Eastern European workers overwhelming the EU labor market did not materialize. Moreover, estimates indicate that the overall internal EU migration flows (including effects of the Eastern enlargement) increase substantially slower than migration rates on the global level.[74]

Though not fully exploiting freedom of movement to sustain economic migration, Central and Eastern Europeans regard freedom of travel as one of the most important aspects of EU membership. Provisions in the accession agreements allowing for the suspension of labor mobility of up to seven years for CEECs' nationals could provide part of the explanation for the absence of a boom in economic migration from the new member states.

Legal scholars have claimed that the "2+3+2" suspension formula of those agreements violates the nondiscrimination principle of EU legislation.[75] Imposition of these disproportionate restrictions and the asymmetry of obligations and benefits incurred by CEECs during the initial period of membership have not hampered overall appreciation for the freedom of movement, and it explicitly contributes to European identity formation in the region.[76] Since all member states (with the exception of the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Sweden for the first round of Eastern enlargement) have taken advantage of the possibility of limiting access to their labor markets, freedom of movement for CEECs to a large extent amounts to mobility only for noneconomic purposes.[77] Therefore, the prospect of traveling for leisure as well as cultural and educational experiences explains the importance that Central and Eastern Europeans ascribe to this freedom. For them, it does not simply amount to an economic right but to a political one, an acknowledgement of their belonging to a united Europe.

This appreciation of travel opportunities for noneconomic purposes builds upon CEECs' precommunist Western European connections and postcommunist drive to "return to Europe." For the Central and Eastern Europeans who saw communism as an alien implantation imposing cultural practices and norms separating them from their European (i.e., Western European) cultural roots, the opening of the borders carried symbolic as well as practical connotations.[78] Even in cases of economically motivated migration, Guglielmo Meardi has found that the cultural aspect of mobility remains evident. Based on the differences in the lifestyle of Central and Eastern European migrants compared to that of immigrants from previous migration waves (frequent travel and strong connections with the native country, combined with efforts to integrate in their host community), he doubts the justifiability of labeling them "immigrants" as opposed to "cosmopolitans."[79] This cultural and symbolic dimension of freedom of movement as a concept not necessarily involving entitlement to economic rights in other member states clarifies the role of the variable in producing the outcome of European identity formation. In the prevailing absence of utilitarian calculations imposed by the transition arrangements, one can explain the involvement of freedom of travel in the molding of European identity in the region in terms of its contribution to the internalization of

common values. This internalization is a prerequisite for the emergence of supranational identity within Inglehart's theory.

Supranationality: Cognitive Aptitudes to Identify with European Union Policies / Support for the Euro and a Common Defense and Security Policy

The importance of the common currency for European identity formation derives from the connection between currency and identity that has developed historically at the national level. Matthias Kaelberer argues that national currency is a marker defining the boundaries of political entities.[80] Theoretically, a reciprocal connection exists between money and identity: money is a purposeful tool of identity construction, and a sufficient degree of collective identity is a prerequisite for proper functioning of the currency.[81] Thus, the common currency is a symbol of deeper integration aimed at increasing affiliations with the EU.[82] Its adoption represents not only a substantial loss of monetary sovereignty but also a leap forward towards construction of the EU as a new political entity.[83]

Introduction of the common currency affects Eurozone citizens' identification with the EU because it makes the European project palpable and therefore serves as a reification of its political order.[84] The symbolic meaning of the common currency underlies the continuous support for the euro in Eurozone members despite initial popular disappointment with its short-term economic implications.[85] Still, variation in attitudes towards the common currency across counties exists. Yet again, the symbolic value of the euro and its interplay with national collective identification patterns explain those divergences.[86] This study's findings indicate that trends of attitudes towards European currency in Central and Eastern Europe do not differ substantially from those hitherto observed in Eurozone member states.

Utilitarian considerations of the benefits of joining the Eurozone in terms of taking full advantage of the single market partially explain the relatively high support for the common currency in CEECs. The elimination of exchange and transaction costs, the eradication of exchange-rate volatility, and the prevention of competitive devaluations and speculation are especially important for CEECs since those states need to overcome inflation and hyperinflation repercussions from the 1990s, to attract foreign investments, and to increase the creation of trade.[87] Previous studies suggest that in those postcommunist countries, macrolevel aspects of economic

and historical-ideational factors have the predominant impact on individual support for European currency. Microlevel indicators of economic self-interest do not influence support for the common currency extensively; thus, aggregate national performance acquires the prevailing importance.[88] Consequently, disillusionment with the short-term effects of euro adoption induces only temporary decreases in support for the common currency.

Despite this feasible explanation for the predominantly high levels of support for the euro, the results of this article indicate that this support is not universally present. Furthermore, it is not a condition in any of the causal configurations for identity formation. Temporal and case-specific fluctuations testifying to the weaker explicit connection between this condition and the outcome could be expounded in two alternative ways.

Scholars who support the view that attachment to national currencies causes the lack of consistent support for the euro point to the symbolism of banknotes as references to the historical past and reproductions of national narratives.[89] In practice this would mean that citizens in CEECs give precedence to national sovereignty and identity, disregarding utilitarian considerations. With support for a common defense and security policy (another policy with great implications for national sovereignty and identity) consistently high and present as a condition in two of the three possible recipes for identity formation, such an explanation of the lack of support for the euro is questionable. An examination of individual cases of lower support for the euro suggests that the emergence of populist discourse that generates debate on the harmful effects of the euro causes the phenomenon.[90]

Skepticism towards the common currency could derive from more practical considerations as well. Adoption of the euro, although part of the *acquis* obligations of CEECs, is not an issue of straightforward immediacy. So far, only Slovenia (2007) and Slovakia (2009) have fulfilled the Maastricht convergence criteria and joined the Eurozone. Most of the other new member states still require substantial preparation before becoming eligible to join the common currency.[91] One could also view the Greek crisis over the budget deficit as part of the explanation insofar as it adds salience to the discouraging aspects of Eurozone membership for two reasons. First, it demonstrates how problems in one state could pose a peril for the stability of the entire Eurozone. Second, it illustrates the necessity of strictly abiding

by Eurozone rules and the constraints they place on national governments when solving similar situations.

The analysis of support for the common currency indicates that increasing the level of awareness of the positive economic effects of the euro and presenting a realistic view on its potential negative implications, as explored by scholars utilizing the Optimum Currency Area theory, would entail higher levels of support (i.e., cognitive mobilization would have positive results).[92] Simultaneously, it shows that occasionally negative attitudes towards the euro in CEECs are not due to identity considerations but to utilitarian concerns (CEECs' citizens do not have anything against the symbol as such).[93] Moreover, those utilitarian concerns do not transfer in a negative attitude towards the EU as a whole and do not prevent support for membership and a feeling of Europeanness. Like some instances in Western Europe, the desire to belong to Europe accounts for support for the euro in the majority of the cases in CEECs (i.e., positive attitude towards membership transfers to tolerance and support for the European currency).

As a supranational initiative, the common defense and security policy is a component of political integration that would change the nature of the EU's external relations.[94] Hence, measuring its relationship to support for membership in CEECs is an important aspect of studies on identity formation in those member states.

CEECs are characterized by close ties with the United States in the realm of security and by general skepticism for the EU's ability to provide for their security as effectively as America has, ever since the end of the Cold War.[95] The union's inability to react to conflicts during the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia further consolidated this skepticism. Hence, in terms of support for a common defense and security policy, the affiliation with the United States becomes a central issue to consider.[96] Several instances reflect the importance of the relationship with the United States and NATO: the US invasion of Iraq, for which the Visegrad countries granted support to the US administration despite the Franco-German stance against an intervention; the Vilnius Letter (sent on the same occasion), expressing confidence in US reasons for intervention, signed by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, among other countries; and the antimissile shield launched as a project by the Bush administration, which involved the Polish and Czech positions clashing

with the stance of French president Nicolas Sarkozy, who asked for a moratorium of the initiative and was thereupon accused of overstepping his mandate as presider over the EU-Russia summit in 2008.[97]

The CEECs' concern with Russian influence and its possible association with EU security and defense initiatives reflects the foreign policy legacy of the Cold War. Polish foreign policy, for example, has consistently aimed at decreasing Russia's political impact, not only in the domestic politics of Poland but also that of other countries. (It supported the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and vetoed the start of the talks between Russia and the EU in 2006, thereby blocking negotiation of the new partnership agreement.) In the process, Polish foreign policy complicated the EU's external relations agenda, occasionally hampering EU-Russian relations. In this context, the United States is viewed as the balancing counterpower in military terms.[98]

In accord with qualitative knowledge on the affiliation between CEECs and the United States in the field of security, one would expect fairly low or at least fluctuating support for the common defense and security policy over the years. This study's findings, however, testify to the opposite: support is consistently high. One could explain this discrepancy by citing the fact that Central and Eastern Europeans believe that EU membership will bring security not only in economic but also in political terms. Regardless of the shortcomings of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, citizens of the new member states associate accession with membership in a club able to protect its members.

Popular responses seem to contradict the expected cautious attitudes geared towards striking a balance between support for an EU common defense and cooperation with the United States. The high rates of positive answers to Eurobarometer questions on a European foreign policy independent of the United States indicate that the average CEEC citizen prefers an EU-based defense system distinctive from that of the United States, though not necessarily in competition or confrontation with it. This conclusion signifies a decreasing sensitivity on the part of citizens for the necessity of maintaining a balance between EU and NATO affiliations due to better US defense capabilities. Thus, one can argue that support for an EU defense and security policy is predominantly based on the desire to feel European and not so much on perceptions of actual strategic advantages of the policy.

Since the latter still have not extensively materialized for CEECs and since the United States has played the crucial role in the region's security in the 1990s, the argument remains particularly relevant. The presence of the causal condition of support for a common defense and security policy in two of the configurations producing the outcome, in turn, allows one to conclude that the prospect of its existence makes Central and Eastern Europeans feel more European and thus contributes to identity formation.

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34. For clarity, those configurations have been simplified by eliminating the irrelevant variables⊠ hose whose presence has no explicit impact on the outcome. The subsequent analysis of findings includes the irrelevant variables so as to explain the contribution that their irrelevance makes to the current conclusions on the peculiarities of determinants of European identity formation in CEECs.

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