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SPECIAL SECTION:
EU Citizenship in Peripheral Regions: Collective Identities and Political Participation in Eastern Central and Western Europe

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SPECIAL SECTION: EU Citizenship in Peripheral Regions: Collective Identities and Political Participation in Eastern Central and Western Europe

Introduction to the Special Section 'EU Citizenship in Peripheral Regions: Collective Identities and Political Participation in Eastern Central and Western Europe'

LARS VOGEL

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This special section investigates citizens' attitudes towards EU citizenship in Eastern Central Europe (ECE) and Western Europe (WE) and their relation to regional living conditions. It presumes that living in regional peripheries leads to 'peripheral' conceptions of citizenship. In particular, we ask whether citizens living in spatially, economically or socially peripheral regions, both in ECE as such and within it, are more likely to share conceptions of citizenship that deviate from those dominant in Western Europe – often equated with the centre of the EU.

All contributions of the special section provide empirical evidence for this double meaning of 'peripheral'. Citizens' notions of citizenship in ECE are based on traditional rather than civic or postmodern foundations that are more prevalent in Western Europe. In qualitative interviews, adolescents from ECE describe this region as economically, socially and politically peripheral compared to Western Europe and this description is mirrored in statistical data. Moreover, many regional units below the national level in ECE can be characterised as 'double peripheries' (Anders Lorenz 2023), being deprived both compared to the EU and their respective national centres. In particular, economic deprivation of one's own region can minimise the feeling of being an EU citizen and fuel Eurosceptic voting. However, these effects are moderated by a number of domestic factors, in particular, whether responsibility for regional deprivation is attributed to the EU or the national level. In the latter case, the

EU seems to be perceived as an alternative to inefficient national institutions entailing a strengthened EU citizenship.

This special section is based on research conducted in the context of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence 'The European Union and its Rural Periphery in East Central Europe' at Leipzig University.[1] Within this framework, data on EU citizenship and peripheries was collected and analysed in a mixed method design, for which results from both standardised surveys and qualitative focus groups with adolescents in ECE (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia) were matched with statistical data on regional living conditions in this region and in Western Europe. Most contributions in this special section additionally include data from large-scale surveys such as Eurobarometer or the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

EU Citizenship

Like any form of citizenship, EU citizenship has an institutional and an attitudinal dimension. The institutional dimension is, in the seminal formulation by Marshall (1950), the legally defined status that bestows all members of a community equally with civil, political or social rights. Regarding political rights, the Treaty on the European Union from 1993 (TEU) has constituted the EU citizenship for all those inhabitants who hold the citizenship of a member state (Article 8.1 TEU) by introducing four political rights: the right to vote and to be elected both in municipal and European Parliament elections, the right to approach the embassy of any EU member state abroad and the right to petition the European Parliament or to apply to the Ombudsman.

The attitudinal elements of EU citizenship encompass issues of belonging, in particular to the community of the EU, and the dispositions for political participation (Bellamy 2008). Belonging to the EU is considered postmodern, differing from traditional, mostly national concepts of citizenship in at least three respects. 1) It is necessarily defined by civic rather than ethnic or national criteria (Wegscheider – Rezi 2021), due to the multi-nationality of the EU. Belonging is less based on the imagined sameness (Anderson 1985) of the citizens in the EU in terms of a common ancestry, ethnicity, language or culture but established through a common legal and political framework and social and political participation. 2) Accordingly, EU citizenship does not solely describe a legal status but also 'acts of citizenship' (Isin 2008). Even non-citizens according to law can conduct these acts thereby claiming citizenship (Karolewski 2010; Bayer – Schwarz – Stark 2021). 3) EU citizenship is a multi-level concept, since EU citizens are simultaneously citizens in at least one of the member states of the EU. Thus, acts of citizenship and feelings of belonging can be linked to

1 This Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence was funded from 2020–2024 by the European Commission (Project number 619591-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPJMO-CoE).

the regional, national or EU level and interact with each other. Due to these interactions the notions of EU citizenship can be derived from the lower levels, or they can offer an alternative or amendment (De Vries 2018).

The contribution in this special section focuses on the attitudinal and conative dimension of citizens' conceptions of citizenship. In particular, we are interested in the prevalence of post-national EU citizenship with its focus on civic identity and political participation among EU citizens. Thus, we follow a political culture approach, which assumes that the stability and legitimacy of the EU and European integration are determined by the congruence between the institutional structure and the related beliefs and attitudes of the population (Almond – Verba 1963; Easton 1975).

Regional Peripheries

According to Marshall (1950), citizenship is defined by *equal* rights and equality is limited to legal equality. Actual differences in the opportunities to exercise these rights do not matter for citizenship. Others (e.g. Turner 2009) argued that such liberal conceptions obscure inequalities in political participation and collective identification as citizens, which indicate a stratification of citizenship along social, political or regional divisions.

Regional divisions can be described in terms of differences between centres and peripheries (Musil – Müller 2008; Noguera – Copus 2016; Dvořák – Zouhar – Treib 2022; Rodríguez-Pose 2018). Peripheries are considered as regional entities that are decoupled from developments in national or transnational centres either by a lack of spatial accessibility, weak infrastructure and economy, discrimination or exclusion from political decision making. In this sense, ECE is characterised by 'double peripheries' (Lorenz – Anders 2023): both the countries as such are peripheral to the EU centres, and many regions within the countries are peripheral to the respective national centres. In spatial terms, countries in ECE (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, but also Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) are at the border of the EU. On average, and despite occasional higher growth rates, the economic status of ECE is still lower than that of WE (Kley 2024 in this section), as is the political participation of citizens from ECE in EU elections and their presence in leading positions in EU institutions.

Additionally, the regional clustering of economic, demographic and social disparities is stronger in ECE compared to WE (Lang et al. 2015). The differences between regional centres, usually the big cities and capitals, and peripheries, has deepened since the end of communism. Regions that were already peripheral in socialist times remained peripheral after 1989 (Pascariu – Pedrosa 2017: xxviii). These peripheral regions are further characterised by the out-migration of young and educated inhabitants and an ageing population, either as a result of or cause of the regions' deprived economic situation (Noguera – Copus 2016).

The classification of region as peripheries or centres and the respective (self-) definitions of their inhabitants are not objective entities, but the outcome of collective bargaining processes embedded in public discourses ('peripheralization' (Kühn 2015)). Thus, inhabitants of peripheral regions according to objective economic, spatial or demographic indicators must not necessarily feel themselves as living in peripheral regions. Centres are also defined in such objective terms, but the reference to spatial centres may also serve as symbolic representation of distant elites (Vogel 2022). In this sense, 'those in Brussels… Prague… Berlin' etc. symbolise those powerful actors who dominate the economy and the political process, and who define the dominant normative ideas of communities, such as their legitimate conceptions of citizenship.

Peripheral Citizenship

Thus, we ask whether periphery can be used in a double meaning with people in regional peripheries of ECE being more likely to share 'peripheral' concepts of citizenship that deviate from the postmodern concepts presumed to dominate in the regional and social centres in Western Europe. Previous research shows that living in peripheries is associated with political discontent, in particular, with the vote for populist or Eurosceptic parties (Essletzbichler – Disslbacher – Moser 2018; Rodríguez-Pose 2018; Dijkstra – Poelman – Rodríguez-Pose 2020; Dominicis – Dijkstra – Pontarollo 2020; Dvořák – Zouhar – Treib 2022; Velthuis et al. 2022). In regions that are either actually deprived compared to an economically, spatially, politically or culturally defined centre, or whose inhabitants feel deprived in these respects, parts of the population may decide to protest against this deprivation ('voice' (Hirschman 1972). Others may withdraw their political support or migrate out ('exit' Ibid.), either due to feelings of deprivation or simply because a peripheral status of one's own region reduces the individually available resources for social and political participation. The subjective perception may add to this lack of resources effect, if feelings of futility reduce the incentives to participate further.

Each of these responses refers to the centres and their dominant economic, political or cultural status and its normative and ideological foundations. Accordingly, protest against the centres or withdrawal of political support implies the contestation or ignorance of citizenship concepts proposed by in the centres and the support of alternative concepts.

However, given that some regions in ECE suffer from a 'double periphery', EU citizenship may be evaluated differently, given that the peripheral status may be attributed either to the national centre or to the EU. Thus, EU citizenship may be considered more positive in countries in which the national centre is blamed, while EU citizenship is more contested in countries in which the national centre is perceived as a bulwark against EU inference (De Vries 2018).

In a nutshell, citizens' contestation of EU citizenship, in its postmodern or civic notion and proposing and supporting alternative concepts in ECE countries and in their peripheral regions, may be due to a lack of resources to participate and driven by a contestation of the normative concepts proposed by the centre of the EU either equated with its institutions, its elites or its dominant member states. Alternative concepts of citizenship may be defined nationally or they may refer to the EU, but with traditional references to the sameness of Europeans in ancestry, culture, religion or values, while they put less emphasis on the civic elements of social and political participation in the EU institutions.

The contributions

All contributions of this special section address these presumptions by analysing self-identification as EU citizens, values (diversity, inclusiveness and equality), voting behaviour and motives for out-migration in a comparative perspective including regional comparisons at European and national level.

The contribution by *Florian Kley* investigates the regional and individual economic bases of individual self-identification as a European citizen (either in addition to, or as a substitute for, identification as a citizen of a particular nationality). Relying on Eurobarometer and statistical data for WE and ECE, he demonstrates that neither the current economic status of a NUTS-1 region nor its development (GDP growth) has a direct impact on individual identification as a European citizen. However, inhabitants of poorer regions were more convinced that the EU was economically beneficial for themselves until 2004, but not later. Further, the inhabitants of prosperous regions see moderately but consistently more economic benefits for themselves compared to the population in economically stagnating or shrinking regions. Those people perceiving the EU as providing individual benefits for themselves are more likely to identify as EU citizens, which gives evidence of an indirect positive effect of regional prosperity on EU citizenship, if the cause of prosperity is attributed to the EU.

The contribution by *Linus Paeth* and *Lars Vogel* continues to investigate regional contextual factors. Their explanatory variable is voting for Eurosceptic parties, which is presumed as contestation of EU citizenship. The level of Eurosceptic voting in a NUTS-3 region is supposed to be determined by its infrastructural, economic and demographic (peripheral) status due to relative deprivation and the attribution of responsibility to the national or EU level. Based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey and statistical data for ECE and WE, they demonstrate that poor economic performance *relative* to surrounding regions or to the past fuels Eurosceptic voting. This underlines that poor economic status enfolds its impact in particular, if other regions that are considered as important points of reference perform better. These impacts are moderated by the infrastructure and differs between ECE and WE. Good public and private

infrastructure in a region reduces the negative impact of poor economic performance *relative* to other regions. While long term economic demise fosters Eurosceptic voting in WE, it reduces it in ECE. This result suggests again that the link between the regional economic situation and EU citizenship depends on which level, national or EU, citizens attribute responsibility for the deprived status of their own region.

Gert and *Susanne Pickel* start from the observation of recurring political conflicts between the EU and the governments of ECE countries, in particular Poland and Hungary, over issues such as the rule of law, migration or the war in Ukraine. Based on various data from Eurobarometer surveys, they demonstrate that these conflicts are not based on a lack of emotional attachment to Europe, which is as high among citizens in ECE as in WE. Rather, these conflicts are based on lower levels of support for values such as diversity, plurality and variety among citizens in ECE, where opposition to Muslim migration and sexual and gender diversity is more widespread than in WE. This attitudinal exclusion of particular groups indicates that citizens in ECE are more likely to support a concept of citizenship that cannot be derived from social and political participation, but from shared ancestry and common cultural or religious traditions, respectively. Empirical evidence further suggests that citizens in ECE consider postmodern citizenship as a threat to their own communities and their values coming from the EU and in particular Western Europe, against which the societies of ECE have to defend all of Europe. Such ideas of resistance are more prevalent in peripheral regions within ECE member states.

Rebecca Pates focuses on the equality of citizens as constitutional element of EU citizenship. Her analysis of qualitative interviews in five ECE member states (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia) show that young adolescents in ECE consider EU citizenship as either irrelevant for their life or primarily in economic terms for investments in the own region of living or for allowing the outmigration to, primarily, WE. They further show a remarkable gap between 'deductive and inductive equality' linked to citizenship. Deductively, i.e. in legal and formal terms, EU citizenship secures the four rights defined in the Treaty on the European Union from 1993 (TEU) (s. above). Inductively, however, the adolescents see themselves urged to use the resulting right of outmigration from the own country to WE because they perceive inequality in the EU with the countries in ECE as peripheral and their citizens as deprived in economic, social and political terms. For them, equality would also comprise substantial redistribution between regions in the EU so that they could choose to make voluntarily use of their right to free movement instead of being urged to improve their individual status by out-migration. *Pates* argues that this objection between legal rights of equality and regional inequalities fuels the distance of adolescents to the EU and reduces their self-identification as EU citizens.

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The Regional Economic Foundations of European Identity

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Abstract: *The question of whether there is increasing social integration among EU citizens in Europe as a spill-over effect of the ongoing process of system integration, as expected by utilitarian perspectives on integration, has been discussed in many contributions so far. In particular, the question of how the economic strength and development of macro-units affects European social integration has gained new momentum after the 2004 enlargement, when economically weaker ECE countries became part of the EU. In this contribution, I focus on the impact of regional economic strength and development on European social integration. I analyse the relationship between the economic situation and development of NUTS-1 regions and individual European identity using Eurobarometer data for the years 2004, 2010 and 2015. Using descriptive and multivariate quantitative approaches, I show that regional economic strength is weakly correlated with European identity, although not significant in multivariate models. However, citizens who believe that the EU is an economic advantage are more likely to identify as Europeans and are more prevalent in regions with higher economic growth. I conclude that convincing citizens of the economic benefits of EU membership could result in increased European social integration in the long run.*

Keywords: ***European identity, European integration, regions, economy, attitudes***

Introduction[1]

Both the refugee and the Euro crisis highlighted that a fundamental issue of the EU today is the question of its responsibilities and tasks. The periodi-

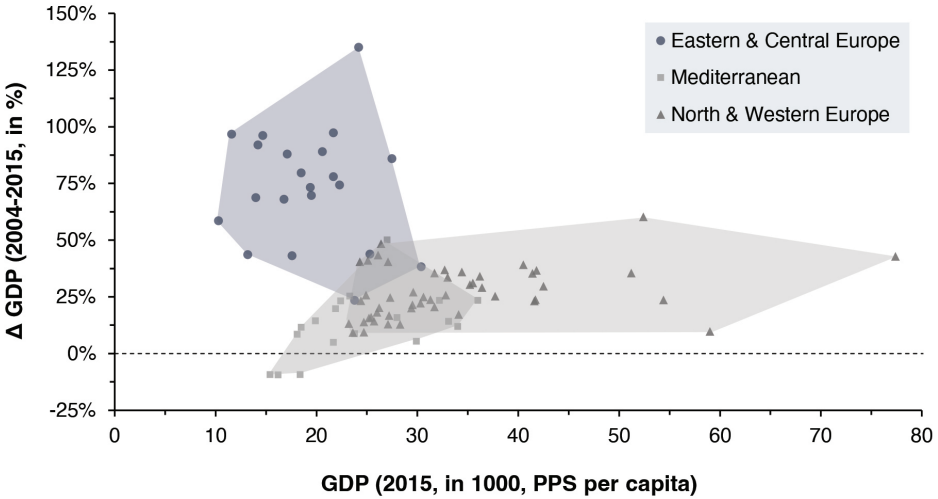
1 This contribution is based on my dissertation submitted to Leipzig University in 2022 and accepted in 2023. Despite some adaptations, most passages are taken verbatim from the dissertation.

cally debates led by the heads of the Member States highlight the problem of different perceptions on what the EU should focus on. Is there a common (financial) responsibility in case of debts? Should the EU force Member States to show solidarity regarding the redistribution of refugees? Should the EU expand the mechanisms of redistribution among territories? While citizens may differ in their expectations in the areas of redistribution, support, or political engagement, undoubtedly, the EU can be regarded as an economic project. With the European Coal and Steel community (1951) resulting in the European Economic Community (1957), economic issues were clearly at the forefront of the predecessors of the EU of today. Furthermore, the most prominent projects of the EU focus on economic cooperation and development. The European Common Market, the free movement of goods, capital, services, and of persons, but also the common currency highlight the importance of the EU as a first and foremost economic project. Hence, the understanding of the EU as an economic institution is closely linked to its heritage, development, and showcase projects.

Unsurprisingly, economic development is also an ever-emphasised objective of the EU. As stated in the preamble of the Treaty on European Union (also known as the Maastricht treaty), '[the representatives of the Member States] RESOLVED to achieve the strengthening and the convergence of their economies [...] DETERMINED to promote economic and social progress for their peoples' (European Union 2012: 15). Although it is undeniable that the European Common Market has gained intensity over the years (Fligstein 2008: 64) and some political actors highlight its positive impact on economic development (Cœuré 2018), economic development can be influenced by many different direct and indirect factors. Looking at the economic disparities and development of EU NUTS-1 regions between 2004 and 2015 in Figure 1, we can see considerable differences between regions in terms of GDP and GDP growth. Since 2004, most regions have witnessed an upswing in their economies. Mediterranean EU regions, especially impacted by the financial crisis, had the lowest economic growth rates.[2] In contrast, in terms of relative growth, regions in Eastern Central European (ECE) Member States have witnessed the strongest economic increase. While some ECE regions may have reached a level of prosperity comparable to that of other EU regions by 2015, most still have substantial gaps to close.

2 The Mediterranean regions shown are the NUTS-1 regions (administrative units usually smaller than countries) of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain. Eastern and Central European regions are in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia. Northern and Western European regions are located in the remaining EU-27 Member States.

Figure 1: Regional GDP and development (NUTS-1 level, 2004-2015)



Source: Eurostat (2018)s. N = 88. Own calculations and depiction

The economic project at the heart of European system integration and the generally positive economic progress achieved in recent years, particularly in the ECE countries, raise important questions about the relationship between economic circumstances and the progress of European social integration.[3] Are more prosperous regions those with a higher degree of European social integration? To what extent did economic growth foster European social integration? Related to the measurement of European social integration used in this study, the self-categorisation or identification (also) as European, the main question of this contribution reads as follows: ***Are citizens in prosperous or economically growing regions more likely to be inclusive Europeans?***

Linking European social integration with the economic situation of citizens and regions is of relevance for several reasons. For one, for the leading actors of the EU, European identity is regarded as a factor 'to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world' (European Union 2012: 16). Anyway, as stated in a more recent document and backed up by empirical research, individual factors such as education and culture are recognized as ways to

3 In what follows, I will refer to the distinction of European integration proposed by Gerhards and Lengfeld (2015) with reference to Lockwood (1964). On the one hand, European system integration concerns the relations between the institutional parts of the Europeanisation process, with the development of the EU, its institutions and legislation as the central topic of interest. European social integration, on the other hand, focuses on the relationships between European actors, which is closely related to the question of the eventual formation of a common European society, where citizens are relevant to each other and show some kind of social cohesion (Delhey 2004: 17).

strengthen this kind of identity (European Commission 2017: 2). However, due to the lack of competences (education) and the complexity of the issue (culture), both issues are difficult for EU actors to access and influence. In contrast, with the EU being an important agent in the field of economic development, policy actors have several possibilities and decisional power to make changes here, especially when it comes to supporting the less developed regions and foster convergence (Cœuré 2018). The EU already pursues its economic development and cohesion objectives by redistributing financial resources between regions through its Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds, European Commission 2015). If the assumption made by scholars such as Haas (1958) could be proven that European social integration would follow European system integration as a spill-over of a utilitarian perspective, extending the current measures and even introduce new ones to strengthen the economic power of the regions may be helpful towards 'creating an ever closing union among the peoples of Europe' (European Union 2012: 16).

The question of this macro-micro relationship may be of great importance for the EU in recent years. Not only because, as we have seen, regions have developed quite differently in recent decades. With the EU's eastern enlargement in 2004 and the accession of economically weak regions, this question is even more relevant. In these regions, the utilitarian expectation of economic prosperity from the EU was far above average in 2004 (GESIS 2012b: 186), making the question of whether or not economic development is followed by European social integration in general all the more important.

Current research on macro factors influencing social integration processes has several shortcomings. First, these analyses are mostly based on observations at the country level only. However, as we know from European identity, disparities in European social integration shares are not confined to national borders, nor are they always homogeneous within countries (Westle 2003: 478f.). Secondly, in many cases, only certain data points are being analysed and the influence of short or long-time developments is mostly neglected. Finally, micro-macro-links are rarely discussed or examined, making the inherent logic of explanation unclear. Overall, a regional perspective on the economic and social integration topic can provide both policy makers and scholars with new insights into how the macroeconomic environment can affect European social integration.

This contribution is structured as followed: In the following section, the theoretical background will be discussed and the outline of empirical research on economic macro-structural determinants on European identity is presented. Subsequently, hypotheses will be formulated for empirical testing. I then present background on the individual level data provided in the Eurobarometer (EB), the question on European identity and the evaluation of the EU for the personal economic situation of a respondent, the macro-structural determinant

in focus, the regional GDP, as well as the methods used in the empirical analysis. After that, the results of the empirical analysis will be discussed to test the corresponding hypotheses. As the findings show, the economic situation of a region correlates slightly, but not significantly, with an inclusive European identity, whereby this form of identification tends to appear more often in richer regions. Although neither the economic development of the regions since the 2004 enlargement of the EU nor since the beginning of the financial crisis correlate with the extent of European identity, both regional developments influence the extent to which the EU is seen by respondents as economically beneficial for themselves. Furthermore, individuals evaluating the EU as economically favourable for them personally are more likely to identify (also) as Europeans. The contribution concludes with a brief discussion of the key findings, the implications for policy makers, and a discussion of the limitations that may be addressed in further research.

Background, Question and Model

Theoretical background

As a theoretical background, I will rely on a utilitarian approach to explain the expected macroeconomic link with the economic situation and development on the regional level. Going back to the work of Haas (1958), he expected people to strengthen their bound, or 'loyalty' (Haas 1958: 14), towards a system if they are positively affected by its outcomes. This form of bonding is a form of 'spill--over', as the satisfaction with the system will also affect the social dimension of integration as Roose described for identity formation (Roose 2005: 294). There are two implications for this to be considered. For one, the targeted outcomes, or the aspirated 'ultimate end' (Haas 1958: 14), may differ among citizens. People may have different expectations the institution in question is capable and/or responsible for. Secondly, according to Rose, the spill-over effect is subject to citizens satisfaction (Roose 2005). Satisfaction is not only a question of the desired or expected goal, but also a question of subject evaluation – which can also be independent of objective results.

Let us get back on these implications in more detail for the case of regional economy and European identity formation. First, why should people have economy-related expectations towards the EU? From its historical development and its most prominent projects, the EU may be regarded as an economic project primarily, aiming at improving the economical living conditions of its Member States and citizens. Especially with the European Common Market and the four freedoms of labour, goods, services, and capital, it is affecting citizens' daily lives in the field of economy and labour. For citizens, this may have consequences in higher personal gains such as an increased income or working perspectives

and possibilities for some, but also reduced wages, more adjustment pressure, and increased competition for others. Therefore, the assumption that the EU is, among other things, an economic project for its citizens is not far-fetched.

Regarding the second implication, the question arises on what basis citizens should evaluate the EU in regard to economic success or failure within the region of residence. First, the economic situation of the region of resident is certainly one important factor affecting citizens living conditions. In wealthier regions, more resources can be spent on social issues, cultural projects, infrastructural measures, administration, but also may attract investments from enterprises and business companies more successfully, which promotes job creation and improves the income situation. Individual economic and general living conditions may therefore be fostered by the wealth of the region of residence.

But why would the EU be made responsible for regional economic wealth, decline, or growth? In addition to some direct individual consequences for citizens, EU membership may also have an impact on the macro-structural conditions in which they live. With the ESI Funds, the EU is already redistributing financial resources between European regions, with poorer developed countries and sub-national regions being the profiteers. The money spend is mainly invested in programmes or measures (e.g. for education, job market, or infrastructure). Besides such direct effects of redistribution, EU membership may also be accompanied by indirect side-effects for the regions, such as mass im- or emigration, leading to growth in some but also a possible 'brain drain' in other regions. Additionally, the enlarged EU with the common market offers more alternatives for old and new industries to settle – a set of opportunities some regions may benefit from while others may face disadvantages. As EU politics in form of redistribution are mainly based on the regional level, and the regional units may be more precise in explaining macro-economic affections for the respondents than larger units (e.g. the nation state in bigger countries or even the economic development of the EU as a whole), a connection of the evaluation of one's own economic situation also due to the macro-structural circumstances in which citizens live seems plausible.

Finally, it is an open question whether the EU is perceived by citizens as being responsible for economic prosperity and development. Undoubtedly, other political and non-political actors can be made responsible for the economic situation of a region. Besides the home country with the respective political actors, also global developments may affect economic prosperity such as the stock market or conflicts. Anyway, developments on the European level, especially the European Common Market, may have a strong effect on more than just citizens' lives. They will presumably also be perceived accordingly by large parts of the population due to the media coverage and the debates, for example, on eastward enlargement as well as the funding systems. It can therefore be assumed that the EU is, among others, s an institution to which economic responsibility is

attributed. In terms of identity formation, it seems unlikely that this will take place with the institution itself (e.g. as a European Unionist), since being an EU citizen or not is not a question of individual attitudes, but rather a legal status determined by country membership. However, the EU (and its institutions), as the main political actor representing European policies (Herrmann – Brewer 2004: 2), may promote the formation of a European identity if it is positively evaluated in certain areas, such as the economy.

In summary, the theoretical model predicts that European system integration, in particular the internal market, will be seen as a contributing factor (among others) to the economic situation and development of regions. In addition to national institutions, citizens will evaluate EU institutions on the basis of the economic situation in their regions. A positive evaluation may lead to a stronger connection with the institution and the concept of Europeanisation, resulting in identification as Europeans alongside or instead of their national identity.

State of research

As the theoretical framework suggests, economic benefits in Europe and the possession of an inclusive European identity should be positively correlated. In this section, I will refer to empirical research on this issue in two areas. First, I will discuss empirical-quantitative research on individual-level economic determinants of European identity, focusing on education, employment and occupation. While there is extensive empirical research in this area, research on macroeconomic determinants of European identification, which will be presented in the second part, is rather sparse.

It is expected that citizens who are better off economically, due to their position within the social stratification system, should be more likely to have a positive view of the EU and to develop a sense of identification as Europeans. The empirical evidence so far supports this idea of a spill-over effect, with higher educated more often seeing themselves (also) as Europeans than medium or lower educated (Bergbauer 2018; Borz et al. 2018; Fernández – Eigmüller 2018; Fligstein 2008; Kuhn 2015; Luhmann 2017; Polyakova – Fligstein 2016; van Mol et al. 2015). Similarly, unemployed are in tendency more seldomly identify (also) as Europeans than employed (Fernández – Eigmüller 2018).[4] There is also a clear divide between those working in white-collar leadership positions in service-oriented industries, and those employed in the industrial sector, whereas the latter are less likely to identify as Europeans (Bergbauer 2018; Fernández – Eigmüller 2018; Fligstein 2008; Kuhn 2015; Polyakova – Fligstein 2016; Verhaegen et al. 2014). In addition, those who consider the economic situation of their household to be favourable are also more likely to

4 Though the effect is not statistically significant in the analysis by Kuhn (2015).

identify themselves as Europeans (Pötzschke – Braun 2019; Verhaegen et al. 2014), just as those who assume that they personally benefit economically from the EU (Borz et al. 2018; Verhaegen et al. 2014). As expected by the utilitarian perspective, a spill-over within some groups that profit more from European system integration in terms of economic process is supposed to have resulted in a higher level of European social integration.

While the empirical evidence at the individual level provides a fairly clear picture of the expected positive correlation, studies based on economic macro-level determinants of European identity formation do not provide such clear results. From its theoretical as well as empirical focus, the study by Weber (2016) is the most similar to my approach. Although Weber's work primarily focuses on questions of migration and European identity formation, in his analysis, he tested for correlations of the regional economic level of NUTS-2 and NUTS-3 regions in 15 EU Member States in multivariate models (Weber 2016: 166; Table 9.1). The findings reveal no statistically relevant correlation with European identity whatsoever. In contrast, in his multivariate analysis of aggregated data on the NUTS-2 level, Landes was able to identify a positive and significant effect for GDP per capita (Landes 2020). According to this, rising regional prosperity is accompanied by a higher proportion of people who see themselves (also) as Europeans. However, this analysis leaves out the control of individual level variables.

As pointed out earlier, macro-related analysis more often takes into account the economic level of whole countries. For the analysis of identities exceeding the national one (European and global), Arts and Halman found a positive effect of GDP on identification and a negative effect for the development of GDP (Arts – Halman 2006). Anyway, as in Weber's analysis, none of the effects is statistically significant. Albeit the analysis by Verhaegen et al. (2014) revealed a weakly significant positive effect of GDP growth on the likelihood of European identity in the first place, this effect was no longer significant once control variables were included in the model. Other studies do not support the thesis of a missing effect. Ceka and Sojka (2016) analysed determinants for different forms of European identity. For the cognitive dimension ('seeing oneself as European'; Ceka – Sojka 2016: 483), the authors identified a negative and statistically significant effect for the GDP level of a country and a statistically insignificant negative effect for GDP growth (Ceka – Sojka 2016: 493). This would imply lower levels of inclusive European identity in wealthier countries, rejecting the utilitarian approach expected above. In contrast, the analysis by Polyakova and Fligstein (2016), focussing on exclusive national formation in contrast to inclusive European identity for 2005 and 2010, reveals other findings. The negative effect of GDP on exclusive national identity formation is statistically significant, yet only for the data from 2010 and only if economic development is taken into account (Polyakova – Fligstein 2016). According to this, inclusive European identity is higher in wealthier countries, an observation

in line with the utilitarian approach but contrasting the other studies presented here. Furthermore, GDP growth has a negative and statistically significant effect on exclusive national identity in models for both years (Polyakova – Fligstein 2016: 76f.), which is also consistent with the basic argument.

Why are the results so different? Several explanations can be made for this ad-hoc: a somewhat different operationalisation of European identity, different conversions of the GDP, different micro- or macro-data bases, or differences in the analysis procedure (e.g. two or three level approaches). Albeit these factors may be of importance for the results, they can hardly explain the large deviations in the results, especially regarding the direction of effects. The different years of analysis and country samples that were examined, on the other hand, could rather help to explain the differences. In addition, in the regression models applied, the set of covariates vary between the studies, and the very broad measurement of the economic situation and development of a country may pose another problem. A more fine-grained measurement of the regional context seems to be more appropriate to represent living conditions and to constitute the basis for the evaluation of the economic environment. Finally, it has to be highlighted that, with the exception of the study from Polyakova and Fligstein (2016), none of the studies have a clear focus on economic conditions themselves. GDP and GDP growth are usually only analysed as control factors and have also been largely neglected in the interpretations and discussions. The research gap on regional economic conditions and European identity is regrettable, not least because the explanatory potential of the regional perspective has already been demonstrated in other areas of research on European social integration.[5]

In conclusion, research on individual level determinants of European identity formation points towards higher shares of Europeans among the better-off citizens (highly educated, employed, more well-off occupational classes in the service-oriented sector) – those potentially profiting from European system integration. Research on the macro level is inconclusive. Some studies suggest a negative correlation between an area's economic level and the percentage of citizens who identify as Europeans, while others show a positive correlation. Additionally, some studies find no correlation at all. Albeit a vast number of factors may explain these different results, it shall be mentioned that results even within the same study may differ (Polyakova – Fligstein 2016).

Theoretical Model and Expectations

Having presented the theoretical background and the state of research, I will now combine both into a theoretical model of the economic macro-factors of European identity formation, taking into account the theoretical mechanism at

5 See, for example, the studies on Euroscepticism by Kuhn (2011) and Schraff (2019).

the individual level. For the macro-micro relationship, the utilitarian approach suggests that those who are satisfied with the results of the work of a political institution are more likely to develop a sense of belonging or identification with it. For EU citizens, the work and results of the EU and its institutions are expected to be evaluated here. Therefore, citizens from prosperous regions may evaluate their EU membership as successful in terms of improving or maintaining their economic well-being, and consequently develop some kind of attachment to it, such as an inclusive European identity. The expected effect may apply to two different economic variables: the level of well-being, but also its development over time. While the former is more commonly used in empirical analyses, the latter may be even more relevant as European system integration has developed strongly in recent decades. As presented above, results of empirical studies implicitly testing these arguments are ambiguous, with some studies supporting and other rejecting these expectations. The first hypotheses of this contribution are therefore:

H1a *Citizens in wealthier regions (high GDP) are more likely to be inclusive Europeans.*

H1b *Citizens in regions with economic growth (GDP growth) are more likely to be inclusive Europeans.*

Even if the macro-micro relationship described above is empirically confirmed, this does not prove the underlying argument of a spill-over effect. There may be different ways in which citizens assess the economic situation in their region: the economic situation and development may not be associated at all with the EU; any (even positive) development may be seen as being rather hindered by EU policies and regulations; other institutions, especially national and regional ones, may be seen as being mainly responsible for the economic situation. Last but not least, some citizens may not consider the EU as an economic project, but focus on other objects of interest and expectations (e.g. maintaining peace). This may lead to a lack of interest in linking the economic situation and development with the EU project at all. In sum, to properly test the mechanism expected by Haas (1958), it must be clarified whether the EU is evaluated as doing well in terms of the economic situation and the development in the regions. This results in hypotheses 4.2a and 4.2b:

H2a *Citizens living in more economic well-of regions, more often consider the EU as beneficial for their personal economic situation.*

H2a *Citizens living in regions with economic growth, more often consider the EU as beneficial for their personal economic situation.*

In the argumentation of methodological individualism, and the Macro-Micro--Macro-approach suggested by Coleman (1986), a micro-level effect can be added to the model to explain the initial research interest in a macro-micro effect. In line with the spill-over effect, citizens who evaluate the EU as positive for the economic situation should be more likely to see themselves (also) as Europeans, since the positive evaluation would strengthen the bonding towards the system or, in this case, the European idea embodied by the EU and its institutions. The hypothesis for this correlation reads as:

H3 *People thinking that the EU is economically beneficial are more likely to be inclusive Europeans.*

Evidence for this thesis can be found in current research, as the evaluation of EU membership correlates positively with holding a European identity. As Sybille Luhmann has shown (Luhmann 2017), respondents who evaluate EU membership as good for their own country or view membership positively at all are more likely to identify themselves as Europeans. Fligstein's research provides support for the idea of a positive correlation between a positive view of the EU as good for one's country and an inclusive European identity, although he does not refer to multivariate models. (Fligstein 2008: 144). Furthermore, in studies using variables that explicitly ask about the personal economic benefit from EU membership, a clear positive correlation could be identified (Borz et al. 2018; Verhaegen et al. 2014). These results stand in line with the thesis that a positive economic evaluation of the EU goes along with a higher likelihood of identifying (also) as European.

To finalise the model, the macro-micro links expected in H1a and H1b should diminish due to the control of the individual explanation approach from H3. The attitudes towards the EU as economically beneficial should function as a mediator on the main macro-micro-link and explain this correlation. The final hypotheses therefore are:

H4a *Taking into account the individual evaluation of the EU in terms of the economy, the macro-micro effect for economic wealth on identifying (also) as European (H1a) will disappear.*

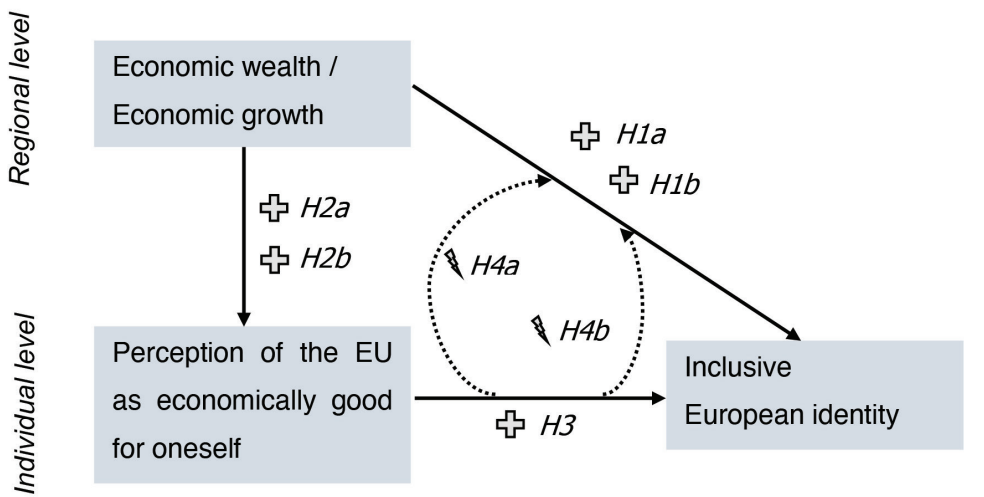
H4b *Taking into account the individual evaluation of the EU in terms of the economy, the macro-micro effect for economic growth on identifying (also) as European (H1b) will disappear.*

One or both of these effects persist despite controls, and the other hypotheses still hold, this would imply that other mechanisms may be relevant in explaining the higher proportion of inclusive Europeans in more prosperous or well-

-developed regions. For example, Fligstein argues that the higher levels of European identity formation among the highly educated and other privileged groups result from a more intense number of transnational contacts and experiences among them (Fligstein 2008: 145). Although an explicit investigation of these hypotheses is to my knowledge not yet conducted, a first indication of support for H4b can be found in the study by Verhaegen et al. (2014). In their multivariate models on explaining European identity, they find a weak positive effect on national economic growth, which is ultimately no longer significant in the model in which a variable was added to assess personal economic benefits through the EU (Verhaegen et al. 2014: 308). Although a number of other variables were also added in the extended model, this could nevertheless be a first indication of a mediation effect.

Figure 2 shows the overall model. It should be noted that the final micro--macro transition, which is part of the basic model by Coleman (1986), is not part of the model. I omitted this transition for the sake of simplicity because in this case the macro-phenomenon to be explained is a purely aggregated one (the share of inclusive Europeans within regions). Although this model seems demanding as some hypotheses build on each other, even rejections of some hypotheses may lead to important new insights for the formation (or not formation) of identity in Europe.

Figure 2: Theoretical model for regional economic factors on inclusive European identity



Source: Own depiction

Data and Methods

Data and Variables

For my empirical analyses, I will rely on data from the Standard *Eurobarometer* (EB). The EB is a multinational cross-sectional survey, nowadays comprehending several waves per year, with samples of around 1,000 individuals per country. While the countries surveyed have varied over the years, all EU Member States as well as some non-EU countries are included in the more recent versions. In the 1990s and early 2000s, additional surveys were conducted in non-EU countries, such as the Central and Eastern survey (GESIS 2020b; conducted 1990–1997) or the Candidate Countries survey (GESIS 2020a; conducted 2001–2004). Interviews are conducted face-to-face, and the target population is selected through national multi-stage random sampling procedures. Despite frequent criticism[6], the EB provides a rich and exhaustive source of data necessary for a comprehensive analysis of macro-level issues on the regional level. The sample consists of the 27 EU Member States, excluding Croatia but including the United Kingdom.

To operationalize European social integration, I will refer to the question of European identity as measured by so-called 'Moreno question' (Ciornei – Recchi 2017: 474; Curtice 2017: 3; Karstens 2020: 123; Luhmann 2017: 1368; Recchi 2019: 277). The item and its response categories read as (European Communities 2004: 19; GESIS 2012a: 252; 2012b: 644; 2012c: 738):

In the near future, do you see yourself as…?

1. *(NATIONALITY) only*
2. *(NATIONALITY) and European*
3. *European and (NATIONALITY)*
4. *European only*

For my analyses, all those who chose one of the first three categories are combined to the group of *inclusive Europeans*. Respondents who have selected category 4 are referred to as *exclusive nationals* (similar to Hooghe – Marks 2004). Cases with missing values (e.g. due to sample splits where the question is missing at all) or escape categories ('None' or 'Refusal') are excluded. Using European identity is not only a widespread and theoretically well-discussed concept for measuring European social integration in research nowadays (e.g. Bergbauer 2018; Fernández – Eigmüller 2018). There are also numerous links to other concepts of European social integration as it correlates with trust in other EU citizens (Westle – Kleiner 2016), transnational solidarity (Ciornei –

6 See Nissen (2014) and her extensive criticism of the Eurobarometer as a political tool with methodological weaknesses.

Recchi 2017; Verhaegen 2017), or positive attitudes towards European system integration (Hooghe – Marks 2004; Immerfall et al. 2010). Despite criticism on the item itself,[7] and issues arising due to adaptions made in the EB over the years,[8] the EB provides a rich source of data available for this operationalisation of European social integration – a necessary precondition for my analytical strategy of researching and explaining regional differences.

For the theoretical model described above it is necessary to operationalize the actual perception of the EU as economically beneficial for the respondent. I am referring to an item that was included in several waves of the EB and which was also used by Verhaegen et al. (2014). The interviewees were presented a list of statements about the EU and asked whether each of them applies to them personally. Respondents were allowed to agree on each statement (multiple answer possibilities) while the answer scale was limited to 'mentioned' or 'not mentioned'. Among the statements, one directly links the EU as economically beneficial to the individual. Question and item read as (European Communities 2004: 3; GESIS 2012a: 69; 2012b: 185; 2012c: 409; 2018: 418):

> *What does the European Union mean to you personally?*
>
> *Economic prosperity*

For the spatial delimitation, I refer to the *Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques* (NUTS), the administrative system concluded by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU (European Parliament – Council of the European Union 2003; Eurostat 2020) to construct a standardized system of regional classification for statistical purpose on different hierarchical levels (European Parliament – Council of the European Union 2003: Article 1). For empirical analyses, this classification is helpful because the regional units have a much lower variance in relation to the population than countries, since the minimum and maximum populations are predetermined.[9] Although referring to a more fine-grained NUTS level, such as NUTS-2 or NUTS-3, could capture regional differences more accurately, I will use NUTS-1 mainly because of the limitations imposed by the number of cases at the individual level in the EB.

7 Bruter criticises that the item assumes a tension between national and European identity that does not necessarily exist, that it fails to represent the strength of the two identities, that there is no possibility of choosing no identity, and that there may well be translation errors (Bruter 2008: 280f.).

8 This concerns changes in the wording of the question and the response categories, as well as the inclusion of escape categories. However, I consider these differences to be relatively unimportant for the purposes of this analysis.

9 For the NUTS-1 units, a minimum of 3 million and a maximum of 7 million citizens is determined, while the range is 800,000 to 3 million for NUTS-2, and 150,000 to 800,000 for NUTS-3 units (European Parliament – Council of the European Union 2003: Article 3), with an exception for countries with a lower population, in which case 'the whole Member State shall be one NUTS territorial unit for this level' (European Parliament – Council of the European Union 2003: Article 3).

The number of cases is fairly constant for each wave, with a sample of about 1,000 respondents in each country.[10] At the regional level, this results in small regional samples in the more populous countries with numerous NUTS-1 regions (e.g. Germany, France, or the United Kingdom), especially for regions with small populations. As such, the NUTS-1 level seems to provide the best balance of regional subdivisions with sufficient sample sizes. To further avoid bias due to small sample sizes and to ensure comparability over time, I excluded NUTS-1 regions with a sample size of less than 30 cases in at least one year in the descriptive analysis. I will refer to the 2013 NUTS revision for all analyses, mainly because of the availability of comparable macro data for different years.

I will operationalize the regional economy by referring to the *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP), which measures the net worth of all goods and services produced within a region (Eurostat 2019a). It is probably the most commonly used indicator for the economy of a macro-unit in studies on European identity (e.g. Arts – Halman 2006; Fligstein et al. 2012; Weber 2016), but also in other analyses on European social integration.[11] Since some regions differ in their currency and purchasing power, I will refer to Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) as units, which are a comparable version of Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) comparable over macro units, indicating how much of the regional currency is needed to buy a predetermined set of goods (Eurostat 2019b). Data is provided by Eurostat (2018) and given per capita. For regional economic development, I will use the relative change (in %) of GDP in PPS per capita for each region since 2004, the year of the EU's eastern enlargement, and since 2008, taking into account the consequences of the European debt crisis experienced by some regions.

Although the focus is on the above-mentioned macro-level determinants of the economic situation, research has shown that a wide range of individual--level characteristics are important for explaining European identity formation (e.g. Ceka – Sojka 2016; Fernández – Eigmüller 2018; Fligstein 2008; Luhmann 2017; Polyakova – Fligstein 2016; Verhaegen et al. 2014; Weber 2016). Therefore, I will introduce several control variables in the multivariate models: gender, age, citizenship status, educational attainment, occupational status, employment situation, and political self-placement. Table A.1 in the Appendix contains a detailed overview of the question wording for all individual level variables. The Appendix also contains a table on the bivariate distributions of the covariates with respect to the corresponding shares of inclusive Europeans and the evaluation of the EU as economically beneficial (Table A.2). For a simplified comparison, variables in this table are recoded into groups.

10 Exceptions are smaller samples for Luxembourg, Malta, and Cyprus (about 500 each), and increased samples for Germany (about 1,500) and the United Kingdom (about 1,300).

11 For example, in research on trust in other Europeans (Westle – Kleiner 2016).

For the sake of comparability and clarity, I will limit the analysis to three points in time: 2004, the first year after the EU's eastern enlargement; 2010, the first year with complete survey information available following the onset of the financial crisis in 2008; and 2015, as one of the most recent years with complete data[12] available.[13] If available, data from two waves in one year were combined. For the descriptive and the multivariate analyses, two different samples are used. In the former, where only the dependent variables – inclusive European identity and the evaluation of the EU as economically beneficial for oneself – and the dependent macro-economic variables are of importance, a bigger sample is used where only cases with missing values among these variables were omitted to keep more information. In contrast, the multivariate sample is reduced as cases were deleted with missing values among one or more of the covariates listed above (listwise deletion). The first sample, used for the descriptive analysis, consists of m = 102,689 cases (m_{2004} = 25,747, m_{2010} = 25,391, and m_{2015} = 51,551) on the individual level, within N = 88 groups, each group consisting of n between 36 and 2,050 individual cases. The second sample, for the multivariate analysis, has a total of m = 76,598 (m_{2004} = 25,346, m_{2010} = 25,389, and m_{2015} = 25,863)[14] individual level cases, N = 93 groups, with n between 7 and 1,069 cases per region. In the multivariate analysis I will restrict the main discussion on the most recent year, 2015, but I will discuss results of other time points as a further test of robustness.

Methods

The analysis consists of a descriptive and a multivariate part. First, I will analyse the distribution of the proportion of citizens with an inclusive European identity and their attitude towards the EU as economically beneficial, as well as GDP and its development over time, using aggregated information. Additionally, data will be examined for individual years. For a first test of correlations, bivariate hypothesis tests are used for the macro analysis and t-tests for the comparison of means between different groups on the individual level.[15] As the analysis is conducted mainly on the regional level, I will primarily depict plots for aggre-

12 Unfortunately, for the NUTS-1 classification used throughout this study (version 2013), the most recent and complete data available is for 2015. During the preparation of this study, Eurostat has switched the classification provided to a more recent version, making it impossible to use newer data without losing regions due to missing information. In my opinion, a more comprehensive dataset including nearly all regions and data for all years is more important than referring to a more recent point in time and omitting macro units.

13 Complete data are also available for 2005 and 2014, but limiting the selection simplifies the analysis.

14 Albeit two waves are available for 2015, only one contains all covariates necessary. Therefore, the number of cases in the multivariate sample, where only one wave could be used for analysis, is much smaller.

15 To account for possible alpha-errors due to multiple testing, t-values are corrected by the bonferroni-adjustment.

gated and weighted individual level data and the economic macro indicators including linear trend lines.

In the second part, I will use multivariate modelling techniques and rely on random intercept models to account for the hierarchical structure of the data, with NUTS-1 regions as grouping variable and individuals at the micro level.[16] I prefer this over a fixed-effect approach, without variation in the intercepts over the Level-2 units, because of the general clustering of data within the sample were the question is focused on (regions) (Snijders – Bosker 2012: 46), the testing of explanatory variables on the second level (regional economic conditions) (Snijders – Bosker 2012: 46), as well as the comparably large number of level two units (Snijders – Bosker 2012: 48). As the dependent variables are coded binary, Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models will be applied with a logit function (Snijders – Bosker 2012: 298). For the analysis of European identity, the model is expanded by including a random slope (Snijders – Bosker 2012: 302) for the mediator variable, the individual evaluation of the EU as economically good for oneself. Metric variables (respondents age, economic strength, and economic development on the regional level) are centred by their corresponding grand mean (Enders – Tofighi 2007). The covariance for the random slope and the intercept is unstructured. Although I will rely on average marginal effects (AMEs), which provide a reasonably tangible interpretation of effects in logistic regressions, effect sizes between different models must be compared with caution because explicit tests for differences are not conducted. Yet, the direction of effects and the corresponding p-values may give us first hints on similarities and differences, and a further comparison of *McKelvey and Zavoina's* R^3 between models may also provide some interesting results, although here too I will draw conclusions only with caution.[17] Despite common concerns on applying a multilevel model with relatively few cases on the second level (e.g. Bryan – Jenkins 2016; Stegmueller 2013), as a test of robustness, I will also analyse and discuss hierarchical models with country (or NUTS-0) as group variable, including the corresponding macro factors for countries.

According to hypotheses H4a and H4b, evaluating the EU as economically beneficial for oneself is regarded as a possible mediator for macroeconomic attributes on inclusive European identity. To test this, the *KHB* method suggested by Karlson, Holm, and Breen (2012) is applied. The method helps to decompose the effect of an independent variable x on a dependent variable y into direct and indirect effects caused by a mediating covariate z, taking into

16 I will refrain from a three-level model, with the country level above the regional level, as several countries in the sample are not subdivided into further NUTS-1 regions because they are too small or lack sufficient population.

17 As discussed by Veal and Zimmermann, McKelvey and Zavoina's R^2 'seems most conducive to comparability across different types of empirical models' (Veall – Zimmermann 1996: 2), and therefore comes close to the initial meaning of an R^2 as known from Ordinary Least Square regressions.

account the problem of 'rescaling' of coefficients in Generalized Linear Models (Karlson et al. 2012: 288; Mood 2010). As such, the KHB method can help to identify whether and to what extent a total effect (the observed effect without a mediator variable) can be split-up into a direct (the existing effect after controlling for another variable) and the indirect effect (which is the difference between the total and direct effect).

The statistical software used is Stata in version 15.1 (StataCorp 2017), with the commands *melogit* for the Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (StataCorp 2019c), *margins* for the post regression predictions (StataCorp 2019b), and *estat icc* for the intraclass correlation coefficient estimation (StataCorp 2019a). With the *fit_meologit_2lev*-ado by Langer (2019) for the Pseudo-R^3 (McKelvey & Zavoina), the *khb*-ado for the comparison of coefficients by Kohler, Karlson, and Holm (2011),[18] and the *coefplot*-ado for the depiction of coefficient plots by Jann (2014), three user written Stata-ados are used for the empirical analysis and the depiction furthermore.

Results

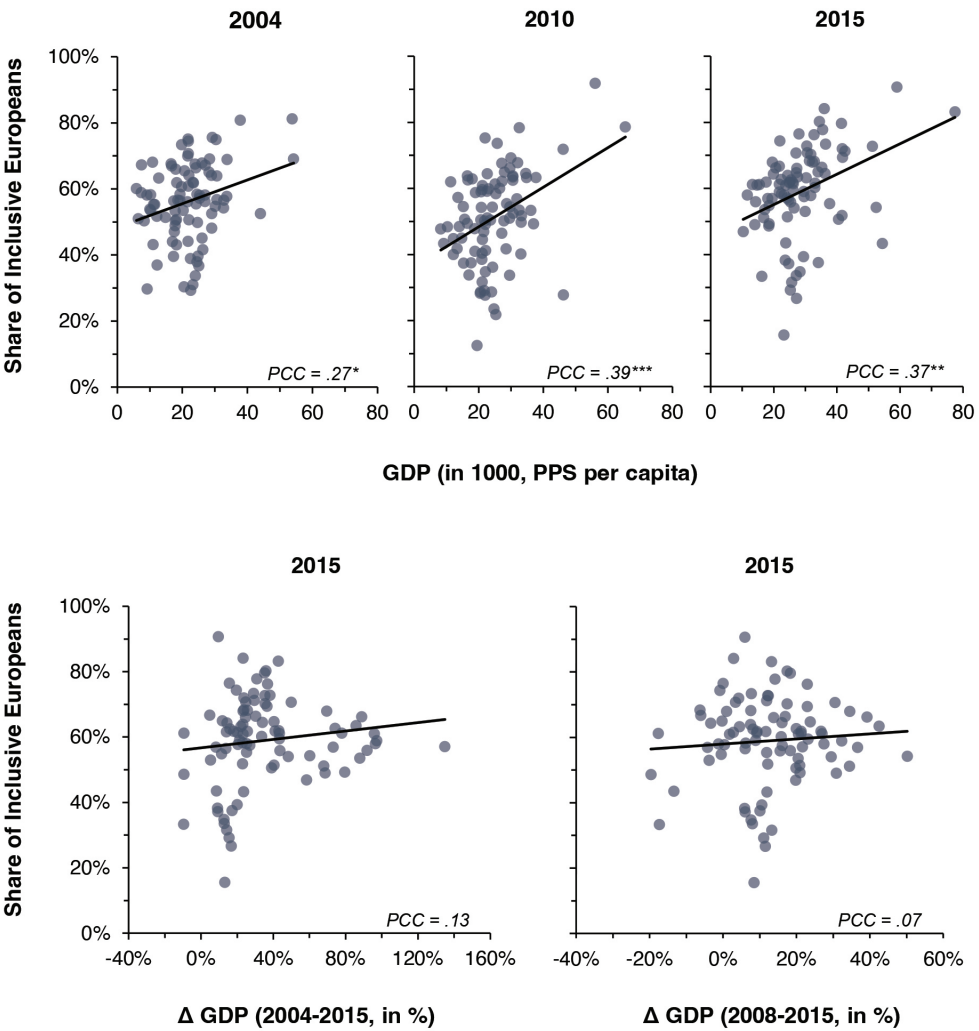
Descriptives

Let us start with the first set of hypotheses, which assume a positive correlation between the level of economic prosperity of a region (H1a) respectively the economic development (H1b) and the proportion of citizens who see themselves (also) as Europeans. In the upper panel of Figure 3, three scatterplots show the weighted shares of inclusive Europeans (vertical axis) and the GDP (horizontal axis) for all NUTS-1 regions for each year. Trend lines were added to the depictions to highlight the direction of a possible correlation. Beginning with the plot for 2004, one can initially observe a strong concentration in the centre (between 40% and 60% of regions with inclusive Europeans and a GDP of 20,000 to 40,000 PPS per capita). Despite this accumulation, the overall trend line suggests a positive correlation. Furthermore, the regions situated at the extreme ends of the scales are mainly in line with this positive tendency. The best-off regions also show the highest levels of inclusive European identity and, vice versa, the lowest levels can be found among those with a comparably low GDP. Despite some minor exceptions, it is remarkable that there are no outstanding examples at the extremes contradicting the hypotheses. Comparing the results for 2004 with the other years verifies the stability of this positive trend over time, with the slope of the trend line being steepest for 2010. Furthermore, the correlations are statistically significant on a moderate or high

18 In its current version, the Stata-ado *khb* does not provide the use of the *melogit* command for the Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models used here. Instead, the test is performed with a fixed effects logit model with robust clustered standard errors for regions.

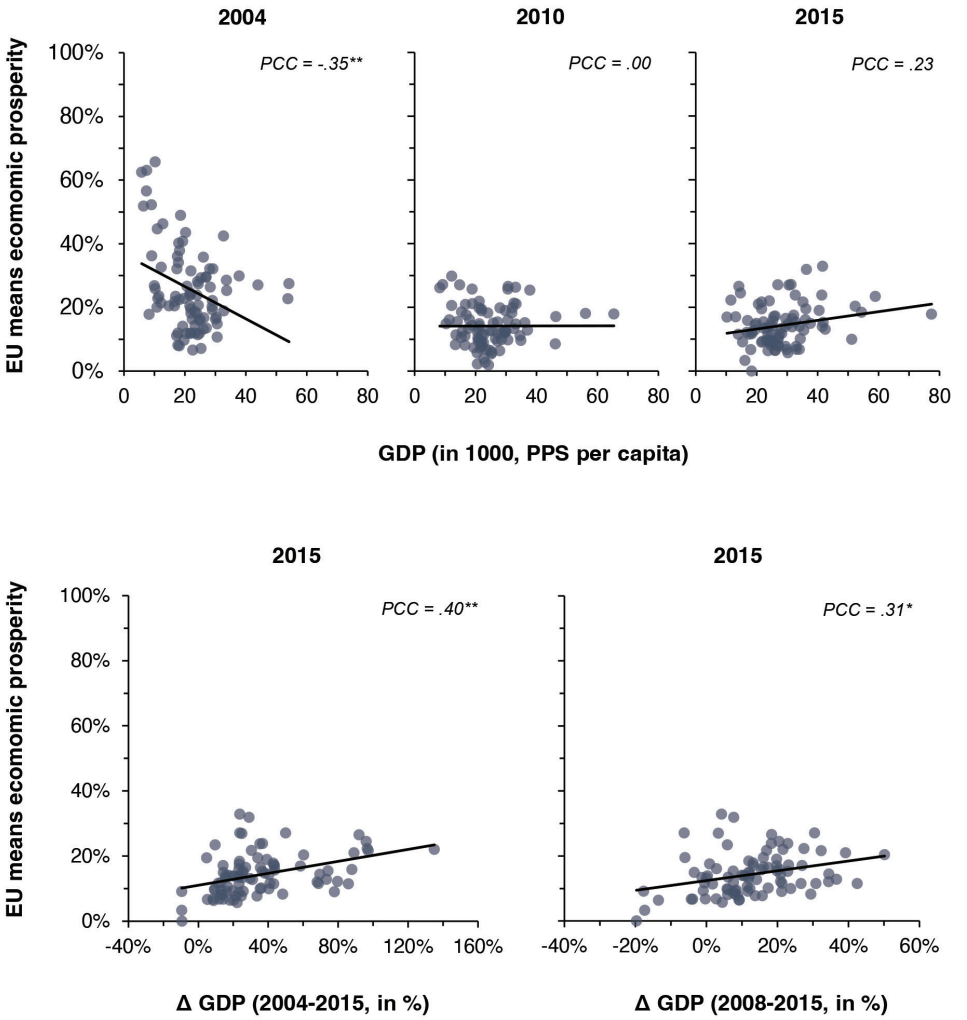
level (p<.05 in 2004, p<.001 for 2010, and p<.01 for 2015) and Pearson's correlation coefficients (PCC or Pearson's R) point towards moderate correlations (.27 for 2004.39 for 2010, and.37 for 2015).

Figure 3: Share of inclusive Europeans, GDP, and development of GDP (NUTS-1 level, 2004, 2010 & 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). N = 88. Weighted. Own calculations and depiction. + p<.1 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Figure 4: Share of citizens evaluating the EU as economically beneficial and GDP (NUTS-1 level, 2004, 2010 & 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). N = 88. Weighted. Own calculations and depiction. + p<.1 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

To test H1b, the lower panel of Figure 3 is similar constructed as the upper panel, but with the relative economic growth plotted on the horizontal axis. In this case, both plots show the share of inclusive Europeans for each region in 2015, but with different time intervals for the economic development (since 2004 and 2008). It is initially difficult to discern a clear pattern in the plots, as the

regions are widely scattered. Especially among regions with a comparably moderate growth, there is a wide range of regions with different levels of inclusive European identity. Furthermore, regions at the extremes do not show a pattern pointing towards a clear trend whatsoever. Correlations are rather weak (PCC of.13 and.07) and not statistically significant. To make a short conclusion on the first set of hypotheses: the data suggest a positive correlation of economic wealth and share of inclusive Europeans over the regions for all years, which is in line with H1a. In contrast, no correlation can be found for the economic development and inclusive European identity among regions, contradicting H1b.

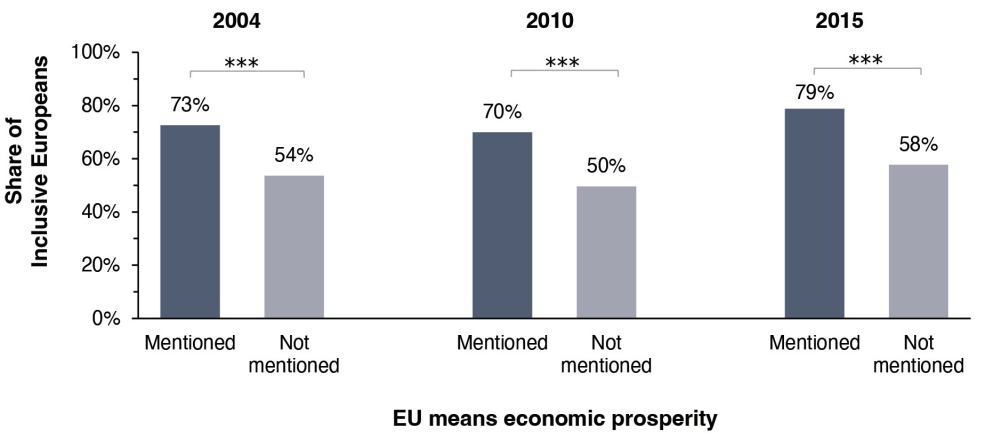
Let us now focus on the question whether citizens evaluate the EU as economically beneficial for them personally. As stated in the second set of the hypotheses, I expect the share of respondents seeing the EU as economically beneficial to their own life to turn out higher both in wealthier (H2a) as well as in more prosperous regions (H2b). As shown in the upper panel in Figure 4, the total share of respondents agreeing on the statement that the EU means economic prosperity is quite low and even diminishing over time with 25% of the respondents agreeing to this item in 2004 and about 14% in 2010 and 2015 (see Table A.2 in the Appendix). As the plots also show, the variance differs between years: while in some regions more than 60% of respondents agreed on this statement in 2004, the highest levels for 2010 and 2015 are 30% and 33% respectively. For 2004, there is a clear negative correlation, while the trend line for 2010 is practically horizontal, and for 2015, there even seems to be a slight positive correlation. The correlation coefficient is strongest for 2004 (PCC of –.35) and highly significant ($p<.001$), while there is no correlation for 2010 (PCC of.00) and only a weak one for 2015 (PCC of.23), whereby the latter are both not significant.

Regarding the correlation between GDP growth and the share of respondents who consider the EU to be economically beneficial for themselves in 2015, the correlation shown in the lower panel of Figure 4 seems to be more in line with the expectations of the model (H2b). In both plots, the trend line is positive, indicating higher approval rates in regions with long-term (left hand plot) or post-crisis (right hand plot) growth in contrast to those with a declining economy. Again, there is a notable variance in the centre of both plots (e.g. in the moderate growth regions). The outliers at the extremes are in line with the general trends. Although the slopes appear to be moderately steep, this may be due to the overall lower level of agreement on the evaluation question. The correlation is moderate for the long-term development (PCC of.40) and slightly weaker for the post-crisis development (PCC of.31), with the first correlation significant at the 1% level and the second only significant at the 5% level. In sum, with regard to the second set of hypotheses on the attitudes towards the EU as being regarded as economically beneficial by the respondents, there is no evidence for a positive correlation regarding the level of wealth as stated in H2a.

In contrast, the distinct trend observed in 2004 even points towards a negative correlation. At least there is some initial evidence for H2b, as citizens in regions with economic growth more often consider the EU as economically beneficial for themselves than those living in regions with economic decline. This positive correlation holds true for both, the long-term but also the post-crisis development. Furthermore, the level of agreement on this item is generally rather low and has furthermore diminished between 2004 and 2010.

Finally, according to H3, I expect citizens regarding the EU as economically beneficial for themselves to be more likely to identify as inclusive Europeans. In Figure 5, the bar charts depict the share of inclusive Europeans among those who agreed on the item that the EU means economic prosperity and those who did not for each year. There are clear differences in all years, with more citizens who agree with the statement seeing themselves (also) as Europeans than those who disagree with it. In addition, there was little change over time, with a difference of 19 PPTs in 2004, 20 PPTs in 2010 and 21 PPTs in 2015. In line with that, T-Tests are highly significant for each year (p<.001). Anyway, it is notable to mention that even among those rejecting the statement, at least every second thinks of themselves (also) as European. Albeit the results clearly support H3, the differences could have been much more distinct.

Figure 5: Share of inclusive Europeans by the evaluation of the EU as economically beneficial (2004, 2010 & 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), and 84.3 (European Commission 2016c). N(2004) = 25,346, N(2010) = 25,389, N(2015) = 25,863. Weighted. Own calculations and depiction.
T-Test statistics, + p<.1 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Multivariates

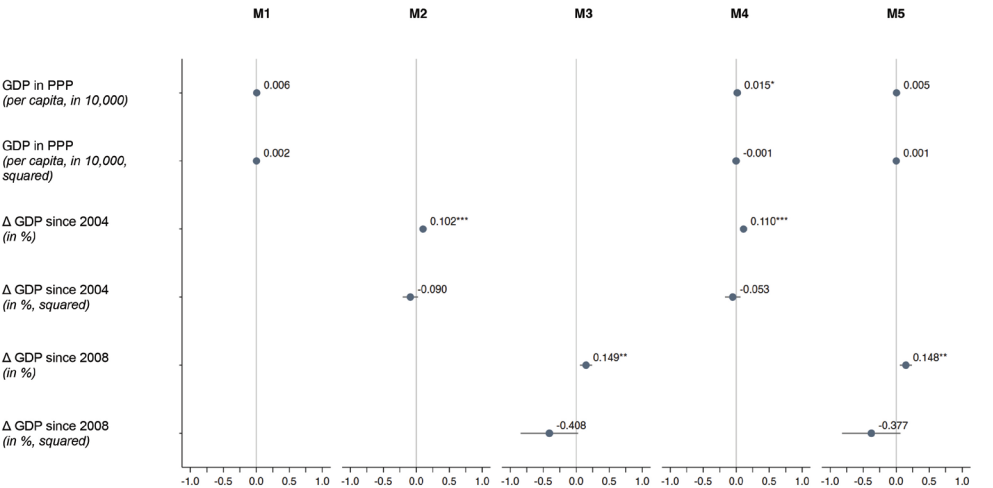
In the following, the hypotheses will be tested by applying multivariate methods. The structure of this section will not be in line with the previous one, which was in accordance with the enumeration of the hypotheses. Here, the analysis is put in order with the dependent variable used, starting with H2a and H2b, asking for the correlation of economic attributes of the regions on the individual evaluation of the EU for one's economic situation. Afterwards, the dependent variable switches to the question of inclusive European identity, to test the remaining hypotheses. For reasons of simplicity, I will restrict detailed analysis for the 2015 data, while I will briefly discuss results for the other years.

Starting with the second set of hypotheses from the theoretical model, the question in focus is whether regional economic attributes are correlated with the individual evaluation of the EU as economically beneficial. For the economic level (H2a), the descriptive results were highly ambiguous, with a negative trend for the first year in focus (2004), none for the second (2010), and a slight positive one for the last (2015). For the economic development (H2b), in contrast, there was a positive correlation as expected. In Figure 6, Average Marginal Effects (AMEs), including 95% confidence intervals and information on significance tests, are depicted for the regression models. Each model contains a different set of macro variables, with linear and squared terms for the macro-economic factors, the long- and post-crisis development, and different combinations of both. Individual level control variables are included in the model but not shown here (see Table A.3 in the Appendix).[19] In M1, the GDP is introduced as a linear and a squared term. The value is divided by the factor of 10,000 to make the effect more visible. Even though there is a weak positive correlation for both terms, they are not significant. Hence, the economic wealth of a region does not seem to be correlated with the answer behaviour here. The different economic developments are taken into account in M2 and M3, with the long-term development since 2004 in the second, and the post-crisis development since 2008 in the third model. There are clear positive trends for the linear trends for both developments, accompanied by highly significant effects ($p<.001$). The AME for the long-term development of about.102 in M2 can be interpreted as followed: the share of respondents agreeing with the statement that the EU is economically beneficial increases on average by 10.2% when the regional GDP increases by an additional factor of 1 (or a plus of 100%). The effect is somewhat stronger for the development following the financial crisis in

19 In short, respondents who are male, younger, better educated, still in education, employed in better paid jobs in the tertiary sector, and have a citizenship other than that of their country of residence are more likely to perceive the EU as economically beneficial than their counterparts. There is also a somewhat linear left-right effect for political self-classification, with left-wingers being less likely to agree with the statement, while moderate and extreme right-wingers are more likely to agree with it.

2008 in M3 (AME of.149). Albeit insignificant throughout, the negative squared terms indicate a weakening of the linear effect in the faster growing regions. The results on economic growth remain basically unchanged when models are expanded by including the economic level (M4 and M5). Minor changes can be found for the model including long-term development (M4), where the linear effect for the economic level now is significant on a low level (p<.05), albeit the AME still is comparably weak.

Figure 6: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me and regional economic factors (regression, 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) including 95% confidence interval, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001. N = 25,863. Several covariates dropped, see Table A.3 in the Appendix for complete results.

A comparison of the AIC and other fit measures (Table A.3 in the Appendix), confirms that the macro-factor variables on the regional level are contributing to improving the fit of the model and therefore are of some importance for the explanation of regional level differences. Furthermore, the country level analysis (Table A.6 in the Appendix) confirms the basic results of the regional level analysis, although the latter provides a slightly better fit, stronger effect sizes, and shows more variance, presumably due to the finer-grained perspective and (some) within-country differences.

To identify differences between years of analysis, predicted probabilities for the three different sample years are presented in the Appendix (Figure A.1). For each model, all individual level covariates and the linear and squared macro factor for the economic variables (arranged horizontally) were added. For the

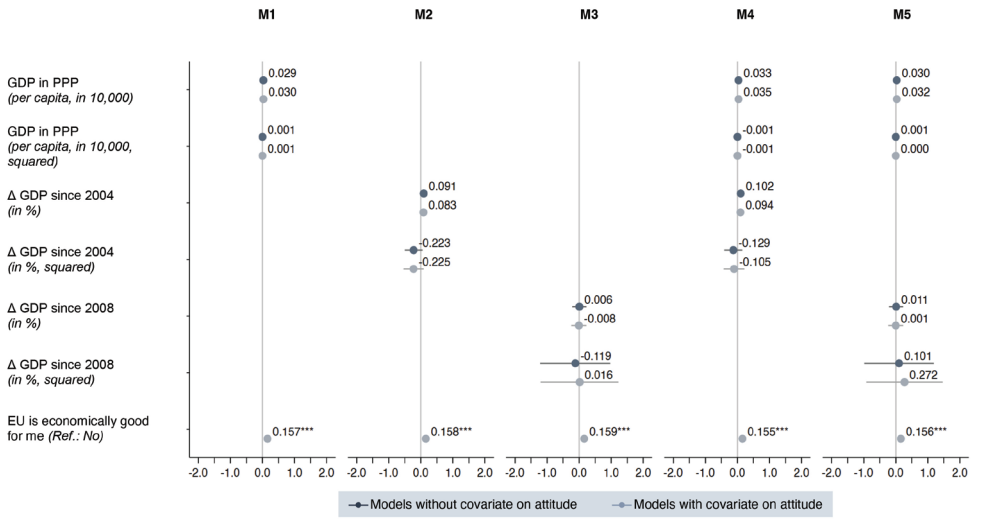
2004 sample, the proportions of citizens who agreed with the statement were higher in both the economically well-off and, even more so, in the poorer regions than in the regions with moderate economic prosperity. Both, the negative linear and the positive squared terms are highly significant ($p<.001$, see Table A.4 in the Appendix). However, all predictions point to a rejection of H2a, as the view that the EU is economically beneficial is not more common among citizens in wealthier regions. Secondly, for the 2010 sample, the correlation for the development since 2004 is positive, and the linear term is significant ($p<.01$, see Table A.5 in the Appendix). This adds to the evidence in favour of H2b, i.e. that citizens from regions with economic growth are also more likely to perceive the EU as an economically beneficial factor.

Let us now turn to the central topic of interest in this study, namely European identity. According to the hypotheses, it is expected that citizens in wealthier (H1a) and economically growing (H1b) regions should me more likely to identify themselves (also) as Europeans. The descriptive analysis has shown that the proportion of inclusive Europeans tends to be positively correlated with prosperity, but not necessarily with economic development. Figure 7 shows the results of the multivariate analysis on inclusive European identity for 2015. To test for the possible effect of mediation by the variable on perceptions of the EU as economically beneficial (H4a and H4b), two versions are shown for each model: one including the individual-level covariate (bright dots) and one without the variable (dark dots). Again, individual-level covariates included in the models are not shown (see Table A.7 in the Appendix).[20] Let us first consider the models without the additional individual-level covariate (dark dots). In M1, linear and squared terms for the economic level were introduced. As shown by the positive effect of the linear term, the proportion of inclusive Europeans within a region appears to be positively correlated with its economic strength. However, just as the squared term, which has an AME close to zero, neither effect is significant. For the development of the economic situation over time (M2 to M5), the effects are also consistently insignificant. Results remain unchanged when the economic level and development variables are combined (M4 and M5). As the variance of the Level-2 intercept reveals (Table A.7 in the Appendix), there is significant variance at the regional level, and this variance is still significant in M4 with the highest Pseudo-R^3 for the fixed effects (.174) and the lowest ICC (.120). Since the lowest AIC is found in M2 (31192.6), this is the most efficient

20 The findings basically confirm results previous studies (Bergbauer 2018; Ceka – Sojka 2016; Fernández – Eigmüller 2018; Fligstein 2008; Kuhn 2015; Luhmann 2017; Polyakova – Fligstein 2016; van Mol et al. 2015; Weber 2016): men, younger respondents, the highly educated, but also those still in education, those working in higher tertiary occupations, and those with a nationality other than their country of residence or multiple nationalities are more likely to identify as Europeans. On the other hand, there are negative effects for the unemployed, the retired and those in manual occupations. Finally, those at the extreme ends of the political spectrum are less likely to (also) identify as European, while effects are positive for the moderate positions.

model in terms of the number of covariates and explanatory power, albeit differences are very small. Overall, the economic macro variables contribute little to explaining European identity formation according to these models, which ultimately contradicts the expectations (H1a and H1b).

Figure 7: Inclusive European identity and regional economic factors (regression 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) including 95% confidence interval, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001. N = 25,863. Several covariates dropped, see Table A.7 & Table A.8 in the Appendix. for complete results.

As mentioned before, the models shown as bright dots in Figure 7 include the variable for assessing whether the EU is economically good for oneself as a binary coded variable. Adding this variable will help to clarify whether this individual-level assessment is positively correlated with inclusive European identity (H3), and whether the macro-micro effect is mediated by the individual--level correlation (H4a and H4b). First, the individual-level correlation is highly significant (p<.001), supporting the findings from the descriptive results and other studies (Verhaegen et al. 2014). With a robust AME of about.16 across all models, the proportion of inclusive Europeans among those who agree with the statement is, on average, 16 PPTs higher than among those who disagree with it. The improved fit measures when adding the variable, such as the reduced AIC (Table A.7 and A.8 in the Appendix), are also in line with H3 and highlight the overall high correlation on the individual level.

For the macro effects, the differences between the models – with and without the variable for evaluating the EU as economically beneficial – are very small. Accordingly, none of the effects is significant. Thus, despite the clear correlation at the individual level, a mediation as expected cannot be identified. This finding is supported by the analysis using the KHB method (Table A.14 in the Appendix), where the effects are decomposed: While there are some statistically significant changes that even indicate some mediation through the reduction of positive coefficients, none of the main effects themselves are significant. This is true for both the effects of the reduced model (without the additional covariate) and the full model.[21] In summary, while the individual-level correlation supports the hypothesis (H3), no mediation effect of importance is evident for the 2015 data. Thus, there is no support for neither H4a nor H4b.

To test the robustness of these results for different time points, the predicted probabilities for all years and each different set of macro variables are shown in the Appendix (Figure A.2). Albeit there is a positive tendency for citizens living in wealthier regions to be more likely to identify (also) as Europeans for all years, as stated in H1a, the significance tests do not support this result. For the economic development, there seems to be a curvilinear correlation for the long-term development in general, contradicting the positive correlation expected. Only for the post-crisis development for 2010 there seems to exist such a correlation, albeit the effects are not significant (see Table A.10 & A.11 in the Appendix). As such, citizens living in regions with economic growth are not more likely to identify (also) as Europeans in general, which is in contrast to H1b. Regarding a possible mediation, the graphical representation confirms the findings discussed above, as there are only small differences between the models for each year and set of variables. Compared with the analysis at country level (Table A.12 & Table A.13 in the Appendix), the models at regional level provide a slightly better fit, while the main results are basically the same. Taken together, the results from these approaches confirm the robustness of the findings, as macro factors contribute little to explaining whether citizens see themselves (also) as Europeans, albeit there is a slight positive tendency for the economic situation.

Conclusion

In this contribution, I tried to disentangle the relationship between economic regional macro factors and inclusive European identity. Given that the EU can be seen as primarily an economic construct because of its heritage and key

21 The only exception is the squared effect for the post-crisis development (M6). The effect is negative and significant at a moderate level ($p<.01$) and slightly reduced in the full model with all variables included. However, in this case the mediation is of little importance, as the squared effect is not central to the corresponding hypothesis.

projects, the question of whether a European identity can emerge as a result of regional economic prosperity or growth is an important research topic for those interested in strengthening this form of identity. As already practiced through the ESI Funds (European Commission 2015), the economic situation of regions has been the focus of EU redistributive measures for some time, which makes the question of possible links between economic indicators and European social integration particularly interesting. Based on the spill-over approach by Hass (1958), I derived a theoretical model suggesting that citizens living in prosperous and economically developing regions are more likely to identify themselves (also) as Europeans and to perceive the EU as economically beneficial for them. Since the latter was assumed to correlate positively with inclusive European identity, a mediation effect was expected, in which the correlation at the individual level should weaken the direct macro effect on inclusive European identity.

Descriptive and multivariate analyses for Eurobarometer data from 2004, 2010, and 2015 have produced some interesting findings. Regarding the macroeconomic determinants of inclusive European identity, there is some evidence that citizens in richer regions are more likely to identify (also) as Europeans at all points in time. Nevertheless, this trend is rather weak and not significant in multivariate models. What is clear, however, is that the economic development of the regions over the years is not related to the proportion of inclusive Europeans in the regions at all. The situation is somewhat different when it comes to the question of whether citizens consider the EU to be economically beneficial for themselves. While people in poorer regions were more likely to think that the EU was economically beneficial to them in 2004, this correlation was no longer evident for 2010 or 2015. However, there are slight tendencies for citizens in regions with stronger economic growth to agree more often with this statement than among those living in economically stagnating or shrinking regions. The overall percentage of people who consider the EU to be economically beneficial to them is rather low and has decreased between 2004 and 2010. However, citizens who regard the EU as economically beneficial for themselves are significantly more likely to (also) see themselves as Europeans. This correlation does not, as expected, mediate the impact of the macro variables of economic level or regional development on inclusive European identity. Finally, the results are robust when a country rather than a regional approach is used. Comparing these two approaches has shown that the more fine-grained regional perspective provides more variance, which can be attributed to within-country differences.

Let us relate the results to the theoretical framework. Even if the more complex model presented is not fully supported, the general idea of a spill-over effect cannot be completely neglected. As those who rate the EU as positive for their economic situation are more likely to be inclusive Europeans, the idea

that a positive evaluation leads to attachment or even identity formation seems to hold. However, the relationship of macro factors and identity is definitely more complicated than expected. A key role is played by the positive correlation between the level of economic growth and the item on individual evaluation. Nevertheless, it is clear that the EU is perceived by few as a contributor to economic prosperity.

In the light of these findings, what socio-political conclusions can be drawn if actors are to pursue successfully the objective of promoting European identity among the population (European Commission 2017: 2)? The distinction between European identity and economic evaluation provides us with an important starting point here. Since the effect of identity is directly related to the economic evaluation of the EU and the latter is influenced by economic growth, promoting economic development seems to be a possible driver for European social integration, especially in the less prosperous regions where inclusive European identity is somewhat less strong. With only a small minority of citizens believing that the EU is good for them economically, promoting economic growth in the regions can be a strategy to unlock untapped potential. Benoît Cœuré, member of the ECB Executive Board, identified several ways to strengthen economic development and convergence, in particular by boosting the economies of the poorer regions of Eastern and Central Europe, while also recommending the expansion of the single market, the promotion of a capital market, but also facilitating access to cohesion funds by strengthening institutions and simplifying the system (Cœuré 2018). Not only can more support be given to regions, but economic support for certain groups who are less likely to perceive the EU as an economic benefit to them personally, namely the less educated and unskilled workers, can increase this sense of economic gain from EU membership.

An interesting case in point is that of the ECE countries. Despite the above-average economic growth in these countries mentioned in the introduction, Widespread belief in the economic benefits of EU membership has declined significantly over the years to an average level (GESIS 2019: 451). The example of the ECE countries thus illustrates that even high economic growth does not necessarily lead directly to a positive assessment of the EU, even if there is an overall correlation in the data. One conclusion that could be drawn from this is that the assessment of these issues could be based more on information and knowledge. As ESI Funds are quite complicated and difficult to understand, future recasts could not only provide the opportunity to widen the scope of the redistribution system and add new possibilities to make it more accessible to more groups. A more extensive public campaign and further information material could also make the system better known to citizens. For the current period of ESI Funds (2021–2017), the European Commission has already recognised the problem of the complexity of the funding system and has communicated

as an objective to 'make the rules less complex' (European Commission 2018). As the debate on the so-called Brexit has shown, the lack of knowledge in this area has so far meant that the economic disadvantages of this system, such as gross capital flows, have been more successfully exploited politically than the positive effects.

This analysis has several limitations. Relying on European identity is not only problematic because the 'Moreno question' used only taps the 'cognitive perspective' of self-categorisation (Bergbauer 2018: 17; Ceka – Sojka 2016: 483), while leaving out other aspects of identity such as emotional attachment (Bergbauer 2018: 17; Ceka – Sojka 2016: 486). Extending this research to other operationalisations of European social integration, such as European solidarity (e.g. Díez Medrano et al. 2019) or trust (e.g. Delhey 2004, 2007; Westle – Kleiner 2016), may be worthwhile in order to determine the robustness of the results, but also to explore the specificities of each topic. In addition, further research is needed to provide a more detailed explanation of economic satisfaction with the economic aspects of European system integration at the individual level. The item used in this analysis is very simple. Further questions on the assessment of the economic impact of EU membership, in particular on the perceived impact on the economic situation of regions or countries, could be helpful to get a more precise understanding of the issue at hand. Finally, although GDP is the most popular indicator for measuring regional economies, it is only one of many possibilities. For example, redistributive measures based on EU funds could be of interest in future further studies. Improving our knowledge of the regional aspects of European social integration could provide us with new information on where and what kind of social policies can be implemented effectively in the future.

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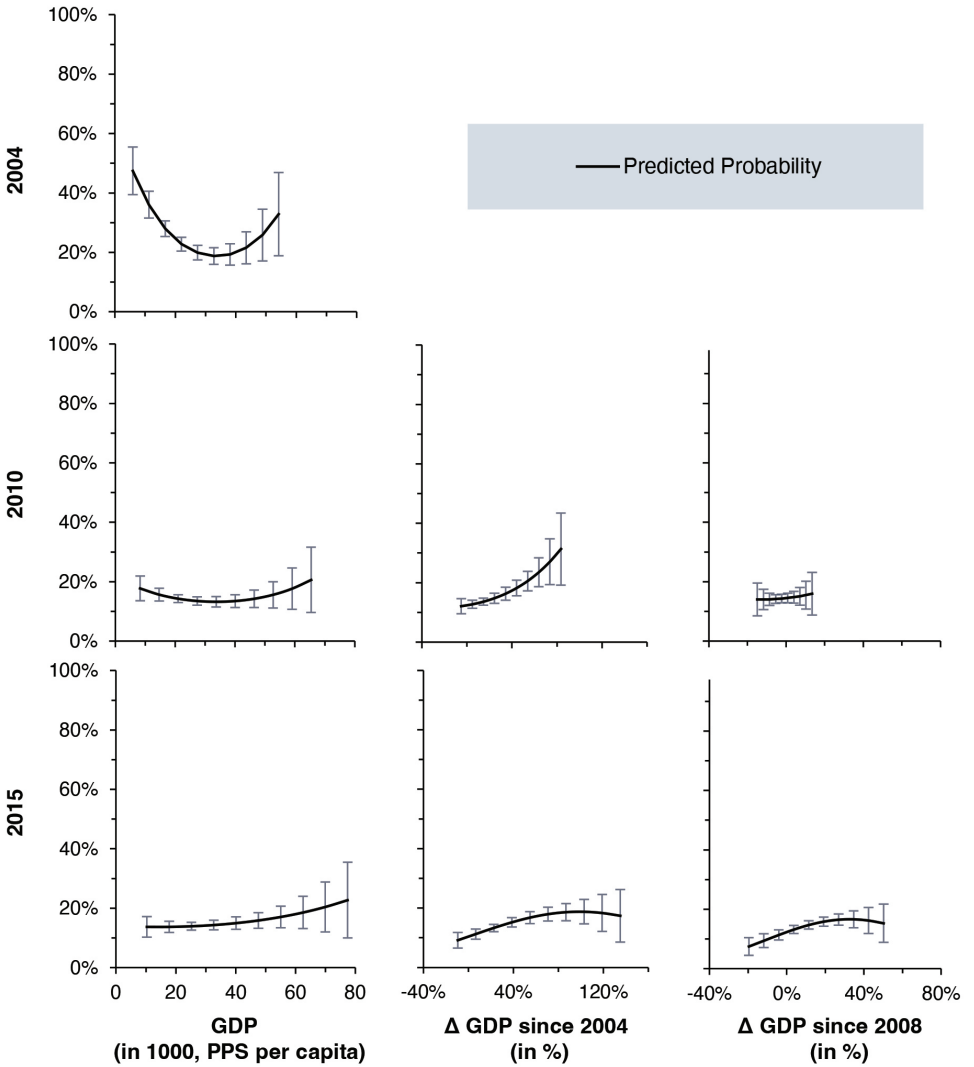
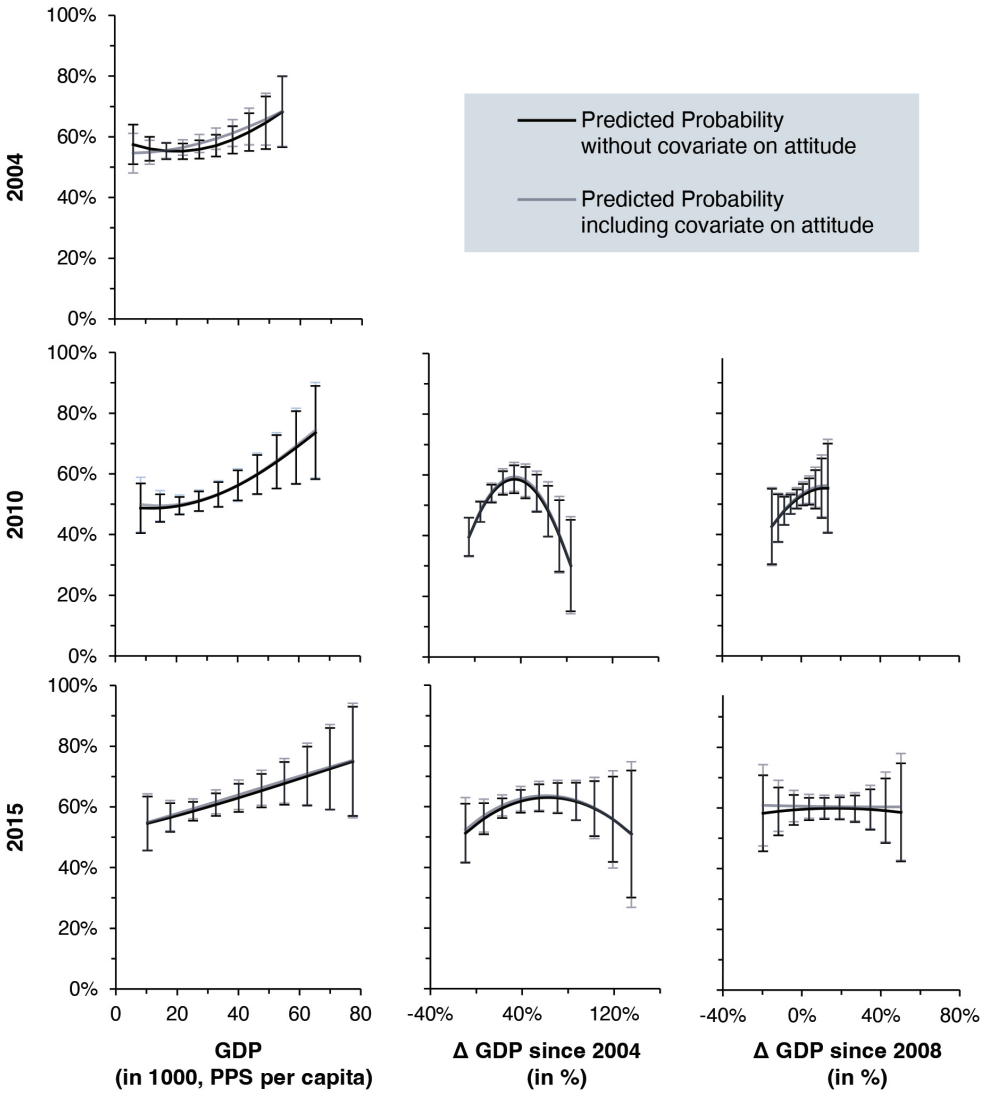
APPENDIX

Figure A.1: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me and regional economic factors (predictions, 2004, 2010 & 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). Predictions derived from Table A.3 (M1, M2, and M3), Table A.4 (M1), and Table A.5 (M1, M2, and M3). N(2004) = 25,346, N(2010) = 25,389, N(2015) = 25,863. Predictions derived from Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models including other covariates. Own calculations and depiction.

Figure A.2: Inclusive European identity and regional economic factors (predictions, 2004, 2010 & 2015)



Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). Predictions derived from Table A.7 (M1, M2, and M3), Table A.8 (M1, M2, and M3), Table A.9 (M1 and M3), Table A.10 (M1, M2, and M3), and Table A.11 (M1, M2, and M3). N(2004) = 25,346, N(2010) = 25,389, N(2015) = 25,863. Predictions derived from Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models including other covariates. Own calculations and depiction.

Table A.1: Description of variables: Definitions, wording, and recoding

Variables	*Definition / Item wording*	*Values*
Inclusive European identity	*(In the near future) Do you see yourself as...?* *1) (NATIONALITY) only* *2) (NATIONALITY) and European* *3) European and Nationality* *4) European only* Grouping: 1) = Exclusive national identity (coded as 0) 2), 3), or 4) = Inclusive European identity (coded as 1)	Exclusive national identity Inclusive European identity
Sex	*Gender*	Male Female
Age	*How old are you?* (Open question)[1]	15-24 years 25-34 years 35-44 years 45-54 years 55-64 years 65 years or more
Citizenship	*What is your nationality? Please tell me the country(ies) that applies(y).* (List of several countries; multiple answers possible)[2]	Only Country Country and other Other(s) only
Education	*How old were you when you stopped full-time education?* (Open question)[2]	15 years or less Middle (16-19 years) High (20 years or more) In education
Class	*What is your current occupation?* (List of several non-active and active employment situations)[2] If currently not in occupation: *Did you do any paid work in the past? What was your last occupation?* (List of several occupations)[2]	Unskilled manual workers Farmer / Fisherman Owner of a shop Employed at desk / travelling / service job Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor Proprietors / higher management / professionals Service Class Never worked

Employment situation	*What is your current occupation?* (List of several non-active and active employment situations)[2]	Employed Unemployed Houseperson Retired
Political orientation	*In political matters people talk of 'the left' and 'the right'. How would you place your views on this scale?* (1 = Left, 10 = Right)	Left Moderate left Centre Moderate right Right No answer / missing

(Continuation on next page)

(Continuation)

EU is economically good for me personally	*What does the EU mean to you personally?* (List of several items, including:) *Economic prosperity* (multiple answers possible)	Not mentioned Mentioned

[1] *Answers grouped for bivariate analyses only.*
[2] *Answers grouped.*
[3] *Bivariate groups used in descriptive analyses on the macro level and in multivariate models.*

Source: European Communities (2004) and GESIS (2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2019, 2018).

Table A.2: Cross table of inclusive European identity, perceiving the EU as economically

Variables	*Value*	*2004*
Sex	Male	62%
	Female	55%
Age	15 - 24 years	65%
	25 - 34 years	65%
	35 - 44 years	61%
	45 - 54 years	60%
	55 - 64 years	55%
	65 years or more	45%
Citizenship	Only Country	58%
	Country and other	75%
	Other(s) only	80%
Education	15 years or less	43%
	Middle (16-19 years)	56%
	High (20 years or more)	72%
	In education	72%
Class	Unskilled manual workers	42%
	Skilled manual worker	49%
	Farmer / Fisherman	40%
	Owner of a shop	61%
	Employed at desk / travelling / service job	61%
	Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	67%
	Proprietors / higher management / professionals	72%
	Never worked	64%
Employment situation	Employed	65%
	Unemployed	50%
	Houseperson	51%
	Retired	48%
Political orientation	Left	60%
	Moderate left	66%
	Centre	58%
	Moderate right	59%
	Right	50%
	No answer / missing	52%
EU is economically good for me	Not mentioned	54%
	Mentioned	73%
Total		58%

Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Commission 2016c). m2004 = 25,346, m2010 = 25,389, m2015 = 25,863. Weighted. Valid values only. Own calculations and

beneficial, and covariates (relative frequencies, 2004, 2010 & 2015)

Inclusive European identity		Perceiving the EU as economically beneficial		
2010	*2015*	*2004*	*2010*	*2015*
57%	65%	28%	16%	16%
49%	57%	22%	12%	12%
58%	65%	28%	17%	15%
57%	64%	27%	16%	15%
57%	67%	25%	14%	15%
54%	63%	24%	14%	16%
52%	61%	25%	12%	13%
39%	50%	20%	11%	11%
51%	60%	25%	14%	13%
79%	75%	23%	12%	23%
91%	89%	29%	23%	25%
36%	42%	19%	9%	8%
48%	57%	24%	13%	12%
68%	73%	31%	18%	19%
67%	74%	29%	19%	17%
39%	38%	17%	11%	8%
45%	51%	22%	12%	12%
35%	38%	25%	14%	10%
54%	66%	24%	15%	13%
53%	63%	25%	12%	13%
63%	73%	29%	16%	18%
68%	76%	28%	18%	22%
57%	64%	27%	17%	14%
60%	67%	27%	16%	16%
43%	54%	23%	10%	11%
43%	50%	19%	12%	10%
42%	52%	21%	11%	12%
50%	64%	24%	11%	13%
60%	72%	26%	15%	16%
54%	62%	24%	13%	15%
55%	61%	29%	17%	16%
46%	46%	26%	15%	14%
42%	49%	20%	12%	9%
50%	58%			
70%	79%			
52%	61%	25%	14%	14%

ommission 2012b), 73.4 (European Commission 2012c), 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), and 84.3 (European Com-
depiction.

Table A.3: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me (regressior

	M0	M1
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.043*** (0.005)	-0.043*** (0.005)
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Age (squared)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)		
Country and other	0.029 (0.016)	0.029 (0.016)
Other(s) only	0.035** (0.013)	0.033** (0.013)
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)		
Middle (16-19 years)	0.029*** (0.008)	0.029*** (0.008)
High (20 years or more)	0.055*** (0.009)	0.055*** (0.009)
In education	0.061*** (0.014)	0.061*** (0.014)
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)		
Skilled manual workers	0.016 (0.010)	0.016 (0.010)
Farmer / Fisherman	0.039* (0.019)	0.040* (0.019)
Owner of a shop	0.020 (0.014)	0.020 (0.014)
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.027** (0.010)	0.027** (0.010)
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.053*** (0.010)	0.053*** (0.010)
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.077*** (0.012)	0.077*** (0.012)
Never worked	0.016 (0.013)	0.017 (0.013)
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)		
Unemployed	-0.017 (0.009)	-0.017 (0.009)
Houseperson	-0.002 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.011)
Retired	0.001 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)		
Left	-0.036*** (0.009)	-0.036*** (0.009)
Moderate left	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Moderate right	0.027*** (0.006)	0.027*** (0.006)
Right	0.026** (0.009)	0.027** (0.009)
No answer / missing	-0.039*** (0.007)	-0.039*** (0.007)
Economic level		
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)		0.006 (0.007)
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)		0.002 (0.003)
Economic development		
Δ GDP since 2004		
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)		
Δ GDP since 2008		
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)		
Variance		
Level-2 Intercept	0.206*** (0.040)	0.201*** (0.039)
Sample		
m (individuals)	25,863	25,863
N (regions)	93	93
ICC	.059	.058
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)		
Fixed & Random Effects	.100	.100
Fixed Effects only	.060	.066
AIC	20629.1	20630

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

n, regional level macro factors, 2015)

M2	M3	M4	M5
-0.044*** (0.005)	-0.043*** (0.005)	-0.044*** (0.005)	-0.043*** (0.005)
-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
0.030 (0.016)	0.030 (0.016)	0.030 (0.016)	0.029 (0.016)
0.037** (0.013)	0.036** (0.013)	0.035** (0.013)	0.034** (0.013)
0.028*** (0.008)	0.028*** (0.008)	0.028*** (0.008)	0.028*** (0.008)
0.055*** (0.009)	0.055*** (0.009)	0.055*** (0.009)	0.055*** (0.009)
0.061*** (0.015)	0.060*** (0.014)	0.061*** (0.015)	0.060*** (0.014)
0.015 (0.010)	0.016 (0.010)	0.016 (0.010)	0.016 (0.010)
0.041* (0.020)	0.042* (0.019)	0.042* (0.020)	0.042* (0.019)
0.022 (0.015)	0.022 (0.015)	0.022 (0.015)	0.022 (0.015)
0.029** (0.010)	0.028** (0.010)	0.028** (0.010)	0.028** (0.010)
0.056*** (0.011)	0.054*** (0.010)	0.055*** (0.011)	0.054*** (0.010)
0.080*** (0.012)	0.078*** (0.012)	0.080*** (0.012)	0.078*** (0.012)
0.018 (0.014)	0.018 (0.014)	0.018 (0.014)	0.018 (0.014)
-0.017 (0.009)	-0.016 (0.009)	-0.017 (0.009)	-0.016 (0.009)
-0.002 (0.012)	-0.002 (0.012)	-0.002 (0.012)	-0.002 (0.012)
0.001 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)	0.001 (0.008)
-0.038*** (0.009)	-0.036*** (0.009)	-0.037*** (0.009)	-0.036*** (0.009)
0.004 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
0.028*** (0.006)	0.027*** (0.006)	0.028*** (0.006)	0.027*** (0.006)
0.026** (0.009)	0.026** (0.009)	0.027** (0.009)	0.026** (0.009)
-0.041*** (0.007)	-0.039*** (0.007)	-0.040*** (0.007)	-0.039*** (0.007)
		0.015* (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)
		-0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
0.102*** (0.026)		0.110*** (0.026)	
-0.090 (0.059)		-0.053 (0.060)	
	0.149** (0.047)		0.148** (0.047)
	-0.408 (0.224)		-0.377 (0.226)
0.164*** (0.033)	0.171*** (0.035)	0.155*** (0.032)	0.168*** (0.034)
25,863	25,863	25,863	25,863
93	93	93	93
.047	.049	.045	.049
.101	.101	.101	.101
.073	.072	.081	.077
20617.2	20619.3	20615.4	20620.9

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Mar-

Table A.4: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me (regression

Sex (Ref.: Male)
Age (in 10 years)
Age (squared)
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)
Country and other
Other(s) only
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)
Middle (16-19 years)
High (20 years or more)
In education
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)
Skilled manual workers
Farmer / Fisherman
Owner of a shop
Employed at desk / travelling / service job
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor
Proprietors / higher management / professionals
Never worked
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)
Unemployed
Houseperson
Retired
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)
Left
Moderate left
Moderate right
Right
No answer / missing
Economic level
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)
Variance
Level-2 Intercept
Sample
m (individuals)
N (regions)
ICC
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)
Fixed & Random Effects
Fixed Effects only
AIC

Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Co
regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.0

n, regional level macro factors, 2004)

	M0		M1	
	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.041***	(0.006)
	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
	-0.043	(0.052)	-0.043	(0.053)
	0.049**	(0.017)	0.049**	(0.018)
	0.018*	(0.008)	0.017*	(0.008)
	0.057***	(0.009)	0.058***	(0.009)
	0.056***	(0.014)	0.057***	(0.014)
	0.027**	(0.010)	0.027**	(0.010)
	0.036*	(0.017)	0.036*	(0.018)
	0.038*	(0.015)	0.039*	(0.015)
	0.058***	(0.010)	0.060***	(0.010)
	0.086***	(0.011)	0.088***	(0.011)
	0.094***	(0.014)	0.096***	(0.014)
	0.067***	(0.013)	0.068***	(0.013)
	-0.017	(0.011)	-0.018	(0.011)
	-0.029**	(0.011)	-0.028*	(0.011)
	-0.022*	(0.009)	-0.024*	(0.009)
	-0.049***	(0.011)	-0.049***	(0.011)
	-0.009	(0.007)	-0.008	(0.008)
	0.042***	(0.008)	0.043***	(0.008)
	0.048***	(0.011)	0.048***	(0.011)
	-0.066***	(0.008)	-0.068***	(0.008)
			-0.083***	(0.014)
			0.034***	(0.007)
	0.478***	(0.078)	0.319***	(0.054)
	25,346		25,346	
	93		93	
	.127		.088	
	.138		.137	
	.046		.083	
	28269.2		28240.9	

ommission 2012b), and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the
05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Table A.5: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me (regressio

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.040***	(0.005)	-0.0
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000	(0.000)	-
Age (squared)	0.000	(0.000)	
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	-0.020	(0.025)	
Other(s) only	0.050***	(0.014)	0.0
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)			
Middle (16-19 years)	0.031***	(0.007)	0.0
High (20 years or more)	0.057***	(0.009)	0.0
In education	0.076***	(0.014)	0.0
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.023*	(0.009)	0
Farmer / Fisherman	0.061***	(0.015)	0.0
Owner of a shop	0.048***	(0.013)	0.0
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.029***	(0.009)	0.0
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.049***	(0.010)	0.0
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.069***	(0.012)	0.0
Never worked	0.031*	(0.012)	0
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.022**	(0.008)	-0.
Houseperson	0.002	(0.010)	
Retired	-0.012	(0.008)	
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.027**	(0.009)	-0.
Moderate left	0.001	(0.006)	
Moderate right	0.021***	(0.006)	0.0
Right	0.032***	(0.008)	0.0
No answer / missing	-0.032***	(0.007)	-0.0
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Level-2 Intercept	0.197***	(0.038)	0.1
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,389		2
N (regions)	93		
ICC	.056		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.096		
Fixed Effects only	.053		
AIC	20900.5		20

Source: Eurobarometer 73.4 (European Commission 2012c) and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Mode
rors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

n, regional level macro factors, 2010)

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
040***	(0.005)	-0.041***	(0.005)	-0.040***	(0.005)	-0.041***	(0.005)	-0.040***	(0.005)
-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
-0.019	(0.025)	-0.019	(0.025)	-0.020	(0.025)	-0.019	(0.025)	-0.019	(0.025)
049***	(0.014)	0.052***	(0.015)	0.050***	(0.014)	0.050***	(0.015)	0.049***	(0.014)
031***	(0.008)	0.030***	(0.008)	0.031***	(0.007)	0.030***	(0.008)	0.031***	(0.007)
057***	(0.009)	0.056***	(0.009)	0.057***	(0.009)	0.056***	(0.009)	0.057***	(0.009)
076***	(0.014)	0.076***	(0.014)	0.075***	(0.014)	0.075***	(0.014)	0.076***	(0.014)
0.023*	(0.009)	0.023*	(0.009)	0.023*	(0.009)	0.023*	(0.009)	0.023*	(0.009)
061***	(0.015)	0.061***	(0.016)	0.061***	(0.015)	0.061***	(0.016)	0.061***	(0.016)
049***	(0.013)	0.050***	(0.013)	0.048***	(0.013)	0.050***	(0.013)	0.049***	(0.013)
030***	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)	0.029***	(0.009)	0.030**	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)
050***	(0.010)	0.050***	(0.010)	0.049***	(0.010)	0.049***	(0.010)	0.050***	(0.010)
069***	(0.012)	0.070***	(0.012)	0.068***	(0.012)	0.070***	(0.012)	0.069***	(0.012)
0.030*	(0.012)	0.030*	(0.012)	0.030*	(0.012)	0.030*	(0.012)	0.030*	(0.012)
-0.023**	(0.009)	-0.023**	(0.009)	-0.022**	(0.008)	-0.022**	(0.009)	-0.022**	(0.009)
0.002	(0.010)	0.003	(0.010)	0.002	(0.010)	0.003	(0.010)	0.002	(0.010)
-0.013	(0.008)	-0.013	(0.008)	-0.012	(0.008)	-0.013	(0.008)	-0.013	(0.008)
-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.027**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)
0.001	(0.006)	0.001	(0.006)	0.001	(0.006)	0.001	(0.006)	0.001	(0.006)
021***	(0.006)	0.021***	(0.006)	0.021***	(0.006)	0.021***	(0.006)	0.021***	(0.006)
032***	(0.008)	0.032***	(0.008)	0.032***	(0.008)	0.032***	(0.008)	0.032***	(0.008)
032***	(0.007)	-0.033***	(0.007)	-0.032***	(0.007)	-0.033***	(0.007)	-0.032***	(0.007)
-0.012	(0.008)					0.007	(0.008)	-0.012	(0.008)
0.007	(0.003)					0.001	(0.003)	0.007	(0.003)
		0.122**	(0.047)			0.130*	(0.051)		
		0.124	(0.134)			0.142	(0.134)		
				0.051	(0.136)			0.037	(0.134)
				0.277	(1.459)			-0.168	(1.501)
187***	(0.036)	0.147***	(0.030)	0.196***	(0.038)	0.144***	(0.029)	0.186***	(0.036)
25,389		25,389		25,389		25,389		25,389	
93		93		93		93		93	
.054		.043		.056		.042		.054	
.096		.096		.096		.096		.096	
.056		.065		.053		.067		.055	
9900.6		20884.1		20904.2		20886.1		20904.5	

ls (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) with standard er-

Table A.6: Agreement on the statement that EU is economically good for me (regressio

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.044***	(0.005)	-0.044**
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000**
Age (squared)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.00
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.031	(0.016)	0.03
Other(s) only	0.036**	(0.013)	0.035*
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)			
Middle (16-19 years)	0.028***	(0.008)	0.028**
High (20 years or more)	0.056***	(0.009)	0.056**
In education	0.060***	(0.015)	0.060**
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.015	(0.010)	0.01
Farmer / Fisherman	0.045*	(0.020)	0.045
Owner of a shop	0.020	(0.015)	0.02
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.027**	(0.010)	0.027*
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.055***	(0.011)	0.055**
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.078***	(0.013)	0.077**
Never worked	0.017	(0.014)	0.01
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.017	(0.009)	-0.01
Houseperson	-0.002	(0.012)	-0.00
Retired	0.002	(0.008)	0.00
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.038***	(0.009)	-0.038**
Moderate left	0.002	(0.006)	0.00
Moderate right	0.028***	(0.006)	0.028**
Right	0.026**	(0.009)	0.026*
No answer / missing	-0.041***	(0.007)	-0.041**
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			0.00
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			0.00
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Level-2 Intercept	0.165***	(0.048)	0.164**
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,863		25,86
N (countries)	27		2
ICC	.048		.04
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.096		.09
Fixed Effects only	.060		.06
AIC	20616.6		20620.

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

n, country level macro factors, 2015)

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
*	(0.005)	-0.044***	(0.005)	-0.044***	(0.005)	-0.044***	(0.005)	-0.044***	(0.005)
*	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
0	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
0	(0.016)	0.031	(0.016)	0.031	(0.016)	0.031	(0.016)	0.031	(0.016)
*	(0.013)	0.036**	(0.013)	0.036**	(0.013)	0.036**	(0.013)	0.036**	(0.013)
*	(0.008)	0.028***	(0.008)	0.028***	(0.008)	0.028***	(0.008)	0.028***	(0.008)
*	(0.009)	0.055***	(0.009)	0.055***	(0.009)	0.055***	(0.009)	0.055***	(0.009)
*	(0.015)	0.060***	(0.015)	0.060***	(0.015)	0.060***	(0.015)	0.060***	(0.015)
5	(0.010)	0.015	(0.010)	0.015	(0.010)	0.015	(0.010)	0.015	(0.010)
*	(0.020)	0.045*	(0.020)	0.046*	(0.020)	0.046*	(0.020)	0.046*	(0.020)
0	(0.015)	0.021	(0.015)	0.021	(0.015)	0.021	(0.015)	0.021	(0.015)
*	(0.010)	0.027**	(0.010)	0.028**	(0.010)	0.028**	(0.010)	0.028**	(0.010)
*	(0.011)	0.055***	(0.011)	0.055***	(0.011)	0.055***	(0.011)	0.055***	(0.011)
*	(0.013)	0.078***	(0.012)	0.078***	(0.012)	0.078***	(0.012)	0.078***	(0.012)
7	(0.014)	0.017	(0.014)	0.017	(0.014)	0.018	(0.014)	0.018	(0.014)
7	(0.009)	-0.017	(0.009)	-0.017	(0.009)	-0.017	(0.009)	-0.017	(0.009)
2	(0.012)	-0.001	(0.012)	-0.002	(0.012)	-0.002	(0.012)	-0.002	(0.012)
2	(0.008)	0.002	(0.008)	0.002	(0.008)	0.002	(0.008)	0.002	(0.008)
*	(0.009)	-0.038***	(0.009)	-0.038***	(0.009)	-0.038***	(0.009)	-0.038***	(0.009)
2	(0.006)	0.003	(0.006)	0.003	(0.006)	0.003	(0.006)	0.003	(0.006)
*	(0.006)	0.028***	(0.006)	0.028***	(0.006)	0.028***	(0.006)	0.028***	(0.006)
*	(0.009)	0.026**	(0.009)	0.026**	(0.009)	0.026**	(0.009)	0.026**	(0.009)
*	(0.007)	-0.041***	(0.007)	-0.041***	(0.007)	-0.041***	(0.007)	-0.041***	(0.007)
4	(0.012)					0.020	(0.014)	0.005	(0.011)
0	(0.003)					-0.004	(0.004)	-0.001	(0.003)
		0.091*	(0.037)			0.105**	(0.038)		
		-0.110	(0.100)			-0.042	(0.108)		
				0.186**	(0.061)			0.186**	(0.061)
				-0.236	(0.266)			-0.245	(0.266)
*	(0.048)	0.133***	(0.039)	0.119***	(0.035)	0.122***	(0.036)	0.117***	(0.035)
3		25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	
7		27		27		27		27	
7		.039		.035		.036		.034	
6		.096		.097		.097		.097	
2		.070		.074		.076		.076	
3		20614.8		20611.9		20616.8		20615.6	

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the national level (NUTS-0), Average Mar-

Table A.7: Inclusive European identity (regression, regional level macro factors, 2015)

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.043***	(0.006)	-0.0
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.0
Age (squared)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.0
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.123***	(0.025)	0.1
Other(s) only	0.267***	(0.023)	0.2
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)			
Middle (16-19 years)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.0
High (20 years or more)	0.161***	(0.010)	0.1
In education	0.214***	(0.019)	0.2
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.034**	(0.011)	0.
Farmer / Fisherman	0.037	(0.022)	
Owner of a shop	0.127***	(0.017)	0.1
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.113***	(0.011)	0.1
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.183***	(0.012)	0.1
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.220***	(0.016)	0.2
Never worked	0.065***	(0.016)	0.0
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.043***	(0.010)	-0.0
Houseperson	-0.014	(0.014)	
Retired	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0
Moderate left	0.021*	(0.008)	0
Moderate right	0.022**	(0.009)	0.
Right	-0.044***	(0.012)	-0.0
No answer / missing	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.0
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Level-2 Intercept	0.494***	(0.083)	0.4
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,863		2
N (regions)	93		
ICC	.131		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.199		
Fixed Effects only	.149		
AIC	31193.9		3

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
043***	(0.006)	-0.043***	(0.006)	-0.043***	(0.006)	-0.043***	(0.006)	-0.043***	(0.006)
000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
121***	(0.025)	0.122***	(0.025)	0.123***	(0.025)	0.121***	(0.025)	0.121***	(0.025)
263***	(0.023)	0.266***	(0.023)	0.267***	(0.023)	0.262***	(0.023)	0.263***	(0.023)
074***	(0.009)	0.074***	(0.009)	0.074***	(0.009)	0.073***	(0.009)	0.074***	(0.009)
159***	(0.010)	0.159***	(0.010)	0.161***	(0.010)	0.158***	(0.010)	0.159***	(0.010)
212***	(0.018)	0.212***	(0.019)	0.214***	(0.019)	0.210***	(0.018)	0.212***	(0.018)
034**	(0.011)	0.034**	(0.011)	0.034**	(0.011)	0.033**	(0.011)	0.034**	(0.011)
0.037	(0.022)	0.037	(0.022)	0.037	(0.022)	0.038	(0.022)	0.037	(0.022)
127***	(0.017)	0.127***	(0.017)	0.128***	(0.017)	0.127***	(0.017)	0.127***	(0.017)
112***	(0.011)	0.113***	(0.011)	0.113***	(0.011)	0.112***	(0.011)	0.112***	(0.011)
181***	(0.012)	0.182***	(0.012)	0.183***	(0.012)	0.180***	(0.012)	0.181***	(0.012)
218***	(0.016)	0.219***	(0.016)	0.220***	(0.016)	0.217***	(0.016)	0.218***	(0.016)
064***	(0.016)	0.065***	(0.016)	0.065***	(0.016)	0.065***	(0.016)	0.064***	(0.016)
043***	(0.010)	-0.043***	(0.010)	-0.043***	(0.010)	-0.043***	(0.010)	-0.043***	(0.010)
-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)
028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)	-0.028**	(0.009)
0.026*	(0.010)	-0.027*	(0.010)	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0.026*	(0.010)	-0.026*	(0.010)
0.020*	(0.008)	0.021*	(0.008)	0.021*	(0.008)	0.021*	(0.008)	0.020*	(0.008)
022**	(0.009)	0.022**	(0.009)	0.022**	(0.009)	0.022**	(0.008)	0.022**	(0.009)
043***	(0.012)	-0.044***	(0.012)	-0.044***	(0.012)	-0.043***	(0.012)	-0.043***	(0.012)
095***	(0.008)	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.095***	(0.008)	-0.095***	(0.008)
0.029	(0.017)					0.033	(0.018)	0.030	(0.017)
0.001	(0.006)					-0.001	(0.007)	0.001	(0.007)
		0.091	(0.059)			0.102	(0.059)		
		-0.223	(0.143)			-0.129	(0.146)		
				0.006	(0.115)			0.011	(0.113)
				-0.119	(0.558)			0.101	(0.556)
466***	(0.078)	0.475***	(0.080)	0.493***	(0.083)	0.450***	(0.076)	0.467***	(0.078)
25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	
93		93		93		93		93	
.124		.126		.130		.120		.124	
.199		.199		.199		.199		.199	
.170		.155		.149		.174		.170	
1192.6		31194.7		31197.9		31193.7		31196.6	

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Mar-

Table A.8: Inclusive European identity including attitude towards EU as economically bo

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.04
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.00
Age (squared)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.00
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.126***	(0.027)	0.12
Other(s) only	0.283***	(0.024)	0.27
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)	0.077***	(0.009)	0.07
Middle (16-19 years)			
High (20 years or more)	0.165***	(0.011)	0.16
In education	0.222***	(0.020)	0.21
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.034**	(0.012)	0.0
Farmer / Fisherman	0.034	(0.024)	0
Owner of a shop	0.135***	(0.018)	0.13
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.118***	(0.011)	0.11
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.188***	(0.013)	0.18
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.225***	(0.017)	0.22
Never worked	0.067***	(0.017)	0.06
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.044***	(0.011)	-0.04
Houseperson	-0.014	(0.015)	-0
Retired	-0.030**	(0.010)	-0.0
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.023*	(0.011)	-0.
Moderate left	0.022*	(0.009)	0.
Moderate right	0.020*	(0.009)	0.
Right	-0.050***	(0.012)	-0.04
No answer / missing	-0.098***	(0.009)	-0.09
EU is economically good for me *(Ref.: No)*	0.159***	(0.012)	0.15
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			0
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			0
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me)	0.051	(0.034)	0
Level-2 Intercept	0.498***	(0.084)	0.47
Covariance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me) & Level-2 Intercept	-0.035	(0.054)	-0
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,863		25
N (regions)	93		
ICC	.131		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.217		
Fixed Effects only	.168		
AIC	30881.8		308

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

eneficial (regression, regional level macro factors, 2015)

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
-0***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)
00***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
00***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
24***	(0.026)	0.125***	(0.026)	0.126***	(0.027)	0.123***	(0.026)	0.124***	(0.026)
78***	(0.024)	0.281***	(0.024)	0.283***	(0.024)	0.276***	(0.024)	0.278***	(0.024)
76***	(0.009)	0.076***	(0.009)	0.077***	(0.009)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.076***	(0.009)
53***	(0.011)	0.164***	(0.011)	0.165***	(0.011)	0.162***	(0.011)	0.163***	(0.011)
19***	(0.020)	0.219***	(0.020)	0.222***	(0.020)	0.216***	(0.019)	0.219***	(0.020)
34**	(0.012)	0.034**	(0.012)	0.034**	(0.012)	0.034**	(0.012)	0.034**	(0.012)
0.035	(0.024)	0.035	(0.024)	0.034	(0.024)	0.035	(0.024)	0.034	(0.024)
33***	(0.018)	0.134***	(0.018)	0.135***	(0.018)	0.133***	(0.017)	0.133***	(0.018)
17***	(0.011)	0.117***	(0.011)	0.118***	(0.011)	0.116***	(0.011)	0.117***	(0.011)
35***	(0.013)	0.186***	(0.013)	0.188***	(0.013)	0.184***	(0.013)	0.185***	(0.013)
22***	(0.016)	0.223***	(0.017)	0.225***	(0.017)	0.220***	(0.016)	0.221***	(0.016)
67***	(0.017)	0.067***	(0.017)	0.067***	(0.017)	0.066***	(0.017)	0.067***	(0.017)
44***	(0.011)	-0.044***	(0.011)	-0.044***	(0.011)	-0.043***	(0.011)	-0.044***	(0.011)
0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.015)	-0.014	(0.015)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)
30**	(0.010)	-0.030**	(0.010)	-0.030**	(0.010)	-0.030**	(0.010)	-0.030**	(0.010)
023*	(0.011)	-0.023*	(0.011)	-0.023*	(0.011)	-0.023*	(0.011)	-0.023*	(0.011)
022*	(0.009)	0.022*	(0.009)	0.022*	(0.009)	0.022*	(0.009)	0.022*	(0.009)
020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.019*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)
49***	(0.012)	-0.050***	(0.012)	-0.050***	(0.012)	-0.049***	(0.012)	-0.049***	(0.012)
96***	(0.008)	-0.097***	(0.009)	-0.098***	(0.009)	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.096***	(0.008)
57***	(0.012)	0.158***	(0.012)	0.159***	(0.012)	0.155***	(0.012)	0.156***	(0.012)
0.030	(0.018)					0.035	(0.019)	0.032	(0.018)
0.001	(0.007)					-0.001	(0.007)	0.000	(0.007)
		0.083	(0.063)			0.094	(0.062)		
		-0.225	(0.162)			-0.105	(0.166)		
				-0.008	(0.122)			0.001	(0.119)
				0.016	(0.620)			0.272	(0.606)
0.050	(0.034)	0.051	(0.034)	0.051	(0.034)	0.050	(0.033)	0.050	(0.033)
72***	(0.080)	0.477***	(0.081)	0.498***	(0.085)	0.459***	(0.079)	0.474***	(0.081)
0.035	(0.050)	-0.012	(0.057)	-0.035	(0.057)	-0.033	(0.054)	-0.041	(0.052)
5,863		25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	
93		93		93		93		93	
.125		.127		.132		.122		.126	
.217		.217		.217		.217		.217	
.188		.174		.168		.191		.189	
380.8		30883.3		30885.8		30882.6		30884.6	

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Mar-

Table A.9: Inclusive European identity including attitude towards EU as economically be

	M0	
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.044***	(0.006)
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)
Age (squared)	-0.000**	(0.000)
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)		
Country and other	0.180**	(0.064)
Other(s) only	0.263***	(0.025)
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)		
Middle (16-19 years)	0.071***	(0.009)
High (20 years or more)	0.159***	(0.010)
In education	0.192***	(0.016)
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)		
Skilled manual workers	0.024*	(0.011)
Farmer / Fisherman	0.007	(0.019)
Owner of a shop	0.080***	(0.017)
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.102***	(0.010)
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.155***	(0.012)
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.183***	(0.016)
Never worked	0.073***	(0.014)
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)		
Unemployed	-0.055***	(0.012)
Houseperson	-0.020	(0.012)
Retired	-0.021*	(0.010)
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)		
Left	-0.045***	(0.012)
Moderate left	0.025**	(0.009)
Moderate right	0.018*	(0.009)
Right	-0.035**	(0.013)
No answer / missing	-0.087***	(0.008)
EU is economically good for me *(Ref.: No)*		
Economic level		
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)		
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)		
Variance		
Slope (EU is economically good for me)		
Level-2 Intercept	0.245***	(0.042)
Covariance		
Slope (EU is economically good for me) & Level-2 Intercept		
Sample		
m (individuals)	25,346	
N (regions)	93	
ICC	.069	
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)		
Fixed & Random Effects	.160	
Fixed Effects only	.124	
AIC	31888.5	

Source: Eurobarometer CC 2004.1 (European Commission 2016a), 61 (European Commission 2012a), 62.0 (European Co
regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.0

eneficial (regression, regional level macro factors, 2004)

M1		M2		M3	
-0.044***	(0.006)	-0.039***	(0.006)	-0.038***	(0.006)
-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
-0.000**	(0.000)	-0.000**	(0.000)	-0.000**	(0.000)
0.179**	(0.064)	0.190**	(0.065)	0.189**	(0.065)
0.261***	(0.025)	0.263***	(0.025)	0.261***	(0.025)
		0.071***	(0.009)	0.070***	(0.009)
0.071***	(0.009)				
0.158***	(0.010)	0.155***	(0.010)	0.154***	(0.010)
0.192***	(0.016)	0.189***	(0.016)	0.188***	(0.016)
0.024*	(0.011)	0.019	(0.011)	0.020	(0.011)
0.007	(0.019)	0.001	(0.020)	0.001	(0.020)
0.080***	(0.017)	0.075***	(0.017)	0.075***	(0.017)
0.101***	(0.010)	0.094***	(0.011)	0.094***	(0.011)
0.155***	(0.012)	0.144***	(0.012)	0.144***	(0.012)
0.183***	(0.016)	0.173***	(0.017)	0.172***	(0.017)
0.073***	(0.014)	0.063***	(0.014)	0.063***	(0.014)
-0.055***	(0.012)	-0.054***	(0.012)	-0.054***	(0.012)
-0.020	(0.012)	-0.015	(0.012)	-0.016	(0.012)
-0.021*	(0.010)	-0.017	(0.010)	-0.017	(0.010)
-0.045***	(0.012)	-0.037**	(0.012)	-0.037**	(0.012)
0.025**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)
0.018*	(0.009)	0.011	(0.009)	0.011	(0.009)
-0.035**	(0.013)	-0.048***	(0.013)	-0.047***	(0.013)
-0.087***	(0.008)	-0.080***	(0.009)	-0.079***	(0.009)
		0.172***	(0.010)	0.172***	(0.010)
0.003	(0.015)			0.020	(0.014)
0.012	(0.008)			0.006	(0.008)
		0.076*	(0.035)	0.077*	(0.035)
0.236***	(0.041)	0.245***	(0.044)	0.233***	(0.042)
		-0.034	(0.030)	-0.033	(0.029)
25,346		25,346		25,346	
93		93		93	
.067		.069		.066	
.160		.192		.192	
.129		.156		.162	
31888.8		31280.2		31279.5	

ommission 2012b), and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the
05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Table A.10: Inclusive European identity (regression, regional level macro factors, 2010)

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.0
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.0
Age (squared)	-0.000	(0.000)	-
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.178***	(0.034)	0.1
Other(s) only	0.292***	(0.027)	0.2
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)			
Middle (16-19 years)	0.073***	(0.009)	0.0
High (20 years or more)	0.181***	(0.011)	0.1
In education	0.242***	(0.018)	0.2
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.018	(0.011)	
Farmer / Fisherman	-0.023	(0.021)	-
Owner of a shop	0.080***	(0.017)	0.0
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.074***	(0.011)	0.0
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.135***	(0.013)	0.1
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.163***	(0.016)	0.1
Never worked	0.030	(0.016)	
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.039***	(0.011)	-0.0
Houseperson	0.003	(0.013)	
Retired	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.028*	(0.012)	-0
Moderate left	0.029**	(0.009)	0.
Moderate right	0.024**	(0.009)	0.
Right	-0.027*	(0.012)	-0
No answer / missing	-0.080***	(0.008)	-0.0
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance	0.371***	(0.064)	0.3
Level-2 Intercept			
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,389		2
N (regions)	93		
ICC	.101		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.173		
Fixed Effects only	.127		
AIC	31929.3		3

Source: Eurobarometer 73.4 (European Commission 2012c) and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Mode
rors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
051***	(0.006)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.051***	(0.006)
000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
176***	(0.034)	0.177***	(0.034)	0.178***	(0.034)	0.176***	(0.034)	0.176***	(0.034)
288***	(0.027)	0.292***	(0.027)	0.293***	(0.027)	0.288***	(0.027)	0.288***	(0.027)
073***	(0.009)	0.072***	(0.009)	0.073***	(0.009)	0.072***	(0.009)	0.073***	(0.009)
180***	(0.011)	0.180***	(0.011)	0.181***	(0.011)	0.178***	(0.010)	0.180***	(0.011)
240***	(0.018)	0.239***	(0.018)	0.241***	(0.018)	0.237***	(0.018)	0.239***	(0.018)
0.018	(0.011)	0.018	(0.011)	0.018	(0.011)	0.018	(0.011)	0.018	(0.011)
-0.022	(0.021)	-0.022	(0.021)	-0.022	(0.021)	-0.021	(0.021)	-0.022	(0.021)
080***	(0.017)	0.081***	(0.017)	0.081***	(0.017)	0.081***	(0.017)	0.080***	(0.017)
073***	(0.011)	0.073***	(0.011)	0.074***	(0.011)	0.072***	(0.011)	0.073***	(0.011)
134***	(0.012)	0.135***	(0.012)	0.135***	(0.013)	0.134***	(0.012)	0.134***	(0.012)
162***	(0.016)	0.162***	(0.016)	0.163***	(0.016)	0.161***	(0.016)	0.162***	(0.016)
0.030	(0.016)	0.030	(0.016)	0.030	(0.016)	0.031	(0.016)	0.030	(0.016)
038***	(0.011)	-0.039***	(0.011)	-0.039***	(0.011)	-0.039***	(0.011)	-0.038***	(0.011)
0.003	(0.013)	0.004	(0.013)	0.003	(0.013)	0.004	(0.013)	0.003	(0.013)
032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)
0.028*	(0.012)	-0.028*	(0.012)	-0.028*	(0.012)	-0.028*	(0.012)	-0.028*	(0.012)
028**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)	0.028**	(0.009)
024**	(0.009)	0.024**	(0.009)	0.024**	(0.009)	0.023**	(0.009)	0.024**	(0.009)
0.027*	(0.012)	-0.028*	(0.012)	-0.027*	(0.012)	-0.027*	(0.012)	-0.027*	(0.012)
080***	(0.008)	-0.080***	(0.008)	-0.080***	(0.008)	-0.079***	(0.008)	-0.079***	(0.008)
0.024	(0.018)					0.037*	(0.019)	0.030	(0.018)
0.009	(0.008)					0.003	(0.008)	0.007	(0.008)
		0.358***	(0.102)			0.402***	(0.105)		
		-1.212***	(0.307)			-1.097***	(0.297)		
				0.533	(0.304)			0.488	(0.290)
				-1.741	(3.256)			0.457	(3.247)
340***	(0.059)	0.311***	(0.054)	0.358***	(0.062)	0.284***	(0.049)	0.326***	(0.056)
25,389		25,389		25,389		25,389		25,389	
93		93		93		93		93	
.094		.086		.098		.080		.090	
.174		.173		.173		.174		.174	
.146		.143		.130		.159		.149	
1925.3		31918.2		31930.2		31913.5		31925.7	

ls (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) with standard er-

Table A.11: Inclusive European identity including attitude towards EU as economically b

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.048***	(0.006)	-0.04
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.00
Age (squared)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.189***	(0.036)	0.18
Other(s) only	0.300***	(0.029)	0.29
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)	0.073***	(0.010)	0.07
Middle (16-19 years)			
High (20 years or more)	0.184***	(0.011)	0.18
In education	0.244***	(0.019)	0.24
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.017	(0.012)	
Farmer / Fisherman	-0.033	(0.022)	-0
Owner of a shop	0.078***	(0.018)	0.07
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.074***	(0.011)	0.07
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.136***	(0.013)	0.13
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.162***	(0.016)	0.16
Never worked	0.028	(0.017)	
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.038***	(0.011)	-0.03
Houseperson	0.004	(0.014)	
Retired	-0.032**	(0.011)	-0.0
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.025*	(0.012)	-0.
Moderate left	0.031***	(0.009)	0.03
Moderate right	0.022*	(0.009)	0.
Right	-0.035**	(0.012)	-0.0
No answer / missing	-0.080***	(0.009)	-0.07
EU is economically good for me *(Ref.: No)*	0.172***	(0.013)	0.17
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me)	0.090*	(0.045)	0.
Level-2 Intercept	0.362***	(0.063)	0.33
Covariance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me) & Level-2 Intercept	0.049	(0.044)	
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,389		25
N (regions)	93		
ICC	.099		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.194		
Fixed Effects only	.148		
AIC	31586		315

Source: Eurobarometer 73.4 (European Commission 2012c) and Eurostat (2018), Hierarchical Generalized Linear Model
rors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

eneficial (regression, regional level macro factors, 2010)

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
47***	(0.006)	-0.047***	(0.006)	-0.048***	(0.006)	-0.047***	(0.006)	-0.047***	(0.006)
00***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)	-0.000	(0.000)
86***	(0.035)	0.186***	(0.035)	0.189***	(0.036)	0.184***	(0.035)	0.186***	(0.035)
94***	(0.029)	0.296***	(0.028)	0.300***	(0.029)	0.291***	(0.028)	0.293***	(0.028)
72***	(0.009)	0.071***	(0.009)	0.073***	(0.010)	0.071***	(0.009)	0.072***	(0.009)
82***	(0.011)	0.180***	(0.011)	0.183***	(0.011)	0.178***	(0.011)	0.181***	(0.011)
41***	(0.019)	0.239***	(0.019)	0.243***	(0.019)	0.236***	(0.019)	0.240***	(0.019)
0.017	(0.012)	0.016	(0.012)	0.016	(0.012)	0.016	(0.012)	0.016	(0.012)
0.032	(0.022)	-0.032	(0.022)	-0.033	(0.022)	-0.031	(0.022)	-0.032	(0.022)
77***	(0.018)	0.077***	(0.018)	0.078***	(0.018)	0.077***	(0.018)	0.077***	(0.018)
73***	(0.011)	0.073***	(0.011)	0.074***	(0.011)	0.072***	(0.011)	0.073***	(0.011)
34***	(0.013)	0.134***	(0.013)	0.135***	(0.013)	0.132***	(0.013)	0.134***	(0.013)
60***	(0.016)	0.160***	(0.016)	0.162***	(0.016)	0.158***	(0.016)	0.160***	(0.016)
0.028	(0.017)	0.028	(0.017)	0.028	(0.017)	0.028	(0.016)	0.028	(0.017)
37***	(0.011)	-0.037***	(0.011)	-0.037***	(0.011)	-0.037***	(0.011)	-0.037***	(0.011)
0.004	(0.014)	0.004	(0.013)	0.004	(0.014)	0.004	(0.013)	0.004	(0.014)
032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.033**	(0.011)	-0.032**	(0.010)	-0.032**	(0.010)
024*	(0.012)	-0.024*	(0.012)	-0.025*	(0.012)	-0.024*	(0.012)	-0.024*	(0.012)
30***	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)	0.030***	(0.009)
022*	(0.009)	0.021*	(0.009)	0.022*	(0.009)	0.021*	(0.009)	0.021*	(0.009)
34**	(0.012)	-0.035**	(0.012)	-0.035**	(0.012)	-0.034**	(0.012)	-0.034**	(0.012)
79***	(0.009)	-0.079***	(0.009)	-0.080***	(0.009)	-0.078***	(0.009)	-0.079***	(0.009)
70***	(0.013)	0.171***	(0.013)	0.171***	(0.013)	0.168***	(0.013)	0.169***	(0.013)
0.021	(0.020)					0.033	(0.020)	0.026	(0.020)
0.010	(0.008)					0.004	(0.008)	0.008	(0.008)
		0.375***	(0.105)			0.406***	(0.108)		
		-1.250***	(0.319)			-1.151***	(0.309)		
				0.566	(0.313)			0.513	(0.301)
				-1.782	(3.376)			0.236	(3.392)
090*	(0.045)	0.090*	(0.045)	0.089*	(0.045)	0.090*	(0.045)	0.090*	(0.045)
35***	(0.059)	0.303***	(0.053)	0.348***	(0.061)	0.280***	(0.049)	0.321***	(0.056)
0.032	(0.044)	0.045	(0.040)	0.052	(0.044)	0.029	(0.038)	0.031	(0.044)
5,389		25,389		25,389		25,389		25,389	
93		93		93		93		93	
.092		.084		.096		.079		.089	
.194		.194		.194		.194		.194	
.165		.164		.152		.178		.168	
582.9		31574.6		31586.7		31571.2		31583.3	

ls (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the regional level (NUTS-1), Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) with standard er-

Table A.12: Inclusive European identity (regression, country level macro factors, 2015)

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.045***	-0.006	-0.0
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	0	-0.0
Age (squared)	-0.000***	0	-0.0
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.128***	-0.026	0.1
Other(s) only	0.288***	-0.024	0.2
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)			
Middle (16-19 years)	0.076***	-0.009	0.0
High (20 years or more)	0.164***	-0.011	0.1
In education	0.222***	-0.019	0.2
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.036**	-0.011	0.
Farmer / Fisherman	0.047*	-0.023	0
Owner of a shop	0.136***	-0.017	0.1
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.119***	-0.011	0.1
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.193***	-0.013	0.1
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.229***	-0.016	0.2
Never worked	0.065***	-0.016	0.0
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.048***	-0.011	-0.0
Houseperson	-0.014	-0.014	
Retired	-0.030**	-0.01	-0.
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.032**	-0.011	-0.
Moderate left	0.020*	-0.009	0
Moderate right	0.023**	-0.009	0.
Right	-0.048***	-0.012	-0.0
No answer / missing	-0.099***	-0.008	-0.0
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Level-2 Intercept	0.215***	(0.060)	0.2
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,863		2
N (countries)	27		
ICC	.061		
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.186		
Fixed Effects only	.149		
AIC	31281.7		

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
045***	-0.006	-0.045***	-0.006	-0.045***	-0.006	-0.045***	-0.006	-0.045***	-0.006
000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0
000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0	-0.000***	0
128***	-0.026	0.128***	-0.026	0.128***	-0.026	0.128***	-0.026	0.128***	-0.026
287***	-0.024	0.287***	-0.024	0.287***	-0.024	0.287***	-0.024	0.286***	-0.024
076***	-0.009	0.076***	-0.009	0.076***	-0.009	0.076***	-0.009	0.076***	-0.009
164***	-0.011	0.164***	-0.011	0.164***	-0.011	0.164***	-0.011	0.164***	-0.01
222***	-0.019	0.221***	-0.019	0.221***	-0.019	0.222***	-0.019	0.221***	-0.019
036**	-0.011	0.036**	-0.011	0.036**	-0.011	0.036**	-0.011	0.036**	-0.011
0.047*	-0.023	0.047*	-0.023	0.047*	-0.023	0.047*	-0.023	0.047*	-0.023
136***	-0.017	0.136***	-0.017	0.136***	-0.017	0.136***	-0.017	0.136***	-0.017
119***	-0.011	0.119***	-0.011	0.119***	-0.011	0.119***	-0.011	0.119***	-0.011
193***	-0.013	0.192***	-0.013	0.192***	-0.013	0.193***	-0.013	0.192***	-0.013
229***	-0.016	0.229***	-0.016	0.229***	-0.016	0.229***	-0.016	0.229***	-0.016
065***	-0.016	0.065***	-0.016	0.065***	-0.016	0.065***	-0.016	0.065***	-0.016
048***	-0.011	-0.048***	-0.011	-0.048***	-0.011	-0.048***	-0.011	-0.048***	-0.011
-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014	-0.014
030**	-0.01	-0.030**	-0.01	-0.030**	-0.01	-0.030**	-0.01	-0.030**	-0.01
032**	-0.011	-0.032**	-0.011	-0.032**	-0.011	-0.032**	-0.011	-0.032**	-0.011
0.020*	-0.009	0.020*	-0.009	0.020*	-0.009	0.020*	-0.009	0.020*	-0.009
023**	-0.009	0.023**	-0.009	0.023**	-0.009	0.023**	-0.009	0.023**	-0.009
048***	-0.012	-0.048***	-0.012	-0.048***	-0.012	-0.048***	-0.012	-0.048***	-0.012
098***	-0.008	-0.098***	-0.008	-0.098***	-0.008	-0.098***	-0.008	-0.098***	-0.008
0.005	-0.023					-0.01	-0.029	0.007	-0.022
0.004	-0.007					0.007	-0.007	0.004	-0.006
		0.053	-0.074			0.031	-0.076		
		-0.274	-0.201			-0.265	-0.225		
				0.057	-0.125			0.037	-0.123
				-0.805	-0.558			-0.826	-0.541
202***	(0.057)	0.201***	(0.057)	0.199***	(0.056)	0.192***	(0.054)	0.185***	(0.052)
25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	
27		27		27		27		27	
.058		.058		.057		.055		.053	
.186		.186		.186		.186		.186	
.155		.156		.154		.157		.160	
31284		31283.9		31283.6		31286.6		31285.7	

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the national level (NUTS-0), Average Mar-

Table A.13: Inclusive European identity including attitude towards EU as economically b

	M0		
Sex (Ref.: Male)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040**
Age (in 10 years)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000**
Age (squared)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000**
Citizenship (Ref.: Only Country)			
Country and other	0.126***	(0.026)	0.126**
Other(s) only	0.295***	(0.024)	0.293**
Education (Ref.: 15 years or less)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.075**
Middle (16-19 years)			
High (20 years or more)	0.162***	(0.011)	0.162**
In education	0.221***	(0.020)	0.221**
Class (Ref.: Unskilled manual workers)			
Skilled manual workers	0.035**	(0.012)	0.035*
Farmer / Fisherman	0.042	(0.024)	0.04
Owner of a shop	0.139***	(0.018)	0.139**
Employed at desk / travelling / service job	0.120***	(0.011)	0.120**
Employed professionals / middle management / supervisor	0.191***	(0.013)	0.191**
Proprietors / higher management / professionals	0.225***	(0.017)	0.225**
Never worked	0.065***	(0.017)	0.065**
Employment situation (Ref.: Employed)			
Unemployed	-0.047***	(0.011)	-0.047**
Houseperson	-0.014	(0.015)	-0.01
Retired	-0.031**	(0.010)	-0.031*
Political Placement (Ref.: Centre)			
Left	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0.027
Moderate left	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020
Moderate right	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020
Right	-0.054***	(0.012)	-0.053**
No answer / missing	-0.096***	(0.009)	-0.096**
EU is economically good for me *(Ref.: No)*	0.156***	(0.012)	0.156**
Economic level			
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000)			0.00
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 10,000, squared)			0.00
Economic development			
Δ GDP since 2004			
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)			
Δ GDP since 2008			
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)			
Variance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me)	0.022	(0.020)	0.02
Level-2 Intercept	0.216***	(0.061)	0.203**
Covariance			
Slope (EU is economically good for me) & Level-2 Intercept	-0.031	(0.026)	-0.03
Sample			
m (individuals)	25,863		25,86
N (countries)	27		2
ICC	.062		.05
Pseudo-R^2 (McKelvey & Zavoina)			
Fixed & Random Effects	.204		.20
Fixed Effects only	.167		.17
AIC	30967.3		30969

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018), H
ginal Effects (AMEs) with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

beneficial (regression, country level macro factors, 2015)

M1		M2		M3		M4		M5	
**	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)	-0.040***	(0.006)
**	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
**	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)	-0.000***	(0.000)
**	(0.026)	0.126***	(0.026)	0.126***	(0.026)	0.126***	(0.026)	0.126***	(0.026)
**	(0.024)	0.293***	(0.024)	0.294***	(0.024)	0.293***	(0.024)	0.292***	(0.024)
**	(0.009)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.075***	(0.009)	0.075***	(0.009)
**	(0.011)	0.162***	(0.011)	0.162***	(0.011)	0.162***	(0.011)	0.162***	(0.011)
**	(0.020)	0.220***	(0.020)	0.220***	(0.020)	0.221***	(0.020)	0.220***	(0.020)
**	(0.012)	0.035**	(0.012)	0.035**	(0.012)	0.035**	(0.012)	0.035**	(0.012)
2	(0.024)	0.042	(0.024)	0.042	(0.024)	0.042	(0.024)	0.042	(0.024)
**	(0.018)	0.138***	(0.018)	0.138***	(0.018)	0.138***	(0.018)	0.138***	(0.018)
**	(0.011)	0.120***	(0.011)	0.120***	(0.011)	0.120***	(0.011)	0.119***	(0.011)
**	(0.013)	0.190***	(0.013)	0.190***	(0.013)	0.191***	(0.013)	0.190***	(0.013)
**	(0.017)	0.224***	(0.017)	0.224***	(0.017)	0.225***	(0.017)	0.224***	(0.017)
**	(0.017)	0.065***	(0.017)	0.065***	(0.017)	0.065***	(0.017)	0.065***	(0.017)
**	(0.011)	-0.047***	(0.011)	-0.047***	(0.011)	-0.047***	(0.011)	-0.047***	(0.011)
4	(0.015)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.014)	-0.014	(0.015)	-0.014	(0.014)
**	(0.010)	-0.031**	(0.010)	-0.031**	(0.010)	-0.031**	(0.010)	-0.031**	(0.010)
7*	(0.011)	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0.027*	(0.011)	-0.027*	(0.011)
0*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)
0*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)	0.020*	(0.009)
**	(0.012)	-0.053***	(0.012)	-0.053***	(0.012)	-0.053***	(0.012)	-0.053***	(0.012)
**	(0.009)	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.096***	(0.008)	-0.096***	(0.009)	-0.096***	(0.008)
**	(0.011)	0.156***	(0.011)	0.156***	(0.011)	0.157***	(0.011)	0.156***	(0.011)
01	(0.023)					-0.011	(0.029)	0.005	(0.022)
05	(0.007)					0.007	(0.007)	0.004	(0.006)
		0.035	(0.074)			0.011	(0.076)		
		-0.208	(0.221)			-0.194	(0.246)		
				0.043	(0.127)			0.020	(0.124)
				-0.612	(0.651)			-0.659	(0.628)
21	(0.019)	0.021	(0.019)	0.021	(0.019)	0.021	(0.019)	0.020	(0.019)
**	(0.057)	0.201***	(0.057)	0.199***	(0.057)	0.191***	(0.055)	0.185***	(0.053)
30	(0.025)	-0.021	(0.027)	-0.019	(0.028)	-0.021	(0.026)	-0.017	(0.027)
53		25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	
27		27		27		27		27	
58		.058		.057		.055		.053	
04		.204		.204		.204		.204	
73		.172		.171		.174		.176	
.5		30970.4		30970.3		30972.9		30972.4	

Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (Logit) with Random Intercepts on the national level (NUTS-0), Average Mar-

Table A.14: Decomposition of effects of macro variables due to attitude covariate (2015,

	M1		M2	
Economic level				
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 1,000)				
Reduced	0.086	(0.056)	0.073	(0.063)
Full	0.081	(0.056)	0.070	(0.063)
Diff	0.005**	(0.002)	0.003	(0.002)
GDP in PPP (per capita, in 1,000, squared)				
Reduced			0.007	(0.018)
Full			0.007	(0.018)
Diff			0.001	(0.002)
Economic development				
Δ GDP since 2004				
Reduced				
Full				
Diff				
Δ GDP since 2004 (squared)				
Reduced				
Full				
Diff				
Δ GDP since 2008				
Reduced	.		.	
Full				
Diff				
Δ GDP since 2008 (squared)				
Reduced				
Full				
Diff				
m (individuals)	25,863		25,863	

Source: Eurobarometer 83.3 (European Commission 2016b), 84.3 (European Commission 2016c), and Eurostat (2018). L
with standard errors in parentheses, own calculations, * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

, KHB-Method)

M3		M4		M5		M6	
0.034	(0.172)	0.226	(0.232)				
-0.013	(0.172)	0.167	(0.231)				
0.048***	(0.007)	0.059**	(0.019)				
		-0.923	(0.641)				
		-0.866	(0.641)				
		-0.057**	(0.019)				
				0.095	(0.439)	0.191	(0.341)
				-0.019	(0.439)	0.074	(0.340)
				0.114***	(0.014)	0.117*	(0.055)
						-3.407**	(1.317)
						-3.291*	(1.316)
						-0.116*	(0.055)
25,863		25,863		25,863		25,863	

Logistic regression with clustered robust standard errors (NUTS-1), including several covariates (not depicted), Logits

Contextual Sources of Euroscepticism in Eastern Central and Western Europe: The Role of Peripheral Regions

LINUS PAETH AND LARS VOGEL

sciendo

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Abstract: *This paper examines how regional contextual factors influence Eurosceptic voting in Eastern Central and Western Europe. It employs a theoretical framework of multidimensional regional periphery and relative deprivation to explore how economic, spatial and demographic factors can generate collective feelings of deprivation among regional inhabitants. This relative deprivation is supposed to manifest as political discontent expressed at the EU level, either by attributing responsibility for regional peripherality to the EU or by blaming national institutions, potentially spilling over to the EU level. Based on an integrated dataset encompassing economic, spatial and demographic indicators as well as election data from the European election 2019 for 1169 NUTS 3 regions within the EU, the findings support the hypotheses. Poor economic performance in a region, relative to the national average and historical levels, increases Eurosceptic voting, and the impact of an ageing population is significant. Spatial infrastructure conditions have minimal direct but moderating effects: Eurosceptic parties benefit more from economic underperformance, if the infrastructure is also poorly developed. The paper further shows differences in cue-taking between Eastern Central Europe and Western Europe suggesting that citizens in Eastern Central Europe consider the EU more often as saviour than as creator of regional deprivation. The paper underscores the importance of regional contextual factors and infrastructural effects, and highlights the need to avoid one-size-fits-all explanations for Euroscepticism in Eastern Central and Western Europe.*

Keywords: ***periphery, Euroscepticism, European Integration, deprivation, cue-taking, contextual factors, voting behaviour, European elections***

Introduction

A growing branch of research has explored the causes and conditions of Euroscepticism in terms of attitudes (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; de Vries 2018; Ejrnæs – Jensen 2019; Hobolt – de Vries, 2016) and voting behaviour (Treib 2014). In addition to individual characteristics (Boomgaarden et al. 2011), regional characteristics have been demonstrated to be important predictors too. In recent years, increasing economic, social and spatial inequalities have become visible between regions in the EU on the international, the national and the regional levels (European Commission 2020). While some regions are economically prosperous, demographically solid, well connected and sufficiently equipped with public and private infrastructure, other areas are declining, ageing and increasingly 'left behind' (Kühn 2015; Musil – Müller 2008). These growing regional inequalities supposedly hamper the quality of life of the population in left behind regions ('places that don't matter' (Rodríguez-Pose 2018) and result in relative deprivation, which has been repeatedly associated with growing political discontent in general (Essletzbichler et al. 2018; Rodríguez-Pose 2018; Velthuis et al. 2022) and Euroscepticism in particular (Dijkstra et al. 2020; Dominicis et al. 2020). So far, long-term economic decline, low employment rates and a low average educational level (Dijkstra et al. 2020) as well as rurality, growing unemployment and a high share of non-EU citizens (Dominicis et al. 2020) have been identified as contextual drivers for Eurosceptic attitudes.

This article contributes to this research by asking how the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties in the 2019 European Parliament election can be explained by a multidimensional concept of peripheral regions. According to this concept, regions are peripheral if their economic performance, demographic situation or regional infrastructure is below the respective national average, which may entail disadvantaged living conditions and lowered chance for social and political participation. We follow the basic assumption of the abovementioned analyses that the population in peripheral regions feel deprived and that this deprivation, in turn, propels Eurosceptic voting behaviour as a kind of protest against the bemoaned state of the region.

From this starting point, we provide five contributions. First, we discuss in detail the mechanisms by which deprivation, stemming from the local and subnational level, can fuel Euroscepticism, an attitude addressed towards the supranational European Union (Taggart 1998), by adapting the cue-taking model (Hobolt – de Vries 2016) to our theoretical considerations.

Second, we investigate predictors for Eurosceptic voting that have so far been neglected in research explaining Eurosceptic voting behaviour. Beyond the well-established socio-economic and demographic predictors, we include a predictor for *spatial infrastructure* that describes whether there is good access to services of general interest in a particular region.

Third, we integrate the economic indicators into a comprehensive model of relative deprivation induced by peripherality. In most of the literature, the region's position relative to its past is considered, but not the region's position relative to the national average. In methodological terms, economic variables were included uncentred on the national average. We centre the regional GDP per capita to the corresponding national average. By doing so, we take into account the core theoretical assumption of relative deprivation that peripheral regions must be identified by assessing their performance *relative* to the performance of the surrounding areas (Noguera et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the past remains a relevant point of reference for the evaluation of the region's current situation, which is why we keep the long-term economic development in our models.

Fourth, we investigate interactions between economic and spatial predictors. Our results show that Eurosceptic parties are able to benefit more from current economic underperformance, if the access to services of general interest is poor as well.

Fifth, we analyse Eastern Central Europe (ECE) and Western Europe (WE) comparatively. The ECE states share a communist past and, compared to most WE states, shorter democratic experience (Bojinović Fenko et al. 2019).[1] Related research on Euroscepticism and populism suggests that the theories – often developed to fit Western European cases – cannot be applied to ECE without taking their history into consideration (Condruz-Băcescu, 2014; Santana et al., 2020; de Vries – Tillman 2011). Our results show strong support for the abandonment of a one-size-fits-all approach for the states of ECE and WE.

We test our hypotheses through an aggregate data analysis conducted on a unique dataset consisting of all 1169 NUTS 3 regions of the 27 EU member states in 2019. Our dependent variable is the share of votes for parties during the 2019 European Parliament election that are Eurosceptic according to the Chapel Hill Expert Survey classification. Our independent variables are the GDP per capita, the development of GDP per capita since 2000, the median age and the access to services of general interest.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the upcoming section, we discuss the state of research and theorise the link between contextual factors and Eurosceptic voting behaviour. Based on these considerations, we develop a set of hypotheses. Subsequently, the data and methodology used for the analysis is presented. In the following section, we test our hypotheses through different quantitative models. Finally, we discuss our results and conclude in the last section.

1 Within the framework of this paper, the following states are considered a part of Eastern Central Europe: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

Theory

The multidimensional understanding of peripheral regions of this work is inspired by the approach of *inner peripheries* that goes beyond a purely geographical concept of peripheral regions located at the borders of a country. Inner peripheries can be located everywhere within a geographical unit and 'suffer from specific economic weakness combined with disadvantageous distance from a centre or zones with higher concentration of jobs, social infrastructure, and institutions' (Musil – Müller 2008: 79). This concept requires considering the broader regional context, since it is the performance of peripheral regions 'compared with their neighboring territories' (Noguera et al. 2017: 2) that is decisive for classifying them as inner peripheries.[2] Correspondingly, we identify peripheral regions by their poor access to services of general interest as well as weak economic performance and high unemployment rates, relative to the national level. An additional characteristic of peripheral regions is the emigration of younger people, leading to population ageing and thus a higher median age (Noguera – Copus 2016).

Rodríguez-Pose (2018) argues that people who feel their region has been left behind relative to other regions or has seen better times before, opt to use elections to protest against the disadvantaged status of their region. They do so by voting for parties contesting the status quo both populist (Bayerlein 2020; Lenzi – Perucca 2021; Mamonova – Franquesa 2020) and Eurosceptic parties (Dijkstra et al. 2020; Dominicis et al. 2020). These parties gain more votes in *disadvantaged* regions accordingly.

The theoretical link between disadvantageous regional conditions and protest voting can be explained by the concept of relative deprivation (Runciman 1980; Walker – Pettigrew 1984). Relative deprivation suggests that objective conditions are less important than their subjective and comparative perception. This perception may either be based on one's own individual status or on the collective status of a social group or a region to which individuals feel attached (Ibid.). Individual and collective deprivation are only loosely linked implying that people may perceive their region as disadvantaged without feeling deprived individually. Thus, preventing the ecological fallacy, a positive correlation between the disadvantaged status of a region and the share of protest voters may be due to protest behaviour of both the disadvantaged and not-disadvantaged inhabitants. Further, people may feel themselves or their group deprived either in comparison to other individuals or groups, in comparison to a historically better status or its expected worsening in the future (Ibid.).

2 For the sake of readability, we will refer to inner peripheries as peripheries or peripheral regions for the remainder of this paper.

However, we need to theorise the conditions under which people address their dissatisfaction with regional conditions at the European level. *Euroscepticism*, in general, refers to qualified and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; de Vries 2018; Taggart 1998).[3] According to the cue-taking model, European integration is too complex and too far away from most people's lives, which leads them to base their evaluation of the integration process on national cues. The evaluation of the national context constitutes a benchmark for citizen's evaluation of the European integration (Hobolt – de Vries 2016). Anderson (1998) argues that a negative evaluation of the national system will lead people to a negative evaluation of the EU, either because the dissatisfaction with the national level spills over to dissatisfaction with the EU, or the EU is blamed for causing the relative disadvantages. Our hypotheses *H1* to *H4* are developed on the basis of these two assumptions. Hypothesis 5 later in this section proposes an alternative interpretation of the cue-taking model by assuming cues from the national institutions working rather as contrasting benchmark.

While relative deprivation fuels a feeling of discontent (Stroppe – Jungmann 2022), the point of comparison can differ between regions 'left behind' and 'those that have seen better times' (Rodríguez-Pose 2018: 21). In the first case, inhabitants may perceive their region as left behind relative to the surrounding regions or the national average. In the latter case, the regional performance is evaluated in consideration of the very region's performance in the past. Accordingly, we test two different economic predictors; namely the economic development and the GDP relative to the national average GDP. Dijkstra et al. (2020) show that Eurosceptic parties fare better in regions that have experienced long-term economic decline. Dominicis et al. (2020) find that a declining GDP benefits Eurosceptic parties in rural areas, but not in cities, towns or suburbs. After controlling for long-term economic decline, regions with a higher GDP per capita are even more likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties (Dijkstra et al. 2020). According to Dominicis et al. (2020), GDP per capita itself does not have a significant impact on the vote share for Eurosceptic parties. The increasing effect of economic decline seems to be stable, while this is not the case for the GDP per capita. This may be due to relative deprivation, i.e. the same GDP per capita may have different effects in regions who are above or below the national average. Thus, the GDP per capita variable used for this paper uses the regional GDP expressed as a share of the national average GDP to take into account within-country disparities. Here we follow the idea of relative collective deprivation, arguing that the comparison of one's own region to surrounding regions resulting in a negative assessment fuels feelings of discontent rather than the objective economic situation of the region. Thus, if we analyse two regions A and B with the same economic situation, but region A's economic

3 For further discussion, see Taggart – Szczerbiak (2002) and Kopecký – Mudde (2002).

performance equals the national average, while B's is below, we expect increased protest voting behaviour only in region B.

H1a: Regions that have a relatively low GDP per capita compared to the national average show higher shares of votes for Eurosceptic parties.

Relative collective deprivation may also occur in comparison with the past (see above). If one's own region was better off economically in the past, feelings of deprivation may occur. Thus, the GDP growth rate does not take the national average as a point of reference, but the region's own performance in the past. We develop our second hypothesis accordingly.

H1b: Regions that experienced long-term economic decline show higher shares of votes for Eurosceptic parties.

Living in peripheral regions is associated with disadvantages and impeded social and political participation (Keim-Klärner et al. 2021; Musil – Müller 2008; Toni et al. 2021). Access to services of general interest (SGIs) is significant for the quality of life of the inhabitants of a region (Noguera et al. 2017). Impeded access might induce the feeling of living in a relatively disadvantaged region and lead to deprivation. Accordingly, we develop our second hypothesis.

H2: Regions with impeded access to services of general interest show higher shares of votes for Eurosceptic parties.

Similarly, regions with older populations have been found to be more Eurosceptic (Dominicis et al. 2020). The ageing of the population is a typical characteristic of peripheral regions which often suffer from emigration of younger people and declining birth rates (Noguera – Copus 2016). Again, we assume the relative median age compared to the national median to be the deciding factor and develop our third hypothesis accordingly.

H3: Regions with a median age above the national median show higher shares of votes for Eurosceptic parties.

The access to services of general interest 'ensures higher quality of life' (Noguera et al. 2017: 17), which makes them suitable to moderate the effects of poor economic performance on Euroscepticism. We argue that good access to SGIs, securing a decent quality of life and thus counteracting feelings of deprivation, tempers the effects of poor economic performance on the success of Eurosceptic parties. On the contrary, poor access to SGIs should reinforce discontent with poor economic performance and further benefit Eurosceptic parties.

H4: In regions with good access to services of general interest, the positive effect of poor relative economic performance on the vote share for Eurosceptic parties is weaker than in regions with poor access to services of general interest.

The cue-taking argument underlying *H1-H4* states that citizens use national benchmarks to evaluate the EU. However, the direction of cue-taking is conditional. In contrast to Anderson (1998), Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) argues that the evaluation of the national institutions contrasts rather than substitutes the evaluation of the European Union. The more citizens are dissatisfied with national institutions, the greater their support for European integration. According to Sánchez-Cuenca (2000: 148), 'citizens of a state plagued by all sorts of inefficiencies may come to the conclusion that they have little to lose by opting for "more" Europe.' If trust in the national institutions is low, the European Union might be perceived as a means for improvement and stability in contrast to the national government (Ejrnæs – Jensen 2019). Vice versa, a higher level of trust in national institutions leads to a lower level of trust in the European institutions.

Living in a peripheral region may thus weaken Euroscepticism in cases, in which the EU or European integration is perceived as a solution for the problems of the region. This may especially be the case in regions in which trust in the institutions of the nation state is low. We argue in our final hypothesis that this theoretical consideration can be empirically tested by a comparative design including Eastern Central and Western Europe. While trust in the European Union is roughly the same in ECE and WE (52% and 51% respectively), trust in the national government and the national parliament is generally much lower in ECE (Boda – Medve-Bálint, 2014). In the 2019 Eurobarometer Survey, in ECE countries an average of 34% claimed to trust the national government and 27% claimed to trust the national parliament. In WE, on average 45% claimed to trust the national government and 47% claimed to trust the national parliament (European Commission 2019).[4] Following Sánchez-Cuenca's argumentation, we can expect the citizens in WE to be more Eurosceptic than the citizens in ECE. Due to their higher distrust in the national institutions, people in peripheral regions in ECE should be more likely to blame the condition of their regions on national institutions, while they conceive the EU as a potential 'saviour'. In WE, where trust in national institutions is generally higher, voters might rather opt to blame the EU for their region being left behind.

H5: The effect of the predictors mentioned in hypotheses H1–H4 is moderated by whether a region is located in Eastern Central or Western Europe.

4 The author's own calculations.

Methodology and data

To test the hypotheses developed in the previous section, multiple OLS regression models are calculated.

$$\gamma_r = b_0 + bX_r + c$$

The term γ_r represents our dependent variable, the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties during the 2019 European Parliament election at the level of NUTS 3 regions r. A number of different predictors at the NUTS 3 level are summarised in bX_r. These include the spatial, economic and demographic variables introduced earlier. And c denotes country effects, taken into account by the introduction of country dummies.

The unique dataset used for the analysis encompasses 1169 NUTS 3 regions in 27 EU Member states.[5] NUTS 3 regions are the smallest unit captured by the *Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics* from Eurostat, qualifying them for specific analysis to determine necessary regional measures (Eurostat 2020). Some member states are structured into a large number of relatively small NUTS 3 regions, while other states are structured into few, relatively big NUTS 3 regions. This imbalance could cause a bias in the calculation, overrepresenting the states consisting of a large number of NUTS 3 regions. To avoid this bias, population weights are added to the calculations.[6] Consequently, the impact of the NUTS 3 regions of each member state on the calculation is proportional to the number of the respective inhabitants.

On the level of the NUTS 3 regions, several indicators are included in the dataset. These include *access to services of general interest, GDP per capita, GDP Growth* and the *median age.*

The indicator for the operationalisation of spatial peripheries is provided by the *European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion* (ESPON EGTC 2022). The indicator *access to services of general interest (SGIs)* is binary and denotes good or poor access to SGIs. Services of general interest include banks, cinemas, doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, retail shops, primary schools, secondary schools, train stations and jobs (Noguera et al. 2017). To calculate the indicator, travel times from grid cells to the nearest service provider were calculated. Travel times were then standardised based on the average of the surrounding NUTS 3 regions. Accordingly, the indicator identifies relative disadvantages compared to the surrounding regions (Noguera et al. 2017).[7]

5 NUTS classification from 2016.

6 By dividing the population share of member states in the total EU population by the NUTS 3 share of member states in the total number of NUTS 3 regions, the NUTS 3 regions of each member state received an individual, nationwide weight.

7 In fact, the calculation of the indicators is more complex than shown here. For more details see Noguera et al. (2017).

Economic disadvantages are operationalised through the GDP per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS) and the Compound Annual Growth Rate. GDP per capita in PPS was calculated based on the GDP in PPS (ARDECO 2023a) and population numbers (ARDECO 2023c). By dividing the NUTS 3 GDP by the national GDP, a relative GDP variable is created that puts the regional GDP into national perspective.[8]

For the GDP Growth variable, the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) is calculated based on the GDP per capita in PPS in 2000 (initial value) and 2019 (final value) (ARDECO 2023b). The following formula is used for the calculation (Heidecke – Hübscher 2017: 257):

$$CAGR = \left(\frac{Final\ Value}{Initial\ Value}\right)^{\left(\frac{1}{Number\ of\ Years}\right)} - 1$$

This indicator describes the economic development of NUTS 3 regions.

Finally, the median age is included in the data set to measure population ageing as a characteristic of peripheral regions. As we are interested in disparities on the national level, the deviation of the NUTS 3 median age from the national median age is calculated (Eurostat 2023). A positive value indicates that the regional median age is higher than the national median age.

Our dependent variable, the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties, is created through a combination of the 2019 European Parliament election results and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). The dataset containing the elections results at the level of almost 80,000 districts was created by Arnold Platon and published by ZEIT ONLINE in 2019 (Platon – ZEIT ONLINE 2019). Platon gathered the electoral data from the national electoral authorities and summarised and harmonised it.

The electoral data was combined with information from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey to determine the share of Eurosceptic votes. In the 2019 CHES, party positions on different political topics and ideological questions were evaluated by national experts in 32 countries, including the 27 EU member states. The issue of European Integration played a prominent role. By the item EU_POSITION, the national experts assessed the 'overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in 2019' (Bakker et al. 2020: 12) on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Opposed, 2 = Opposed, 3 = Somewhat Opposed, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat in favour, 6 = In favour, 7 = Strongly in favour). We identify those parties as Eurosceptic that received a rounded score of one, two or three. A list of the parties identified as Eurosceptic by the CHES is provided in the Appendix (A4).

8 One outstanding outlier (Wolfsburg (kreisfreie Stadt), Germany) is excluded from our calculations as the regional GDP is ~4.5 times the national average. The impact of the remaining outliers is considered in the result section.

Parties falling into one of those categories were then identified in the data from the European Parliament election. On the basis of a correspondence table, kindly provided by Platon upon request, the number of votes for the Eurosceptic parties was aggregated on the level of the NUTS 3 regions. By dividing the absolute number of votes for Eurosceptic parties by the absolute number of valid votes, our dependent variable, the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties among the voters at the NUTS 3 level, was created.

Consequently, we follow a rather broad understanding of Euroscepticism including parties that are strongly opposed, opposed or somewhat opposed to European integration according to the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Such a broad definition originates from our focus on the demand side of voters in peripheral regions, whose choices we assume to be motivated by an expression of protest. The supply side can be heterogeneous depending on the political constellation in the respective EU member state. Protest voters' choice may be restricted to either soft or hard Eurosceptic parties in some regions, while in others they have an electoral choice between parties offering different degrees of Euroscepticism. Further, Eurosceptic parties' ideological orientation may be left or right or they may be in opposition or in government. In order to capture each type of Eurosceptic protest voting given these differences in the supply side, we stretch the category of Eurosceptic parties as far as possible. The limitations of this approach and possible extensions are elaborated in the discussion.

Analysis

We test our hypotheses *H1, H2* and *H3* through an OLS regression model including our six predictors (Table 1 M1). Results are reported as standardised beta coefficients.

The negative effect sign of the regional GDP is in line with our expectations indicating a better performance of Eurosceptic parties in regions that are relatively worse off compared to the national average. Conversely, Eurosceptic parties were less successful in regions that have a high GDP per capita compared to the national average. Accordingly, we can confirm hypothesis *H1a*.

Similarly, GDP Growth between 2000 and 2019 has a negative coefficient confirming hypothesis *H1b*. The higher the GDP Growth rate in a NUTS 3 region the less Eurosceptic parties are supported in this region. Poor economic development, on the other hand, favoured Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament election 2019.

Hypothesis 2 on the effect of our spatial indicator cannot be confirmed. The *access to services of general interest* has a rounded beta coefficient of zero, i.e. good or impeded access to services of general interest does not play a role when it comes to Eurosceptic voting in a particular region.

Finally, the median age had the expected positive effect corroborating hypothesis *H4*. In NUTS 3 regions with a population older than the national average, Eurosceptic parties were more successful. Conversely, regions with younger populations were less likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties.

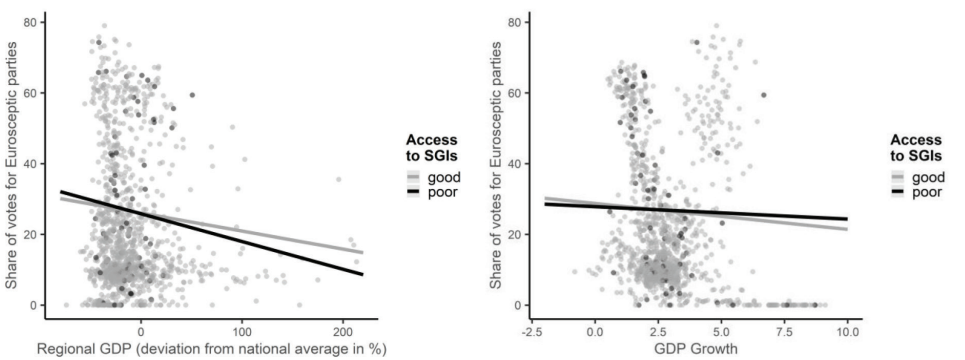
Table 1: Predictors for the vote share of Eurosceptic parties and interactions between spatial and economic predictors (beta values)

Predictors	M1	I1	I2
Relative Regional GDP*	-0.08	-0.08	-0.08
GDP Growth	-0.05	-0.05	-0.06
Access to SGIs	0.00	0.00	0.01
Relative Median Age*	0.07	0.07	0.07
Relative Regional GDP*Access to SGIs		-0.04	
GDP Growth*Access to SGIs			0.03
Observations	1147	1147	1147
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.910 / 0.907	0.910 / 0.907	0.910 / 0.907

Standardized beta coefficients; *relative to the national average (see chapter 3)

In the models I1 and I2, we test the presumed moderation effect of the quality of access to SGIs on the impact of economic performance (Table 1). The negative interaction effect between regional GDP and access to SGIs (I1) indicates an increased negative effect of regional GDP in NUTS 3 regions with poor access to services of general interest. In contrast, regarding the interaction between GDP Growth and access to SGIs (I2), the positive sign indicates that the negative main effect of GDP Growth is reduced in regions with poor access to SGIs – against the expectation of H4.

Figure 1: Interaction – Access to SGIs x Regional GDP/GDP Growth



The two interaction plots (Figure 1)[9] visualise again that regional GDP has a stronger effect on the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties in regions with poor access to SGIs compared to regions with good access to SGIs. Accordingly, in regions with a regional GDP below the national average, Eurosceptic parties performed better, if the access to services of general interest was poor as well. We can thus confirm hypothesis *H4: poor access to SGIs and below overage regional GDP increase Euroscepticism cumulatively, while good access to SGIs, i.e. good public and private infrastructure, tempers the effect of regional GDP.*

In contrast, the moderation effect does not work as expected with regard to GDP Growth. While its negative effect remains negative in regions with poor access to SGIs (i.e. Eurosceptic parties benefit from poor economic development), the effect is not pronounced, but more moderate in regions with good access to SGIs. Possible explanations for this surprising finding are elaborated in the discussion section.

To check the robustness of our results and to take into account OLS regression's susceptibility to outliers (Sibbertsen – Lehne 2021), models M1, I1 and I2 were additionally calculated excluding outliers. Outliers were removed based on the Inter Quartile Range method. After removing the outliers, 992 observations remained for the regression models. Apart from a general decrease in effect size, a non-substantial change of sign in M1 for the access to SGIs (from 0.00 to –0.00) and a stronger interaction effect in model I1, results remained robust (see Appendix A5).

Eastern Central and Western Europe – a Comparison

In the final step, we test hypothesis *H5* by running regression models for ECE and WE separately. The results (Table 2) point towards a confirmation of our hypothesis for GDP growth but not for regional GDP. While regions with poor economic development since 2000 were more likely to vote Eurosceptic in WE, the effect was reversed in Eastern Central Europe. Eurosceptic parties performed worse in regions that experienced a poor economic development in ECE. However, this is not the case for the current regional GDP, whose coefficients' sign is negative in both regions and for which the effect size is even stronger in ECE, meaning that Eurosceptic parties in this region do benefit more from a GDP below the national average than they do in WE.

With regard to access to SGIs, the sign differs between WE and ECE. Poor access to services of general interest favoured Eurosceptic parties in ECE, while the same phenomenon hampered the performance of Eurosceptic parties in WE.

9 Prior to their visualisation, 100 was subtracted from the predictor *Regional GDP*. Accordingly, the intercept represents regions not deviating from the national average with regard to their regional GDP per capita. Values below 0 on the x-axis indicate a GDP below the national average.

The effect of the median age differs as well between WE and ECE. In WE, regions with a population older than the country average are more likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties. In contrast, a relatively higher median age was associated with a lower share of votes for Eurosceptic parties in Eastern Central Europe. In other words, Eurosceptic parties are able to benefit from population ageing in Western Europe, while the same phenomenon actually hinders their performance in Eastern Central Europe.

Table 2: Predictors for the vote share of Eurosceptic parties in Western and Eastern Central Europe (beta values)

Predictors	Western Europe	Eastern Central Europe
Relative Regional GDP*	-0.05	-0.14
GDP Growth	-0.06	0.06
Access to SGIs	-0.02	0.05
Relative Median Age*	0.11	-0.06
Observations	920	227
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.902 / 0.900	0.937 / 0.933

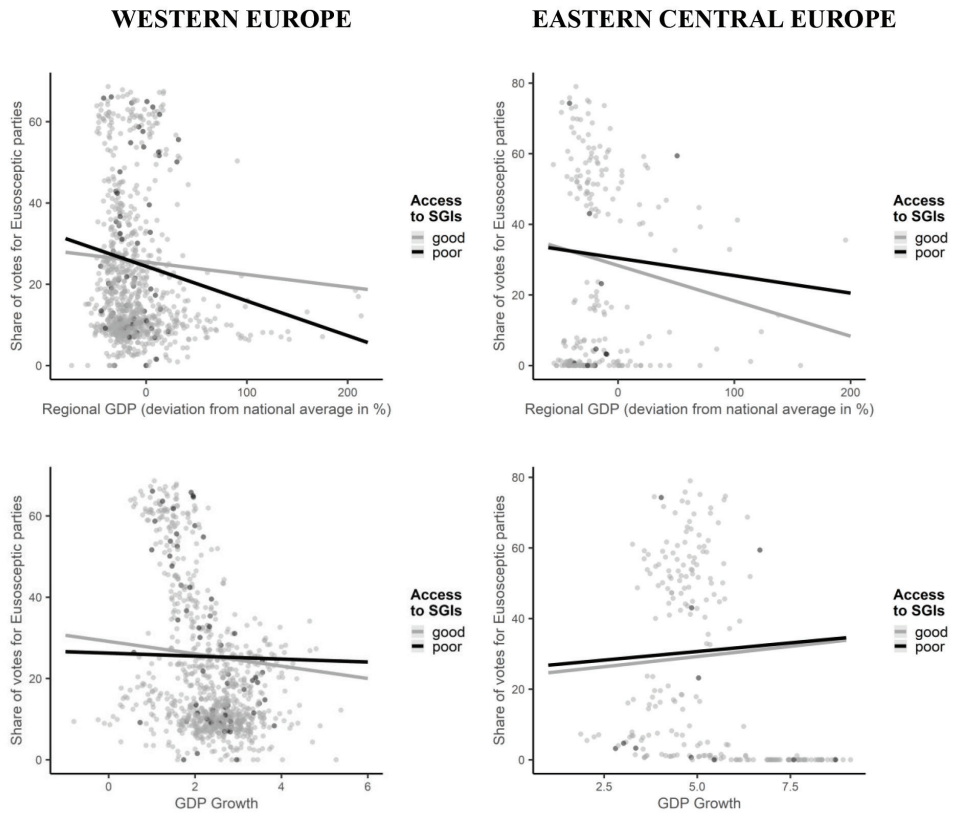
Standardized beta coefficients; *relative to the national average (see chapter 3)

Finally, the interactions between access to SGIs and the economic predictors are analysed for ECE and WE separately (Figure 2 and Table A1 (Appendix)). In WE, the interaction effects are in line with the effects that have been identified during the analysis of the aggregate data set (Table 1).[10] In regions with poor access to services of general interest, the effect of regional GDP is more pronounced, i.e. Eurosceptic parties benefit more from a relatively low GDP. In contrast, the effect of GDP Growth is stronger in regions with good access to SGIs, again in line with the analysis of the aggregate data.

However, in ECE the moderating effect of *access to SGIs* on regional GDP is reversed. Here, the effect of a low regional GDP is *more moderate* in regions with poor access to SGIs. This means the ability of Eurosceptic parties to capitalise from a low GDP (relative to the national average) is actually reduced in regions with poor access to SGIs in ECE. In contrast, access to SGIs only moderates the effect of GDP Growth to a very limited degree in ECE.

10 This is not surprising, since most of the EU population for which the regions are weighted is located in Western Europe.

Figure 2: Graphical representation of interactions between spatial and economic predictors in Western and Eastern Central Europe



Discussion

Our results show higher levels of Euroscepticism in regions with a low GDP per capita compared to the national average. This finding supports our hypothesis *H1a*, stating that citizens of regions that perform economically below other regions in one's own country are more likely to feel deprived, leading to a higher share of votes for Eurosceptic parties. Previous findings on the impact of GDP have not been consistent so far (Dijkstra et al. 2020; Dominicis et al. 2020). This may be due to the usage of the absolute GDP, while we used the relative GDP, expressed as a percentage of the national average, which is more in accordance with the theory of relative deprivation.

Our analysis further confirmed economic *development* to be a strong predictor for the share of votes for Eurosceptic parties independently of the current

economic situation, a finding previously made by Dijkstra et al. (2020). Regions with a lower GDP Growth between 2000 and 2019 showed higher support for Eurosceptic parties than regions with a higher GDP Growth. This result corroborates the assumption that collective deprivation emerges additionally from the comparison between the current and the past performance of a particular region. In the words of Rodríguez-Pose (2018: 21), regions 'that have seen better times and remember them with nostalgia… have used the ballot box as their weapon'. Accordingly, we can confirm hypothesis *H1b*.

Furthermore, we tested whether good or poor access to services of general interest in a region, i.e. the quality of the private and public infrastructure, leads to relative deprivation and thus to a higher share of votes for Eurosceptic parties. However, we cannot confirm hypothesis *H2*, since access to SGIs has no considerable effect on our dependent variable. Still, the operationalisation of the infrastructural indicator used in our analysis may add to this result. Given that poor access so SGIs is measured relatively to the surrounding regions, regional clustering cannot be captured, which may lead to underestimation of poor accessibility.

Our analyses further confirmed that regions with a median age higher than the national average (a sign of emigration of young people as well as low birth rates) showed higher support for Eurosceptic parties (*H3*).

Additionally, we argued that good access to services of general interest, securing a decent quality of life, would temper the effects of poor economic performance on the success of Eurosceptic parties. Our moderation analysis showed some support for hypothesis *H4*. In regions with a relatively low GDP, Eurosceptic parties performed better, if access to SGIs was poor as well. However, this effect is reversed in regions with poor economic *development*. Here, Eurosceptic parties actually performed worse when access to SGIs was poor as well. This surprising finding may be due to the different points of reference used to state collective deprivation. In regions that did not develop well and have seen better times before, the focus of attention might be on the relative downgrading of the region and its loss of relevance compared to the past. In contrast, in regions that are currently performing worse than other regions in their own country, the attention for problems of public and private infrastructure in the present may be more pronounced than in regions focusing on the past.

The comparative analysis of ECE and WE showed considerable support for our hypothesis *H5* that contextual predictors for Euroscepticism are moderated by regions location in Eastern Central or Western Europe. In WE, where trust in national institutions is generally high, regional problems are more likely to be blamed on the European Union. In ECE, trust in national institutions is generally lower and citizens there may, consequently, perceive the European Union as a saviour from inefficient national institutions which are blamed for their regional struggles. This argument can explain why the effect of economic

development is reversed in ECE, where regions with poor economic development were *less* likely to vote for Eurosceptic parties in 2019. The same argument applies to the finding that an above average median age, indicating demographic problems and out-migration, led to worse performance of Eurosceptic parties in ECE. However, there is no reversal of effect for regional GDP: Eurosceptic parties benefit from a relatively low regional GDP in both WE and ECE and even more so in ECE.

Our analysis focused on the demand side of Eurosceptic protest voting. Accordingly, and in line with earlier research (Dijkstra et al. 2020; Dominicis et al. 2020), we did not further differentiate the supply side, assuming that voters made their decision to vote for Eurosceptic parties independently of the specific (Eurosceptic) parties and the structure of party competition. While this approach is suitable for capturing a wide range of political constellations in comparative analyses, the results should be fine-tuned in further research, as the supply side may moderate voters' instrumental choice for Eurosceptic parties to articulate protest. First, while voters who are motivated to express protest against regional deprivation support soft Eurosceptic parties, they may abstain from supporting hard Eurosceptic parties, since their fundamental opposition to the EU and European integration (Taggart – Szczerbiak 2002) may deter them. Second, voters may perceive Eurosceptic parties on the left as better suited to articulate protest against the relative deprivation of the own region, since left wing Eurosceptic parties tend to oppose the European Union due to socio-economic concerns, while right wing Eurosceptic parties tend to base their criticism on concerns about national sovereignty and cultural issues (Meijers 2017). Finally, governing Eurosceptic parties may be perceived as less suited to articulate protest compared to Eurosceptic parties in the opposition. Accordingly, the impact of regional deprivation on the vote share of Eurosceptic parties may be strongest in countries with soft, left-wing parties in opposition, while it may be smallest in countries with hard, right-wing parties in government. Thus, investigating the moderating effect of the supply side on the impact of regional deprivation on Eurosceptic voting can be a promising avenue for future research.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that contextual factors at the regional level impact Eurosceptic voting behaviour in Western and Eastern Central Europe. Contextual factors were presumed and tested within a theoretical framework of multidimensional regional periphery and relative deprivation. It started from the assumption that economic, spatial and demographic contextual factors can cause feelings of collective deprivation among its inhabitants, if they perceive their own region as disadvantaged with regard to these factors compared both to its own past or surrounding regions. Such relative deprivation may cause

political discontent that is addressed to the EU-level by cue-taking, either by blaming the EU or European integration as responsible for the peripheral status of their region or by blaming the national institutions with a subsequent spill-over to the EU level.

Our results mainly corroborate our hypotheses. Poor economic performance of a region, both relative to the national average and the own past, increases the share of Eurosceptic votes. In comparison, the spatial or infrastructural situation of a region has an almost negligible direct impact, while a demographic situation of an aged population, most often indicating out-migration, is equally important.

However, there are indications for moderating effects of the public and private infrastructure, since the effect of the economic situation is tempered in regions with a good infrastructure, but the effect is not consistent for the economic development. Although all effects are relatively small, they support the notion that the rise of Euroscepticism induced by collective economic deprivation can be curbed by investing in public infrastructure.

Finally, the cue-taking approach has been demonstrated to work somewhat differently in Eastern Central and Western Europe. Long-term economic downgrading of a region fosters Eurosceptic vote share in Western Europe but decreases it in Eastern Central Europe; however, such reversal cannot be found for the current economic situation. Presumably, citizens are more susceptible to blaming national institutions and turn to the EU level for help the longer the economic situation devastates. Since the moderating effect of the infrastructure differs as well between Eastern Central and Western Europe, we underline the necessity to overcome a one size fits all approach to explain Euroscepticism in both Eastern Central and Western European countries.

Beyond such regional differentiation, the analyses show the importance of regional contextual factors and the value of integrating them into a model of multidimensional periphery, given that the economic, spatial and demographic factors have independent and joint impacts. Future applications of these models should enrich them by including individual level factors. To avoid an ecological fallacy, our hypotheses did not presume which part of the regional population voted for Eurosceptic parties, but future research should address the individual predictors leading to identification with their own region, the observation of collective deprivation and its translation into Euroscepticism.

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APPENDIX

Table A1: Univariate Analysis Full Sample

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev
Eurosceptic Vote Share	1154	,0	79,0	26,6	21,3
GDP Growth	1168	-,8	9,1	2,9	1,6
Regional GDP	1165	26,2	313,6	88,4	31,9
Median Age	1168	-23,4	12,2	1,0	3,2
Access to SGIs	1161	0	1	,07	,3

Table A2: Univariate Analysis Western and Eastern Central Europe

	Western Europe					Eastern Central Europe				
Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev
Eurosceptic Vote Share	889	,0	59,7	18,9	14,7	266	,0	20,9	4,6	5,5
GDP Growth	900	-,8	7,2	2,2	,8	269	1,5	9,1	5,3	1,5
Regional GDP	896	26,2	313,6	88,8	30,1	269	44,4	295,8	86,9	37,2
Median Age	900	-23,4	12,2	1,2	3,5	269	-4,6	6,2	,4	1,8
Access to SGIs	898	0	1	,08	,3	263	0	1	0,04	,2

Table A3: Interactions between spatial and economic predictors in Western and Eastern Central Europe (beta values)

	Western Europe		Eastern Central Europe	
Predictors	I1WE	I2WE	I1ECE	I2ECE
Relative Regional GDP*	-0.05	-0.05	-0.14	-0.14
GDP Growth	-0.06	-0.06	0.06	0.07
Access to SGIs	-0.02	-0.02	0.05	0.05
Relative Median Age*	0.11	0.11	-0.06	-0.06
Regional GDP*Access to SGIs	-0.08		0.07	
GDP Growth*Access to SGIs		0.05		-0.01
Observations	920	920	227	227
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.902 / 0.900	0.902 / 0.900	0.937 / 0.933	0.937 / 0.933

Standardized beta coefficients; *relative to the national average (see chapter 3)

Table A4: Eurosceptic Parties according to the Chapel Hill Expert Survey

Country	Party Name	Party Name (English)	EU-Position
Belgium	Vlaams Belang	Flemish Interest	2
Belgium	Partij van de Arbeid van België; Parti du Travail de Belgique	Workers' Party of Belgium	3
Denmark	Enhedslisten—De Rød-Grønne	Unity List/Red-Green Alliance	2
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People's Party	2
Germany	Alternative für Deutschland	Alternative for Germany	2
Greece	Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas	Communist Party of Greece	1
Greece	Laïkós Sýndesmos—Chrysí Avgí	Popular Association—Golden Dawn	1
Greece	Elliniki Lisi	Greek Solution	2
Spain	Vox	Voice (Latin)	3
France	Parti Communiste Français	French Communist Party	3
France	Rassemblement national	National Rally	1
France	La France Insourmise	Unbowed France	3
France	Debout la France	France Arise	1
Ireland	Dlúthphairtíocht–Pobal Roimh Bhrabús	Solidarity—People Before Profit	2
Italy	Lega Nord	Northern League	2
Italy	Fratelli d'Italia	Brothers of Italy	2
Italy	MoVimento Cinque Stelle	Five Star Movement	3
Netherlands	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	Reformed Political Party	3
Netherlands	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party	3
Netherlands	Partij voor de Vrijheid	Party for Freedom	1
Netherlands	Partij voor de Dieren	Party for the Animals	3
Netherlands	Forum voor Democratie	Forum for Democracy	1
Portugal	Coligação Democrática Unitária	Democratic Unitarian Coalition	2
Austria	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Freedom Party of Austria	2
Finland	Perussuomalaiset	The Finns Party	2
Sweden	Vänsterpartiet	Left Party	3
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	Sverigedemokraterna	2
Bulgaria	Ataka	Attack	2
Czechia	Komunistická strana ˇCech a Moravy	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	2
Czechia	Svoboda a pˇrímá demokracie Tomio Okamura	Freedom and Direct Democracy Tomio Okamura	1
Estonia	Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond	Conservative People's Party	2
Hungary	Fidesz—Magyar Polgári Szövetség	Fidesz—Hungarian Civic Union	3
Hungary	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	Law and Justice Party	3
Poland	Kukiz '15	Kukiz '15	3
Poland	Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość	Confederation Liberty and Independence	1

Country	Party Name	Party Name (English)	EU-Position
Slovakia	Slovenská národná strana	Slovak National Party	3
Slovakia	Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko (Marian Kotleba)	People's Party—Our Slovakia	1
Slovakia	Sme Rodina—Boris Kollár	We are family—Boris Kollar	3
Slovenia	Slovenska nacionalna stranka	Slovenian National Party	3
Croatia	Živi zid	Human Shield	2
Croatia	Hrvatska konzervativna stranka	Croatian Conservative Party	3

EU-Position: 1 = Strongly Opposed, 2 = Opposed, 3 = Somewhat Opposed

Table A5: Predictors for the vote share of Eurosceptic parties and interactions between spatial and economic predictors (beta values) - Excluding Outliers

Predictors	M1x	I1x	I2x
Relative Regional GDP*	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06
GDP Growth	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Access to SGIs	-0.00	0.01	0.00
Relative Median Age*	0.05	0.05	0.05
Relative Regional GDP*Access to SGIs		-0.06	
GDP Growth*Access to SGIs			0.03
Observations	992	992	992
R^2 / R^2 adjusted	0.916 / 0.914	0.916 / 0.914	0.916 / 0.914

Standardized beta coefficients; *relative to the national average (see chapter 3)

‘The Iron Curtain did not dissolve very well’: Reflections on EU Citizenship from CEE peripheralised perspectives

REBECCA PATES

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Abstract: *Peripheralisation is determined in socio-demographic, economic, political and identitarian factors. It is, many say, by definition, characterised by a willingness to migrate, in particular among the younger generations. European citizenship comes with the right to migrate – to relocate, to work and to be treated as equals in many respects to the local citizenry. In this research paper, I explicate the results of twenty interviews in six CEE countries with 7th-graders who were asked what they thought of European citizenship. Those who knew what this is give widely divergent answers, but there are two dominant themes running through their perspectives: they do not feel great affection for the EU, and whilst willing to migrate, they do not appreciate the need to do so. Thus, they feel the EU does not live up to its promises to deliver equality for all Europeans. One explanation they give for this is that ‘the Iron Curtain did not dissolve very well’: the burden of history is acutely experienced.*

Keywords: ***European citizenship, peripheralisation, inequality, CEE History***

Equality and democratic citizenship

Citizenship in democracies holds out the promise of equality amongst those sharing that status. Democratisation is on the one hand a process of establishing institutions relevant for the functioning of the political apparatus (and its checks and balances), it also presents a way of closing social relations to people who are not citizens on the one hand and of opening them (in principle) to those who are members of the same demos (Brubaker 1992: 46). Thus, the

institution of citizenship presents winners and losers of a 'birthright lottery' (Shachar 2009) that distributes social, economic, political and education--related opportunities in accordance with the accident of one's extraction or place of birth. Both winners and losers share in principle their status with others of the same citizenship, and close access to those of another citizenship. Thus, whilst democratic nations are internally organised horizontally, they are internationally organised vertically.

If we focus on the horizontal organisation, we notice that democratic citizenship over time tends to generate equality within a nation-state (Lessenich 2019). This is because, as the political sociologist Stephan Lessenich argues, the course of democratisation involves ever new waves of inclusion that are accompanied by attempts to resist this new inclusion. Those fights for open or closed relations within the demos are, for Lessenich, the very essence of modern democracy. For instance, what in 1789 was a revolutionary perspective on the equality of 'all Frenchmen' excluded most men and all women. Feudal systems are characterised by a great distance between the power structures in a territory and its inhabitants, particularly if they were serfs. By conferring citizenship to (initially only adult, male, tax-paying) inhabitants, the state is admitting that these people are at least in principle fit to rule themselves rather than being ruled by others, or at least fit to determine who runs the country (Ther 2022: 24). Women and excluded men slowly gained the civic, political, social and economic rights that determine modern citizenship and thus became part of the demos. So democracy, Lessenich argues, is not just a style of government, but it is a lifestyle. And this lifestyle includes the fight for inclusion in the demos, as well as the resistance against it.

So debates concerning the composition of the demos continue, as Lessenich argues, now revolving on closing the ranks against the 'huddled masses yearning to be free' – or yearning to escape poverty, or just on the lookout for adventure – who come from abroad on the one hand, and on trying to force the higher classes to open their ranks to those who strive for better lives from within. Those who argue for openness or closure always do so with their personal profit in mind. Thus, conflicts concerning the openness or the closeness of any society are archetypical democratic conflicts that are continuous and open-ended. This is because the claim that the demos is a society of equals is always a normative claim concerning formal equality – which is concordant with a great deal of substantive inequality. So the working classes close ranks against the peripheralised, the migrants and the non-working poor, and demand more openness from the middle classes, the middle classes close ranks against the working classes and demand more openness from the upper classes, and so on, and all try to achieve a better status for themselves or at least to maintain their current status by defending from 'below'.

Citizenship in a democracy which thus, over time, generates new claims to equality and legal frameworks guaranteeing equal rights for increasing numbers of people, without necessarily achieving equality in practice. Equality in practice always falls short of its claims in theory. But equality in principle serves to delineate those who belong to the demos and those who do not.

Citizenship in the EU on the other hand confers mainly one type of substantive equality amongst EU citizens: the equality of freedom of movement, and this only for the purposes of work, where work is understood in a conservative sense as remunerated work (as opposed to care work, art or volunteering). The amended treaties of Rome and of Maastricht afford EU citizens the right to move and reside freely in any member state and, for example, to vote in local and European parliamentary elections. It outlaws discrimination against citizens on the basis of nationality, and it seeks to combat discrimination on the basis of sex (as had the original Treaty of Rome), 'race' or ethnicity, religion or belief, disability or sexuality (Dean 2019). 'However', as Gerhards and his colleagues have argued, 'Survey results show that only 56 percent of respondents support the idea that EU migrants and national citizens should be treated equally' (Gerhards et al. 2020, n.p.).

What this might mean is not immediately clear. The notion of equality has a number of components, amongst which we find ontological equality and equality of access to resources. To claim that other Europeans are not equal may thus mean either that there is some intrinsic status to which they cannot lay claim – for instance, by seeing them as equally European, but not of equal value. Some political sociologists argue that Central and Eastern European citizens have been subject to racialisation or ethnicisation, thus being regarded as 'white' but not equally white (Böröcz 2021, Parvulescu – Boatča 2022 refer to 'dirty whites' and 'internal peripheries'). Alternatively, equality might mean that some Europeans should not have equal access to social resources in comparison to long-term residents (Manow 2018, 2022). Thus, the view that some are unequal is ambiguous. Inequality might mean having a differential status or a differential right to access resources.

It is becoming clear that whilst European citizenship holds out a number of promises – of equality, of supranational identification options, of a sense of belonging – it continues to fall short of expectations. Interestingly, what EU citizenship does offer effectively is precisely the one feature that has most been taken advantage of in the past decades: it fosters 'people's ownership of the integration project through the recognition of "special rights" to Community citizens. These "special rights", in the model of supranational citizenship that eventually made its way into the Treaties, are based on reciprocal recognition, among the Member States, of the status of their respective nationals' (Strumia

2017: 674). In other words: It allows for relocation to other EU member states, the right to settle, work and profit from the social insurance plans offered to local citizens.

The massive loss of employment, social security and income in CEE states after 1989 caused a substantial level of migration of young men, a loss of skilled labour, a rupture of family bonds, communities, congregation and associations (Aust et al. 2022: 117). And yet, the very groups of young people who are planning on emigrating (as argued in Pates 2023) are highly hesitant on articulating a positive perspective on the very institution that allows them to do so.

This puzzle – that young Europeans planning on making use of relocation rights offered to European citizens are highly hesitant to identity as EU citizens – is best explained with reference to the overarching promises made by the European Union, namely, the promise of equality. It turns out that young people see their options for a future as requiring emigration precisely because they are in many ways not equal or not seen as equal to their (Western and Northern European) peers who get to stay in their regions of origin. If European citizenship functioned as promised, it would allow everyone equally to stay or to migrate. Substantively, they are unequal, meaning the CEE youth feel they need to migrate in order to have a future, whilst others can choose careers, good incomes and a dignified life in the regions of origin. That is, the equality promised – an equality for those who relocate internationally within the EU – is not the equality CEE youth seek, although they are prepared to take advantage of it. The substantial equality they would prefer would require considerable redistribution of resources to make all European youth face comparable futures – in their places of origin.

The research project

This analysis is based on 20 focus group interviews in secondary schools with 16–17-year-old students which we conducted in the autumn and spring of 2021–2022 in two of the most peripheral NUTS 3 regions in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia (for more details on the project, see Lorenz – Anders 2023). The research was funded by the EU as part of the *Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence* at Leipzig University 'The European Union and its rural periphery in East Central Europe'.

We had first developed a peripherality index along five indicators: GDP in purchasing power standards per capital, employment rate, median age, travel time to the closest regional centre and accessibility to 'services of general interest' (by which we meant hospitals, supermarkets and pharmacies). For each indicator, NUTS 3 regions that performed worse than the national average were given a score of 1 and we thus determined the degree of peripherality in relation

to the national context. For each of the five countries, we then identified the two regions that ranked highest in each country. Within these regions, we identified towns with 20,000 to 30,000 inhabitants and within these towns, secondary and vocational schools; we kept the type of settlement and the context conditions comparable. We assumed that these regional centres would show a reasonable number of commuters to the schools from more rural areas. The students we spoke to were 11th grade students, and we conducted the group interviews in the local language (which was not always the native language of the students) and with groups of 8, trying to ensure gender parity in each group. There were two exceptions. In the secondary school in Lučenec (Slovakia), only seven students participated and in the vocational school in Moreni (Romania), 20 students participated. Participants were told that the interviewers were interested in what people thought about their lives in the EU. To keep group discussions comparable, several questions were used as a guide. Six questions concerned the young people's perceptions of their own personal situation, their town and their plans for the future, their perception of EU citizenship and the rights connected to it, and the EU elections.

The collection of data: Cases and schools

In Hungary, the towns we picked were Siófok in the southern Transdanubian region and Karcag in the northern Great Plain. Siófok has about 25,000 inhabitants and Karcag nearly 20,000. Siófok is a popular tourist destination, Karcag is characterised by natural gas production and agriculture. In Siófok, one class from the Krúdy Gyula vocational school and one from the Perczel Mór secondary school participated. The group discussions in Karcag took place at Nagykun Református secondary school and Varró István vocational school, which are located in the city centre (for more details, see Mandru – Vig 2023).

In Romania, the towns we chose were Moreni, a town situated in Dâmbovița County in the Wallachia region, and Caransebeș, a town in Caraș-Severin County, in Banat. Similar in size (18,000 vs. 21,000 inhabitants), Moreni is an old industrial town whilst Caransebeș is a medieval town designed around the Orthodox Cathedral Învierea Domnului. The schools selected in Moreni were the technological 'oil' high-school and the national college 'Ion Luca Caragiale'. In Caransebeș, we interviewed students at the 'Traian Doda' national college and the 'Decebal' technological high school (for more details, see Ferenczi – Micu 2023).

In Poland, the towns we focused on were Sandomierz, a municipality on the Vistula River in southeastern Poland, and Nowa Ruda in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, in the southwestern part of Poland, close to the Czech Republic, each with roughly 22,000 inhabitants. Sandomierz is characterised by its well-preserved historical town centre. Nowa Ruda also has a historical town centre with traditional textile manufacturing and mining industries, few of which

are still in operation. In Sandomierz, the interviews were conducted at the high school and the vocational school, which share a large building complex. In Nowa Ruda, we selected the high school in a residential but central area, whilst the vocational school is located more peripherally (for more details, see Stosik – Sekunda 2023).

In Czechia, the towns we elected were Sokolov, located in the Karlovy Vary region in the west of the country, on the border with Germany, and Chrudim, located inland in Eastern Bohemia, about 11 km south of the larger Pardubice. One of the most important industries in Sokolov is the Uhelná coal power plant. The Pardubice region, to which Chrudim belongs, is characterised by industries such as electrical and mechanical engineering, chemical production, manufacturing, the agricultural and food industries, as well as commercial and public services. The schools in Sokolov were a vocational school, Integrovaná střední škola technická a ekonomická Sokolov, and a secondary school, Gymnázium Sokolov. The schools in Chrudim were the vocational school Střední odborná škola a Střední odborné učiliště obchodu a služeb, and the secondary school, Gymnázium Josefa Ressela (for more details, see Stangenberger – Formánková 2023).

In Slovakia, the towns we selected were Ružomberok, with its 27,000 inhabitants, located in the northwest of Slovakia, Liptovský Mikuláš located about 30 km east of Ružomberok, with about 31,000 inhabitants, and Lučenec, a town of about 28,000 inhabitants, located in the south of Slovakia, close to the Hungarian border. We spoke to students at the vocational school in Ružomberok, Spojená škola—Stredná odborná škola obchodu a služieb Ružomberok, at the secondary school in Liptovský Mikuláš, Gymnázium M. M. Hodžu, and at two schools in Lučenec, the vocational school Stredná odborná škola hotelových služieb a dopravy v Lučenci and the secondary school in Lučenec, Gymnázium Boženy Slančíkovej Timravy. The vocational school is a bilingual school with many students of a Hungarian background (for more details, see Stangenberger 2023).

The research process

The interviews were held in the local languages by native speakers, transcribed and translated, and subsequently collectively interpreted in a research seminar during the summer term 2023 in the department of political science at Leipzig University. The interpretation method used was grounded theory. This is a style of qualitative research that aims at systematically interpreting qualitative data using both inductive and deductive approaches (Strübing 2004). The analysis of first cases allows for first theoretical concepts. This is followed by a 3-stage coding process that, as a rule, is a collective process. The first step consists of open coding and the structuring of the material according to themes in an interactive process: the interpretation is intersubjectively secured (ibid.: 99). The next step consists of developing categories, which are abstracted and generalised

themes (Przyborski – Wohlrab-Sahr 2014). Finally, selective coding allows for the determination of core categories that serve to explain the phenomena being researched and allow for the generation of the central theory (ibid.: 211).

One clear set of resultant codes concerned the willingness to migrate to regional or national centres or to move internationally (analysed in Pates 2023). Given their decisive articulation of preferences in favour of migrating themselves, either to urban centres in their countries of residence or to Western European countries, what do the students make of the very institution that allows them to conceive of such a future? What, in other words, do they make of the EU citizenship? The results are mixed; clearly, there is no consensus on the usefulness of the EU to the individual across countries, classes and situations. Some patterns, however, could be discerned across these cases, which I shall present in what follows.

In the presentation of my results I shall not be quoting from every interview nor from every school, not because nothing interesting was said, but because I was looking for patterns; and these patterns are sometimes more succinctly or poetically articulated in some case rather than others, which leads to them being quoted. But all the results were found repeatedly (otherwise they would not amount to a pattern). I shall also not present the results on the basis of one of the countries, languages spoken or school type, because the data situation in this research project does not allow us to come to conclusions concerning any one country, region or town. Still, two main patterns emerged with regards to the question of EU citizenship and equality. First, there is not much interest in or affection for the EU, though it is deemed useful mainly in the sense that it allows for easy migration. Second, the anticipated need to migrate is seen with resentment: the students regard the EU as having allowed for a great deal of inequality, resulting in unevenly distributed opportunity structures across the EU, and the freedom of movement that comes with EU citizenship is but a weak compensation for the inequality. The students see themselves as being on the losing side of the opportunity lottery, and as inheritors of historic disadvantage, as I shall show.

The Results

A. 'All that connects us are borders'

That something is shared with others – a narrative, an ascriptive feature, a purpose – is part of the meaning of a collective identity (Delitz 2018). There are clearly students who feel attachment to the Union, even if it is sometimes articulated with some hesitation – though this attachment is pragmatic and concerns students having an option to emigrate: 'For example, if someone finishes school and can't find a good job in Poland, they just go abroad, and thanks to the EU

there's no problem to go to e.g. to Germany to work and come back without any problems' (2021118B_Nowa Ruda). The most positive utterances amongst all the interviews in the five countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechia and Slovakia) were made by Slovakian students who see their national and their EU identities as intertwined, as shown in the following quote: 'Well, I don't think there is that much difference [between EU citizens], because Slovakia is part of the European Union, so we don't feel that much of a difference, so to speak. And we think of it more as a general thing, that we are citizens of both, that we don't make any difference' (210930B_ Lučenec). Slovakia was also the country in which the students appear to identify with the EU on an emotional level. For instance, one student said that in her opinion, 'we are like one big family, we help each other' and 'it is such a given that we are citizens in the European Union', listing the free movement of the EU as 'uniting' factors. Others mention that they have never experienced not being EU citizens but regard membership positively.

The Czech students on the other hand also identify with the EU, but do not claim to have much affection for it – they only mention the economic advantages membership brings them, by highlighting EU funding of infrastructure and everyday life. One interviewee illustrates this by saying, 'if we weren't in the European Union, there would just be nothing, there wouldn't be that playground, there wouldn't be that road, there would just be gravel or something. It would just be different' (211001A_Chrudim).

The students in Poland on the other hand by and large resisted the suggestion that they might identify with the EU. In so far as if the EU is mentioned in positive terms at all, it is mostly because of the opportunity to travel without a visa and the opportunity to work abroad. When encouraged by the interviewers to say something positive about EU citizenship, one young woman says: 'I guess the fact that we don't need passports [to travel]' (211116A_ Sandomierz). Such a pragmatic perspective with is guarded articulation of a benefit of EU citizenship was altogether quite rare, however. A girl in the same Polish town clearly demurred when asked about her European identity: 'We talk about Poland every day. We don't mention the EU every day, or every hour, or talk about it more. Most of us only think about passports, and the rest are more attached to Poland' (20211116A_ Nowa Ruda). Most students elsewhere agree with her: 'Every person looks more at their nation than at the whole Parliament, at the Community. And he would look more at who is going to govern his country than the whole community of countries in Europe. And that's it' (211116B_ Sandomierz). 'We are Poles first, then citizens of the Union' (2021118A_Nowa Ruda). Particularly among the Polish students interviewed, there was some reluctance to identify as European citizens. Some explain why they feel this way. For instance, in Nowa Ruda, a student explained: 'I don't feel any connection with other EU-citizens just because we're in the same EU. I mean, I'm Polish, someone's German, and

we're in the same organization. So what does that change? I mean I really like the fact that we're in the EU because it's easier for us as citizens of Europe, but honestly, what does it change?' (211118A_ Nowa Ruda).

Some Hungarian and Slovak students flatly refused to consider the question. In these interviews, the gist tends to be that there is nothing that connects them with other EU nationals. In Lučenec, a student argues rather wittily: 'I can't even comment on what I think connects us. I guess it's just borders'; they continue: 'it's a completely different culture everywhere, the French live completely differently than the Slovaks, the same goes for the Germans, and it's different in every country' (20210930A_Lučenec). A Karcag student emphasised. 'For me it's not important', he explains: 'I say it's not important because we are such a small country, I think we are fine without the union because we can do everything, before the union and after the union' (20220125B_Karcag). But other students in Karcag argue more pragmatically: 'the EU means national cohesion, an alliance between nations, and this is also reflected, for example, in the Schengen area, where you don't have to use a passport everywhere, you can cross borders with an identity card, and the free movement of goods, products, and capital is also much easier, for example, with other continents where there are no such federal systems. So… the Union essentially makes it easier for us to be European and to have contacts with other countries' (220125A_ Karcag). All positive claims in these contexts are highly pragmatic rather than affective; there is not much love lost either for the EU or for other Europeans, or at least, not affection that they feel appropriate to articulate in the context of these interviews. One Karcag student explains that this is because 'the people of Europe are more connected by culture and history than by… the institutional system that we call the European Union' (220125A_ Karcag). But though there is not much love lost for the EU institutions or other member states, many Hungarian students express their desire to move within the country in the near future, primarily to attend universities and a majority of the interviewees mentions a strong inclination to move abroad in the longer term. One student explains, 'Because of the very few opportunities, I can't imagine staying here in the future' (220125A_ Karcag).

So there is not much ambivalence amongst the students. Those who answer the question as to what European citizenship means to them point to the usefulness in terms of opportunities to migrate that the EU citizenship offers them, but they have no love for the EU nor do they identify in a collective whose institution the EU is. That said, many students did not answer the questions and said they knew too little about the EU. 'I don't know what would happen if we weren't in the European Union.' Another says: 'I don't really know, because I don't care about that stuff. I don't even know what the European Union means, or like I know we're in it, there's like countries in it, right, they might help us, too. But I just sit there and say, yeah, we're in the European Union, great, and what am I supposed to do with it?' One secondary school student argued 'I don't

even know where the European Parliament is.' Those who admit to little knowledge also assume that the EU has no effect on their lives and that membership in it would make no difference whatsoever.

So, to summarise, many of those interviewed articulated the view that either EU citizenship (about which they often admitted to know little) made no difference to their lives, or that it was primarily useful either because local infrastructure projects might be funded by the EU or it might allow them to migrate at some time in the future. But there is another perspective that was frequently articulated by students: that they were not equal to others, in particular in relation to Western European students.

B. 'The Iron Curtain didn't dissolve very well'

The inequality perceived and articulated by the students in our interviews relates to economic and ontological differences. I shall present these in turn. Many students pointed to the relative poverty of their own countries in contrast to Western countries, in particular when they were explaining their desire to migrate: 'everybody knows that Eastern Europe is quite… not backward, but behind the other half of Europe', a 'backward area economically and socially' (20220113A_Moreni), 'countries are lagging behind, such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, (to) catch up with countries like France or Germany' (220125A_Karcag). They rate their own countries in negative terms; in terms of standards of living, there are few positive outlooks; they berate the lack of choices for youths and poor infrastructure (they mention health services, public transport, corruption). Migration, then, is not a migration to the West in the sense of 'ex occidente lux!', as some have argued (mainly from the West), but a push factor, as they find their expectations for private and public lives likely to be thwarted for those who choose to stay. Thus, Romanian students agreed with the student who said: 'If we want something else or want to do something with our lives, we can't do it with the salary we get in Romania' (220113B_Moreni). Emigration is for them a means to an end. Those who did not want to be left behind all pointed to a future as emigrants (for more details, see Pates 2023). But they did not like not having an option to stay. They resent the stark choices they face. As a Czech student puts it: 'It seems to me that they just treat the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the smaller countries here as a kind of garbage' (210921B_Sokolov). A Hungarian student says ruefully: 'Hungary should not be left behind' (220125B_Karcag), whilst a Romanian student laments 'it seems like we're a bit forgotten by the world' (220113A_Moreni). What makes their own countries so unattractive is articulated most clearly by a Romanian student. She argues that 'Eastern Europe' generally had not become as modern as the rest of the world, because of history somehow… It's as if this city is stuck in time, somehow' (20220113A_Moreni). Another student adds: 'why can't this

town be fixed? Because the people here are drowning in their own mediocrity. People are, how shall I say, stuck at such a mediocre level of consciousness' (220113A_Moreni). Even though Romania has resources, they are not valued, Romanians are 'stupid' or 'thieves' (220113B_Moreni).

Many more thoughtful students argue that the real problems are historically made, and that the problems are generally between 'the East' and 'the West'. One student goes so far as to say that there are comprehension problems generally between the two Europes: 'only we among ourselves can understand each other, those in the East, because those in the West have not shared our history, let's say' (220113A_Moreni). This fundamental lack of understanding of 'Eastern Europeans' by 'the West' is due to the fact that the Eastern countries are seen by other Europeans as pre-modern, they argue, as well as backward and poor.

This view of the East is at least in part attributed to the dictatorships of the twentieth century: 'Here in Eastern Europe, National Socialism and Socialism were present for many decades, and there is a tradition of this here in Eastern Europe, and it cannot be regulated at the European level, because what is completely unacceptable in Western Europe... was once accepted here' (220125A_ Karcag). They see this history as unfortunate, however as one commented: 'I understand that from this European citizenship I gain a certain freedom, but this European citizenship for the citizens of the European Union does not mean much socially speaking. I mean, I won't be treated as an equal in other countries because I have another citizenship underneath my European citizenship and everyone has their own opinion about the citizens of another country' (220113A_ Moreni). This is a point that particularly the Romanian students elaborate on without being prompted:

> okay, there's a big difference between the western states and the states...not that big, but there's a big difference between the western states and the eastern states, there's a certain behavior that westerners have shown towards us. What could be the reason? We look in history and we realize that there is this difference: in the West there is a great hatred of communism, the Russians were communists, we were communists and we realize where it comes from, but we still remained poor. And nobody helps us (220113A_ Moreni).

The lament about inequality is succeeded by a demand, that there be more transfer payments to the East. The economic disadvantage is seen as a grounds for solidarity, rather than, as they see it, a reason to be disparaged. As the political sociologists Patricio Korzeniewicz and Timothy Moran have argued, international migration that entails gaining access to the average lowest deciles can be hugely advantageous if the lowest deciles of the country of immigration is higher than the upper deciles of the country of emigration. If this is the case, international migration becomes the 'single most immediate and effective

means of global social mobility for populations in most countries of the world' (Korzeniwicz – Moran 2009: 107).

So migration solves a number of problems from the perspectives of the students – of relative and absolute poverty, inadequate infrastructure, lack of social and economic mobility – but they rue this fact and would articulate clear resentment of the fact that citizens in Western countries do not face such stark choices. They feel that genuine equality would mean similar life choices, including the choice not to emigrate. So they argue for transfer payments – but realise that these come at a cost. These costs seem to them unfair, a form of modern imperialism even. One Romanian student argues:

> I am not saying that it is a bad thing to have two different Europes, it is good to have two different Europes on two levels. Culturally. I think it's very healthy to have that, but economically it's a, it's a big disadvantage. I mean, from what I know and from what projects I've followed (sic) from the European Union, they are trying somehow to make Europe uniform. Like a unification. It's good on some levels, economic, social... The idea is that they are trying to achieve a unification, and a cultural unification which creates a defensive posture somehow, because of history we feel again that we could be controlled and nobody wants that and that's why we slowly lose hope in changing something or equalising from these points of view. (220113A_ Moreni)

Another student chimes in: 'I think that this theme of culture can be emphasised, because my personal impression of the European Union is that it is trying to standardise not only economically but also culturally, which I think is very wrong, it seems to me that they want to diminish culture, especially Eastern culture. That seems to me to be the point, and it can be emphasised' (220113A_ Moreni). Also the Czech debates took a dark turn: 'I think lately it's really been more of a dictate... that the European Union is telling the countries what to do, that it's clearly above them' (211001A_Chrudim). All these students see the imposition of EU norms and values as the payment exerted for their relative poverty, and feel that the price that they have to pay as a country is too high: an imposition that affects their own values and norms and is an attempt to wipe out Romanian, Polish, Hungarian or Czech culture. In fact, they explain that what they experience from the West is an attempt to assimilate Eastern cultures to the West, as if the EU was unwilling or unable to tolerate cultural differences: 'the idea is that they are trying to achieve a unification, and a cultural unification which creates a defensive posture somehow' (220113A_Moreni).

These laments of inequality are however not equally distributed across the interviews. It is striking to what degree the feelings of inequality expressed by Romanian students in particular differs from the perspectives of our interviews in Poland, where the students portray themselves much more confidently as

members of a society of solidarity amongst equals: 'So, if I'm going to work, I'm going to work for other citizens of the European Union, also from outside our country. That's how I look at it. So, I will work for others, and others for me. A kind of symbiosis' (211118A_ Nowa Ruda). Whilst the Romanian students emphasise that taking financial aid from the EU comes at too high a cost, and that they are not treated as equals either collectively or individually when they work in Germany (where they recount that others have experienced racism), Polish students see themselves more in a symbiotic relationship with other Europeans, a metaphor from biology suggesting that every state in the EU, and every individual in the state, have different functions that they take up and though the roles might not be equal, they are equally important.

To Summarise

Whilst EU citizenship is a 'liminal' form of citizenship, one of its aims has been to establish, or at least suggest, equality amongst European citizens. Our research project held interviews with adolescents in six CEE countries in secondary and vocation schools. Whilst some students – namely in Poland and Slovakia – articulate that they are members of a circle of solidarity and share the aims of the EU, others – notably Hungarian and Romanian students – see EU citizenship provisions pragmatically, as a way to ease the project of migration, but would prefer to stay in their own areas of origin if they were just not so peripheral in economic, social and infrastructural terms. Neither perspective cherishes EU citizenship as they do their national citizenships. Many chafe at the sense of inequality. And this is a problem – as one of the most promising aspects of citizenship as the linchpin of democratic order is its dynamic quality, enabling subjects as claimants, as the social scientist Engin Isin has argued (2013: 21). EU citizenship as enacted (by which Isin means that citizenship is the result of certain activities by the citizen) is distinguished from citizenship as arranged (meaning that citizenship is the result of activities by people acting in and for institutions). There are various acts through which European citizenship may be performed or enacted:

> When people mobilise for legalising same-sex marriage, rally for public housing, advocate decriminalisation of marijuana or ecstasy for medical uses, wear attire such as head-scarves in public spaces, campaign for affirmative action programmes, demand better health-care access and services, demonstrate against austerity measures, seek disability provisions, protest against government or corporate policies and lodge court cases, they do not often imagine let alone express themselves as struggling for the maintenance or expansion of social, cultural or sexual citizenship… people do not often mobilise and rise for abstract or universal ideal. (ibid.: 21–22)

Isin is arguing that citizenship is lived experience, an activity that happens on a meta-level, as an unintended consequence of political activities, whilst people are interpolating their citizenship rights and the attendant claims to equality. It is notable that none of the students interviewed in our research was enacting European citizenship in the sense here explained, but of course, there are young and from peripheralised areas, where political expression may not take the forms that it does in urban areas.

If we accept that citizenship is enacted, and that it expresses itself in performed subject positions, Isin deduces that European citizenship too is a question of enacted subject positions, a way of relating to others either as equal citizens or unequal outsiders:

> We can then define European citizenship broadly as a relational (political, legal, social and cultural but perhaps also sexual, aesthetic and ethical) institution of domination and emancipation that governs who European citizens (insiders), strangers, outsiders and abjects (aliens) are and how these European subjects are to govern themselves and each other in that space constituted as Europe. So European citizenship is not only membership in a state. It is a relationship that governs the conduct of the (subject) positions that constitute it. (Isin 2013: 26)

Thus, European citizenship does not merely denote a status, but a range of activities that constitute the citizenry as a performed subjectivity, and which citizens may – or, as we have seen in the case of the students here described – may not engage in. As non-citizens can and do engage in these activities, and as not all citizens engage in them, it seems that enacted and institutionalised citizenships are then two categories that refer to similar but not the same kinds. They are not exactly overlapping phenomena. This is an artefact not only of European citizenships, but of identities generally. And it has effects on how identities can be studied. They can be analysed in *deductive* terms: there are certain basic political-philosophical principles on the basis of which one may call a person a European citizen, and a correct understanding of how (the appropriate set of) these principles can be used to deduce the appropriate set of labelling and identifications of a person as a European citizen. Identities can also be analysed in *inductive* terms. Here, the way people see or enact EU citizenship transmutes into more general models of what EU citizenship *is*, and ought to be. Third, we can take the approach that citizenship is *enacted*: that varied subjects enact or embody interpretations of favoured principles, and that what we call democracy in a given time and place is the contingent outcome of a particular understanding of which subjects enacting which principles matter most.

One result of this research has been that equality might *deductively* be part of European citizenship, because equality is what the institution seeks to achieve or suggest, but *inductively* it is hard to find, as some citizens – the CEE youth,

amongst others, interviewed in this project – argue with some verve. The equality they seek is differentiated on different scales: economic, social, political and identitarian. On an economic scale, the students discuss local deindustrialisation, low levels of innovation, and the prevalence of badly paid, insecure, low skilled wok. On a social scale, they discuss the local levels of poverty and the high rates of emigration. Politically, they see the dependence of their regions from the national centres and the European West, and they articulate their feelings of exclusion from the demos. And finally, what I have focused on here, they discuss the identitarian aspects of their inequality, and with the exception of individual Polish and Slovak students, many express their feeling of not being equal to the West, neither in the life options nor in terms of equality of treatment, should they choose to move West.

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Not in my House: EU-citizenship among East-Central European Citizens: Comparative Analyses

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Abstract: *The successes of right-wing populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as a repeated distancing from the European Union, raise the question of whether there is such a thing as European citizenship at all. Citizenship is not understood as formal nationality, but as a sense of belonging. This ties in with the considerations of political cultural research. This article uses representative surveys to address the question: What about European Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe? The results show that the feeling of belonging to the European Union in Eastern and Central Europe is better than its reputation and not lower than in Western Europe. However, there are differences in the recognition of plurality between the majority (not all) of Eastern European states compared to the majority of Western European states. In particular, the integration of Muslims is more strongly rejected. The same applies to the social acceptance of homosexuality. This partly explains the success of right-wing populists in Central and Eastern Europe and marks a certain cultural difference, which is primarily directed against a wet model of democracy that is considered too open to plurality. In short: Central and Eastern Europeans also see themselves as Europeans and EU members, but their ideas of a European democracy differ from Western ideas – especially in peripheral regions.*

Keywords: ***citizenship, political culture, Eastern Europe, political community, nationalism***

Introduction – Citizenship, Political Community and Nationalism

The recent debates between the European Union and Hungary or Poland show conflicts regarding the acceptance of the rights of the European Union to shape the politics in East-Central European countries. These rights and admonitions regarding democratic processes on the political level are vehemently rejected and reference is made to their own sovereignty (Pytlas et al. 2019). Only the financing of their own projects by the European Union seems to be desired. This is perhaps understandable in view of the recent detachment from the supremacy of the Soviet Union and the process of a (new) nation building after 1989. But at the same time the current developments highlight problems of a common identity and European citizenship (Hooghe – Marks 2004; Karolewski 2009). Thus, politicians of right-wing populist parties in Poland and Hungary can rely on their nationalist defensiveness to carry a return among their citizens (Górak-Sosnowska 2016). Especially when political positions are directed against a higher plurality through migration or on the issue of sexual and gender diversity, the approval of many citizens seems certain. The latest election results point in this direction. It almost seems as if the projection of all of one's ills onto the external enemy, the European Union, is the model of success par excellence for nationalist right-wing populist politics. When election posters in Hungary depict not Russia's attack on Ukraine but the European Union's measures as a detonated bomb for Hungary, it becomes clear that a common European identity at the level of politicians still seems a long way off.

The good election results at least raise doubts about a closer attachment of Central European and Eastern European citizens to the European Union. Whether this is a matter of fundamental Euroscepticism or a desire for sovereignty can be left open for the time being (Hooghe – Marks 2005). But what about European citizenship? Do Central and Eastern European citizens, once they have enjoyed the financial benefits of the European Union, turn away from it? And is it more the money of the European Union that they want and less the (democratic) values? These observations lead us to pursue the following research question:

What about European Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe?

Our thesis is that especially in Central and Eastern Europe, derived from the abovementioned political positions of the leading politicians of various Eastern European parties, the sense of belonging to the European Union is particularly weak. A complementary thesis is that especially in peripheral areas, such as rural areas, the sense of belonging to the European Union is particularly low. Which leads to a second question:

Is the sense of belonging to the European Union particularly weak in rural areas of Central and Eastern Europe?

The concept of the periphery can be debated. It is not self-evident; one has to define the periphery. With regard to the European Union, it would even be possible to define the Eastern European countries in relation to Brussels as periphery. This would even have a historical anchoring, as the work of Charles Tilly (1990) on the city belt and Stein and Rokkan (1967) show. We thus use a relatively simple, spatial understanding of periphery and exclude economic or other forms of periphery here. For practical reasons (insufficient data, different research question), we do not deal with complex inner peripheries in this paper (Di Toni et al. 2020).

The aspect of perceived belonging links the question to political culture research, specifically the aspect of political *community* (Easton 1975). It is seen as a central basis for the stability of a political system. It can also be applied to the supranational entity of the European Union, as shown in the work of Kohler Koch (Kohler-Koch et al. 2004), Hix (2008), and Lorenz and Anders (2021). With the concept of political community, the concept also fits into considerations of the European Union itself as a democratic political system where different political support can be studied.

We try to capture citizenship, or the feeling of belonging to the European Union, with the help of various survey data. The Eurobarometer 93.1 (2020) with its focus on European Citizenship and the Special Eurobarometer 493 on Discrimination of the Eurobarometer study series serve as our basis. In their surveys, they take Central and Eastern European countries into account in greater numbers and focus on the topic of citizenship or recognition of plurality.

Political culture research as an approach to citizenship

According to classical political culture research, political culture refers to the *attitudes and value orientations of* the citizens of a (usually nationally conceived) collective that are *oriented toward political objects* (Almond – Verba 1963; Pickel – Pickel 2006). In this respect, political cultural research always addresses the level of belonging and citizenship. A political culture is the *collective set of attitudes and value orientations toward the political system and value orientations of the citizens of a country,* which from their point of view are a consequence of historical processes and collectively similar individual socialisation. A political culture depicts the subjective side of politics in a community without, however, placing the attitudes of individual citizens at the centre of consideration. This collective statement is achieved through the representatively surveyed beliefs of citizens. The *central substantive goal of* political culture research is to capture the subjective conditions that promote or endanger the *stability of* a (democratic)

political system. In the absence of at least a positive-neutral attitude toward the political system, it is subject to the risk of collapse in the event of a crisis (regardless of whether the crisis is economic, political or social) (Rose – Chin 2001). The majority of citizens are no longer willing to actively stand up for the current system and follow the existing rules and norms (Allmond – Verba 1963; Easton 1979; Pickel – Pickel 2006).

Since political culture is strongly value-based and undergoes its constitution through socialisation, a political culture usually develops slowly. In line with the considerations of value change research, these are processes that sometimes take place over generations (Inglehart 1979). Political objects can be valued in principle or in the short term and performance. Seymour M. Lipset (1959, 1981) focused his attention on the interplay between legitimacy and effectiveness evaluation. Legitimacy maps the fundamental belief in the legitimacy of the political system. It embodies a diffuse attitude of individuals toward the political system, usually accumulated over a long period of time (already beginning in socialisation), which has a high degree of inertia toward outside influences and a high degree of consistency. Effectiveness is a subjective assessment of the concrete performance of the system and its actors. Perceptions of effectiveness can be divided between political and economic. Problems at the level of the general political order of a system, such as a legitimacy crisis of democracy, arise when effectiveness problems cannot be solved in the long run or there are fundamental doubts about the values of democracy (Watanuki et al. 1975; Pharr – Putnam 2000).

Citizenship comes into play in the political culture approach primarily through the ideas of David Easton (Easton 1965). He sees the feeling of belonging and a bond to a political community as essential for its survival. Easton systematises the form and goal of the relationship between citizens and political objects with his concept of *political support,* an attitude with which a person orients himself toward a political object. Like the term political culture, political support is an analytical rather than an evaluative term. All political objects, according to Easton, can be positively or negatively supported. For a political regime to maintain persistence, positive political support must predominate among the population. Support is received by the political regime when the demands of citizens on the system are met. Easton (1965: 171–225) identifies three objects of political support, from which the *political community* is the most interesting here. The term comprises the members of a political system and their basic value patterns. A sense of community and an overarching sense of belonging and attachment to the collective (usually the nation) and the individuals living within it are the basis of this component of the political order, which also manifests itself in mutual loyalty among community members (Easton 1975).[1]

1 The other two objects of support are the political regime and the political authorities. '*Political regime*' refers to the institutions themselves, i.e. the office roles rather than the specific role-holders. Political

Easton differentiates into the components of legitimacy and trust. Legitimacy is the product of citizens' perceived congruence of their own values and ideas about the political system with its structure. Trust involves the hope for a 'common good orientation' of these objects or of the people supporting them and is based on socialisation experiences and generalised *output* experiences. Citizenship is one of the long-term components of legitimacy. At the same time, this understanding of citizenship differs from concepts of formal belonging that focus solely on legal citizenship (Faulks 2000). However, this understanding is not far removed from liberal postmodern approaches, which accord a greater role to citizens' feelings and self-assessments of their subjective affiliation (Gibert 1997; Ivic 2011). However, political culture research focuses more on national objects, something that global or postmodern approaches to citizenship tend to avoid. For Eastern Europe, European citizenship has so far mostly been studied with regional limitations. Both similarities to and differences between Western Europe and among the Eastern European countries can be found (Coffe – van der Lippe 2009; Show – Stiks 2012). The focus of the analysis is not on formal belonging, but on the affective feeling and self-assessment of belonging relying on the political culture approach.

Easton's conception in particular was adapted for the European Union (Kohler-Koch et al. 2004). In addition to looking at the support of the political system of the European Union and measuring its effectiveness, the focus was strongly on the discussion of an output legitimacy (Scharpf 1999) versus an input legitimacy. Thus, the so-called legitimacy crisis of the European Union was judged as either existing or non-existing with reference to these two aspects. The discussion on Euroscepticism can also be classified here (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; de Vries 2018; Hooghe – Marks 2007; Leruth et al. 2017). Citizenship and belonging always play a role here, especially in the contrast between European and national citizenship.

However, work related to identity should also be mentioned here (Jamieson 2002; Maas 2007, among others). Specifically, the expression of Eastern European Euroscepticism can also be understood as an inquiry into the assumption of European Citizenship (Taggart – Szczerbiak 2002). Despite many pronouncements of the European Union aimed at the political community of the European Union, empirical research on the issue of political community and citizenship remains underdeveloped compared to other aspects of the political culture of the European Union (see Westle – Segatti 2016). This shows that among the large number of Eurobarometers, surveys of the European Union, only two specialised surveys on citizenship have been conducted. The most recent of them will now be the basis for the empirical analysis.

support of *political authorities* applies to the holders of political authority roles. They receive political support because of the acceptance of the decisions they make. Citizens' assessments result from their satisfaction with the *outputs of* the political system or political authorities (Pickel – Pickel 2006: 80–81).

Data material used for the article

In order to deal with EU citizenship, we need comparative data for Europe on the one hand, and on the other hand questions that focus on the political community and certain value relationships in the European Union. The analyses presented here draw on data from the Eurobarometer 93.1 survey conducted in 2020 (survey period July to August 2020).[2] This study explicitly addresses the aspect of citizenship in the European Union and surveys all member states of the European Union, as well as its accession candidates, with regard to feelings of belonging. For the analyses, the focus is on the Eastern European and Central European member states of the European Union. For reasons of clarity, no differentiation between the Western European member states is made, and the mean value of the EU-27 is used as a reference point. The data on citizenship are supplemented by 91.4 Eurobarometer Study 493 (survey period March 2019), which was collected in 2019. It has a focus on discrimination and differentiation from other cultural and social groups. This provides a look at the value level of belonging.

For current results, data from the Eurobarometer 97.1 (survey period February to March 2022), which were the most recent available at the time of writing, are included in the analyses at one point.[3] Both surveys interviewed more than 30,000 people, each with between 1000 and 2000 people representative for each country. An overview of the variables used can be determined in each case in the documents of the European Union. We also use the data from the European Values Study for an analysis, as there are no corresponding options for the Eurobarometer. The corresponding data explanations can be found on the website of the European Values Study (https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/). As a method of analysis, comparative plots of frequencies are predominantly used. One multivariate analysis (regression analysis) is included. At appropriate points, bivariate correlation analyses are presented to compress correlation results. The data were kindly provided by the GESIS data archive.

Citizenship in intra-European comparison

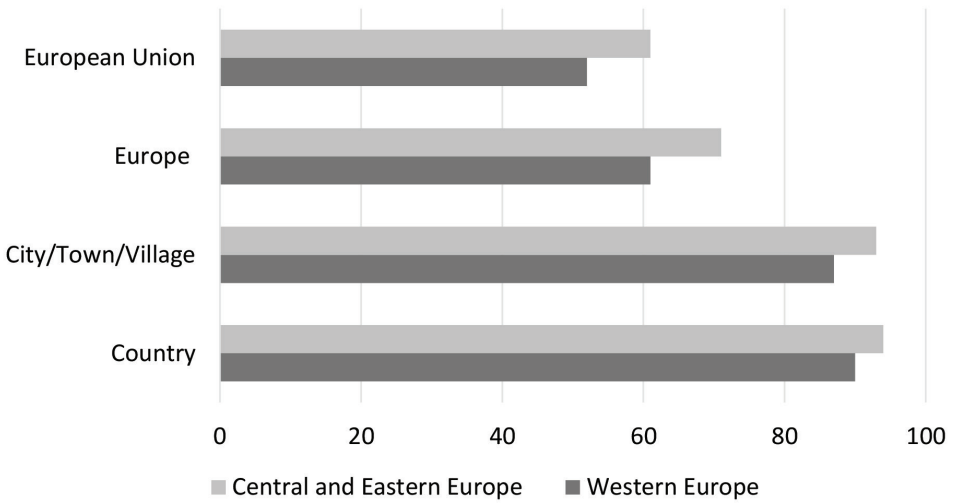
Belonging to a political community can be ascertained from the attachment to and identification with a political community expressed in surveys. The data from Eurobarometer Study 93.1 from 2020 are useful in this respect, as they specifically ask about the attachment of the citizens of the EU member states to the European Union. Since they also ask about attachment to other objects of identification, they offer opportunities for comparison. If we look at the attachment globally

2 Basic data available at https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2262.

3 Basic data available at https://fra.europa.eu/en/databases/anti-muslim-hatred/node/6580.

across the member states, divided into Western Europe and Eastern and Central Europe, the result is a ranking of the sense of belonging. The highest level of attachment is to one's own nation in virtually all of the countries studied. It is even slightly stronger in Eastern and Central Europe than in Western Europe. This is followed almost equally by a sense of belonging to one's immediate personal environment (Chart 1). If nationality is a global identification, proximity is probably due to personal circumstances. Compared with this sense of attachment, attachment to Europe and the European Union falls behind. Attachment to the European Union is the weakest of the four political communities surveyed.

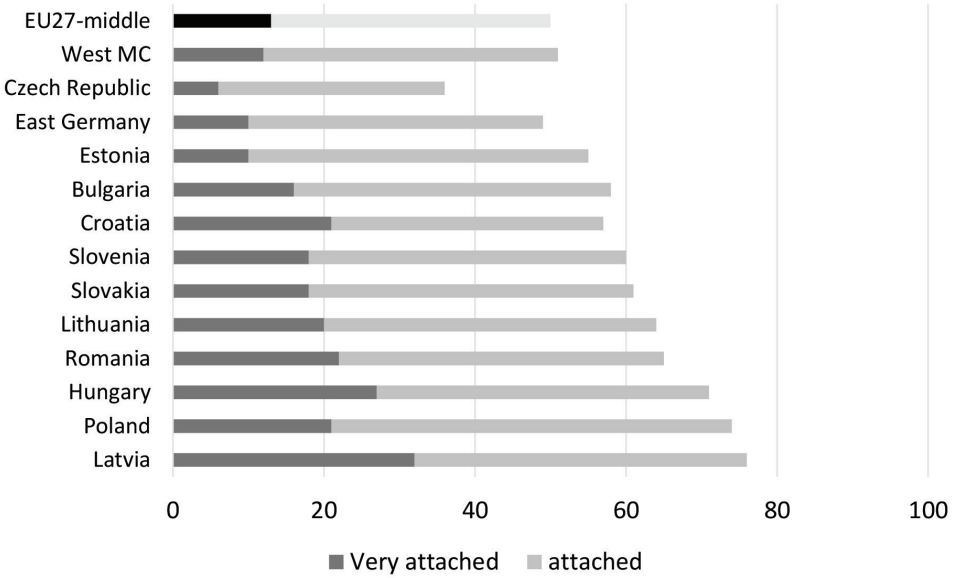
Chart 1: Spheres of connectedness in comparison 2020



Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1; n=32,446; in percent of affirmative responses; 'Please tell me how strongly you feel connected to <>'; West MC = West European Member Countries.

After all, the solidarity ratings for the European Union are between 50 and 60 percent. In a global comparison between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, attachment to the European Union is higher on average in the Eastern European countries than in Western Europe. The same applies to all other objects of attachment. On a general level, this contradicts the hypothesis put forward at the outset of lower connectedness in Eastern and Central Europe. However, it is also clear from Chart 1 that national interests take precedence over European interests. This applies to Western, Central and Eastern Europe. In the following, let's take a closer look at the attachment to the European Union in a country comparison. The result is better than expected after the many discussions on the legitimacy crisis of the European Union. Only the Czech Republic and eastern Germany are below the average for all members of the European Union.

Chart 2: Attachment to the European Union 2020

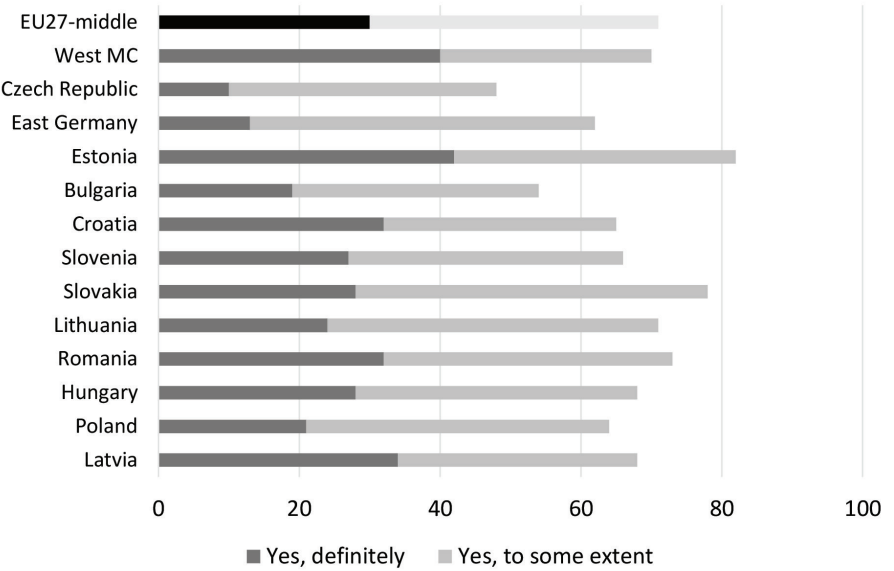


Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1; n=32,446; in percent of affirmative responses; 'Please tell me how strongly you feel connected to the European Union'; West MC = West European Member Countries.

More than half of the citizens in these two countries do not see themselves as connected to the European Union. Particularly in the Central European states of Poland and Hungary, which are often in the spotlight, citizens' attachment to the European Union is high (Chart 2). The same applies to Latvia. Overall, it is not possible to speak of a fundamental distance only among Eastern Europeans and Central Europeans. Certainly, the level of attachment to the European Union is nowhere near that of one's own nation (91% on average for all EU states) or to Europe (58% on average for all EU states), but one cannot speak of a far-reaching distance with this result. Nor is there any clear logic to explain the differences in the attachment of the various Eastern and Central European states to the European Union. It is just as economically successful countries, such as Poland or Hungary, that show high levels of attachment, as Estonia and eastern Germany, which show lower values. Now this is only a single question on connectedness, and a relatively general one at that. In Eurobarometer 93.1, three more explicit questions were asked with reference to EU citizenship. Of particular interest is the question on the extent to which citizens of Central and Eastern European countries classify themselves as EU citizens (Chart 3).

This time, several Central and Eastern European countries are below the EU average. However, apart from the citizens of the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, it

Chart 3: Self-assessment as EU Citizens



Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1; n=32,446; in percent of agreeing answers; Statement = 'You feel like an EU-Citizen'; Four-Point-Scale to answer; West MC = West European Member Countries.

is only to a small extent. Identification with the European Union is particularly strong in Estonia. We have left the arrangement as in chart 2, which shows that the self-attributions of an EU citizenship are by no means parallel to the preceding attachment question. Here, too, it is difficult to discern a systematic pattern.

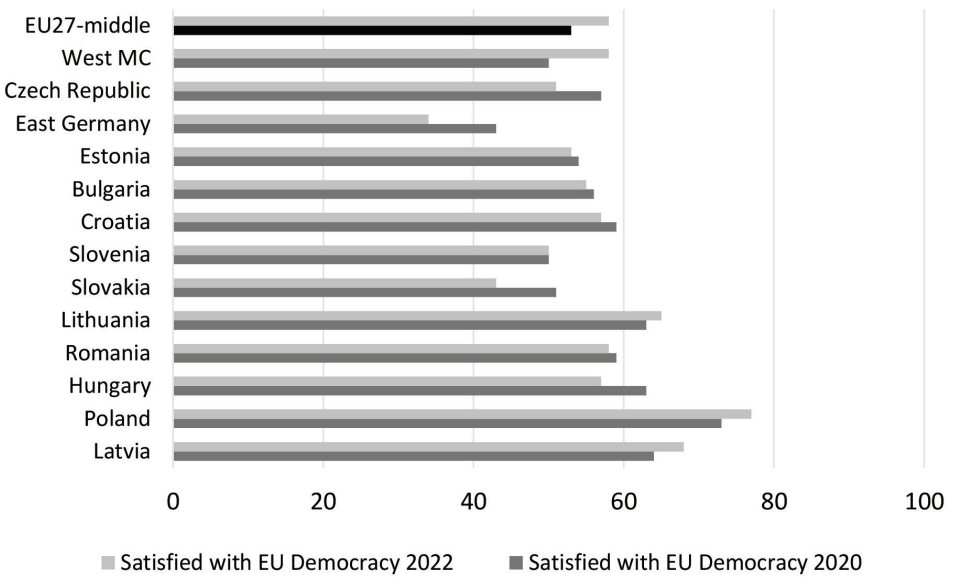
Looking at the results from Chart 2 and Chart 3 together, no above-average distance from the European Union as a reference community can be detected among citizens in Central Europe and Eastern Europe. This high level of attachment is surprising in view of the public discussions. Less surprising, perhaps, is the attachment from a historical perspective. Thus, above all, the desire to belong to Europe drives perceived affiliation with the European Union (Pearson's r-correlation=.81). Accordingly, on the side of the political community, one can speak of a European identity in slightly more than half of the citizens in the member states, and for almost as many even of the feeling of belonging to the political community of the European Union. Whether the figure of 50–60 percent is to be considered high or low is in the eye of the interpreter. As a substitute for a national identity, however, attachment to the European Union is probably not enough.

If we follow the path of political culture research, we can still ask the question of satisfaction with the current democracy in the European Union. In this way,

we leave the level of diffuse support for the political community in the direction of diffuse-specific support for the political system of the European Union. But even in this aspect, the assessment of democracy in the European Union is not really unfavourable. On the contrary, citizens in Poland in particular are very satisfied with democracy in the European Union in 2020 – despite some political disputes with the EU. Certainly, these values may have changed by 2023, but this is not obvious. As evidence of the generally high stability, with minor deviations, in the response behaviour of the population, the most recent results from Eurobarometer 97.1 from the beginning of 2022 are integrated in chart 4.

If the data from Eurobarometer 93.1 can be trusted, and there is nothing to suggest otherwise, attachment to the European Union is hardly any different in almost all Eastern European countries than in Western Europe. At least at the level of the political community, Western Europeans cannot play a blame game – at least as far as citizens in Eastern Europe and Central Europe are concerned. There is no question, however, that attachment to the European Union visibly takes a back seat to a sense of belonging to other collectives and identities. This is true for all countries in Europe. And the number of citizens who feel connected to the European Union tend to hover around half of the populations – in Western Europe, in Central Europe and in Eastern Europe.

Chart 4: Satisfaction with democracy in the European Union



Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1 (2020); n=32,446; Eurobarometer 97.1 (2022), n=26502; in percent of affirmative responses; West MC = West European Member Countries.

It can be concluded from this that when there is a collision between national and European identity, attachment to Europe will usually take a back seat. However, the extent to which this affects the sharing of value orientations is still an open question. It is also a question of how one imagines the European Union on the value level (Weßels 2016).

Differences in values and political issues of contention

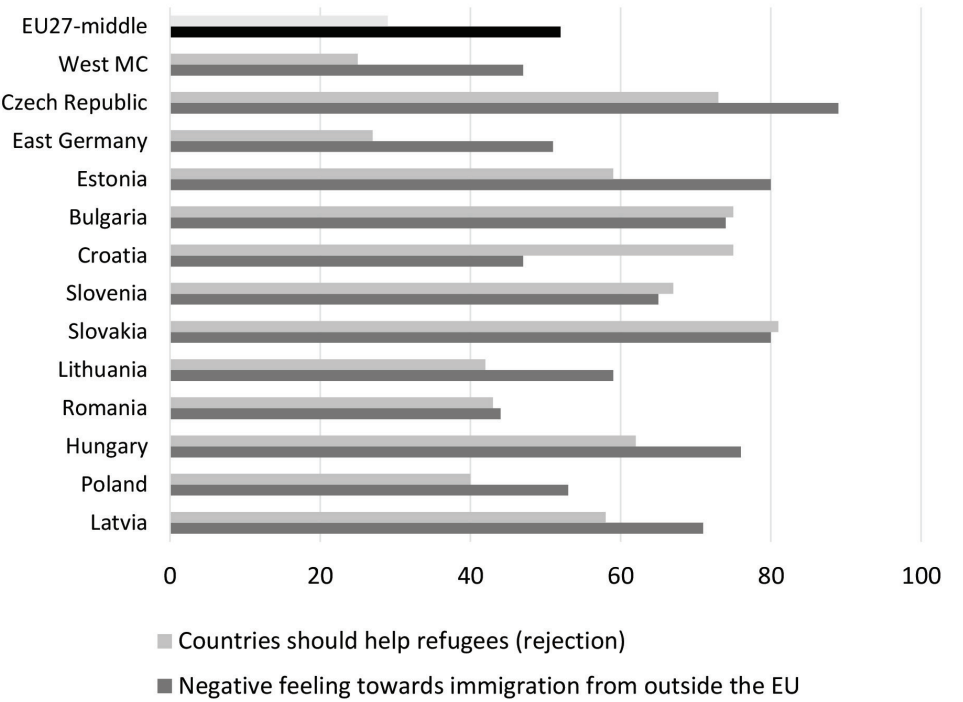
The attachment of Central and Eastern European citizens to the European Union now does not seem to match the partly right-wing populist policies of some Eastern European states. This is shown by various norm control procedures of the European Union, such as towards Poland and Hungary (Pappas 2019; Muno – Pfeiffer 2022). But how can it now be that with more than half of Hungarians and Poles being citizens of the European Union, these policy discrepancies are nevertheless seen again and again? One possible explanation for this discrepancy lies in the image of the desired European Union. More precisely, it is in a different attitude of Central and Eastern Europeans towards the values of diversity, plurality and variety established in Western Europe. Thus, borrowing from Western European understandings, the latter values are seen as central to liberal democracies and a European democracy in the European Union (Ferrin – Kriesi 2016). These attitudes can be examined in terms of two aspects – first, the acceptance of (Muslim) migration, and second, openness to new sexual and gender diversity. Both issues embody the strongest changes in the European Union and of social modernisation processes, and include claims of a general acceptance – also in relation to universally seen human rights. However, the right-wing populist election campaigns in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, to name but a few, have used both Muslim migration and rejection of same-sex lifestyles or even transsexuality to shape – and often win – their elections.

But how do citizens feel about these two complexes of values-based politics. Let us start with the immigration of Muslim migrants from outside the European Union, which is controversial almost everywhere in the European Union.[4] As it turns out, the attitudes in the population reflect a conflict within the political top of the European Union. On average in the member states of the European Union, the rejection of help for refugees or negative feelings towards immigration from states outside the European Union is already around half of the citizens. In most countries in Eastern Europe, the rejection of refugees is once again significantly higher than the average of the member states of the European Union. But there are differences also in Eastern Europe. Of course, these attitudes also depend on how affected people are by refugee migration, as the more moderate

4 At this point, it must be pointed out that rejection of other migrant groups, such as people from Ukraine, has hardly been a problem. If it is, then the rejection is based on the religious affiliation marked as foreign, from which a cultural difference is derived.

results in some countries in Southeastern Europe (Romania, Croatia) reflect. The strongest rejection of migration is found in the Czech Republic. But also in Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia, there is a far-reaching majority with attitudes rejecting refugees and immigration.

Chart 5: Attitudes toward immigration in comparison of EU member states



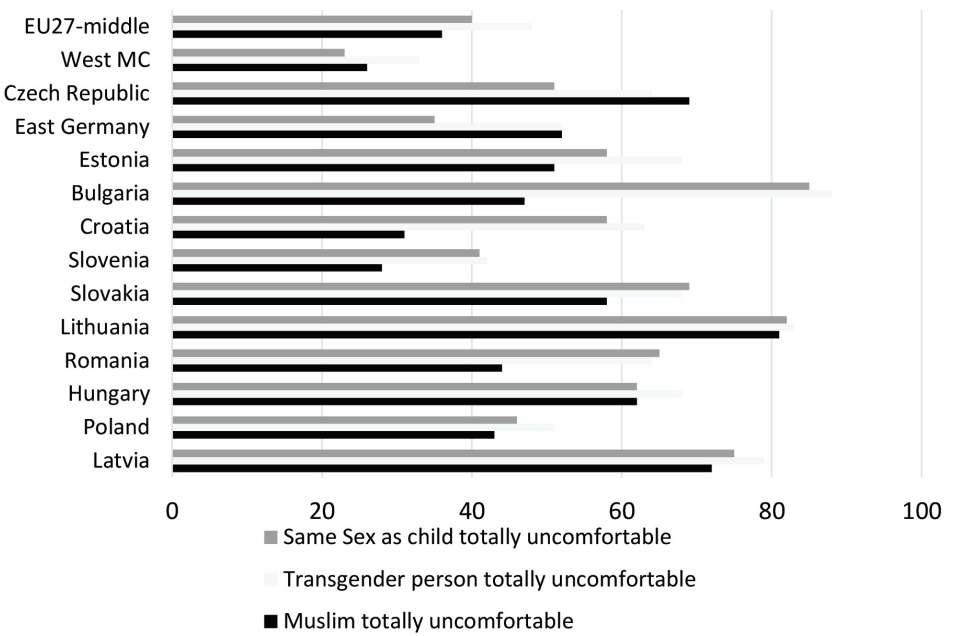
Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1; n=32,446; in percent of affirmative responses; West MC = West European Member Countries.

Now, one could argue that these are legitimate attitudes toward migration, which is often also branded as illegal. It becomes more problematic when – also in the course of such debates – certain groups come under general suspicion and are exposed to prejudice. This raises the question of the extent to which citizens in the European states are prepared to support the European Union's policy of plurality and recognition of human rights, beyond a commitment to the European Union.

At this point, data from the Special Eurobarometer 493, which surveys the acceptance of Muslims and other minorities and social groups, can help us. The question asks how one would rate it if one's own daughter or son brought home

a Muslim, a person of the same sex or a transgender person as a love interest. Apart from Slovenia, the social distance – because this is what we measure with this question – towards Muslims is significantly above the average of the member states in all Central and Eastern European EU countries (also Mohiuddin 2017). Social distance is particularly strong in Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. But in Hungary and Slovakia, around 60 percent of citizens also feel totally uncomfortable. Even more striking is the rejection of transgender persons or persons of the same sex. In Bulgaria in particular, and again as well as Lithuania and Latvia, there is a very high social distance here, which goes as high as 80 percent uncomfortable. This value is also massively higher in all Central and Eastern European states than in the EU-27 average or the member states in Western Europe (23–33%).

Chart 6: Social distance to Muslims, homosexuality and transgender people



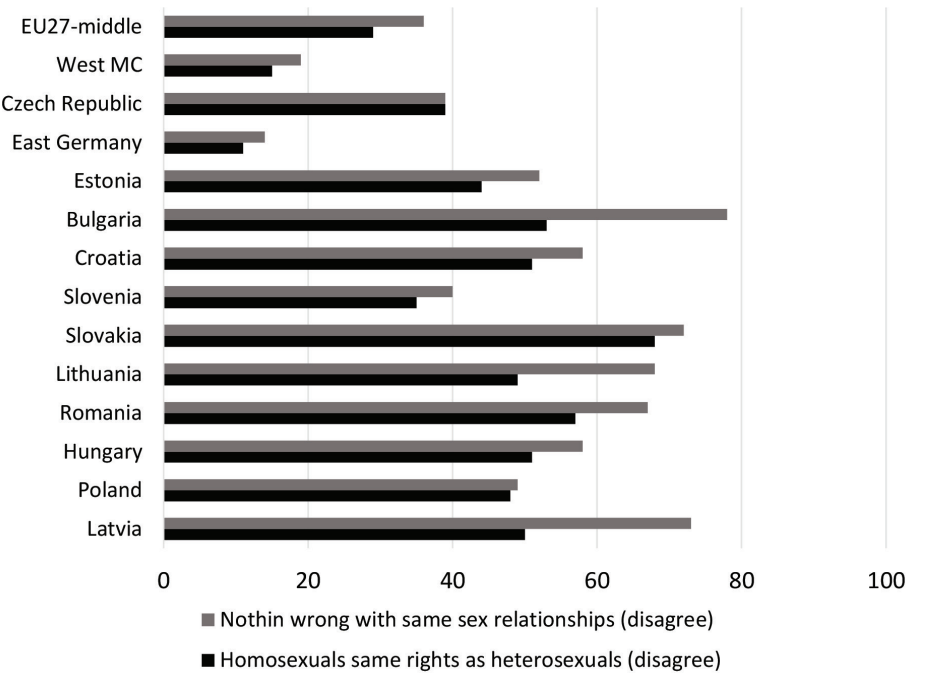
Source: Authors' own calculations; Special Eurobarometer 493 (2019); Discrimination; n=32,446; in percent of agree responses; Question: 'How would you feel if your child brought home a <> as a love interest? Shown = totally uncomfortable' (references: partially uncomfortable, totally comfortable); West MC = West European Member Countries.

It becomes clear that the rejection of migration, especially but not only in Central and Eastern Europe, has to do with Muslim migrants. Muslims who are perceived as foreign are seen as not fitting into each country's society, and

accordingly people do not want them in the country and certainly not in their own families (Öztürk – Pickel 2021). Corresponding election campaigns can accordingly draw on a broad potential and exacerbate the situation by branding the foreign group. In addition, the European Union is portrayed as an actor that is responsible for the immigration of Muslims to Europe and, in the worst case, even deliberately promotes it. However, it is also true that attitudes in the Eastern European countries differ greatly in some cases. Slovenia and Croatia in particular are at or just below the average level of rejection in Western Europe. This is despite the fact that they have been key transit countries for migration in recent years. Just as there is a general impression that the rejection of Muslim migrants and Muslims is stronger in Eastern Europe, there is also a considerable differentiation.

The same can be said for sexual and gender diversity. Again, this is a central right-wing populist campaign issue that is promised in Central and Eastern Europe, and here too the European Union and 'the West' are seen as importers of what is interpreted as a disease rather than gender and sexual self-

Chart 7: Attitudes toward same sex relationships



Source: Authors' own calculations; Special Eurobarometer 493 (2019); Discrimination; n=32,446; in percent agreeing to the above items; West MC = West European Member Countries.

-determination. This was already evident in Chart 6, but is shown again when asking directly about guaranteeing rights for homosexual couples or whether homosexuality should be considered normal (Chart 7). The results are not quite as pronounced outside of personal proximity, but between half (Estonia) and two-thirds (Slovakia, Latvia) of citizens oppose equal rights for homosexuals and find some things wrong with same-sex partnerships. Slovenia falls slightly out of the overall picture again, with a slightly lower rejection of sexual and gender diversity. It is possible that modernisation processes are contributing to greater acceptance here, as these have been most successful in Slovenia out of all the Eastern European countries (Pollack et al. 2003; Pickel et al. 2006). The rejection of homosexuality is particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Latvia.

Here too, there is diversity in the Eastern European states, albeit limited diversity in view of the consistently higher values compared to the Western European EU member states and the EU's overall means. The view of these selected findings on attitudes towards homosexuality and transgender could be substantiated with further data from Eurobarometer 493. But since the result is basically always the same, we will leave it at the presented graphs. What becomes clear is that in the Eastern European and Central European member states, we find clear problems with sexual and gender diversity, as well as with Muslims. Country variations arise due to the thematisation of right-wing populist political elites, a proliferation of religious norms, but also historical traditions (Öztürk – Pickel 2019). The rejection of Muslims is proving to be a key element in the electoral success of right-wing populists. The relationships have already been documented elsewhere (Öztürk – Pickel 2019, 2021). As an example, here is an analysis using the European Values Surveys and an assessment of right--wing parties (Table 1).

The result is as simple as it is convincing. Even if other prejudices and resentments also have their place in the arsenal of right-wing populists' enemy images, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim resentments are more important for the electoral success of right-wing populist parties than anti-feminist positions or regressive sexual norms – which is by no means to downplay their relevance for right-wing world views. Nonetheless, it is rather prejudices reinforced by threat perceptions (Pickel – Yendell 2016) that drive voters into the hands of right-wing populist parties. Several studies show that the enemy images of the European Union and 'Islam' as well as an exclusionary nationalism are closely interwoven and, in their combination, represent the normal case among voters of right-wing populist parties (Stockemer et al. 2019). Against the background of the question of European citizenship, such results must at least be problematised.

Table 1: The effect of a rejection of Muslim neighbours and alternative explanatory fact

			Identifica
Country (parties)	Bulgaria NFSB, Volya, Ataka & IMRO	Poland KORWIN, Kukiz'15 & PiS	Slovakia L'SNS, SNS & SR
Rejection of Muslim neighbours (Ref.: no)	*-.078***	*.127****	*-.008*
Distrust in national political institutions	.143**	-.494***	.037
Distrust in the European Union	-.003	.502***	.133**
Exclusionary nationalism	-.027	.059	.133***
Anti-egalitarian gender relations	-.064	.071*	-.085
Anti-liberal sexual norms	-.006	.107***	.022
Economic deprivation (Ref.: no)	-.079	.039	.022
High educational qualification (Ref.: other qualifications)	-.093***	-.069**	-.043
Biological sex (Ref.: Women)	.077***	.014	.049**
Generation X (Ref.: Millennials)	.016	-.079*	-.055
Baby Boomers (Ref.: Millennials)	-.021	-.093**	-.088***
Interwar generation (Ref.: Millennials)	-.013	-.138**	-.180***
Likelihood ratio test	35.88***	274.81***	50.91***
Pseudo R-square	.083	.353	.054
Observations	666	538	991

Source: EVS 2020 – The PopuList 2.0 (Roodujn et al. 2019). Note: The table shows the results of logistic regressions. Th

Periphery and generational change in EU citizenship?

One of the questions posed in the introduction was to what extent a situation that can be classified as periphery leads to differences in identification with the European Union. As a regional periphery, one can draw on many things, including the constructions of persons themselves. Here, we follow the idea of differentiating between urban and rural areas and consider rural areas as possibly peripheral. Other forms of periphery were omitted here. For the sake of clarity and simplification, we try to do this using cumulative correlations for Western and Eastern or Central Europe. In doing so, we are aware that we are putting aside the differentiations we have made so far. However, analyses not carried out here for reasons of space also showed a stability of results at country level.

For attachment to the European Union, no significant result emerges when differentiating along rural area or urban area. Or, in other words, citizens of rural regions considered peripheral do not differ in their attachment to the

tors on identification with right-wing populist parties

tion with a right-wing populist or extreme right-wing party				
Estonia EKRE	Slovenia SDS & SNS	Cheh Rep. SPD & Dawn	Hungary FIDESZ, Jobbik & KDNP	Croatia HDSSB & HSP
*.092***	*.003*	*.059***	*.122***	*.012*
.291***	.383***	.068	-.626***	-.011
.221***	-.151*	.131***	.302***	.059*
.059	.124*	.016	.148***	.070***
-.084	.140*	-.064	.116*	-.016
.019	.049**	.021	.057***	.001
-.049	-.036	-.020	.032	-.018
.012	-.057	-.019	-.022	.020
.108***	-.019	.008	.008	.007
.027	.036	-.037	.013	-.004
.067*	-.101*	-.045	-.048	-.007
.051	-.171***	-.106***	-.043	(-)
105.40***	42.55***	53.30***	347.15***	21.54**
.245	.082	.119	.321	.105
508	473	853	876	732

he entries are average marginal effects. * <.10, ** <.05, *** <.01 (see Öztürk – Pickel 78–80).

European Union from citizens in urban areas. There is no effect of peripheral location on the feeling of attachment to the European Union, but – as Table 2 shows – there is an effect of age. Attachment to the European Union increases significantly and statistically significantly among young people in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe. The difference between younger and older citizens is greater in Eastern Europe. Thus, it is the following generations that see themselves more strongly connected with the European Union and the European idea. As far as the acceptance of plural developments is concerned, the correlations with age also give some hope for the near future.

There are clear correlations in Western Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe: Younger people are more willing to recognise Muslims, but also sexual and gender diversity, even in their (future) family. Of course, it remains to be seen how this actually works in concrete cases, but a generational shift in values is discernible. In Eastern and Central Europe, this shift is even slightly higher than in Western Europe. At present, it is not possible to determine whether bio-

Table 2: Connectedness EU by rural periphery and age (correlation)

	Age		Rural area	
	Western Europe	Middle and Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Middle and Eastern Europe
Attached to European Union	-.05**	-.09**	n.s.	+.03*
Feel to be EU-citizen	-.09**	-.16**	n.s.	n.s.
Positive Feeling towards immigration from outside EU	-.17**	-.15**	-.03*	n.s.
Country should help refugees	-.12**	n.s.	-.02*	n.s.
Love relationship Muslim (uncomfortable)	+.14**	+.13**	+.11**	+.05**
Love relationship Same Sex (uncomfortable)	+.11**	+.14**	+.03**	+.06**
Love relationship Transgender (uncomfortable)	+.10**	+.13**	+.04**	+.03**
Homosexuals same rights as heterosexuals	-.11**	-.15**	-.03**	-.11**

Source: Authors' own calculations Eurobarometer 93.1 and 91.4; n=32,446; Pearson's R-product moment correlations; only significant values shown; p<.05; n.s. = not significant; *=p<.05; **p<.001.

graphical effects are perhaps counteracting the generational effects, but there is much to suggest a change in values in these aspects, which is likely to lead to a change in gender relations such as an increasing recognition of sexual and gender diversity (Inglehart – Welzel 2005; Inglehart – Norris 2003).

For the first time, the attitudes toward plurality and diversity also show differences between EU citizens living in rural areas and those living in the city or suburbs. In rural areas, a tendency toward reticence or even rejection of increasing plurality with regard to people of the Muslim faith or sexual and gender diversity is evident in virtually all states of the European Union. Whether this is an expression of a self-perceived peripherality or a higher degree of traditionality and distance from modernisation processes cannot be clarified to the last point, but both are undoubtedly reasons for these empirical discrepancies.[5]

Conclusion – European Citizenship with Differences in the Recognition of Plurality

European Union citizenship in Eastern and Central Europe is better than its reputation. Citizens in Central and Eastern European states are just as likely to feel connected to the European Union as those in Western European member states or the average of European Union states. Thus, one has to reject the first thesis of the article. In spite of the partly anti-European Union policies that can be observed in some Central European states, e.g. in Hungary, the citizens

5 Unfortunately, the relevant variables were not included in the data sets used, which is why an examination could not be carried out. However, comparable analyses with the European Values Surveys point in this direction (Pickel – Pickel 2023).

are hardly different from those in Western Europe in terms of their citizenship. This does not mean that we can assume a complete, even far-reaching sense of belonging. Although the figures for almost all Central and Eastern European countries show slight surpluses in the number of citizens identifying with the European Union, whether this is already the clear majority of identifying persons desired by political culture research and democracy research can be viewed critically (Diamond 1999) – especially since one must assume that in case of conflict the affiliation to one's own nation usually outweighs the affiliation to the European Union. If there is no conflict, then a multiple identity that takes into account the nation, one's own place of residence and the European Union is possible for just under 60 percent of Europeans.

Differences can be found elsewhere. Ideas about one's own community and democracy differ between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe primarily along the lines of exclusions of minorities and the understanding of who belongs to a political community. In Central and Eastern Europe, with variations across countries, there is a stronger rejection of Muslim migration and also sexual and gender diversity than in the Western European member states. These attitudes correspond with right-wing populist statements and corresponding policies when the possibility exists due to access to power. The rejection of Muslim migration and sexual and gender diversity have established themselves as conflict issues. One could almost say that both issues are among the central mobilisation themes of Eastern European right-wing populists, who, unlike Western European right-wing populists, have found their way to power (also Brubaker 2017; Pytlas 2016; Öztürk – Pickel 2019, 2021). At the same time, the acceptance of Muslim migration and sexual and gender diversity characterise the growth of plurality and pluralisation in Europe. Mostly both are accepted or tolerated to varying degrees.

Rejection of Muslim migration, social distance from Muslims in general, and difficulties with homosexuality and transgender people are clearly stronger in Central and Eastern Europe than in the average of Western European member states. Thus, the conflict of values that exists between traditionally minded people and proponents of pluralisation widens to a discrepancy between Western European and Central and Eastern European member states. Right-wing populists use this prevailing defensiveness among the population against Muslim migration and sexual and gender diversification for mobilisation and electoral success (also Eatwell –Goodwin 2018; Pytlas 2016; Öztürk – Pickel 2019). In doing so, they paint a picture of the European Union as a community that wants to forcibly change its values and pave the way for both Muslims and transgender activists to enter Central and Eastern European countries.

If we look at the possibly peripheral rural areas, the perceived affiliations are hardly different from those in the large cities and suburbs. Only the rejection of plurality is somewhat stronger than in the average of the states. It is clear that there are generational differences. The younger generations in particular, even

more so in Central and Eastern Europe than in Western Europe, are identifying more and more strongly with the European Union. This result, which is hopeful for the future of the European Union, is accompanied by greater openness in the younger age cohorts to the many forms of pluralisation. Young Central and Eastern Europeans in particular are increasingly comfortable with a plural society. However, they make up only a small proportion in the Central and Eastern European countries, which are predominantly sceptical about pluralism.

If one takes the – certainly still limited – findings presented together, then citizenship in the European Union is characterised by the desire to belong to Europe, with simultaneous rejection of a pluralisation that is seen as too far-reaching and contrary to one's own values. These attitudes are not uniform in Eastern Europe, but differ from country to country. This differentiation should also be noted as a result. The togetherness of plurality and liberal democracy is seen as prescribed by a Western-dominated European Union – and sometimes rejected. This does not diminish the affiliation with the European Union, but opposes it with its own understanding of democracy (guided democracy) and classification as the better Europeans defending Europe. This process becomes stronger under conditions that are interpreted as peripheral. Above all, plurality is rejected. Here, too, people see themselves as the last place to protect Europe against decay and that is why they are members of the European Union. This does not mean that you feel like a European, but EU citizenship is often difficult for citizens of many Eastern European countries due to the differences in attitudes towards Muslims and sexual and gender diversity.

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REGULAR ESSAYS

The Emerging New World System and the European Challenge

ATTILA ÁGH

sciendo

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Abstract: *In the early 2020s we live in the transition period between two world systems, the Old World Order (OWO) and the New World Order (NWO), in a deep 'polycrisis'. Therefore, the term transformation has recently appeared in official EU documents as well as in political science literature. The transition to the NWO has begun with this crisis management and it will produce a radical transformation of the entire global architecture in the 2020s. In its conceptual framework this paper focuses on the contrast between 'de-coupling' and 'de-risking', as it has been explained very markedly in the recent speeches of the president of the European Commission, Ursula van der Leyen (EC 2023a), and the national security adviser, Jake Sullivan (The White House 2023). This contrast symbolises the US policy, concentrating more on cutting or reducing connectivity among the various policy fields, versus the EU policy turning them safe and interdependent. These approaches represent the US and EU attitude in the emerging New World Order, and primarily in their relationships to China.*

Keywords: ***New World Order, polycrisis, complexity management, multilateral securitisation, global and social citizenship***

Turning from the US-based GDP to the EU-based SDG (sustainable development)

After the collapse of the Soviet empire, the Bipolar World Order (BWO) ended and the Old World Order (OWO) began, while the New Great Transformation (NGT) has recently meant the transition from the Old World Order (OWO) to the New World Order (NOW). Since the pandemic and the Ukrainian war have provoked

a full-blown transformation as the current systemic change in the global world. The first result is 'the new past', which includes rewriting the history of the OWO. Everything happened in a different way as was stated before, because the OWO became unsustainable and produced a complex crisis in a polycrisis. Despite this deep crisis, a narrow-minded 'realpolitik' dominated in the OWO for a long time, but after the failed management of the global fiscal crisis in the late 2000s, it became clear that the neoliberal globalisation and the ensuing polycrisis (WEF 2023b, 2023c) had to be overcome. In the mid-2010s the *dual* – socio-economic and climate – global crisis management began, and due to the pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine, a complex security crisis has also emerged. Thus, in the early 2020s the transition period to the NWO has been entered, and this new *triple* global crisis has been identified in its full complexity. The former approach in the management of global financial crisis in the late 2000s was a deep failure, and it has led to a discussion about 'the new past' and to the strategic innovations by the reconceptualisation of the world system's theory. Nowadays, after the discovery of these three waves of crisis in international relations' theory the most often asked question has been 'Is the world transitioning to the next era?' Altogether, at this historical turning point, as a watershed to a new era, the management of the triple crisis has started within the NWO.[1]

As to the discovery of the new past, given the efforts of the Biden administration for the return to the dominant, 'rule-making' role in the global system ('back to the leadership'), there has been a renewed debate on the ill-famed Washington Consensus in the US. In fact, the idea and slogan of the Washington Consensus was launched in 1989 at the time as the collapse in the BWO and the emergence of the Pax Americana on the global scene. It goes back to the classic market-centric concept that free trade as the invisible hand of the market always produces national wealth, since allegedly it is the most effective form of policymaking. Uwe Bott has summarised in the current – mostly American – debate that the US and China benefited a lot from the neoliberal globalisation at the price of the environmental destruction and the rising domestic income inequality. In Western Europe this is not so much the case, since it has never followed the extreme 'rugged individualism' of the United States, but anyway its results are disappointing worldwide:

> So, in the end the Washington Consensus stands and falls over the definition of wealth. The Washington Consensus is predominantly about advancing material wealth and consumerism.… In fact, the Washington Consensus was a 'negative sum' game. It ill-defined the meaning of wealth. It helped China and some others to reach new heights of material wealth at the costs of greater, not lesser, oppression and exploitation within their own borders and to the benefit of

1 This paper relies on the world system analyses in my books and papers (Ágh 2019, 2021, 2022a, 2022b).

> a very few inside those borders.... To that, one needs to add the global cost of a likely irreversible level of environmental destruction. Plus, there is the cost of one of humanity's greatest accomplishments, free and democratic societies. Unless we are lucky, aside from our own plutocrats, the only real 'winners' are the oligarchs around the world as well as the advocates of global authoritarianism. That is in itself a surreal outcome (Bott 2023: 2).[2]

However, the recognition of the deep internal contradictions of the OWO in the late 2010s was not enough, since the vast network of the shorter or longer vested interests prevented any relevant changes. The political will and action were missing until the early 2020s, but finally, due to the pandemic and the Russian aggression, the need for imminent action has become evident. After this 'no pain – no gain' situation there has been a consent that the triple global crisis cannot be solved without accepting the 'pain' of the deep transformations, therefore the NGT has turned out to be a creative crisis. The 'first pain' came with the collapse of the former world system in the pandemic and the Ukrainian war, when real, meaningful change began. This has been followed by the real recognition of the necessary/substantial change that has produced the 'second pain', since these fundamental transformations have also caused painful effects in all countries by forcing radical reforms upon them. The first radical systemic change, which was coordinated by the WHO and took place in the early 2020s during the pandemic, was followed by the second wave of changes due to the Ukrainian war. They have produced an extreme vulnerability of global supply chains. First of all, energy security has many geopolitical risks, but global food security has also suffered because of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

These radical transformations as the mainstream efforts have been disturbed or hindered by the many local and regional crises, but they have still remained the dominant megatrend in the global system. After the long painful collapse of the former world order in the 2010s, this positive 'response' to the pandemic and Ukrainian crisis by the global and local reorganisations has also caused many painful effects in all countries by forcing radical reforms upon all social sectors. These 'two pains' in the subsequent stages of the transition period overlap to a great extent, still their contrast is very visible as the pain in the collapse of the old system versus the pain in the building of the new system. The pandemic produced common efforts for the crisis management worldwide, while the Ukrainian war has deeply polarised the world system, still both demanded urgent steps to a new 'rules-based world order' and the first positive results of the radical transformations can already be felt in 2023.[3]

2 On the globalisation debate see also Cornwall Summit Documents (2021) and EIU (2022b).

3 The Global Risks Report 2022 (WEF 2023a) offers wide explanations for the OWO case analysing the 'climate action failure', 'debt crisis in large economies' and 'employment and livelihood crisis'.

Actually, the OWO ended in the late 2010s with its collapse, and in the early 2020s there has been a reconstruction of the global governance. In this transformation period the theoretical revolution has created a new conceptual framework with new future scenarios (Goldstrom 2022). The necessity of the world-systemic change has become rather clear and manifest, with various terms whirling about, but pointing in the same direction: the former world order is over. The running or turbo-globalisation in the OWO caused deep damages that made this world system unsustainable, first of all by ruining the natural environment. Accordingly, one of the leading policy institutes in Brussels has summarised the situation as follows:

> After decades of increasing globalisation in trade, capital and information flows, we are currently experiencing a shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine.... Disrupted supply chains, US-China trade tensions and the gradual demise of the WTO appear to be serious threats to globalisation and have altered the geopolitical landscape. Where is globalisation heading? Are we seeing the beginning of a more multipolar world order, one divided between US and Chinese influence? And if so, where does the EU fit in this new scheme? (CEPS 2022).

The first wake-up call already came with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) passed by the UN Assembly on 25 September 2015 and was accompanied by the Paris Agreement on 12 December 2015 in the climate conference. Since these 'global events', *sustainable* development has become the central systemic term, conceived also by the wide-reaching diplomatic network of the United Nations, but represented basically by the European Challenge. In the spirit of 'beyond the GDP', instead of the old, market-based and economy-centred theory, the new concept has embraced the entire complexity of sustainable development elaborating a global, green and knowledge-based strategy. It was already operationalised in 2015 by the UN in the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, altogether in 17 SDG index scores and 169 SDG 'targets'. As Gomez-Echeverri notes (2018: 1), the SDGs provide the most comprehensive and balanced global development agenda: 'One of the greatest achievements in the global negotiations of 2015 that delivered the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change is that, for the first time, the linkages between climate and development were enshrined in each of the documents.'[4]

4 The SDG reporting has become mainstream in the global research efforts and its application in strategic planning (UN 2023a, 2023b). The EU has 'Europeanised' this project and this paper focuses on the European version. The SDG approach has been converted by the business world into ESG (Environment, Society and Governance) terms.

In this new global approach, the series of documents have been given names like 'Preparing for a new global governance', 'Pact for the Future' or 'The Road to the 2024 UN Summit of the Future'. Many big Brussels-based policy institutes have also convened international conferences in order to discuss the new features of globalisation and the emerging multipolar world order, especially from an EU point of view. The SDG founding document has been followed by regular SDG Reports, also comprising the SDG Index with its rankings for all states. The SDG Reports have become the mainstream effort in the transformation strategy as well as in the elaboration of the new rules-based world order. Accordingly, the SDG in the following years has been extended and described step by step in many ways, and categorised also as the Sustainable Governance Index (SGI) by the Bertelsmann Foundation in its SGI Report on the OECD countries. The survey structure of the SGI Index has two 'categories' – policy and political – which allow the full X-raying of all societies. The first category has the three main pillars of economic, political and environmental policies consisting of 6.8 and 2 dimensions, and the second one has another three main pillars of quality of democracy, executive capacity and executive accountability, consisting of 4.8 and 5 dimensions.[5]

This theoretical grid gives a detailed picture of sustainable development inside the OECD countries, with their contacts to the global world acting as an 'outlook' to the external factors and with the further ramifications in the national developments. Given their intensive cooperation, the SDG – and on that base the SGI – Reports have been the flagships of the EU for its renewal efforts in this transitory period. The latest reports have already shown the deep changes in the 'transformation process' which will be discussed later. Given its complexity focusing on the common management of the triple crisis and the large scale of the 169 SDG targets, the SDG/SGI orientation has become the basic tenet of global politics and policies, as both are for making strategic decisions and elaborating policy instruments. The SDG 'interim' Reports indicated the milestones of the global/local transformation and they have been accompanied at all significant global/regional conferences.

The September 2023 SDG meeting of the UN was prepared by the G7 Summit (Hiroshima 2023). The Hiroshima G7 meeting took place in the spirit of transformation to sustainable development and in the political environment of the Ukrainian war. Accordingly, the main message of this meeting was both the support for the full sovereignty of Ukraine as a political declaration on one side, and the central concept, the framing of the strategic message on sustainable development in the Summit as an official document on the other. Thus,

5 The Bertelsmann's Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) have focused on three main issues: sustainable policies, robust democracy and good governance (SGI Bertelsmann 2022). This approach has also indicated that the US has an especially weak performance compared to the West European countries.

the *G7 Leaders' Statement on Ukraine* was issued in Hiroshima with the strong statement that 'We are renewing our commitment to provide the financial, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support Ukraine requires for as long as it takes' (G7 2023a: 1). At the same time the long official Summit document, the *G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communique* (G7 2023b) has emphasised that the main task of the global strategy is to accelerate achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the sustainability requirements have been described in this document from all sides.

Amid the heightened uncertainty, but based on multilateralism, these main suggestions for the global governance have been preparations for the 2030 UN Agenda in Sustainable Development. They have been summarised in four requirements: *first*, the quality infrastructure through the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII); *second*, the global health measures through pandemic prevention to achieve universal health coverage (UHC); *third*, striving for fiscal sustainability of the strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth; and *fourth*, the importance of investment in human capital to ensure a just transition in response to the structural changes such as digital and green transformations. The Communique strongly condemns the widespread use of information manipulation and media interference by Russia in order to gain support for and to obscure the facts of its war of aggression against Ukraine. Finally, it suggests building constructive and stable relations with China in order to enable sustainable economic relations and a rules-based world order of global interest, but it warns about the excesses of the dependencies in the critical supply chains, especially from China's 'credit colonialism' and 'non--market policies', which distort the global economy.

It was already evident in this global neoliberal theoretical wasteland and the sharp ideological warfare that an effort for innovative and fair multilateralism could only be fought on a global scale. So, the SDG Reports have systematised both the negative and positive spillover effects, given that the negative externalia hinder progress and preclude the democratic movements for a new knowledge--based development. Still the collapse of the OWO and the emergence of the NWO has produced a new kind of systemic uncertainty that demanded the new type of consolidation through this dynamic transformation. The NWO has entered as a security-centred world order by the new, extended and complex meaning of security in all possible fields from the military to energy security as the 'supply' of everything. As a result, weaponising and securitising have become common twins that have led to the globalisation of securitisation in this emerging rules-based world order at a much higher level than before. Pandemia as the health security issue has proved to be a classic case of securitisation by first disconnecting and later reconnecting the regional-national-local units globally. These foreign relations have changed much more quickly than the internal relationships, therefore the global issues and the accommodation to them has

come to the fore in the NWO. This transformation has been facing the current information disorder because of the weaponisation of fake news, but it has been supported by the international communication-cooperation agreements, which has facilitated the multilateral securitisation.

Overcoming the polycrisis by complexity management and multilateral securitisation

The pandemic and the Ukrainian war have shaped the new geopolitical realities with a new wide security policy agenda in all dimensions to cope with this increasing SDG system as complexity management and multilateral securitisation, because polycrisis means multiple global challenges affecting the entire world simultaneously through hyperconnectivity and desecuritisation. Polycrisis has become a widespread term in the 2020s, since it very markedly expresses the new features of the global crisis (see WEF 2023b, 2023c). *Complexity management* may have two faces, interrupting/removing the connectivity as *de-coupling* – or de-linking – and multilateral securitisation as *de-risking* – or de-weaponising. So, these two key terms for overcoming the polycrisis indicate the opposite highways of complexity management. More or less, it is clear that the latest decisions of the US tend more towards the de-coupling and the EU efforts more towards the de-risking in this terminology, and these characteristic attitudes have appeared most markedly in their relationship to China in the hegemon triangle of the US-EU-China.

Otherwise, in the NWO and the Ukrainian war, the vocabulary of hybrid warfare has been extended from the new achievements of military technical innovations to the sanction policies and many other fields of information--disinformation warfare. While in the turbo-globalisation in the OWO there was a permanent threat caused by the *negative* externalities between/among all actors and fields of the global game that led to destabilisation, in the recent transformations in the NWO the global processes have increasingly resulted in the *positive* externalities across the SDG realm through *multilateral securitisation*. While in the OWO, the hybrid war meant threatening-hurting the security of other states or exercising hegemony over them as negative externalia, in the NWO it turns to positive externalia through the newly discovered complexity management, as if creating-reinforcing radical transformations by some new means, well beyond the traditional warfare. In the last years hybrid warfare has also taken place by some 'peaceful' means, by 'weaponisation' of the economic or information sectors through sanctions as complex psychological warfare. Paradoxically, in the emerging NWO even the former negative externalities have turned into positive externalities, like the insecurity with weaponising energy supply by Russia that has provoked deeper and quicker green transformations in the EU. Actually, the new twin key terms of sustainability and security cover

this positive process of hybridisation among the different fields globally. This is a turning point from 'boring' to 'daring' as a sharp turn from the boring, status-quo oriented and routine 'business as usual' approaches to the brave radical transformations, for instance in the new European green energy policy.

The turning point came with the pandemic that was a drastic and unprecedented global challenge. It concerned all fields of life, by increasing the complexity of the world order and manifesting the absurdity of the running-ruining globalisation. The final push to the change of the world systems as the real turning point in the transition period was made by the Russian aggression in Ukraine that not only presented the dangers of the re-emerging Russian empire, but also discovered the vulnerability of the OWO in general, and the necessity of radical transformations. Therefore, the present transition period is much longer, sometimes even very chaotic, more controversial and conflict-driven than the former world system-changes. It covers two stages, and these stages of the transition period have a very different character in general. That is, a 'destructive' stage in the late 2010s was followed by a 'constructive' stage in the early 2020s. It has been so, especially at the level of the global powers (US, EU and China), and both in the timing and content of these stages due to the depth of the radical transformations. The complexity of the NWO emergence is high, therefore still there is a chance that it will result in a dynamic consolidation from the mid-2020s.

The future is coming much sooner than we think, since it arrives as a sudden brutal change like a typhoon. In the process of the world-systemic change, people – who already have an idea of what the future could look like – finally understand that after the polycrisis there can be no return to the old normality, while a new normality is taking shape step by step in the (world) economy and politics, and in their everyday lives. It is not by chance that the systemic change in this big turmoil is the central term nowadays in much of the world's media, e.g. this refers to a historical turning point or 'watershed', or very often the original German term 'Zeitenwende' for the present radical change. Turning this new vision into reality, a new conceptual framework has been elaborated in social sciences and is widely discussed every day in the media reporting about both global events – e.g. in the context of the Ukrainian war – and the tensions inside the individual countries like the energy and/or food crisis. Namely, the complexity and wide ramifications of the global changes can be exemplified with the close connection between the Ukrainian war and the energy crisis in Europe, but also between this war and the food crisis in many developing countries is due to the disturbances in the supply of the Ukrainian grain.[6]

6 It is characteristic that the Fondation Robert Schuman (2022) has also referred to the Zeitenwende, translated it as the 'change of era', and investigated its German process profoundly. Its contribution to the debate on the systemic change has been summarised by Corblin (2022). There has also been vast German literature on this subject dealing both with the end of the Merkel period and the new features of the world system, see e.g. Scholz (2023).

Although it was evident that the pandemic influenced all fields of life world--wide, the recognition of the depth and complexity in the world-systemic change still remained partial in the early 2020s, restricted mostly to the instant crisis management of the pandemic. The shock of the Ukrainian war has been needed to recognise and accept the concept of global systemic change in its totality, embracing also the solution of climate crisis due to the brutal effects of energy crisis and desecuritisation. After the outbreak of the Ukrainian war the systemic change in its many varieties has become widely discussed in world politics and media, first of all in EU politics. This conceptual framework of the current global crisis, as the transition period between the two world systems has been conceived in the twin terms of preparedness and response, and conceptualised in the central term of resilience. Theoretically it has also involved the new key term of sustainable development or inclusive growth, but it has only been implemented on a large scale just under the pressure of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. The 'world disorder' was an entry to the long transitory period between the world systems, and in the second, ongoing stage of the transitory period, however, there has been an emerging readiness to create synergy and resilience with the necessary political decisions for the global reconstruction. It has been testing the reform capacity for the new sustainable development of all countries, and the world order in general despite the second big 'pain'.

Thus, the necessity of the world-systemic change has become rather clear and manifest, with various terms whirling about, but pointing to the same direction: the former world order is over. This earlier world order was introduced around 1989 and it has been crumbling finally with the efforts of Russia to restore its empire, and last but not least, with the entry of China to the world-wide power game as the new global hegemon. Actually, a new multipolar world system is emerging with three global hegemons, the US, EU and China, while Russia has dreamed about a return to the former bipolar world order, but as a result of its counterproductive aggression against Ukraine, it has ceased to even be a real global power. As for the roadmap of the NWO, the global hegemons have three different timetables for the world systemic change. Briefly, the US realised early the decay of the world system, but moved only half-heartedly to the second, constructive stage, while due to its spectacular development China realised it belatedly, and still has a big delay in its entry to the second stage. Due to the dominance of the Economic Europe over Social Europe, the EU was awkward in its realisation of the world system's decay, but after the shock of the pandemic and Ukrainian war it has produced an eminent constructive second stage, in which the enlargement of the EU in the form of the European Political Community has also reappeared.

Therefore, it is very important to point out that behind this emerging power game between the three global hegemons there has been a complete failure of the old-time, running globalisation. This kind of destructive globalisation

has been ruining its own preconditions following the idea of limitless growth and excessive consumption, resulting in the threat of the ecological disaster and by drastically presenting the final limits of this harmful economic growth and consumption. While the declining period of the former world system in the 2010s was producing the *divergence* among/between the main fields of development, the emerging new world system in the 2020s has made a very ambitious project to build up their *synergy* first of all between sustainable economic growth and ecological conditions. In spite of the present progressive developments, the apocalyptical vision is still with us in many ways. The 'pains' of globalisation have continued with the emergence of the NWO due to the Ukrainian war, therefore the collapse of the global networks, the demolition and the disintegration of global supply chains is still shocking a large part of the population world-wide.

The former conceptual framework behind this running globalisation was based on the primitivisation of world affairs by the neoliberal approach embracing only the pure economic interests, exclusively with their direct effects and totally neglecting the complex global effects of all actions and their sequences of remote ramifications. This oversimplified concept of market fundamentalism has been the deep conviction and the practical philosophy of the big multis – and even more so in a more sophisticated way of the tech-moguls – which has focused only on direct profit interests. It has neglected the effects of their economic actions on the world-wide process of running globalisation, although in fact their complex process has also produced many negative external effects, damaging the human universe. The full-blown running globalisation in the 2010s was the deepest point of the former world system and its regulated world order, and it has led to the decomposition of the world order into world disorder. The outgoing and incoming global hegemons also contributed to this world disorder, but in very different ways. Russia with the re-awakening of its aggressive behaviour against the post-Soviet states has reached its peak in the 2020s in Putin's 'special action' against Ukraine. The behaviour of Russia has been violating many legal regulations in both the OWO and the NWO that has been in fact the suicide of the age-old Russian empire, ending even Russia's role as a world power through the new hybrid world war. So has done China in the last decade, since it has also been violating the framework of the economic world order, mostly with its ill-famed world-wide 'business invasion' or contract colonisation, representing a formidable economic challenge for both US and EU. Finally, the US as a declining global power produced manifestly aggressive and counterproductive global behaviour in the Trump presidency. It has only been mistakenly corrected with the slogan of the Biden presidency 'back to leadership', although the APSA president, John Ishiyama, has announced that political science in the US has already suggested 'a transformative moment' in the postpandemic world (Ishiyama, 2023: 423).

In general, the main conclusion of the experience from the ongoing world crisis is that the acknowledgement and the statement about the major contradictions of the given system is by far not enough, since the strong network of the present processes and vested interests prevents any meaningful action to overcome these contradictions by a radical systemic change. The real systemic change begins only with a deep crisis, which unleashes a painful period in all social fields that convinces the large part of a population of the unavailability of the New Great Transformation with its simple formulation 'no pain – no gain'. The lesson of the present crisis period with the pandemic and Ukrainian war is that the harmful effects of the 'disharmony' with 'pain' have to come first in order to open the way for the deep changes in the second stage, so this painful stage is necessary to reach the positive side of the new 'harmony' with 'gain'.

While the BWO split the world system into two parts – leaving the so called Third World somewhat 'in-between' – the OWO unified it under the unipolar world dominated by the US. This 'total' victory of the West and the 'free market' meant the myth of the End of History for the extreme neoliberals and launched a running or turbo-globalisation. Thus, the OWO became a very controversial era of neoliberalism, with a rapid economic development and modernisation worldwide as running globalisation on one side, and with many economic, social and political defects, negative externalities as 'ruining' globalisation worldwide on the other side. The ruining effect was mostly seen as overburdening the ecological system, but the negative effects cumulated in the dissipation of the illusion of global democratisation, again worldwide. The positive process of rapid economic development had negative effects not only in the Global South, but in the Global North as well, although in a different way. The unified economic world produced an almost untransparent global world with a complicated system of interdependencies that turned out from the other side to be dangerous dependencies in this polycrisis for all countries. Untransparent, since the complicated supply chain and multilevel effects were so complex that they could not be followed at all in all details, and the leading actors were living for most of the OWO period in an enthusiasm of 'limitless' growth. The pandemic in this respect was a turning point indeed, in the respect that it brutally discovered this jungle of hidden connections and effects, that appeared much earlier, but were not so catastrophic. The OWO in its decline turned out to be a fragmented world order that reached its peak in the transition period, which has been continued in the form of the multipolar world system where the stronger middle powers are demanding some partial, even exceptional, regulations for themselves or for their macro-region.

All in all, the OWO was an era of interdependence turning to dependence as a jungle, first it was seen from the positive, and later more and more from the negative side. It made the US 'great', but undermined it with tremendous internal tension. China was a beneficiary, also moving later towards the nega-

tive externalities of economic growth, realising the self-inflected wounds of creating a new society within the frame of the old political system and the constraints of dependency for a modernised economic system. This leads us to the political framing of this 'revolutionary' economic development as 'building empires' in the superpowers that has to be considered as a 'longue durée' in history. Russia, including the Soviet period, has a long tradition of building empire, which returned after the chaotic period of Yeltsin. As usual, it has been based first of all on the traditional capacity of the military conquer and power, nowadays combined with hybrid warfare. The US had military domination in the leadership function in the OWO that proved to be too costly and inefficient. The process of building empire in China has been even longer and more multifaceted in its historical development, continued as the conquer of Tibet, the recapture of Hong Kong, with a brutal extension of power in some parts within China (Xinxiang province). The more sophisticated extension has been beyond China in some parts of Central Asia, the South China Sea area, reinforced by the new efforts of Xi Jinping, the 'Communist Monarch'. The postwar EU was under US protection in the BWO, and remained under the US security umbrella by NATO in the OWO. The EU as 'Economic Europe' was enjoying the drogue of interdependencies and realising the pain of the increasing dependencies only much later. The EU could not escape the neoliberal illusion of 'free' interdependence, and that illusion led to some kind of happy self-cheating about the miraculous 'peaceful' transformation effects through economic contacts, like FDI and intensive trade.[7]

It is clear, however, in a longer historical perspective that the ongoing radical changes by building up a new multipolar world system have also been removing the last vestiges of the BWO the developed between the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian war represents this long-lasting radical change across the world systems actually, and even symbolically, by the fight against the return of the Soviet empire in the form of extending the Russian empire. But even so far the challenge of the recent NGT has been much broader and deeper than the final removal of the bipolar world, or by that of the unipolar world dominated by the US, since it has basically been a creative response to the destructive wave of the 'running globalization' in the last decades that has provoked the climate crisis threatening mankind with an apocalypse.

The main lesson from the ongoing world crisis is that the recognition of the major contradictions in the world system with radical statements about the necessary changes is by far not enough, since the strong network of the

7 The meaning of the 'empire' has also changed historically, which became evident first between the transition from the British to the American empire due to the transition from direct to more indirect rule, from the classical to the softer, neoliberal colonisation. Even more so in the case of the Chinese 'economic' empire that comes up very vividly in the NWO.

current short-term interests can prevent any meaningful action to overcome these contradictions in the global crisis. Captured by the outdated system, most global actors were very reluctant for a long time to go through the meaningful transformations and/or to comply with the rule of law in the emerging new world system. The real systemic change begins only with the recent deep crisis, which has unleashed a new painful period in all social fields. Only this pressure convinces a large part of the population of the unavailability of the New Great Transformation with its simple formulation 'no pain – no gain'. The lesson of the present crisis period with the pandemic and the Ukrainian war is that these harmful effects of the global 'disharmony' with its increasing 'pain' have been needed to open the way for the deep changes in the second stage. Thus, the first negative, painful stage was necessary to reach the positive side of the new global 'harmony' with its complex, synergic 'gain', although the second, creative stage has also some new kinds of 'pain' in completing the radical transformation.

The emergence of the Tripolar World Order: De-coupling and de-risking perspectives

In the present transition period, the outlines of the multipolar world have become more and more visible, namely in the formation of the tripolar world system of the US, EU and China organised as the NWO. It seems so that – due to the Ukrainian war and Russia declining as a world power – the last vestiges of the (old) bipolar world will disappear, but the US will regain a somewhat stronger role in the NWO than in the declining OWO, as President Biden has emphasised repeatedly. Actually, the Tripolar World Order has been born, and all the three global hegemons have their special profiles and specific contributions to the NWO. Namely the US has represented the continuity of the world systems since the Second World War, first of all as the leading military power and also as the chief actor in global institutions. China is the country of robust modernisation, turning out to be the main competitor of the West in economic globalisation by also claiming the position of leadership in the Global South. This radical change creates that particular historical situation in which China appears as a competitor for the global leading role due to its spectacular economic development in the last decades. This analysis outlines mostly the contradictory character of the American and Chinese entry into this new tripolar world in the two stages, and it concludes with the constructive changes within the EU that has raised the European Challenge for both US and China.[8]

8 On the new role of China in the world system there has been a very vast literature, see the Mercator Institute for China Studies (Merics 2020, 2022) in general. The most fashionable topic has been the claim for the new Chinese role in Doshi (2021), EIU (2022a, 2022b), EPC (2022), Feng (2020), Optenhögel (2022) and Wang (2022).

Most analysts still describe the emerging world system as a reemerging bipolar world order with the US and China as their increasing bilateral tension indicates, although the transition to a NWO has manifested that both hegemon powers have serious internal and external deficiencies or internal hurdles. While the EU has been threatened by the US 'vassalisation' (Puglerin – Shapiro 2023), at the same time, due to its creative character in creating synergy between/among all basic fields of reglobalisation, the *initiative* role of the EU in the world system's level has appeared rather clearly. The pandemic showed us that the EU is capable of adapting to the complexity of the rapid changes, and also that there could be even more innovations in the next years than in any other decade in EU history. Nevertheless, focusing on the still ongoing transition period of world systemic change in its two stages, the special character of the three hegemons appears in a manifest way that determines the structure of the NWO and its further development in the 2020s to a great extent.

The globalisation research has entered a new phase discovering the complexity of changes and the destructive character of the neoliberal globalisation, which are the focal conceptual points of this paper. The recognition of the ongoing deep change from deglobalisation to reglobalisation has been much bigger in the EU than in the US both in high politics and in the theoretical literature, and the farewell to neoliberal globalisation has been declared 'officially'. Nevertheless, the term of the new era has not been so much in the focus of public discussions in the US as in the EU or elsewhere in the world. Obviously, the US has been the classic case of neoliberalism and state capture by big business, with its self-destructive character that has been described in the political science as the crisis of US democracy and in the international relations' theory as the drastic weakening of its leading role in the world system. These two sides have been interconnected by the relative decline of the US economy, and its result is the increasing social disorder, extreme movements and deepening tensions between the two major parties – seen also by the Washington elite (The White House 2023).

This has also led to the relative decline of US democracy and the American dream that has been quasi-evident in the American political science, discussed theoretically in many papers and supported by a large amount of data from public opinion surveys (Rothstein 2022). This topic has also been at the centre of the Freedom House Reports (2022, 2023). Based on the vast US and international literature, these Reports have described the decline of US democracy as 'severe political and societal polarization' leading to 'the pernicious effects for democracy'. They have been 'reconceptualizing' the polarisation in both the global and US context and concluding that the relative decline of US democracy fits the global trend of turning from democracies to autocracies. They have also pointed out some common features between the US developments and 'the democratic erosion in Hungary and growing authoritarianism in Turkey and

Venezuela'. Thus, 'the crisis of American power' in the early 2020s was raised as an issue in 'How Europeans see Biden's America' (Leonard – Krastev 2021) and the social polarisation has been the key word in these analyses (see Levitsky – Way 2022; and Heinrich 2023).

The special US transition period with its declining global role can be best seen in its contrast with Chinese developments, since in the present stage of transition it's not Russia, but China who has become the main challenger of the US. Contrary to the US and EU developments, China was first to set a strategic alternative, but last to realise its own decay at home. Due to its controversial accommodation to the change between the world systems, China has also been captured by its own former success in neoliberal globalisation. In the late 2010s China felt that it was the winner of the OWO, but in the 2020s it has to realise more and more that it is not well prepared for the NWO. While the first stage of the transition period in the US was a negative process of decay, as the decomposition of the OWO was leading to global disorder, China saw this disorder as a *positive* process for its accelerated economic growth and widening modernisation, and a period in which China finally presented itself as a challenger of the US central position in the world system. In fact, for China the first stage was in some ways an optimistic era, beginning with the Deng Xiao-ping's invention of reform dictatorship. Again, so far, the second stage for China has been much more a *negative* – at least a very controversial – process with a deepening tension between the narrow modernisation and complex democratisation, in which all socio-political and human hurdles have increased as the main obstacles to further economic growth and modernisation.

Actually, the US and China still have a common illusion that economic growth, with any kind of modernisation, produces not only global economic and military power, but also some kind of relevant social and human progress as a large home base for global leadership. The confrontation between economic strength and overall social progress took place in the US earlier and in China much later, although none of them realised this historical trap. In China, like in the US, the turning point between the two stages appeared drastically in the early 2020s. For China, the pandemic meant the radical slowdown of economic growth as the end of the 'positive' process, although combined with, and compensated by, the growing confrontation with the US to claim the leading role in a new – seemingly bipolar – world system, which therefore has blurred the vision about the real strategic situation in China. In this respect, one can argue that China entered the second stage very belatedly, since the first stage was not 'decay' like in the US. On the contrary, it was the accelerated economic development, which made this 'decay' elsewhere a good environment for China. Arriving to the turning point, though China began to feel the economic slowdown, and new constraints and disturbances, it still elaborated a global strategy for its rapid development for the 2020s in the spirit of Xi Jinping's message from

the 2010s, claiming global leadership as the main challenger of the US. It has been formulated in the political message at the 20th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, still not recognising the necessary social change, and in some ways moving in the opposite direction. Anyway, China was very dynamic economically in the first stage and slowed down socially in the second stage. This process can be treated as the model case of the antagonistic divide between modernisation and democratisation due to the increasing tension in the second stage, in a historical contrast with Taiwan and South Korea with their democratisation and 'Westernization' drive.[9]

Looking at the Chinese case, it has to be noted that the OWO period also accomplished the globalisation of the international relations' theory moving from the narrow US focus to a wider view of the globalisation process. This paradigmatic change was particularly important for the understanding of this global process with the increasing Chinese role. The globalised research paradigm went parallel in the 2010s with the explosion of China research, since China was concerned with all aspects of the globalisation in a more complex world system. So the exclusivity of the research on China by the special group of sinologists ended. China was extremely active in the declining OWO period, since the complexity and disturbances of the global disorder offered an open space for the violations of the declining world order almost in all respects. Therefore, China research has become everybody's concern in political and social sciences, and beyond, and so the new controversial process has been followed by many foreign policy analysts and political science experts in the 2020s. This research has been focusing on the turning point between the first and second stages, and first of all on the internal accommodation of China to the NWO, although its strategic alternative of global leadership was only formulated in vague terms in the 2010s, but coming to the fore in the 2020s. Thus, the enigma that China is an absolutely special case just for professional sinologists disappeared when it became the challenger of the US in the OWO, and its political system was discussed in the conceptual frame of the new autocracies. This new approach began with the reform dictatorship of Deng Xiao-ping and has reached full world attention with the emergence of the dynamic autocratic system of Xi Jinping (see Pei 2021).[10]

China's claim for superpower status has been the official line since 2012, and it was the main message in the inaugural speech of Xi Jinping at the 20th

9 The interesting question is why Taiwan and South Korea have been moving from the successful modernisation to some kind of democratisation, and why not China. It is particularly important to emphasise here that democratisation means an internal complex political and educational mobilisation of the entire society.

10 The new role of China in world politics after the Russian aggression was in the forefront of the world media right after the outbreak of the war. The claim for the global role of China in the world system has been declared by Xi Jinping, re-elected as the leader at the Congress of the Chinese Communist Party on 16 October 2022.

party congress. In the global arena China has presented this challenge against the OWO on behalf of the Global South against the Global North, at the highest level of 'geopolitics' with its claim for future global leadership. At the same time, China has been busy building macro-regional organisations as well in its own neighbourhood. Both directions have produced their own controversies and tensions that can be briefly summarised in such a way that China has actually played its pushing role beyond the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) level, and has reached the global, US-China confrontation level, although it has intensified efforts to also organise its leadership on its own specific wider macro-region.

Obviously, these parallel global and macro-regional efforts have supported each other on one side, but have weakened on the other, since the Chinese claim for macro-regional leadership has mobilised India and Japan to turn against this Chinese effort. China wanted to connect these two ways for the global role by the New Silk Road project (Belt and Road Initiative 2013) given that its global effort for leadership was based on the tremendous economic growth that made China into the second biggest economic power and which was combined with connectivity. On the other side it claims leadership in the macro-region around the South Chinese Sea – including the see cable network debate with the US and the regional powers – by extending it to Central Asia. However, these trends have been disturbed in the second stage by the slowdown of economic development produced by the internal contradictions of the Chinese developments and by the external resistance of India and Japan.

Detecting the new Chinese crisis, it is necessary to discover its internal political and social dimensions behind the changing economic scenery. At first look, many deep contradictions have emerged with their overconcentrated public management, backsliding in public policy chiefly in the Zero Covid Campaign, and also some former actions leading to the lowering of the birth rate. Crises in the building industry and real estate connect and aggravate economic and political problems, along with both high corruption cases within the political elite and giant enterprises of tech-moguls, which raises the open question of how to control them. This is the basic dilemma nowadays for the 'Communist Monarch' as it is often mentioned in the world media. All contradictions have been cumulated in the social area of the emerging middleclass, since China has developed a global managerial class, but Chinese society does not tolerate full--blown high social polarisation and the ensuing tension with its global way of life and new patterns of this globalised strata, termed 'the Second China' (see China Power 2022; Guan 2022; Guo – Lei – Jincai – Shum 2021).

It is very difficult to qualify the political system in China, but nowadays it is not as specific and unique a case as it was decades ago. It is an interesting topic in international political science with its intensifying research on autocratic political systems. The OWO produced a challenge for democratisation that

meant a rupture with the old exclusive divide between the democracies and 'traditional' political systems, and gave a push to the research on the different kinds of the new democracies, emerging from the crisis of global democratisation and becoming the new autocracies. While it can be argued that in the US the 'economy' has captured the 'politics', or big business has captured the state, certainly in China, in an opposite way, the politics captured the economy by a developmental dictatorship. It has created a very shaky balance on the top with the obvious stronger power of the party elite with the tough social crisis management in the Xi regime. In China there has been a renewed high drive for 'party-state capitalism' combined with the age-old slogans of the Chinese Communist Party.

Altogether, the main divide in the present transatlantic relationship between the US and the EU has been how to deal with China. The latest US national security document contains resistance to China's claim for the rank of superpower, which is actually a refusal of the new bipolar world order. Unlike with Russia, this containment does not focus on military security regulations or on nuclear weapons, but on economic competition and on trade contacts, or even more so on technical containment (e.g. the production of chips) as it has been officially explained after the experiences of the Biden presidency (The White House 2023). At the same time, it has been more and more a multifaceted conflict in the polycrisis, since there are some common big multinationals between the US and China – sometimes even embracing other countries like Israel or the Netherlands – which resist to the cooling of production and trade contacts, or to stopping technology transfers. Unlike the US, the European strategy towards China has been more open and resilient as has been formulated by Ursula von der Leyen in her special message: 'it is vitally important that we ensure diplomatic stability and open communication with China. I believe that it is neither viable – nor in Europe's interests – to decouple from China. Our relations are not black or white – and our response cannot be either. This is why we need to focus on de-risk – not de-couple' (EC 2023a: 3). It seems that there was a shaky compromise between the EU and the US at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in this respect, but since then this transatlantic divide has come up new and again, obviously connected with the US claim of 'back to leadership' and with increased European openness to global transformations and higher competitiveness in the global trade.[11]

This US-China divide, however, will be influenced to a great extent by further Chinese internal development. China is not only involved in the global economic

11 On 29 September 2021 the EU and US organised the Trade and Technology Council and issued the Inaugural Joint Statement (EC 2021) for the coordination of their global activities that has still provided a solid framework to their relationships with China. The EU has organised a project – EU & China Think-Tank Exchanges – for regulated Chinese contacts, and Germany and France have especially and strongly supported this cooperation (Carlo 2023; Chen and Qi 2023; German Government 2023).

and innovation competition, but it also has to face the global disturbances or transnational threats like global climate crisis and disruptions in the global supply chains on one side, and the increasing tension in its managerial middle class accompanied with the deepening population crisis on the other. Not surprisingly, in this post-truth world all terms and theories from the OWO have been questioned, and nowadays there is a complete cacophony in the ensuing disinformation war (see e.g. Oliveira 2022; Sawyer 2021). In such a spirit, the US, China and the EU have divergent concepts about democracy and sovereignty, since China claims to be a democracy and has elaborated its own concept of sovereignty as well.

Conclusion: The global and social citizenship as the European Challenge

This paper has tried to make a contribution to the new conceptual framework of the New Great Transformation in three main directions. First, the systemic change from the OWO to the NWO has moved through a long transition process in two very different stages of decay/decline and construction/innovation. Second, the hybridisation – or interpenetration – of several social fields, from the recent hybrid war to all kinds of security, has been the megatrend in the global system at all levels, in its hard and soft versions. Thus, there has also been a rise of two kinds of global hegemons, macro-regions, middle powers and nation-states with their special hybrid profiles. Third, the new transformations will lead to the consolidation of the NWO in the second half of the 2020s under the pressure of the European Challenge. It will be a new construct with the dynamic consolidation in the incoming new world system based on the global and social citizenship. The EU has prepared three – social, green and geopolitical – transformations to the NWO to overcome the triple crisis and to create a dynamic sustainability.

First, the transitions between the world systems in the last two cases were much shorter and less complicated, since the Bipolar World Order (BWO) of the US and Soviet Union was quickly constituted by the winners right after the Second World War. The same goes for the unipolar world system after the collapse of the Soviet Union with the OWO, since the US-dominated neoliberal world system was also created rather rapidly. The contrast with the recent ongoing transition in this respect is big, because it began already step by step in the OWO and it takes a relatively long time even in the emerging NWO because of the radical, complicated transformations in the management of polycrisis. Within the OWO there were already some important changes in the running neoliberal globalisation with the entry of the new global players, but above all with China. Although it produced a very complex system of world economy and global governance, it was overburdened with the rightful claim of all megaregions for the

institutional participation in the management of the rules-based world order, but without a real systemic breakthrough that has only just arrived in the 2020s.

The disastrous effects of the neoliberal approach on the human universe due to the running/ruining of globalisation caused a rather long stage of decay, therefore mankind lived in an 'age of pessimism' in the first transitory period. Nowadays, the emergence of the NWO suggests entry to the 'Age of Optimism', given the new perspectives of complexity management and multilateral securitisation in the polycrisis. The outlines of the new system can already be seen in this second stage of the transition, in which the competition among the global powers will lead step by step to the regulated connectivity with an increasing synergy. Thus, as the UN's efforts for an 'SDG world' indicate, the reglobalisation has been conceived and planned with this synergy among many social fields. It has also been supported by the new megatrend of regionalisation/localisation, on those levels where the economic and social activities have been optimal (Angelis et al. 2022; Blockmans 2022; and UN 2023a, 2023b).

Second, this new SDG-based human universe 'beyond the GDP' as the new world of knowledge-based society shows a clear division between the stronger and weaker versions both horizontally and vertically in the NWO. The contrast is clear also at the highest level between the global hegemons, with the US and China on one side and the EU on the other. All in all, both the US and China are lagging behind the EU according to the complex SDG data in regular UN reports, which indicates that they are leading powers only in the traditional dimensions such as GDP and military power, but they are relatively weak in the new dimensions of complexity management and multilateral securitisation in the SDG terms, which are decisive in the long run, while the EU is strong and pioneering in these fields (EC 2023b). The same division applies vertically at all levels from the middle-powers and macro-regions to local organisations. The emergence of the NWO has also changed the entire geopolitical landscape. The new multipolar structure appears not only at the level of the three global hegemons, but also at the multiactor level in many other macroregional organisations.[12]

As a result, the institutional architecture for global governance is in a deep transformation, since all three global powers as well as the macroregional actors have been visualising a new type of globalisation, and building up a NWO both at the global and macroregional levels. Due to the wake-up call of Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the increasing synergy may already be noticed between the EU and US, often called the transatlantic moment. In general, the

12 The UN Sustainable Development Reports cover all countries and their progressive or regressive tendencies have been described. In the latest Report (UN 2023a) on the 193 UN member states, 20 EU countries are among the first 25. The best non-EU country is Japan (21st). The US is only 39th and China is 63rd (UN 2023b). For more on the 'beyond the GDP' issue, see especially the World Happiness Report (2022). The 'Think Global – Act European' programme from the 2010s has recently been renewed in the EU, and a new institutional cycle will start in this spirit after the EP elections in 2024.

'New West' – also embracing Canada, Australia and in some ways Japan – is nowadays more united. It has been focusing on the reregulation of the world order in its multipolar-multiactor structure by offering some kind of New Deal for the Global South as well.

Accordingly, the main issue is that both the Global North and Global South have lost their former meanings – overburdened with former 'East' and 'West' – at the level of the countries and their populations. Even China has tried to build up a structural in-between position. On one side it makes efforts to unite the non-Western world politically with its Shanghai Cooperation Organization group, and on the another it strives to intensify its presence within the West for the success of its own complex economic modernisation. Also, an increasing number of the 'Southern' countries' populations already belong to the Global North in many ways in their social position and with their dual identity. It would be misleading to consider them as compradors, since in many cases they represent the 'the freedom fighters' against the traditional 'West' by claiming some kind of 'Western' status for themselves. Obviously, in this period of the new 'hybrid world war' in Ukraine the UN is losing ground in crisis management on one side, since its basic structure and procedures still reflect the post-Second World War situation, but on the other side a new kind of cooperation has been negotiated in the UN between the emerging Global North and Global South. Accordingly, the special global organisations like the WHO and WTO have undergone a deep transformation for the support of the new Global South weakened by the polycrisis, although they still need much more creative innovation.[13]

The shocking effect of the Ukrainian war has been needed to overcome the triple global crisis, but of course the theoretical revolution as the change of paradigms has also been needed in order to elaborate the new strategic design. The explanation of the modernisation-democratisation conflict indicates that the former conceptual framework behind this running/ruining globalisation was based on the primitivisation/privatisation of the world affairs by the neoliberal approach reduced to the concept of home oeconomicus. This modernisation--centric view embraced only the economic or business interests, exclusively with their direct cost effects, and totally neglected the complex global effects of all actions as the externalia with the series of their remote ramifications. This oversimplified concept has been the deep conviction and practical philosophy of the big multis – and even more so in a more sophisticated way of the tech--moguls – which has followed only direct profit interests. It has neglected the ruining effects of the running globalisation on the world-wide process, although this complex process has produced many negative external effects damaging the entire human universe.

13 The latest developments have also been suggested by the EU, also in its relationships with wider Europe (EC 2023b).

Third, accordingly, this dynamic consolidation of the NWO proceeds at the global, regional and country levels with its innovative and retrograde versions. It appears first of all in the tendency of the combined reglobalisation and (macro) regionalisation, or 'localization', as a megatrend at these levels. Above all, in the new rules-based world order many macro-regional associations are gaining ground due to this tendency of global regionalisation with special geopolitical profiles. Thanks to the ongoing painful transformations at all levels, this emerging world system has been oriented towards the synergy that has also presupposed a claim for the common global and social citizenship, as the world-wide pandemic crisis management has shown. The basic problems of mankind, especially in the climate crisis, can only be solved through the synergy based on the twin terms of solidarity and sovereignty, cooperation and competition, globalisation cum regionalisation, as creating convergence with the mutual support of all actors concerned in all basic matters. They have been negotiated and decided by the global institutions in the first half of 2020s, and after the transitory period the new perspectives and new strategies will be consolidated in the second half of the 2020s.[14]

The regional/national/local versions of the NWO have appeared parallel with the global transformations as the result of ending the unlimited turbo--globalisation that overloaded the ecological system. The NWO has to counter also the widening tendency of autocratisation with many varieties of hybrid regimes between autocracy and democracy. Furthermore, the internal/national side of the pandemic crisis management has also proven that some kind of the new emerging global and extended social citizenship is needed everywhere with its complex connections in its national varieties, since in this recent reglobalised world in fact all countries are neighbours. The global and social citizenship is not wishful thinking or an ideological miracle, but an everyday process. The *global citizenship* is a tough reality in the polycrisis, since all countries and their citizens are vulnerable, and the only open question is how to manage it. As far as the extended *social citizenship* is concerned, it has to be widened just for the protection against the social and economic tsunamis of the polycrisis, since these typhoons of the sudden global changes has turned from 'rarity' to 'regularity'. But it has to be approached even more from the side of the new economy and knowledge-based society, in which the healthcare system is a part of the new production system and cannot be reduced to the illness and the problems of ageing, but has to be extended to support the activity of an entire lifetime. Therefore, the new perspective described in this paper is the wide process of the complex global-social citizenship with global 'insurance' based on human investment as the rising EU model suggests. The 'knowledge factories' as the big

14 Vít Hloušek (2023) has recently given a wide overview of the polycrisis management in the EU, seen from the side of the East-Central European development, considering this region as a 'good lab' for crisis management.

policy institutes in the EU – like EPC and CEPS – have been engaged in strategic research on the transformations in the NWO by focusing on the global and social citizenship in their close and intricate combinations that offers a large variety of global, regional and local solutions of the polycrisis. Both the universal health coverage and the investment in human capital figure high among the sustainability requirements as social sustainable transition and strategic autonomy in the EU (see recently ETUI 2023 and Social Europe Publishing 2023).

Altogether, this paper has tried to show that the EU has played an initiative and constructive role in the transformation of the world system and the European Challenge has appeared in the elaboration of the sustainable development and multilevel global governance. On that base, the European Challenge has also been formulated markedly in its new geopolitical role, balancing the US as transatlantic cooperation and securing the interdependent relationships with China. Finally, the most radical change has taken place inside the EU towards federalisation, including the new efforts for the organisation of the European Political Community in its neighbourhood. All these processes are still in their innovative stage with many hurdles and contradictions, but with a good perspective of their consolidation in the NWO framework in the second half of the 2020s.

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Poland's Governmental Response to the European Green Deal: Discursive Strategies prior to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022[1]

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Abstract: *Although Poland's energy mix is becoming 'greener' each year, the country's energy production is still dominated by coal. This affects several important spheres: financial, socioeconomic and political. Therefore, the aim of the article is to explain Poland's response to adaptational pressure stemming from the European Green Deal (EGD) by reconstructing discursive strategies related to the topics of decarbonisation and green transformation. We perceive the EGD as a regulatory initiative, whose purpose is to incorporate formal rules and European norms in the domestic discourse and public policies. In order to induce such a change, the European Commission influences the 'utility calculations' used by member states. However, at the same time, some member states need to deal with problems caused by misfits between their energy sector's capabilities and expectations of the EGD. In Poland's case, the significant fields of misfits refer to national emission targets, obligations resulting from the EU Emission Trading System and the Fit for 55 reform package. Using discourse analysis, we have reconstructed a governmental narrative on the transformation based on election manifestos, selected ministerial documents and social media posts from the years 2019–2021. As the government aims to present itself as defenders of Polish national interests, climate-related policies are seen as a threat. There is a clear focus on energy*

1 This paper in its previous versions has been presented at several international conferences, such as the UACES Virtual Conference 2020, Workshop: Writing and Publishing during the Pandemic Crisis 2020, and UACES Virtual Conference 2021. It beneffited strongly from all the ideas and feedback shared at these events, as well as the discussions with editors of the recently published book, *Making the European Green Deal Work: EU Sustainability Policies at Home and Abroad* (Helene Dyrhauge – Kristina Kurze 2023). We are grateful for all these comments as well as reviews we have received. The participation in the conferences and the research was supported by the Jagiellonian University.

sovereignty and security issues, while challenges related to global warming are absent from the political communication. As the situation at the Belarussian border developed and the danger connected with Russian politics became clearer, the concept of being a defender acquired more meanings.

Keywords: ***European Green Deal, Poland, discourse analysis, logic of consequence, decarbonisation, green transformation***

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present and explain the Polish government's response to the European Green Deal (EGD) from 2019 to the beginning of 2022. We will draw from Europeanisation theory in order to recognise the EU logic of inducing the change and member states' strategies for dealing with the pressure of adaptations. Following this we will provide empirical data on the Polish energy mix, but also analyse the main threads of the governmental narrative related to the topics of decarbonisation and green transformation.

The article is divided into the following sections. First is the theoretical framework analysing the European Green Deal and EU conditionality as important factors influencing the transformation of the Polish economy, followed by the methodology section explaining the selection of the data. Next, the analysis is done in two dimensions – we present the areas of misfits connected with the implementation of the EGD in Poland, and we reconstruct the governmental narrative related to this theme. The purpose of reconstructing government communication is to identify the values and symbols used by government in its discursive strategies. We do not see the governmental narrative as a barrier to transformation. Instead, we recognise it as a discursive strategy allowing us to mitigate socio-political constraints and challenges involved in implementing the EGD in Poland.

The year 2020 was the deadline for the first EU climate-energy package. The EU as a whole achieved the main '20–20–20' objectives; however, this outcome varies when we take a closer look at national targets. Poland performed well on two out of the three targets. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency which allowed Poland to reduce final energy consumption were the areas where Poland achieved its 2020 aims. Only in the renewable energy target did Poland fail to achieve expected progress (European Environment Agency 2021: 31). In this light, Poland is an interesting case. Poland started its energy transformation from a point where its entire industry sector was based on coal-based technologies inherited from the communist era. Poland put

significant effort into meeting the 2020 climate and energy objectives. Those undertakings have had an impact on Polish society, which now needs to share the financial burden of the transformation decreed by the EU.

More ambitious targets set in the climate and energy framework for 2030 and later added in the Fit for 55 package put even more pressure on member states to meet the objective of climate-neutral economy in 2050. The Polish government was seen as slowing down decarbonisation processes by vetoing certain decisions within the European Union or contesting the ETS system. The purpose of the article is then to reconstruct the rationale of the government within the context of significant socio-political constraints in the suggested period. As the situation changed dramatically in the beginning of 2022 and the transformation processes have been overshadowed by high inflation and the war unleashed by Russia at the gate of the EU, we have chosen the beginning of 2022 for the end of the analysis.

Theoretical framework

The European Green Deal can be perceived as any regulatory proposal of the EU which refers to the market correcting rules, i.e. regulations counteracting the negative influence of the market. As with every EU policy, the EGD also consists of 'processes of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then should be incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies' (Bulmer – Radaelli 2004: 4). The political importance of the EGD shows that the EGD is a Europeanisation instrument that can have a significant impact on the member states' economies including the Polish one. According to the Europeanisation theory, two factors play a key role in this process.

The first is the scope of the misfits between the expectations of the European Commission and the capabilities of the member state's energy sector. The second is the behaviour of political actors at the domestic level, which provides an answer to the adaptational pressure (Börzel – Risse 2000).

Europeanisation inherently entails some degree of incompatibility between European-level policies and domestic political processes. Therefore, the success of the European Commission in achieving the EGD objectives depends on how the member states' governments cope with the policy misfits regarding the reduction of GHG emissions. Policy misfits occur between EU regulations and legal principles and national policies. Eventually, the 'regulatory competition' emerges, and, as a result, there is pressure on states to adapt their policies to the EU requirements (Börzel – Risse 2000). The larger the scope of the misfits, the higher the adaptational pressure. However, it is a logic of organisational behavior which influences both variables.

The methods of governance in EU climate and energy policy have changed over time. The first measures of the 2020 climate and energy package launched in 2007 were based mainly on 'soft governance'. The path to achieve the main objectives – 20% less greenhouse gas emissions, 20% more energy from renewable resources, and 20% increase in energy efficiency – was paved by directives and nonbinding practices such as setting timetables, benchmarks or policy monitoring. However, often the member states did not translate policy coordination into effective actions at the national level. Thus, the process of 'hardening the soft governance' has started and the climate policy has been coupled with stricter conditionalities. Following this approach, member states have to fulfill certain administrative, economic, legal and political conditions. For example, in 2013 the 'greening of the European Semester' began, which has since ensured that macroeconomic policies are also more environmentally friendly. Instead of directives, the EU started regulating the climate and energy policies through regulations which must be entirely applied across the EU. An example of this is the European Climate Law which inscribes in hard law the objective of a 55% reduction in greenhouse gases emissions by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (Bongardt – Torres 2022).

The shift in the way the EU climate and energy policy is governed can be explained by referring to the logic of appropriateness and logic of consequence. At the beginning of formulating this policy, the EU followed the logic of appropriateness. It assumed that political actors are driven by the rules relevant to the situation in which they are found and appropriate to the roles they assign to themselves in this situation. In the communication from 2007 titled 'An Energy Policy for Europe', which later became the basis for the European Council's decision to adopt three key targets called 3x20, the European Commission described the locus in such a way:

> Energy is essential for Europe to function. But the days of cheap energy for Europe seem to be over. The challenges of climate change, increasing import dependence and higher energy prices are faced by all EU members. Moreover the interdependence of EU Member States in energy, as in many other areas, is increasing – a power failure in one country has immediate effects in others. Europe needs to act now, together, to deliver sustainable, secure and competitive energy (European Commission 2007: 3).

A year later, the European Commission defined the role of the EU as follows:

> 2007 marked a turning point for the European Union's climate and energy policy. Europe showed itself ready to give global leadership: to tackle climate change, to face up to the challenge of secure, sustainable and competitive en-

ergy, and to make the European economy a model for sustainable development in the 21st century (European Commission 2008: 2).

The context defined in this way creates a framework of rules and norms, in which the changes stipulated by the given policies should happen. Following this, member states through the process of socialisation and persuasion are expected to change their beliefs, norms and identities towards the energy transformation and climate change adaptational measures. However, tools of the logic of appropriateness like 'soft governance' in climate and energy policy have not been fully effective. Even the bottom-up socialisation processes led by social movements and organisations could not sufficiently persuade the main political parties and governments in Central and Eastern Europe to redefine their interests and identities (Grabbe – Lehne 2019; Hess – Renner 2019).

'Hardening the soft governance' in climate and energy policies, especially in the process of EGD implementation, indicates that the EU behaves now in accordance with the logic of consequences – it manages change by influencing the 'utility calculations' used by member states. The actions planned by the EC in the EGD strategy anticipate preferred outcomes that are better quality of environment and climate neutrality in the whole EU. In the opinion of the EU decision makers, these actions produce the best consequences measured against the prior preferences of member states (Goldmann 2005; March – Olsen 1998). Thus, the adaptation to climate change and energy transformation is seen as more likely to happen. It is because member states see in the change induced by the EGD the obligation created through negotiation and mutual consent, which were grounded 'in a calculated consequential advantage', and not because the EGD appeals to the normative rationality of member states (March – Olsen 1998: 949–952).

The EC's actions are aimed at persuading political and societal actors in member states that a 'greener' and 'emissions neutral' European economy meets their expected utility regarding energy. In order to induce such a transformative change, the EU in the first place rather offers either positive incentives like additional funds (e.g. Just Transition Fund and Social Climate Fund) or negative ones like reducing emission allowances from the ETS.

However, even such logic of inducing the change in member states has limits. Those limitations arise from the instrumental rationality which governments follow in their policies. Member states agree on the transfer of new rules to the national level as long as incentives are credible (Ugur 2013). Moreover, the margin utility of European policies for member states is determined by the domestic costs they have to bear. Excessive costs may lead not only to the reluctance of the imposed policies, but, as several studies showed, they limit the effectiveness of EU conditionality (Schimmelfennig – Sedelmeier 2004).

Europeanisation theory explains what may be the response mechanism of the member states when facing the growing adaptational pressure resulting from the EU level. This strategy may also affect the EU governance mechanism. According to Europeanisation theory, the existence of *veto points* within the institutional structure of the state allows political actors with various interests to minimise the negative effects resulting from the adaptation process. The case becomes even more interesting when such a veto point is established by a government whose responsibility is the implementation of the EU rules. Due to the membership obligation, a member state at the national level has a limited set of political tools for how to respond to the compulsion stemming from the EU conditionality. One of them is shaping the public debate in a country. On the one hand, it may hinder the pressure put upon the policy makers by the society which incur excessive costs of the EU conditionality, and on the other hand, shaping public debate may help to gain some concessions during the renegotiation of the EU law at the European level (Putnam 1988).

Analysis of the government narrative on the EGD will allow us to show how the Polish government used public discourse to present itself as a veto point towards the stringency of the EU environmental policies.

Methodology

The analysis of the misfits between the Polish energy sector and the EU requirements defined in the EGD was based on two main sources. The first is the official government documents and think-tank reports on the energy mix. The second source is the EU legislative documents that implement the EGD.

The governmental narrative was reconstructed using election manifestos, selected ministerial documents and posts on social networks. The leading methodology and perspective for reconstructing the governmental narrative was discourse analysis, yet limited to the governmental actors as they are the main focus of the article.

The governments are primarily responsible for the implementation of EU regulations including the EGD. In the Europeanisation theory they are the main recipients of the expectations stemming from two directions or two levels – the supranational policies proposed by the European Commission and national actors (e.g. civil society organisations, political opposition parties, etc.). Thus the analysis of the government communication aimed at identifying the ways in which the Polish government managed pressure arising from these two levels.

Building on the previous literature on that subject (Biedenkopf 2021), it can be argued that the analysis of the dominant narratives might indeed help to understand policy processes and the strategies adopted by the main actors. Although a detailed discussion of understanding the discourse goes beyond the aims of this article, some methodological notes are deemed necessary. In

this light, the discourse is understood to be constituted by public speeches, campaign materials and official documents published by government officials. The analysis focuses on public images and perceptions (see Lisowska-Magdziarz 2006, cf. Wodak – Krzyżanowski 2008).

The leading analytical questions are as follows.

- How was the transformation presented?
- What was the purpose of government communication?
- What important players were identified?

The governmental narrative has been reconstructed on the basis of the following documents and sources.

- Visions presented in the election manifestos for 2019 and 2020
- Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (PEP2040)
- The posts of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Facebook, from November 2021 to February 2022

The starting point is 2019 as this is the year that the European Green Deal was introduced.

Election manifestos can be seen as official programme documents of the party, building the relationship between the voter – the governed-to-be – and the leader (the leader-to-be). Election manifestos can also be a proper source to reconstruct worldviews and value sets promoted or adopted by a given party.

Polish politics since 2015 has been marked by the dominance of one party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), leading consecutive governments. However, it should be noted that in the Polish political system, it is considerably difficult to form a one-party government, which is also the case of PiS, as they needed coalition partners. Yet, the analysis will be mostly limited to Law and Justice's narratives as they are definitely the leading voice in the government and their representatives govern the most relevant offices (from the point of view of this paper). Therefore, the Law and Justice election manifesto from the 2019 parliamentary elections has been analysed.

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Flis – Ciszewski 2020), presidential elections were held in Poland. The candidate officially supported by Law and Justice was the incumbent president Andrzej Duda (TM 2020), so only his programme is included in the reconstruction of the governmental narrative. Furthermore, we included the official policy related to the energy sector (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021).

The final source for analysing the governmental narrative in this article is public posts that Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki shared via his Facebook profile (Morawiecki 2022c). This source was chosen for several reasons. Morawiecki is reasonably active in social media, with a significant number of

followers on both Facebook (271 thousand followers) and Twitter (562 thousand followers) (Morawiecki 2022f), yet the number of posts shared daily in November 2021, when the analysis started, was higher than the number of tweets. To avoid repetition of the same messages and due to the high volume of posts shared, the analysis has been restricted to Facebook. The chosen time frame was from 1 November, coinciding with the first post on COP 26 in Glasgow, to 23 February, the eve of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, since the war has dramatically changed the political parameters of the security and energy policies. In all, 259 posts from this period have been initially selected for the analysis, given they included reference to EU climate policies, environmental issues and the risks connected with Russian politics. While initially the scope was meant to be mostly limited to the European Green Deal and decarbonisation strategies, given the Russian invasion, more attention has been paid to conflicts next to the eastern borders of Poland prior to the invasion. After the primary analysis, the selection was limited to 151 text documents, which were then processed and coded using the MAX QDA software. In the end, audio and audiovisual materials were not included.

The suggested analysis is undoubtedly limited in terms of scope and choice of sources. We have focused on public communication directed mostly to the main party supporters, such as campaign materials and social media (i.e. Facebook) posts. Previous works in this growing field of research did analyse parliamentary speeches (Biedenkopf 2021), journals (Rancew-Sikora 2002) and press discourse (Wagner 2015). We wanted to reconstruct the main ideas and values present solely in governmental narratives, as these might be then analysed as discursive tools.

Analysis

Misfits of the EGD in Poland

Due to the coal-based energy system, which is an artefact of communist-era energy policy, all kinds of EU decarbonisation initiatives have been perceived in Poland as economically and socially demanding. Poland's energy mix explains this well; however, there are also signs of gradual adaptation to the stringency of EU environmental policies.

In the report on the Polish power system published in 2018 (RAP 2018), it was suggested that 'Poland stands at the crossroads of important decisions on its energy system' (2018: 3), with a power mix dominated by hard coal and lignite, power plants reaching their expiration date and widely heard concerns about 'energy supply security, clean air, climate change, rapidly declining costs for renewable energy and the expected growth of electricity demand' (2018: 3). COVID 19 did not change these concerns, but rather only side-tracked them temporarily.

The Ministry of Climate report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions published in 2021, the so-called Poland National Inventory Report 2021 (Olecka et al. 2021), presents the data from 2019. In that year, carbon dioxide was the main greenhouse gas in Poland (more than an 80% share). The highest emissions were related to the energy sector, with a lower contribution from industry processes, agriculture and waste. In 2019, Poland was the fourth largest GHG emitter in the EU-27, which is partially explained by the scale of the national economies. The first three places were occupied by other big member states – Germany, France and Italy. The real picture of the misfits in this field shows the effort put in by countries to mitigate the problem of climate change internally. Among the four largest GHG emitters in the EU, only in Poland did the total net emissions increase between 2015 and 2019 by 4%. In the other mentioned countries, emissions decreased in this period of time, in Germany by 10%, and in France and Italy by 4% (European Energy Agency 2022b).

The crucial expectation arising from the EGD states that 'Further decarbonising the energy system is critical to reach climate objectives in 2030 and 2050. [And] the production and use of energy across economic sectors account for more than 75% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions' (European Commission 2019).

The first field of misfits between Poland and the expectations of the EGD is the national emission targets. In the Effort Sharing Decision from 2009, Poland, as a less wealthy member state, was allowed to increase GHG emissions by up to 14% compared to 2005 levels (Decision No 406/2009/EC 2009). Finally, in 2020 the GHG emissions in Poland increased by 12% – 2 percentage points below the national emission target. Meanwhile, in May 2018, the European Commission raised the reduction levels in the Effort Sharing Regulation. The assumption was that Poland by 2030 should decrease GHG emissions by 7% compared to data from 2005 levels (Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of the European Parliament and of the Council 2018). According to the data from the European Energy Agency, only six EU member states were on track toward their national targets. In July 2021, the EC issued a proposal for a new national emission target, which would meet the expectations of an ambitious 55% reduction in the GHG in the EU by 2030. Poland's target has been raised once again – now Poland is expected to reduce its emissions by 17.7% compared to the 2005 level (European Commission 2021b).

The national emission targets will exert huge adaptational pressure on Poland's industry and economy because they refer to the sectors not included in the Emission Trading System. In 2020 in Poland, emissions from these sectors (agriculture, transport, waste, buildings and small industry) produced 51% of all GHG emissions (European Energy Agency 2022a).

The second field of misfits stems from changes in the EU Emission Trading System under the Fit for 55 reform package. The main objective of the reform

is to reduce emissions from EU ETS sectors by 61% by 2030, compared to 2005 (European Commission 2021a). It is an 18 pp. increase from the level established in 2014. In order to reach this target, the EC proposed three main changes to the current ETS system. The first is to speed up the reduction of the emission allowances from the system each year. It immediately generated a visible cost for society. Right after the EC presented its proposal, experts predicted that the price of a tonne of CO2 in the ETS would reach around 90 euros by 2030 (Simon 2021). On 7 February 2022, the price reached 96 euros per tonne (Chestney – Abnett – Twidale 2022), which makes a 180% increase since the announcement of the 'Fit for 55' proposal on 14 July 2021.

The second change which the EC proposes to introduce to the current ETS applies to the market stability reserve (MSR). Since 2019, this mechanism has allowed the tackling of imbalances in the emission market caused by oversupply by withdrawing and putting back allowances to the market. The reform assumes that from 2023 onwards the allowances withdrawn from the market will be invalidated, which means that they would be permanently removed from the system (European Commission 2021a). This will impact the overall volume of the allowances in the market, and ultimately large emitters might pass the growing cost of their production on to final consumers.

The third change proposed by the EC in July 2021 intends to include sectors such as transport and buildings into the EU ETS. The share of domestic transport sector in Poland in total net emissions[2] increased from 10.1% in 2005 to 17.4% in 2019. The same indicator for the building emissions in Poland in total net emissions decreased from 12.6% in 2005 to 10.5% in 2019. This reduction does not seem permanent, however. One of the causes is that as much as 87% of the coal used for heating in the EU is consumed by households in Poland. Therefore, the experts predict that by 2030 emissions from these sectors will be almost 81% higher than in 1990 (Maćkowiak-Pandera – Buchholtz – Adamczewski 2021).

Eventually, all these processes influence the society and the public policies. First, the Fit for 55 package already has an impact on energy prices followed by consumer prices.

A severe increase in electricity prices for non-household consumers was observed in the EU between the first half of 2019 – 12 eurocents/kWh, and the first half of 2022 – 18 eurocents/kWh. Electricity became about 50% more expensive (Eurostat 2022a). In Poland electricity consumers like companies or public institutions paid about 36% more between 2019 and 2022 (Eurostat 2022c). In the case of households, the growth was much lower in this period and was only 9% (Eurostat 2022b). Nonetheless, it is non-household prices that have an impact on inflation.

2 Including international transport.

Coal continues to dominate energy production in Poland, with ongoing discussions and debates on the future of the sector. The most important factors are financial – varying competitiveness; socioeconomic – restructuring of the mining industries and regions; and political – issues of energy security and sovereignty. In 2020 the downward trend in hard coal production was visible, while 'the quality and price advantage of imported fuel' led to the policy of storing 'unsold domestic coal', with reserves reaching about 15 million tonnes (Jędra 2021: 30). That has definitely changed in 2022, with talks on the possibility of increasing domestic production due to the war-induced circumstances. In previous years, Poland imported a significant number of fossil fuels from Russia; in 2020 it was 15% of hard coal, 47% of natural gas and 64% of the oil (Gawlikowska-Fyk – Maćkowiak-Pandera 2022). These numbers illustrate the pressure on the energy system enacted by the war and the decisions of de-russification.

The second field of social cost of implementing the EGD refers to the labour market, especially in these regions, which will have to adapt to the 'green' transition. According to the Mining Regions Sensitivity Index, 0.823 million people live in the poviats (counties) most vulnerable to the energetic transition in Poland (Juszczak – Szpor 2020). In order to provide for not only the economically but also the socially comprehensive transition of the most vulnerable regions, the government will need to find additional money to those from the Just Transition Fund or supplement the Social Climate Fund country allocation with national financing (European Commission 2021c).

Analysis of the Government Narrative

The analysis begins by reconstructing the most significant threads present in the 2019 elections campaign. Protection of the environment was mentioned in the campaign materials prepared by the Law and Justice Committee (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2019), although it was not the most prominent theme. Furthermore, climate issues were not highlighted as the main concern: broadly understood environmental protection was to include the themes of natural heritage, climate-related concerns, air pollution issue, animal rights and waste management. The Polish government of the previous years (also led by PiS) was portrayed as successfully reconciling proecological ambitions with socioeconomical interests. Narrowing the analysis to climate change and decarbonisation issues, the campaign materials included plans to improve heating, invest in photovoltaics, to increase green surfaces in cities, afforestation, and offshore wind farms and – what is significant – to launch a nuclear energy programme (Kułakowska 2021).

However, what seems more important is the analysis of the Law and Justice programme in the context of the energy sector and foreign affairs. Here, we find

not only the promise of the nuclear plant or the support for the Polish mining industry, but also the concept of energy sovereignty. Climate-related policies were seen as a threat, recklessly accepted by the main political opponent of PiS, Civic Platform (PO), a threat to the Polish economy, mining sector and the energy market (leading to an increase in energy prices) (Kułakowska 2021).

As mentioned before, in 2020 there were presidential elections held in Poland. The programme of the incumbent president Andrzej Duda presented on a dedicated website did not pay too much attention to ecology; there was one section jointly devoted to health and ecology, illustrated by the picture of Mr Duda planting trees (Komitet Wyborczy Kandydata na Prezydenta RP Andrzeja Dudy 2020), and where he briefly mentioned investment in household heating, proper waste management and afforestation.

In February 2021, the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment published the document Polityka Energetyczna Polski do 2040r – the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (PEP2040). The authors underlined the relationship between national plans and EU concentrated efforts and policies. They mentioned the new updated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% (with reference to the year 1990). In this context, they stated that 'following dynamically accelerating climate-energy EU trends will constitute a significant transformational challenge for Poland' (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021b: 3). The Polish obligations established in 2009 were reviewed: increase energy efficiency, increase the share of energy from renewable sources, and contribute to the reduction of GHG by 20% (compared to 1990).

The authors of the policy emphasised the particular situation of the Polish economy (more) dependent on carbon fuels and the need for a just transition. In this light, they stressed that the transformation should ensure 'socially acceptable energy prices' and should not 'intensify energy poverty' (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021a: 3). They suggested that the analysed strategy will provide for 'the low-emission energy transformation' which, in turn, 'will initiate broader modernization changes for the entire economy, guaranteeing energy security, ensuring a fair distribution of costs, and protecting the most vulnerable social groups' (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021a: 5). The statutory goal of the energy policy was also mentioned, which is energy security. As a result of the policy, GHG emissions should be reduced by 30% by 2030. In the same year, no more than 56% of electricity production should be coal-driven. Nuclear energy should be implemented from 2033 onward.

When analysing public communications shared by Mateusz Morawiecki through his Facebook profile (Morawiecki 2021d), several key elements have been identified.

In reference to demands of EU energy policies, Morawiecki underscored the necessity of just transformation (Morawiecki 2021a). He remarked that various

countries have different points of departure in terms of energy transition and that the disadvantaged position of Poland calls for additional funds and support. Furthermore, he outlined the conditions of the transformation, saying, 'in order to participate in the transformation in fair terms, Poland needs to have adequate funds secured, and the EU needs to be based on good rules.... We need to carry out a responsible climate policy, protecting the most vulnerable social groups, so that Polish citizens are not affected by rising electricity prices, and the Polish economy does not lose its competitiveness' (Morawiecki 2021a). The analogy with the 2019 election manifesto is clearly noticeable.

The second theme was the acknowledgment of mutual interdependence within the European Union and in the wider global perspective. The support of the EU and the need for pan-European solidarity were mentioned in the context of the conflict on the Polish-Belarussian border (and simultaneously Eastern EU border), and the growing threat from Russian politics. However, we could also notice elements of contestation of EU politics, mostly the ETS system and some signs of tensions connected to the EU jurisdiction.[3] The energy crisis and inflation were seen to be caused not only by Russian (imperial) politics but also by 'irresponsible' EU climate policies. As shared in December, 'on climate policies there lies a shadow linked to the prices of CO^2 emission allowances. ETS is a European energy tax.... It should have a more constant nature, not prone to abrupt changes. In a situation of great variability, the profits are acquired by financial institutions, not by common citizens' (Morawiecki 2021e). On several occasions, Morawiecki commented on speculations leading to the increase in ETS prices. This interesting paradox visualises the political and structural constraints the Polish government aimed to navigate. On the one hand, they wished to present themselves as a 'loyal and conscientious member of both European and transatlantic community' (Morawiecki 2021j), on the other, they challenged EU policies and the EU Tribunal.

The third theme was related to the Gazprom policy and, more broadly, the threats connected to Russian politics. It was particularly visible in the context of the border crisis mentioned above, which was described as a form of hybrid war, 'a political crisis created... to destabilise... Europe' (Morawiecki 2021k). In that light, Poland was portrayed as the defender of Europe. Many posts that followed were devoted to praising the Polish soldiers protecting the border. The threat posed by Russia and Belarus should be minimised by joint European initiatives, including common energy policies, as stated in the post from November 2021, the 'EU is the object of Russian energy blackmail because we

3 The analysis of the conflicts with the EU Commission blocking the transfer of the National Recovery funds, or with the Czech Republic over the Turów mine are outside the scope of this paper.

still fight each other, in the energy domain, instead of playing together. Till that changes, we can be sure that Putin will use our differing interests to his advantage' (Morawiecki 2021b). In this context, the Polish opposition to Nord Stream 2 should be mentioned. Nord Stream 2 was opposed as 'a tool for blackmail' of the Russian Federation.

Although posts related solely to Polish infrastructure or investment were excluded by default from the analysis, it should be noted that many posts at the turn of 2022 addressed the Polish government's development plan, called the Polish Order (Polski Ład). It is certainly not focused on environmental issues but rather investments and changes in taxation and budget allocation, but it does include a section devoted to ecology, such as plans for new wind farms, hydrogen technology, low-emission transport, solar energy, nuclear plant and similar plans (Morawiecki 2021f).

The posts did mention another important topic for Polish green transformation: the region most closely connected to the mining industry – Silesia[4]. There, at the end of November 2021, Morawiecki commented on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) (Morawiecki 2021g). He said: 'For us, the dilemma of CBAM depends largely on its final shape and on where the funds thus collected go – so that they can be included in our budget, so that we could invest them in the energy-intensive industries and green transformation of the Polish economy' (Morawiecki 2021g). And he added, 'Silesia is the heart of Polish economy and energy system, and is also the key to the success or failure of the European green deal… as a prime minister and a politician, I need to ask – will we be able to cover the social costs of such a big transformation? The answer to this question will determine our support for this project' (Morawiecki 2021g). Miners were also mentioned on 4 December on the traditional Miner's Day – praised for their hard and significant work and for providing energy security (Morawiecki 2021m). At the end of December, the PM visited the Silesia region again. While commenting on this trip, he said: 'another issue that I talked about with the residents of the Silesian towns is the EU energy policy, which causes their – understandable – anxiety. This policy creates various challenges and problems that my government needs to deal with. We will defend the Silesian industry and workplaces against changes that do not take into account the needs of local residents. Energy transformation is needed, but it must be fair and based on solidarity!' (Morawiecki 2021i).

The main actors mentioned in the government communication were certainly the Polish government and the Law and Justice party, often referred to as 'we' or sometimes as 'my government'. The European Union was mostly seen as a unitary actor, sometimes troubled by internal conflicts. The EU goals were not

4 Cf. (Głuszek-Szafraniec – Szostok-Nowacka 2021)

seen as closely aligned with Polish national interests. Supporting EU policies which are not favourable and/or beneficial to Polish interests was then seen as a mistake. Russia and Vladimir Putin were mentioned in the context of imperial politics, posing a threat not only to the neighbouring countries, but to all of Europe. The main opposition party and its leader, Donald Tusk, were often referred to and presented in a negative light, in order to provide contrast to current governmental policies. They were also sometimes blamed for accepting climate-EU policies. Donald Tusk was criticised for the actions of the Civic Platform in Poland[5] but also for the actions of the European People's Party. There was no true normative alignment in terms of values connected with opposing climate change. Rising sea levels or global warming were absent from government communications. Even the European Green Deal was hardly mentioned; within the material coded, there was only one direct mention to the programme in the context of Silesia.

The important analytical context is the broader perspective of EU-Poland relations during the analysed period (November 2021 to February 2022). Although a detailed analysis of these relations goes beyond the scope of this article, there were obvious tensions related to the Polish judiciary system and the freezing of the funds for the National Recovery Fund. In addition, internal battles were being played out simultaneously: Mateusz Morawiecki frequently referred to Donald Tusk, the leader of the main opposition party and the Civic Platform, but also to the leader of the European People's Party and former president of the European Council. The interesting example of 'killing more than one bird with one stone' is in a post from 17 December 2021. The post focused on the issue of inflation, depicted as a global post-pandemic problem. The Polish government was portrayed as an active player, fighting the crisis. It was also directly suggested that the increase in prices is the effect of trade and speculation of the ETS, which was accepted by the opposition party and (then Prime Minister) Donald Tusk. Furthermore, the current PM stated that 'we need to be vigilant because the European Union is planning two new, big taxes, the ETS tax on housing, heating, fuel, and transport. I hope we will reject them together' (Morawiecki 2021l).

The Impact of the War

The end of the analysis coincided with one of the most dramatic events in this part of the world in the last 70 years – the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is too early to predict for certain how this war will change climate policies in a longer perspective. However, some preliminary trends can already be noticed.

5 Tusk was the prime minister of Poland from 2007 to 2014, and the Civic Platform in the coalition with the Polish People's Party ruled the government from 2007 to 2015.

In terms of the discourse analysis, we have seen some form of continuation of the prewar rhetoric. In posts from November 2021, there were already mentions of threats connected with Russian politics and the possibility of military attacks on the territory of Ukraine (see (Morawiecki 2021c), not to mention the conflict called the 'hybrid war' on the Polish-Belarussian border. The postulates of sanctions also appeared in November 2021, in a letter directed to the members of the European Parliament (Morawiecki 2021h). From the end of January 2022, the Russian threat against Ukraine has been mentioned more frequently, the examples of posts related to the possibility of war could be the following: 'we have to do everything to oppose bad and unjust intentions of Russia towards our Eastern neighbour' (Morawiecki 2022d), or 'Europe standing on the verge of war' accompanied by the renewed calls for blocking the Nord Stream 2 project (Morawiecki 2022b). On 25 February Mateusz Morawiecki published a letter to the European Union leaders, Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, calling for several sanctions against Russia and a departure from purchasing Russian hydrocarbons, oil, gas and coal (Morawiecki 2022e).

As we have mentioned before, there are some significant structural and sociopolitical determinants of Polish energy policies. The Polish economy had been dependent on Russian resources, despite efforts toward diversification of energy resources. Prime Minister Morawiecki declared at the end of March that Poland would stop importing Russian coal by May and Russian oil and gas by the end of 2022 (Morawiecki 2022a). Russia stopped gas import even earlier (Zaniewicz 2022). There have been suggestions directed towards the European Commission to introduce a special tax on importing Russian resources (Morawiecki 2022g).

Official policies have also been updated – on 29 March 2022 the government accepted the amendments to the energy policy till 2040 (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2022). These amendments underlined the value of energy sovereignty, the necessity of becoming independent of imported fossil fuels, and increased energy security. They included as well development of renewable energy sources, using domestic coal deposits, implementing nuclear energy plants and – what is significant in the context of this article – plans to renegotiate EU climate policies, so that they allow more conventional energy sources to be used on a temporary basis without inducing expenses that are too costly. There have also been some domestic adjustments protecting individual customers from the increase in electricity, gas and coal prices (e.g. Ustawa z Dnia 23 Czerwca 2022 r. 2022).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the reorientation of the energy policies of other EU member states. On 27 February 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared a need for radical diversification of energy supplies by building two LNG terminals (Scholz 2022). The German authorities have also considered expanding the operation of coal power plants beyond 2030. Despite

the adjustments undertaken at the level of individual states, there is also a broad consensus at the European level that the EU urgently needs to decrease dependency on Russian gas and oil (European Council 2022).

It is far too early to predict the impact of the war on the implementation of the EGD. On the one hand, we see calls for clean energy transition, strengthened by de-russification strategies (European Commission 2022). On the other, we witness pan-European anxieties connected to the availability of energy resources. In July 2022 the European Parliament agreed to include nuclear energy and gas within the taxonomy of green energy sources. This was a Polish postulate already mentioned by Morawiecki in December 2021 (Morawiecki 2021e). It is quite likely then that the challenges connected with the Russian invasion and the dependence of some European economies on Russian hydrocarbons will delay the EGD implementation.

Conclusions

The process of 'hardening' soft governance in climate and energy policy constituted a more rational approach to the implementation of EGD rules. The EU governance mechanism follows the logic of consequences, which entails manipulating the utility calculations of member states through incentives. The EGD uses positive incentives, such as additional funds for green transformation of the national economies, but also negative incentives, such as reducing emission allowances from the ETS. Especially the latter category of EU conditions exerts growing pressure on Poland whose energy sector is a coal-based artefact of communist era policy. These incompatibilities between European-level policies and domestic political processes reveal several misfits which determine the response of the member states to stricter rules imposed by the EGD. The first field of misfits between Poland and the expectations of the EGD is the national emission targets. Although Poland achieved its national target till 2020, new higher levels of reduction in GHG emissions create a more difficult challenge for Poland. The second field of misfits is linked to changes in the EU Emission Trading System under the Fit for 55 reform package. Eventually, all these processes generate additional higher costs for society either by growing energy prices or altering the labour market in regions vulnerable to the energy transition. Therefore, the government that also follows instrumental rationality uses different mechanisms to avoid the negative effects resulting from the adaptation process. One such mechanism is the strategy of shaping the public perceptions on the EGD. On the one hand, it allows government to mitigate the pressure put on society incurring the excessive costs of the EU climate and energy policy, and on the other creates the opportunity to use social attitudes to strengthen the negotiation position at the EU level.

Reconstructing the Polish governmental narrative allows one to see it as a discursive tool to mitigate the social pressure and navigate expectations connected to the EGD implementation.

The governmental narrative presented the green transformation of the Polish economy and the subsequent EU climate policies as a challenge. In this context, the Polish government was to be cautious and protect the interests of vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the government needs to actively seek EU funds to facilitate the transformation. Polish citizens should not be affected by rising energy prices, and the Polish economy should not lose its competitiveness. Climate EU policies were also sometimes portrayed as a threat, especially in the context of the ETS system. The latter was called 'a climate tax', the price of which has been influenced by speculations. Russian imperial politics and Nord Stream 2 were definitely seen as a threat, destabilising the region and undermining its security.

The purpose of government communication appears to be to build trust in the government's ability to defend Polish interests. Polish national interests are mostly related to securing funds for the transformation so that Polish citizens are protected from high energy prices and other related costs. As the situation on the Belarussian border developed and the threat from Russia became clearer, the concept of being a defender acquired more meanings. But even prior to these events, the ideas of energy sovereignty and energy security were visible in governmental communications.

It can be said that we are thus observing the reaction to the logic of consequences. The Polish government responds according to modified utility calculations (using instrumental rationality). There have been attempts to challenge the EU system of rewards and sanctions. The normative response aligned with EU normative goals was hardly visible, and the risk and threats connected strictly to climate change issues, heat waves or rising sea levels were hardly discussed. On the contrary, values and norms present in governmental narratives were centred on national interests, sovereignty and security.

This proves that the European policy of the Polish government is subordinated to the internal policies. At the European level, such strategies result in the so-called European Blame Game. As shown, this strategy applied in Poland will likely lead to persistent tensions in Poland's relations with the European Union. The tightening energy and climate policy of the EU will require faster, and thus more socially costly, reforms. This, in turn, will increase social discontent and the level of pressure, prompting mitigation strategies from the government. The further research in this field will be able to show how much the future Polish governments will be able to change this path.

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US-Visegrad Realities in Biden's World of Democracies

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Abstract: *The 'liberal world order' can be considered as an historic exception in the history of 'realist anarchy' of international relations. This exception is the result of many factors and it has been significantly influenced by the power of the United States. Thus, the agenda of the world order can be analysed in the context of American foreign policy. The place of Central Europe – and in the Visegrad countries – can be analysed in this frame. This approach elaborates the basis for further inquiries also of the Central European-American relations but here the goal is to understand the place of the Visegrad countries in the context of the American led liberal world order. The goal of this study is to theorise the world order, and to identify the role of the United States and the place of the Visegrad countries in it. Furthermore, the study tries to draw theoretic conclusions in the light of the 'Biden doctrine' – which is theoretically coherent with the liberal characteristic of the order – to the Visegrad-US relations.*

Keywords: ***world order, theories of international relations, US foreign policy, Visegrad Cooperation***

Introduction

The 'liberal world order'[1] is an historic exception according to Robert Kagan (Kagan 2022: 9) – a 'bug' in the classical realist logic of the international

1 The clarification and precise conceptual theoretic definition of the difference between the terms world order and international order deserves a separate study. If using the term liberal international order, Ikenberry's (e.g. 2020) or even Kagan's (e.g. 2022) theoretical definition of international relations can be taken as a point of reference. In this case, the tangible characteristics of a liberal international order are the principles of cooperation, free trade, universality of human rights or peaceful coexistence.

system(s). Despite not becoming universal, the liberal world order has been able to prevent the outbreak of great power wars since 1945. This does not mean, of course, that the order created eventual peace, or that the great powers did not fight, or would not fight, proxy wars. There is a consensus in the theoretical literature that the 'liberal world order' was helped to be borne by the United States as a midwife exploiting a very particular power configuration and the assistance of, for instance, European allies. [2]

The study makes historical references to Central European-American relations, but it does not aim to provide a chronological overview.[3] Rather, the aim is to highlight what, in the context of the 'liberal world order', can form a logical and conceptual system that is relevant to our region in terms of US foreign policy.

The theoretic starting point is the world which is visible from Central Europe. In this study Central Europe is mentioned narrowly as a synonym of the Visegrad Cooperation.[4] Accepting the assertion that there are indeed regional characteristics in foreign policy which are more specific to the Visegrad countries, we also need to note that the V4 is also part of a larger framework of interpretation based on the present logic, i.e. the V4 is part of several larger, overlapping 'security complexes' such as the EU or NATO. In other words, the aim here is to interpret our own region (Central Europe and the V4). In order to do so we need to reverse the order of logic and look first at the largest circle, the world order, and then at the transatlantic (security) complex led by the United States, which influences the interpretive frames and the set of instruments of the regional and domestic (foreign) policy geometry in Central Europe. Stem-

However, these principles are not equally present globally in all dimensions (e.g. economic global governance vs. hard security issues). World order, on the other hand, is understood as a truly existing global ruling principle based on these values, which compels the actors of the international system to act regardless of whether or not they actually share liberal values. The coercive framework is influenced by the agenda-setters of the liberal world order – such as the US or the EU – and the actors of the order cannot ignore the framework. This is the surrealism of international relations – i.e. that realist foreign policy logic can also be interpreted within this framework, i.e. ultimately both liberal and realist schools are correct and there is currently one paradigmatic framework which is created and operated by the West. Consequently, realism and liberalism are also concepts within this Western constructed system of thoughts.

2 Robert Kagan sees the source of error in the fact that order regulates many areas of life but does not change human nature, and it is because of the latter that we can perceive that the 'liberal world order' is under siege by historical forces today. The emphasis on the negative quality of human nature is clearly a realist starting point for Kagan, but the belief in the limiting power of order is more liberal (Kagan 2022a; Kagan 2022b).

3 There are many examples of works on the history of relations between Central Europe and the United States in the Hungarian (Hungarian and English) literature. See for instance: Rada 2018, Péczeli 2019.

4 Exactly defining Central Europe is not a simple task, because in the process of defining its geographical, political and economic boundaries we also run into the problem of how to narrow down the definition. It is clear that the use of a broader definition poses more rather than fewer methodological problems. A much broader and more detailed description of the restrictive use of the term is presented in Marton et al. 2015.

ming from this, the following propositions can be drawn with respect to our region and the world order.

1. Hungary's (and consequently the other V4 countries') foreign policy has a sovereign space of maneuver and a national character, which can be decisive first regionally, because it is there where the closer network of values and interests (which are eventually constructed at the national level) directly interacts;
2. Central Europe is indisputably and institutionally part of the 'liberal world order', which we can also understand in the light of the relations with the United States, the most influential agenda-setter of this order;
3. The domestic and/or regional character and space for maneuver is exogenously and institutionally shaped by the 'liberal world order' and by the development of that order in which the US foreign policy (not only in relation to our region) is fundamental.

The 'liberal world order' in theory

Theorising the 'liberal world order' is not a small endeavour, because it can be liberal and also can give credit to realist predictions at the same time. Some of the issues on the US foreign policy agenda are clearly liberal, while other issues generate realist responses. Transatlantic cooperation itself is a specific 'liberal bubble' within the 'liberal world'. Realist power is not negligible, however, because the United States created this bubble and was able to establish itself as the sole hegemonic superpower in the world order after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The United States, thanks to its realistic-material military, economic and political power, has been able to fix the agenda from its own point of view, leaving less room for other participants, in some cases even forcing compliance. The Visegrad countries – similarly to others – perceive the downsides of the 'liberal world order' but are only able to act as critics because they are inside the bubble. They do not have a direct agenda-setting power either, but they are able to participate indirectly in influencing proposals related to an issue already on the agenda. If there is no unified and distinctive voice, it will be lost in the noise of the turbulent outside world, and it is no wonder that only the role to adapt remains.[5]

In theory certainly, but also in terms of practical political action, we can agree that there is a distinctive regional characteristic that influences foreign policy.[6] The regional characteristics are also shaped by the agenda set and pursued by the leaders of our international system and alliance: the United States and, not insignificantly for our region, the European Union. We also accept the assump-

5 The term resilience expresses very similar phenomenon.

6 See for instance the summary about Regional Security Complex Theory in Marton et al. 2015.

tion that the current world order is liberal and influenced by the issues on the agenda of the liberal West (neoliberal approach, but with tangible neorealist elements if NATO is included in the equation), and that the issues reflect the order itself. The West is not uniform in every practical decision, but we can accept the simplification that the US is the dominant agenda-setter, so the bilateral relations – the Central European-American relations – are explicitly important.

On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that the constituent actors, i.e. states, also have an impact on what issues are placed on the agenda at the systemic level and consequently how the world order develops. To take one example: our country's foreign policy is influenced by the international order and international events, but interests and values are determined by a longer, deeper, more complex and more internally driven process (the individualistic approach, which is more classical realist or classical liberal in nature); i.e. what we think about the challenges we face is first reflected in our region and if it gains credit by our partners in the regional issue-specific (security) complex,[7] it can also have an influence at the level of the liberal order.[8]

S = L (R1, R2…) +/- IL (O1, O2…)
L = R1 +/- R2…
R1 = +/- H, P, CZ, SK

The international/world order is a useful starting point, and it is worth interpreting it not only within the narrow framework of formal international law and international institutions. If interpreted narrowly, the failure for instance of the UN to contain Russian aggression would suggest the failure of the order itself. Russia broke the rules of the institutional order in every respect in 2022 (and has continuously since then) and the international institutional order is not capable of responding. The UNSC might well authorise use of force as retaliation in theory, but understandably this will not happen in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war. Nonetheless, the failure of the UN does not mean the failure of the 'liberal world order', because there are many mechanisms that have demonstrated that unilaterally breaking order has serious (even if not immediate) consequences. It is a fact that even China, which has benefited from the 'liberal order' over the past decades, cannot rationally neglect and simply sit on the waves of (artificially strengthened) national sentiment when seeking

7 See for more details: Marton et al. 2015.

8 In the formula S is the international system; L the members of the liberal order (the bubble or core); IL the regions outside the liberal core and O the players in these regions. R stands for the regions within the liberal core among which the United States or Central Europe are independent but mutually influential (asymmetric sometimes) units. The formula does not include the relative weight (power) of the players/regions. Assume that R1 is Central Europe, thus R1 is influenced by the individual countries' interests in the region.

some kind of world leadership. This logic reduces expectations on the chances of a 20th century-style Cold War, because China is incomparably more connected to and dependent on the 'liberal order' than the Soviet Union was.

The 'liberal world order' from a neoliberal (or idealist) point of view is a framework, the limits of which can be pushed, but not crossed without serious consequences. That is – and here according to both liberal and realist theory, which endow states with anthropological traits – in a world based on self-help, self-interest and power-maximising, states are condemned to life in a 'liberal correctional facility' managed by the agenda-setter of the order if they want to survive in the complex system of interdependencies. It is a prison because sovereignty in the international system cannot be unlimited even for great powers; and either because of neo-liberal mutual dependencies or because of the neorealist survival instinct states cannot do just anything. However, this is relative, because the 'liberal order' is also based on nation-states and on the myth of Westphalian-style sovereignty,[9] according to which the sacred cow of the international system is the sovereign equality of the states and full authority in their domestic affairs.[10] From the Central European point of view the 'liberal world order' can be described along the following premises:

1) the international system is state-centred and states follow self-interest, which is derived from their internal endowments – i.e. interests and values are constructed within the state because of domestic reasons; the pursuit of an existing and valid interest is rational in the international sphere, but the process of interests-formation is not (i.e. dependent on personal, or party-political convictions);
2) there is international order, institutionalised as a compromise between the self-interested behaviour of states, which can be called norms or traditions;
3) the international order is anarchic and 'reconstructs' the network of interests and leads towards controlled anarchy through institutional compromises;
4) within the international order, there are sub-systems in which the 'socializing' effect of the order, i.e. hierarchy appears more characteristically; it can be manifested regionally or thematised along issues: as in Central Europe, Europe or the West, interdependencies are stronger and may be even formally institutionalised (EU) or ideologically motivated ('world of democracies');

9 It is important to note here and to complete the argument that we are aware that the peace of 1648 itself is only a milestone in a long process, but nevertheless the reference to this event as a paradigm-shifting date is widely accepted in the theoretical literature. For more on the critique see Osiander 2001.

10 See the Charter of the UN: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter.

5) some states may be able to have influence with their own interests on the international level: the United States is an example of a modern national interest formation and the EU for a postmodern process (Cooper 2000);
6) the validity of the international order is not called into question only by the fact that some actors are not equally affected by socialisation, or that they are questioning it.

Differences may remain even within the narrowly defined sub-system or the liberal democratic core of the order ('liberal bubble'), which is the result of differences in the internally determined process of interest and value formation. However, neither this, nor a challenger to the 'liberal order', such as Russia today, can easily destroy it. The order is constantly changing. Neither China nor Russia can offer yet a viable alternative with a similar 'socializing' capacity which is characteristic to the 'liberal world order', or compared even to some extent to the Soviet Union in the Soviet bloc. The corollary of the above is that the international order cannot be in constant anarchy because it changes, which is not only a modification or consequence of the material (re)distribution of power between actors, but also a change in the internal and external interests and conditions of and for the actors, i.e. socialisation.

The foreign policy agenda of the US and the management of the items of this agenda influence the directions of the 'liberal world order', thus it has an influence on the subsystemic level, such as on the V4. The regionally strong socialisation effect of Central European cooperation and interaction has a direct and unavoidably solid influence on the individual foreign policy of the countries of the subregions (here the V4). However, as we discussed, national interests are constructed internally, i.e. Hungary and the other three Visegrad countries also shape the outcome of the Central European complex compromise of interests and values. This is a valid but overlooked explanation for why many immediately talk about the crisis or even the obsolescence of the V4 when this compromise is not born easily.[11] Consequently, the interests and foreign policy directions are born first independently (of course the governments who are the engines of interest construction through securitisation)[12] even from the neighbours; later through the regional 'socialisation process' they may get closer and adapt to the compromise. But it is a process and may be longer than in a crisis we would need. Shaping the compromise and the 'joint' interest in 2015 (illegal migration) was quicker than in 2022. In line with this logic the differences in the interests are normal despite many comments that Visegrad is dead.[13]

11 Such as today.

12 See Marton et al. 2015.

13 Luckily, those experts who have dealt scientifically with our region have a different opinion. See: Cabada 2020; Usiak 2018.

The Visegrad regional compromise of interests can be different from the rest of the EU or the Transatlantic region. Through the socialisation process the Visegrad interests shape also the EU, US agendas (and V4 specific issues may appear on the agenda) and leave a print on the 'liberal world order'. The realisation of the process implies to a few conclusions: there is a dialogue in the order but changes are slow; the direct agenda-setters' interests will always be more dominant; the smaller states (such as the Visegrad countries individually) are not always patient.[14]

In relation to the changes in the 'liberal world order', claims have been made that the world order has failed and that nationalism and populism are undermining the internationalism (Ikenberry 2022) that has characterised the US-led order since 1991. It is important to note here that while nationalism may be the antonym of internationalism, internationalism is not inherently liberal, so nationalism cannot automatically be the inverse of liberalism. Perhaps it is precisely that internationalism weakens the order, since the forced dissemination of liberal values ('offensive liberalism'[15]) on the international stage is not tolerant, i.e. not liberal to regional alternatives. There are strong arguments about the decline of the United States. But the fact that the US shaped socialisation process, driven by American values and interests, does not create automatic conformity for all members, it does not mean that the order is failing. In the case of empires, it can be historically attested that the end of expansion indeed meant the decline of the empire. However, the 'liberal world order' is independent of its creators, for example through multilateral international organisations, international security agreements and organisations, global trade and global product chains, the total globalisation of finance. This gives the ability to the order to deal with challenges jointly and impose a negative impact on those who challenge the order itself or violate its rules.[16]

14 Even if nowadays the US presidential elections are theatrical and entertaining (for some terrifying) but the US foreign policy in practice and the agenda does not change that quickly if at all, consequently the world order even more slowly. Eventually, for the 'liberal world order' and the transatlantic alliance and the US-Central European relations it is less decisive whether Republicans or Democrats will occupy the White House. The tones may be different and in the longer term the consequences of certain foreign policy steps definitely, but the trends and the directions will remain the same in the core: maintain and strengthen the order, which is threatened by China and Russia and their followers.

15 The term is not widely used in the literature, unlike the offensive realist label. However, Ikenberry mentions it in a similar context (Ikenberry 2020). For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that the author of this article – independently of Benjamin Miller – has come to a similar conclusion to Miller and also introduced the term into the Hungarian literature (Rada et al. 2023). In a 2010 article, Miller added theoretical sophistication to the general critique of the Bush administration's neoconservative foreign policy – critique fashionable at that time – when he characterised offensive liberalism (Miller 2010).

16 For liberals, one of the most important features of the order is that progress is linked to modernity, to capitalist economic development. A very convincing proof of the continuous and accelerating human progress is that in the last thirty years the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (while the world population has grown at an astonishing rate) has decreased by 1% every year. It is easy to

The dichotomous logic of the 20th century was believed to have been left in the past after 1991, a view which gained popularity with incredible speed in global professional circles.[17] A recurring motif in the history of human thought is the attempt to describe reality in terms of counter-pairs (Levine 2006) and the historical events of the last century have seemed to confirm the validity of the existence of these counter-pairs: the First World War and the fight between the liberal world and the 19th century balance of power politics; the Second World War and the struggle between democracies and fascist totalitarian dictatorships, or the Cold War and the struggle between democracies[18] and communism. If we think about it, this simplification, and an approach more akin to the 'normal' course of international relations, is brought back by the Biden 'world of democracies', which divides the world into liberal democracies and illiberal authoritarian regimes, according to certain criteria decided in Washington.

The liberal world order is an exception (Kagan 2022a) – if we look at the examples above, it has only existed for 32 years – which has been able to come into being and survive for so long because it has rested on the unquestioned and unchallenged material power of the United States. This base may have diminished in relative terms, but the more important pillar of the liberal order is intangible. What keeps the United States at the heart of the liberal order is that its members, and indeed even its critics, benefit more from its functioning than they spend on maintaining it (this is also true for the EU and the US). And if we look at the opportunity costs, the costs would be incomparably higher if each country had to maintain the necessary security on its own, without international institutions to mitigate conflicts in each and every area of international relations (i.e. not only in the military dimension). What Joe Biden has also perceived well is that there is a group of countries within the order – the liberal democracies – which voluntarily wish to maintain order along values they themselves share, and there are others who do not share the same values but whose interests (at least in the short term) do not come into conflict with the logic of the order. The latter group is also numerous, and given the law of inertia, it is difficult to imagine a successful attempt of overthrowing the existing system. The principles, norms and institutions created in or by the US-led 'North Atlantic design centre' will remain attractive until the US (and the West) can credibly represent them. If that credibility is diminished, for example, by movements like BLM or

calculate that this is a drop of more than 30 percentage points all together. It is interesting to note that in the United States, the 'progressives' who outpace liberals on the left also sharply attack the 'liberal world order' precisely because of capitalism or criticise it for its failure to 'equalize' according to imperial logic.

17 It is also not surprising that Fukuyama's theory (1993), or more precisely allegory, has been the most widely and sharply criticised hypothesis since, even in liberal circles.

18 Yes, we are aware that not all the allies were or have been democratic. This is the core of hypocrisy in Biden's World of Democracy logic.

MAGA, which disproportionately exaggerate the flaws (even if otherwise raising relevant questions) of the system for their particular (with universal claim) self-interests, then they are falsely labelled liberal (or conservative), then not only the US, but the liberal world order loses.

Liberal logic defined the 'new world order' after 1991 and this is what forms the core of today's international system. Therefore, if (only) this line of thought is accepted as a starting point, then any vision of an indeed multipolar world in which China and/or Russia are global powers is exaggerated. This may be possible if China or Russia could develop and operate an alternative order that is better than the present one and that is voluntarily followed by the international community. It is not enough to point out the flaws of the present order. The flaws are not a challenge to the order, even if they are to the dominance of the United States, because the liberal order is also a self-controlling ecosystem, in which sustainability is secured precisely by the fact that it balances the conflicts of interests that arise from the diversity of values. The United States has been able to define the order for so long because it has placed its maintenance at the top of its foreign policy agenda, even if it has come at a cost and with relatively less benefit to Washington compered to its partners.

This is the original basis, which is often forgotten even in Washington. Like, for example, when the balance of the ecosystem is not the goal but Washington rather intends to forcefully make the members of the order equal and similar (democracy promotion with Bush, or the assertion of democratic superiority with Biden), or when the US seeks to withdraw from the order and demands more contributions from the other beneficiaries (neo-isolationist and transactionalist thinking with Trump). Compared to the hierarchical system of imperial and 'vassal or satellite' relations, in which weaker states feel vulnerable and only submit to the stronger because of their survival instincts, the 'liberal world order' has brought something new. The weaker states believe in defence within a regulated framework of cooperation, thus they can turn to areas more beneficial to them than power maximalisation (e.g. the economy, culture).

Is there a Biden doctrine?

At the start of his presidency, Biden made clear the need to develop relations with European allies in the frames of the 'world of democracies'.[19] Moreover, the Russian aggression and invasion of Ukraine (2014 interestingly still left some doubts) made it even clearer that a strong and united EU is in Washington's well-perceived interest. Even before his official inauguration, Biden had

19 We need to add that the practical implementation of this idea divided Europe. Consider, for example, that not all EU or NATO allies were automatically invited to the 2021 and 2022 Democracy Summits. It drives thus counter-productively a wedge between allies reinforcing political divisions and ideological debates.

already set out ambitious plans for Transatlantic cooperation, with essentially positive expectations. Biden declared that 'America is back in Europe', a statement he reiterated at the Munich Security Conference (NPR 2021) and a year later, in Warsaw, now in a new context and with new reasons, following the Russian invasion (White House 2022). However, the original statements, which appeared to be a victory speech, did not take into account that the Europeans and the V4 countries had not been passive in the years preceding Biden's presidency and had started to redefine their position and role in the 'special relationship'[20] in a changing world order, especially in the light of China's growing power. In Biden's foreign policy, the turning (back) towards Europe also served to strengthen the front against Russia from the very beginning. Biden has positioned the United States as a leader of the world of democracies (White House 2021), in which he believed that the EU and US interests were aligned. At the same time, this envisages a kind of global conflict of democracies and dictatorships, which does not necessarily coincide with EU interests and the necessity to maintain relations with China (and, of course, Russia).

The 'liberal world order' is eventually similar to the Biden logic, a set of liberal principles, the application of which is intended to make the whole world sustainable and peaceful, resting on the stability of like-minded democracies (Ikenberry 2020). From this perspective, it makes sense to speak of a 'liberal world order' even if not all international actors are the same, but the term loses meaning if the core liberal democracies do not exist, and consequently, it is dangerous to tolerate dissent and illiberal turnings within the 'liberal bubble' (core). This is the explanation for the activist agenda to criticise the allies (seemingly) more often during the Obama and now Biden administrations than adversaries. The liberal approach to the world order is necessarily normative and inherently forward-looking: it judges the world through its own lens, and if the Western values remain dominant it utopianly envisages a better and more livable world.[21]

US-Visegrad relations in the world of democracies

The idea of the 'spirit of Visegrad' cannot be interpreted in the traditional realist--liberal coordinate system. The countries of the Visegrad Group are members of the European Union and NATO, and although their foreign and security policy is guided by national interest, traditional, classical realist power-political categories are hardly able to interpret their political actions. Although several elements of liberal institutionalism and other liberal theories (interdependence, demo-

20 Of course, the term originally refers to UK-US cooperation, but it is not entirely inappropriate to use it in a wider EU context either.

21 The recurrent keywords of the foreign policy strategies of the 2000s built on this idea. A good example of this is the security strategy of the European Security Strategy – 'A secure Europe in a better world' (EU 2003).

cratic peace) are relevant to understand the Visegrad Group's security policy practice, they cannot holistically capture the reality of the Visegrad Group either. The security policy of the countries in the region can only be reconstructed as a choice between possible futures imagined in the past, partly interest-based and conscious, partly shaped in a context of debate, partly informed by fundamental value choices and the constructive power of imagination. In the case of the V4, the regional security complex is a particularly interesting object of research especially as Visegrad Group defence ministers agreed in 2014 to develop a common defence policy strategy which is active management of the earlier mentioned regional socialisation process of interests.[22] Translated into the 'language' of securitisation, one could say that state actors in the V4 security community are attempting to jointly address certain threats and they jointly identify them. This is true independently from the actual governments and their domestic ideology.[23]

Why is this relevant for our region and our countries in Visegrad, and how does it justify the benefits of belonging to the 'liberal world order'. NATO cannot, therefore, be conceived of as a mere community of realist interests – otherwise it is doubtful that it could have survived in the post-Cold War world, after the Soviet military threat was gone. Yet it is essential that the Alliance provides its members with a strong collective defence and deterrence capability. Without it, Hungary and the other countries of the V4 would not be able to provide for their own security adequately. Without NATO its members would require prohibitively expensive defence development, or else be subordinated to the interests of some external power. If that external power were the United States or NATO (which would be likely even without membership), the Central European countries would share in the dependence and orientation constraints of the alliance, but would not participate in its decision-making in the absence of membership. That is, there is no sane alternative of memberships.

Both analysts and political actors agree that Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and the war have brought about a fundamental change in the international order. However, it should be remembered that in the three decades since the Cold War we have witnessed a number of turning points that have reinforced the need within the academic community to interpret the 'new world order' and none of them actually created a new one (Rada 2007; Rada 2019). We only need to look back at the last decade, which began in a very pessimistic way, with a vision of an overstretched US led world torn apart by the global war on terror and in decline ravaged by the global economic crisis (Zakaria 2011). This did not create multipolarity though, despite the fact that

22 See the publication presented by the Czech presidency (Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group 2019–2020).

23 See for instance Nyilas 2023.

a regionally stronger China and Russia wanted to be seen as a challenger again. It is beyond dispute that the United States has remained the world's leading superpower and the (neo)liberal world order it (also) created in 1945 and has governed and influenced since 1991 still stands and no systemic alternative has emerged. Some of the historical turning points of the last three decades can be interpreted as systemic challenges, but the socio-economic difficulties of consequence have also shaped domestic politics and raised fundamental questions of order, values and interests.

The 'world of democracies' acknowledges that the goal is to maintain a 'liberal world order', but recognises that while the order is global, not everyone necessarily shares all its goals and can exist outside of it, thus it is a global but not a universal value system. That is, the United States can be tolerant of actors outside this democratic world as long as they do not threaten the order itself – through Washington's perspective, as long as they serve the US goals (of which maintaining order is a serious element). However, within the order, this logic cannot be tolerant, because the members of the 'world of democracies' must be strong to prevent 'Kagan's jungle' (Kagan 2022a) growing back. Of course, the latter creates tensions within the order, because unification along American progressive-liberal principles – we have deliberately not used the term interest or value – requires much less attention and energy from Washington than managing the process of compromise. The 'liberal order' is the global set of rules and logics – from which, incidentally, even China benefits – that can be sustained if the 'constructed'[24] arguments of US domestic politics are uniformly shared within the 'world of democracies'. It is not so surprising, therefore, that allies that are otherwise in fact regarded as stable democracies are criticised and their domestic policies are pressured. Inside the bubble, all the elements that form the ideological basis of the liberal order – free trade, progressive (i.e. ever-expanding) protection of universal human rights, peace, security and a friendly foreign policy – can be held to account simultaneously, while outside the bubble the approach is more pragmatic and realist and it is not necessary to comply with all the elements at the same time.

Conclusion: Visegrad-American relations

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, calling into question many of our assumptions about the international order. Russian aggression is a test of the system and also raises questions about whether the V4 is a regional security complex in the traditional sense. Leaving aside the open questions, we can agree that the invasion of Ukraine will be registered in the history books as

24 This is the classical liberal microeconomic logic; more on classical liberalism see for instance Baylis 2020: 103–114.

a turning point and that many of the often carefully guarded tenets of the way international relations functions will need to be rethought. There is no doubt that the V4 will remain valid and that in today's world there is a need for political cooperation at the regional level, which can provide flexible and regionally effective responses to (even) global challenges that arise in different regions.[25] But even before the war in Ukraine, theoretical debates had already pointed out that the theoretical framework of regional security complexes is narrow and not fully applicable to the V4 and that the Visegrad Cooperation is rather a kind of issue(question)-specific regional complex, and definitely not a united international organisation. That is, the regional character does emerge due to commonly understood challenges and responses to them. The issue-specific approach to security has tended to strengthen cooperation on strategic issues over the last 30 years, despite many debates and diverging approaches. The 'Visegrad spirit'[26] is the link, the logical and indeed practical institutional 'glue' that has enabled the Visegrad countries since 1991 to continue to cooperate flexibly and to enter together to the European or global stage, representing regional interests that would have been less visible without cooperation. Some issues are interdependent and closely interlinked and become issue-specific security supercomplexes (Marton et al. 2015), which are also constantly changing.

In the context of US foreign policy, rather philosophical dialogues are currently taking place about our region, and debates are opening up over certain words and phrases rather than on issues of practical relevance. At the end of the first decade of the new century, there was already an ongoing question whether the United States would be able to continue to play the role it had since the end of the Cold War. The slogan 'America first' did not emerge with Trump, because under Barack Obama there was already an internal demand to step back from world politics and concentrate on domestic economic and social problems. This has been seen by many as the end of the era of unilateralism and a return to a multilateral world, in which there are challengers to the United States. China, however, is not strong enough to create a new system (order) and Russia may be able to influence global politics for the last time with its military aggression in Ukraine.[27] This may change, especially in the case of China, but it will not mean that the influence of the United States will diminish significantly in the near future.

The United States has occupied a special place in the international system since the end of the Cold War, a fact that all the theoretical schools agree on (Mearsheimer 2018). The neoliberal (neoconservative) Robert Kagan (2022b)

25 See more about V4 specific security studies at Marton et al. 2015.

26 See more about the expression 'Visegrad Spirit' at Rada 2021.

27 Interestingly, this scenario was also predicted by the liberal Kagan, the realist Mearsheimer and, by a different logic not knowing the above two (due to the simultaneous publication), was also the finding of the 2019 Hungarian publication 'Biztonságpolitikai Corvinák' (Rada 2019; Mearsheimer 2018; Kagan 2022a).

adds to this by arguing that considering the historical development of the order and the anarchic nature of international system, on which the liberal and realist mainstream also agrees (Baylis 2020: 103–114; 130–144; 192–206), the logic of US dominance is an exception, because even from a realist perspective, the US interests coincided with the need to reinforce and maintain the (neo)liberal order. The key to the emergence of the 'liberal hegemony' was that the United States was able to become a power in the international system without a challenger so that it could pursue a purely liberal foreign policy. The aim of which was to spread the liberal order and expand the range of liberal democracies, and to strengthen the institutions that support international governance, in accordance with its interests based on its own domestic values. Unchallenged by international events, the assumption of US foreign policy was that a world reconstructed in its own image would be safer for all and would offer the possibility of real progress also for all without exception (Mearsheimer 2018: 6).

For Central Europe, 2019 was a symbolically important year because Hungary, together with other Central European countries, celebrated the 30th anniversary of the change of systems, the 20th anniversary of NATO membership and the 15th anniversary of EU membership, thus joining symbolically and institutionally to the 'liberal world order'. These events have been the cornerstone of the foreign policy of the countries of our region over the last three decades. Additionally, 2019 marked the anniversary of rejoining the 'West'. In Yalta, our country's fate was decided and we had no influence on the real directions of development of our country for four decades. However, this changed in 1989; and while the past decades have not been easy, and the democratic transition and institutional, economic and social reforms have not been smooth, today Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic are full and equal members of the Western security architecture and alliance and value community. This membership has given back the opportunity that the V4 countries lost after the Second World War and the membership has given our countries the chance to develop along the values and, more importantly, the interests that were not possible earlier. Consequently, for any sane observer there was and is no alternative to Euro-Atlantic integration. Of course, there are and will be disputes and disagreements, but all of these move the alliance forward rather than calling into question its validity.

Central Europe became part of the alliance, but the 'newcomers' did not always feel that they were really welcomed. Feelings of abandonment or neglect have been recurrent and are not always unjustified. In the recent decades, the desire to align with the European Union or NATO has meant that the countries of Central Europe have often adopted institutions and rules without criticism, and that we have become less responsive to and less engaged with the often different processes taking place in our region. Until the mid-2000s, the issue of energy security was less prominent within the EU, and in 2015 the community was surprised that a 'new' member(s) could take such a strong stance on illegal migration.

It is in Hungary's and the region's interest to be part of this Euro-Atlantic alliance, but the past twenty and fifteen years also showed that this community will only work and will be able to address future challenges if its members are able to represent their interests on an equal basis. Honest dialogue is also in the interest of the United States. The feeling that Central Europeans have been forgotten or are not understood is not conducive to the development of the community. A feeling that the United States has turned its back on our region, partly as a result of the global economic crisis, have developed. Since the early 2010s, there has been a growing tendency for Washington to criticise more sharply and to intervene openly in the domestic politics of its allies,[28] something that had never happened before. While the change of attitude on the US side is justifiable – see the argument about the democratic core of the 'liberal world order' – the new tone has caused tensions within the alliance.

All these experiences and serious dilemmas that had to be addressed in the last decades can serve as a guide for how to strengthen regional resilience and prepare for the increasingly frequent global political turning points that are likely to continue in the future. Regional cooperation does have relevance but there is no lasting alternative of the Euro-Atlantic alliance. A good example of this is that, learning from the lessons of the 2008–2009 crisis, when the whole EU was looking for a solution, the more effective response for our region was a regional approach, and building on this experience in the fight against Covid-19, the member states – despite EU criticism – sought a solution within the V4 frames to the dilemma of how to deal effectively with the pandemic without creating unforeseeable economic problems. Thus, strengthening regional cohesion in the V4, developing physical and human infrastructure and exploiting regional synergies remain high on the agenda.

The goal of integration into the Euro-Atlantic federal system was unquestioned and its success is beyond doubt. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the rules of the game in the EU and NATO were shaped without the Visegrad countries, and even after full membership was achieved, there remained a justifiable sense of inadequacy: the alliance expected unconditional alignment as a starting point and was not always accommodating of the reservations expressed by our region. There is, of course, no alternative to Euro-Atlantic integration and the public of the Visegrad countries, contrary to any belief, have a clear pro-NATO and pro-EU public opinion. [29]

28 Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary at the State Department (in 2014) is a good example in Hungary's case. Available at: http://ircblog.usembassy.hu/2014/10/03/victoria-nuland-az-europai-es-eurazsiai-terseg-ugyeiert-felelos-kulugyi-allamtitkar-beszede-az-egyesult-allamok-kozep-europa-strategiai-forumon/

29 Also, let us consider that criticism does not necessarily equal skepticism and that opinion polls clearly demonstrate the popularity of NATO and the EU. The governments cannot ignore this fact either. See in more detail the Nézőpont Institute's earlier surveys on various topics: Nézőpont Intézet 2019.

The Visegrad countries have long sought to prove themselves as reliable allies, for example by lining up behind the United States unconditionally in 2003, which led to a number of sharp criticisms in Western Europe. The V4 countries also sought to be fully compliant in the often double-standard EU accession process without expressing concerns, which was of course comfortable to the EU. Full membership, as the term implies, brought with it real expectations of 'equality', i.e. the 'new' members did not just want to take their share of the responsibilities without being able to shape the future. The importance of cooperation and finding a common voice is particularly important. The Visegrad countries want to be effective and reliable partners at the same time, while keeping the typically regionally important issue-specific complexes on the European, transatlantic policy agenda. Effectiveness does not only depend on the Visegrad countries, as the club(s) also need to implement their internal reforms, in which it is important to listen to the views of all members. The use of double or multiple standards in many cases, including against the Visegrad countries, is by no means a way forward. That is true even if the result of recent regional elections in 2023 are not celebrated similarly in all the capitals within the alliance.

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