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# A Lover to Be Ashamed of: Romania in the Eyes of the Italian Political Elites

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## Abstract

*Two criminal events committed in 2007 by Romanian nationals in Italy triggered tensioned relationships between the two countries. The contemporary use of populist rhetoric in the Italian political debate contrasts sharply with the pre-2007 supportive discourses towards the Romanian accession to the EU. Such positive attitudes of the elite were driven by political reasons, mutual economic benefits, and cultural ties. This article argues that elite discourses adapted to the negative attitudes continuously displayed by the Italian public. By combining process-tracing and descriptive statistics, our study illustrates how the Italian public was highly reluctant about the EU membership of Romanians before 2007. As a result, the shift of attitudes at elite level seems driven by opportunistic reasons. While still praising Romania's membership as an economic asset and an opportunity for the Italian business, when it comes to immigration, most Italian politicians follow and actively fuel people's fears rather than contrasting and publicly condemning discrimination and xenophobia.*

**Keywords:** Public Opinion, Political Discourse, Immigration, EU Enlargement, Italian-Romanian Relations

## Introduction

Two criminal events committed in 2007 by Romanian nationals in Italy triggered tremendous use of populist rhetoric in the contemporary Italian political debate. While still praising Romania's membership as an economic asset and an opportunity for Italian business, many top-level politicians (of both major coalitions) increasingly call for more restrictive measures on Romanian immigration. The emphasis of their discourse falls on the 'national security' dimension being based on the constantly growing numbers of Romanian immigrants from a few thousands in the early 1990s to more than one million in 2008 – the largest foreign community in Italy and one of the largest Romanian communities in Western Europe (Drew & Sriskandaraja, 2007). Two years ago, the Minister of Infrastructures, Antonio Di Pietro, suggested collective expulsions and moratorium on the entrance of Romanian immigrants (Angelescu, 2008). These reactions reached extreme policy proposals that openly contradict the European norms. Such attitudes starkly contrast with the substantial support of the Italian officials for the European Union (EU) accession of Romania. For example, in 2006, the Italian Foreign Minister, Massimo D'Alema (2006), summarized the Italian position in these terms: 'I

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sincerely hope that Romania will be granted EU membership by the scheduled date, that is, January 1, 2007. The accession of your country represents another step towards the definitive demolition of the artificial divisions which afflicted our continent for more than 50 years'.<sup>3</sup>

To what extent do these discourse developments of the elites reflect the attitudes of the public? This article illustrates, by examining survey data, that the Italian public had negative attitudes towards Romanians even before the 2007 incidents and argues that it was only a matter of time until the elite discourse followed the same direction. Thus, the shift of the political elite is not necessarily a direct reaction to the criminal acts, but rather an attempt to align to public beliefs. To fulfill our goal, we analyze the attitude of the Italian elites and public towards the EU accession of Romania and use a combination of process-tracing and descriptive statistical analysis. The former is used to substantiate our claims that positive discourses of the Italian elites towards Romania in the pre-EU accession period were mainly driven by shared cultural backgrounds and envisaged positive effects at political level, as well as mutual economic benefits. Descriptive statistics is used to examine the attitudes of the Italians towards the Romanians by using a proxy variable (the willingness to have them in the EU) from the Standard Eurobarometers.

Our analysis is particularly challenging and intriguing, given both the lack of recent data and the lack of studies on this topic. Previous research on the relationships between Italy and Romania focused mainly on general discussions of their past, on political decisions after violent incidents, and on extensive descriptions of Romanian migration waves. We complement this literature by providing an analysis of public perceptions. In this respect, our exploratory study sets fruitful grounds for further research. Furthermore, by revealing the congruence between elite and public level attitudes, we expect to contribute to a wider body of literature that addresses not only the behavior of citizens in the host country, but also the expectations of immigrants.

The first section includes the basic characteristics of Romanian immigrants in Italy before the 2007 EU accession. The second section discusses the attitudes of Italian elites towards Romania on the background of political, economic, and cultural factors. The third section focuses on people's feelings, whereas the paper ends with a general discussion and conclusions.

## The Profile of Romanians in Italy

There is a constant growth of the Romanian presence in Italy. In 1990, there were only 8,000 Romanian nationals in Italy; in 2001 they were almost 75,000; in 2008 the number grew to more than one million. The greatest increase took place on the eve of the accession, between 2006 and 2008. In the span of less than two years, the number of Romanian immigrants in Italy almost doubled (from 556,000 to 1,016,000). 2002 represented a crucial year to understand the evolution of Romanian immigration flows. In 2002, the country officially joined the so-called 'Schengen white list' and this determined the abolition of visa requirements for short-term stays (up to three months). Romanian citizens willing to spend short periods in one EU member state were no longer required to apply for a visa (EC, 2414/2001). The presence of Romanian immigrants in Italy seems to be concentrated in a few specific areas of the country: the major urban areas of the North and of the Centre (Rome, Turin, and Milan) and the industrial districts of the North-East (Veneto) plus the agricultural areas of the country, characterized by the need of seasonal workers. An example of the fast growth of the number of immigrants in the Southern regions is represented by the case of Puglia, where the Romanian community increased from 4,170 units in 2006 to 25,084 in 2007 (+501%) (Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, 2008). This state of things is also reflected in the words of a Romanian immigrant quoted by Bleahu (2006) "everywhere around Rome you hear people speaking Romanian. I do not even want to mention

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3 All original quotes were translated from Italian by the authors.

Turin; we will become a majority there. Visit any Italian town and it is impossible not to meet Romanians". The Romanian nationals who reside in the Northern regions of the country account for more than 55% of the total, while in some areas of *Mezzogiorno* and the Islands the number of Romanian immigrants is almost irrelevant.

According to a study commissioned by the Romanian government (Metro Media Trans, 2007-2008), 72% of the Romanian nationals residing in Italy have a high school degree, 9% of them own the house in which they live, while 90% of them earn, on average, €1,030 per month. It is noteworthy that the employment rate among Romanian immigrants is 13% higher (70.9%) than that of Italian nationals (57.9%) (Caritas Italiana, 2008). Notwithstanding the general high level of education and the increasing economic independence of the Romanian immigrants, most of them still operate in low-skilled sectors (characterized by structural lack of Italian manpower), are often underpaid and experience worse working conditions than their Italian counterparts.<sup>4</sup>

As in many societies where immigrants receive "second-hand" jobs, the situation in Italy mirrors what commonly people describe as 'the Romanians come to do the jobs that the Italians do not want to do anymore'. In 2007, one out of five new foreign employed workers was Romanian. Romanian workers are distributed as follows<sup>5</sup>: one third within the industry (especially the construction sector), half of them in the third sector (domestic assistance, tourism, and external services), and 6% of them in agriculture. A plurality of Romanian women (a quarter) works as caretakers. There is evidence of widespread violations of labor rights and of structural underpayment due to their persistent status of legal informality (Caritas Italiana, 2008). Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, Romanian nationals can easily seek work in the construction sector, agriculture, domestic work, engineering trades, hospitality industry, trade, tourism and some highly qualified areas. Seasonal work is also covered by the facilitated procedures, while for the rest of the occupations, the transitional arrangements are applied (EUBusiness, 2007). The Italian Minister for Social Solidarity stated that the partial liberalization of access to the labor market 'would cover the majority of Romanians already in Italy who have been hitherto subject to restrictions as non-EU members' (Traser, 2008). This move by the Italian government might well be seen as a sort of regularization program as it basically legalizes the presence of Romanian workers. In this respect, it is important to mention that the Romanian community is reported to contribute to 1.2% of the economic growth of the country, thereby confirming its relevance in the economic life of the country.

At a glance, the Romanian community in Italy seems well-structured internally and organized at both individual and informal (friend/family networks) and collective/formal levels (association networks). As reported by Bleahu (2006), "many Romanians leave for Italy packed with phone numbers of as many relatives or friends as possible" who are supposed to provide essential support and assistance to the newcomers. This seems to stem from the specific nature of migration phenomena in which family ties play a fundamental role. The presence of relatives or friends in a specific city is a crucial factor for those who decide to emigrate. Often the migration process follows a serial pattern: *first*, a few go and see, *then* the others follow. In many cases, almost entire villages move to the same city or neighbourhood, thereby replicating their domestic social structures in the new environment and creating compounded and detached (origin-defined) sub-communities.

At the collective level, a complex network of associations, groups, churches, and even political parties constantly support (and to a certain extent favor) integration into the new society. These activities reduce the risk of marginalization and contrast prejudices and racial discrimination. The local leaders of the community, often Romanian priests operating in Italy, are often considered

4 This state of things, often tolerated by the public authorities, makes it very convenient for Italian businessmen to recruit Romanian workers. The conditions of the recruitment are often agreed in an informal way (sometimes on a daily/weekly basis) between the employer and the worker (see Reyneri, 2007).

5 We took into account only the official numbers, data about immigrants working on the black market are not available.

by the local authorities as bridging figures between immigrants and the Italian institutions. The increased involvement of the Romanian Church in the coordination and support of the immigration flows (Iordache, 2008) is not reduced to the religious assistance, but often involves material help to the immigrants. A second case that deserves to be discussed is the remarkable diffusion of Romanian newspapers printed in Italy (Zanda, 2007). The Romanian network benefits from the existence of two successful newspapers, *Gazeta Românească* (weekly edition starting 2001) and *Ziarul Românesc* (both weekly and monthly editions), having between 14,000 and 56,000 printed copies/month. Additionally, Romanians created political organizations aimed to represent them within the Italian institutions. The major Romanian political party in Italy is The Romanian Identity – Party of the Romanians of Italy<sup>6</sup> established in 2006. The statute of the party claims that “protecting the rights of the Romanian community in Italy represents the party’s primary concern and the reason behind its establishment”.<sup>7</sup> In three years the party has spread throughout the *Penisola* and now counts eight regional offices in the areas marked by the largest Romanian presence and more than 50 local committees, four of which are based in Rome. The political relevance of the party and its electoral weight have increased, an indicator of this fortunate trend being the alliance agreed upon at local level with Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* (Massai, 2008). When it comes to the political weight of particular Romanian personalities, a noteworthy case is that of Ramona Badescu, a famous Romanian actress active in Italy and honorary member of the Romanian party, who ran for the local elections in Rome, supporting the candidate mayor of the centre-right, Gianni Alemanno.<sup>8</sup>

Two criminal events committed in 2007 by Romanian nationals in Italy have created tensions between the Romanian community and the Italian public and have fueled a new wave of populist discourses among the political elites who increasingly profited from deeply rooted fears among the population. Since immigration represents a relatively recent phenomenon in Italy, the public seems to adopt the easy conceptual shortcuts to understand it. One of the most common is a distinction between “us” and “them” based on the idea that immigration represents a potential source of problems (criminality, social desegregation, unemployment, etc.). Data on foreign crime in Italy show a different reality: in 1996 the Romanians represented only 6.4% of all foreign nationals reported to the judicial authorities for having committed a crime; the percentage grew to 22.1% in 2001, just one year before the country joined the “Schengen white list” (L’Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2001).

### Pre-2007 Elite Attitudes and their Sources

“If we were all to be locked in a dark room, and in the dark each of us were to be asked to express ourselves on the enlargement of the European Union, I would be the only one to say yes” (BBC Monitoring International Reports, 2002), the former German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, liked to repeat. If the discussion would have been over the Romanian membership, the Italian Prime Minister would have almost certainly joined him, saying a convinced *Sì*. The Italian political elites have traditionally shown positive attitudes towards Romania, Italy being one of the earliest and most committed supporters of Bucharest’s European ambitions. The support emerged among the political stakeholders seems to stem from political, economic, and cultural reasons (Fossati, 2008). *First*, Romania’s membership may be seen as a further step towards the stabilization of

6 The original name is Identità Romana – Partito dei Romeni d’Italia / Identitatea Românească – Partidul Românilor din Italia.

7 The statute is available at [www.identitatearomaneasca.it/it/statuto.html](http://www.identitatearomaneasca.it/it/statuto.html).

8 Considering Alemanno’s strong stances towards immigration and his xenophobic and populist claims during the electoral campaign, Ramona Badescu’s decision to support Alemanno and her successive appointment as the Mayor’s advisor has provoked strong criticisms from pro-immigrants groups and NGOs. After Alemanno’s electoral success, Ramona Badescu has been appointed as “Advisor for the relationship with the Romanian community” in July 2008 (see also Popham, 2008).

the Balkans which represents a region of strategic relevance for Italy. *Second*, Italy represents Romania's major economic partner. *Third*, Italy and Romania share strong cultural and historical ties. Each of these is approached in the following sub-sections.

### *A gate to stability*

From an Italian perspective, Romania's membership negotiations and its final accession in 2007 represented a crucial phase for the relations between the two countries and for its successive developments. At the elite level, Romania's EU membership has represented an enduring priority and a key interest for the political and economic leadership of the country. From the very beginning of the membership talks in the mid-1990s, all Italian governments, regardless of their partisan color, actively supported Bucharest's efforts (De Giovannangeli, 2007). If we look at the active role played by Italy in the years preceding Romania's accession, we can easily assess the existence of a special commitment towards a successful completion of the negotiations. Illustrative for this support are the words of Massimo D'Alema (2006):

Romania's membership will finally contribute to reshape the EU's foreign action in the direction of a greater awareness of the strategic relevance of the South-Eastern region of our continent, thereby playing an active role in the stabilization and in the rapid development of that area. As you know, the Balkan region represents a long-standing priority for the Italian foreign policy. In this sense, we have fruitfully and closely cooperated with Romania in that area, both at bilateral and multilateral levels. [...] I firmly believe that our common Latin roots will be fundamental to elaborate a common vision of Europe's interests and priorities.

Silvio Berlusconi, the leader of the largest Italian opposition party at that time (*Forza Italia*), similarly emphasized the common interests and the special partnership between the two countries: "we are convinced of the necessity for Europe to extend its borders to the Balkan countries, to Bulgaria and Romania". He then added that "[Italy] will continue to cooperate closely with Romania as far as its accession to the European Union is concerned and (beyond)" (Associated Press, 2005).

### *The economic ties*

Apart from the above mentioned involvement of the Romanian workforce in the Italian economy, there are Italian firms that heavily invested in Romania. To assess the economic significance of the relationship, we limit our discussion to the post-communist period<sup>9</sup> that witnesses an increasing role of the Italian capitals in Romania and the presence of well-established commercial flows between the two countries. Following the successive waves of privatizations and reforms in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Romania became the largest investment destination of the Italian capitals in Central and Eastern Europe. Some figures better explain the relevance of this phenomenon; the number of Italian societies based in Romania reached in 2007 more than 7,500 units and the number was growing. Analogously, Italy represents by far the first economic partner of Romania.

<sup>9</sup> During the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian workers and businessmen contributed significantly to the development of newly independent Romania. Just to mention an example, more than 2000 Italian workers participated at the construction of the King Carol I bridge in Cernavodă. The bridge became the longest bridge in Europe and the third in the world and was finally inaugurated in 1895.

The value of Italian export flows in Romania increased to €5.5 billion in 2006 (+18,62% compared to 2005), while the value of imports from Romania equaled €4.3 billion (+5,93%, the highest increase since 2000). Overall, the trade balance has traditionally been in favor of Italy, thus strengthening the perception of Romania being an asset for Italy. Italian businesses lead in some crucial sectors of the country's economy, such as banking (UniCredit group has more than 50,000 clients in Romania) and energy sectors (i.e. Ansaldo Energia and ENEL). Moreover, the favorable conditions due to lower labor costs and fiscal burdens, and limited *sindicalization* of the labor market favored a progressive process of delocalization of many small and mid-sized Italian enterprises, which relocated their production units from the most industrialized regions of the *Penisola* (i.e. Veneto, Lombardy, Piedmont, etc.) to Romania (Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2007). The highest number of Italian enterprises is based in the Western part of the country, in Transylvania. If we were to consider solely the Timișoara district (often referred to as the *Romanian Padua*), the number of Italian factories operating there equals 1,200 units (2004 estimates), mainly specialized in the *textile* and leather sectors (Iordache, 2004).<sup>10</sup>

### ***The cultural and historical connections***

From a cultural point of view, the relationship between the two regions can be historically traced back to the Roman conquest of Dacia achieved by Emperor Trajan between 101 and 106 AD. Under the auspices of the Roman Empire, the two regions shared common destinies until the partition of the Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and developed close cultural and economic ties that lasted and evolved throughout the centuries until the end of World War II (Hösch, 2004). Since 1945, the beginning of the Cold War and the division of Europe into conflicting blocks drastically downsized the relevance of the process. In the aftermath of WWII, only 8,000 Italians remained in Romania and the number decreased following the nationalization of the private properties undertaken by the communist elites and the successive obligation of becoming Romanian citizens or leaving the country (Caritas Italiana, 2008). The collapse of Communism and the successive process of liberalization determined a fast restructuring of the historical ties further fostered by Romania's European ambitions. The 1991 Romanian Constitution (Article 62.2) granted the Italian community the status of national minority and recognized its right to elect one representative to the national Parliament (Paskal, 1997). More generally, it seems important to emphasize the key relevance and particular significance of the common Latin roots and of the shared sense of *latinitas*. The latter appears particularly strong in Romania as it has been adopted over the centuries as a distinctive trait of the Romanian national identity and played a crucial role in the state-building process during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The cultural distinctiveness of the country has been fostered over the centuries by its particular geographical position as a Latin island in a Slavic sea.<sup>11</sup> One practical consequence of these cultural and historical developments is represented by the Romanians' capacity to easily learn other neo-Latin languages, which is one of the key reasons explaining the massive Romanian presence in Italy and Spain.

<sup>10</sup> The process of delocalization of many Italian companies produced growing unemployment and generated growing frustration and resentment among the Italian workers who perceive these measures as direct challenges to their economic wealth and labor stability (see Randazzo, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> Noteworthy is the key significance (both cultural and national) of the symbols linked to the Roman past such as Emperor Trajan and Capitoline Wolf. The former is considered as a sort of national hero. Trajan is one of the four national heroes mentioned by name in Romania's national anthem which solemnly declares "Now or never let's give proof to the world / that in these veins still flows a Roman blood / that in our chests we still maintain our pride in a name / The victor in his battles, the name of Trajan!". The fact that "Traian" is a very common name in Romania confirms the high popularity of the Emperor which defeated the Dacians and Romanized the region. Another important symbol of *latinitas* is represented by the Capitoline Wolf. In the aftermath of WWI, the Italian state made a gift to Romania of five copies of the Capitoline Wolf. One copy was sent to the Roman Square in Bucharest, a second one to Cluj, a third to Chișinău, a fourth to Timișoara and a fifth to Târgu-Mureș. They symbolized the unity of Romanians from all parts of the country and their *latinitas*.

## Attitudes of the Public

Following the arguments presented in the previous section, the positive attitudes of elites towards Romania have solid grounds. They originate in a combination of historical legacies and pragmatic approaches towards politics and economy. Regarding the latter, good relationships offered numerous benefits to the Italian companies that either invested in Romania or used workforce. These perspectives are not shared by the Italian population. We use Standard Eurobarometers to assess the willingness of Italian citizens to welcome Romania in the EU. We account for the last two years before accession as this period coincides with some of the most supportive discourses from elites. We analyze the Eurobarometers no. 64.2 (October-November 2005) and no. 66.1 (September-October 2006) to evaluate whether Italians are in favor of Romania becoming part of the EU. In doing so, we select the item where respondents are literally asked this question (QA 44 for 2005 and QA 33 for 2006).

Table 1 displays the feelings of citizens from the old member states (EU 15) towards the Romanian accession. These data allow us to analyze the attitudes of Italians in a European context. Three general points must be emphasized before tackling the particular Italian attitudes. First, there is a trend towards higher opposition as the accession moment approaches. On average, most support rates decrease from one year to another (with a margin of error included in our evaluations), whereas disapproval rates increase. More and more European citizens become reluctant. In this context, the second point may add significantly to this picture: more than one third of the countries (six out of 15) have constant negative values in their population perceptions towards Romania. Great Britain and Ireland dramatically change after one year (see columns 3 and 5 of table 1), whereas discrepancies between percentages of positive and negative attitudes towards the Romanian accession increase from 2005 to 2006 in most of the six countries. At the same time, even strong supporters of Romanian accession (i.e. Greece and Spain) register decreasing rates of support and increasing disapprovals. Third, looking at distribution of support, we can identify a general trend of countries that later joined the EU to be more supportive towards the accession of a new member state.

**Table 1:** *EU1512 countries Support for Romanian accession*

Country	2005		2006	
	For (%)	Against (%)	For (%)	Against (%)
France	41	46	40	49
Belgium	47	48	46	50
The Netherlands	50	40	47	44
Germany	35	60	32	61
Italy	37	50	35	51
Luxembourg	38	52	38	53
Denmark	49	40	55	36
Ireland	44	29	36	38
Great Britain	41	36	31	51
Greece	68	30	64	35
Spain	46	25	41	29
Portugal	42	30	42	33
Finland	47	46	49	45
Sweden	67	21	67	21
Austria	16	73	21	72

Source: EB 64.2 and 66.1 data.

12 We selected EU15 as the level of support for Romania's accession in the 10 new member states is very high, comparable only with what Greece displays among the old member states. By using only the old member states we provide a better ground for comparison among countries that created the EU and built it during decades.

In this environment, data provide evidence for very unfavorable sentiments of the Italian public towards Romania's membership. When asked whether they support Bucharest's European ambitions, 37 percent in 2005 and 35 percent in 2006 answered positively, whereas 50 percent of the 2005 and 51 percent of the 2006 samples claimed to be against it. The level of support in Italy appears low and only three other countries display lower percentages of positive attitudes: Austria (16 percent in 2005, 21 percent in 2006), Germany (35 percent in 2005, 32 percent in 2006), and Great Britain (41 percent in 2005, and 31 percent in 2006). All these countries are marked by a strong Romanian presence along with Spain and Hungary (Drew & Sriskandarajah, 2006). Going back to the cultural connections with Romania, Italy displays the lowest rate of support among the other Latin countries that are part of the EU. France, Portugal and Spain are stronger supporters of Romania's accession, the latter being also the country with a massive presence after the enlargement.

Moreover, we also test if the Italians are overall skeptical regarding the admission of new countries. Table 2 includes their attitudes over countries that were planned for the 2007 accession (Bulgaria and Romania), Western countries that did not want to join the EU (Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland), countries that are recognized as official candidates (Croatia, Turkey, and Macedonia), and countries that are potential candidates in the future (Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, and Bosnia). The increasing lack of support observed from one year to another can be clearly identified in the particular case of Italy, with negative attitudes towards all potential candidate countries, including those from Western Europe. However, the accession of the latter is the only case where the percentage of positive attitudes exceeds the percentage of negative attitudes. These countries comply with the requirements of the EU and Italians are aware that they are out only because they want to. As a result, they do not consider that the presence of these three countries may represent a negative asset for the EU. As percentages indicate, Italians are equally reluctant regarding the admission of Bulgaria and Romania, half or more than half considering that the accession of these countries is not a good thing, whereas less than four out of ten Italians consider the accession of the two to be a positive asset.

Surprisingly, the percentages reflecting attitudes on Croatia and Ukraine's accessions are very close to those displayed for Romania and Bulgaria. Moreover, the attitudes towards Croatia are more positive than for any of those countries that were to become certain members in less than four months following the date of the survey. Ukraine performs better than Romania in the eyes of Italians, the positive attitudes being higher for the former than for the latter. As one would expect, the positive attitudes towards Turkey, an intensely debated case, and potential candidate countries, are very scarce. Therefore, Romanians perform worse in the Italian eyes than countries that have an insecure future in the EU.

**Table 2:** *Italy's support towards (potential) candidate states*

Country	2005		2006	
	For (%)	Against (%)	For (%)	Against (%)
<b>Romania</b>	37	50	35	51
<b>Bulgaria</b>	38	47	39	47
<b>Switzerland</b>	73	17	70	21
<b>Norway</b>	69	20	66	24
<b>Iceland</b>	63	23	60	27
<b>Croatia</b>	45	41	43	45
<b>Ukraine</b>	39	47	36	51
<b>Turkey</b>	29	55	26	60
<b>Albania</b>	28	58	27	60
<b>Serbia</b>	29	54	29	57
<b>Macedonia</b>	30	53	31	54
<b>Bosnia</b>	32	52	29	56

Source: EB 64.2 and 66.1 data.

As evidence from both tables indicates, public attitudes do not correspond to elite declarations of support for the Romanian accession. The political, economic, and cultural connections do not make a difference at public level where support towards Romania is the lowest when compared to support towards Bulgaria, Croatia, or Ukraine. Moreover, among the countries with the same Latin origins, Italians are the most reluctant regarding Romania's accession and among the EU15 only three countries exceed their negative attitudes. Given this situation, let us take a close look at what happens in the aftermath of accession.

## Discussion

This article revealed two different trends in the Italian-Romanian relations preceding the 2007 EU enlargement when Romania was granted full membership. The years before the EU accession were characterized by a sharp contradiction in terms of attitudes. On the one hand, we have emphasized how the positive attitudes of the Italian political elites towards Romania were based on political reasons, mutual economic benefits, and shared cultural background. The existence of a traditionally strong relationship between the two countries has been consolidated and strengthened by recent mutual economic interests. At the beginning of the accession process, in the eyes of the Italian political and economic elites, Romania represented an asset of primary importance whose full integration into the Euro-Atlantic sphere represented the most solid guarantee for the Italian interests in the Balkan country. Romania constitutes Italy's first economic partner in South-Eastern Europe and a myriad of Italian companies are successfully operating in the country. These aspects, along with the cultural and historical closeness, clearly explain the bipartisan support for Romanian EU membership registered at the political level on the eve of the 2007 enlargement. Moreover, the consolidation of a strategic partnership with Rome was perfectly functional to Romania's interests, not only for economic reasons, but also given the need of EU sponsors for the successful completion of the membership negotiations. As nicely put in the title, the relationship between the two countries can be described as based on mutual convenience, where cultural ties matter, but economic interests matter even more. To the Italian politicians, this seemed a more than valid reason to support Romania's European ambitions as witnessed by the enthusiastic support of both Prodi and Berlusconi's governments.

On the other hand, we looked at the sentiments of the Italian public towards Romania. Such attitudes are formed in the presence of Romanian immigrants, but unlike political elites, regular people lack the necessary information to assess the benefits that good relationships with a foreign country could entail for their domestic economy. What clearly emerges in the pre-2007 period is a wide gap between political stakeholders and the general public. The former are clearly more supportive, mainly for economic and strategic reasons, the latter more skeptical, due to widespread fears primarily related to transnational crime and growing immigration (often seen as a threat).<sup>13</sup> The Eurobarometer data confirmed this state of things, depicting the Italian public as strongly opposed to the enlargement. On the other hand, while less than one third of Italians were in favor of the Romanian membership, there was only a handful of minor xenophobic or neo-fascist parties which endorsed and fueled the public's fears.

The discrepancies between public and elite attitudes are striking and indicate consistency between what the Italian public felt before and after the Romanian accession. In view of these arguments, a logical connection may be established between the negative opinions on Romania and the change observed at the political elite level after the critical juncture moment (i.e. 2007). In the aftermath of the enlargement, the top-down gap significantly narrowed. The actual behavior of the political stakeholders changed a lot. The low rates of criminality among Romanian

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13 In a survey conducted in Turin in 2007 on a probabilistic representative sample, we have noticed that these factors are key determinants for anti-migration attitudes of the Italian public.

immigrants – similar to those of other immigrants – cannot represent causes of such a shift. For example, in 2008 the Romanian regular immigrants represented roughly 30% of the foreign residents and the Romanian prison population accounted for only 14% of the total. In 2010, the Romanians condemned for crimes represent only 0.2% of the total Romanian immigrants in Italy (Ministero della Giustizia, 2010).

At the same time, none of the conditions triggering positive attitudes (political, economic, and cultural) altered. Instead, it can be argued that they follow the opinion of their voters. Elite's recent attitudes seem indeed driven by opportunistic reasons. While still praising Romania's membership as an economic asset and an opportunity for the Italian business, when it comes to immigration, most of the Italian politicians find it easier to follow (and sometimes to actively fuel) people's most ancestral fears, rather than to contrast and publicly condemn discrimination and xenophobia. Unless assuming such a drastic change, we should expect greater governmental commitment to integration of foreign newcomers and to the citizenry's civic awareness, following the drastic increase in the number of immigrants experienced by the country in the last decades.

There are opposite developments characterized by growing and widespread neglect towards positive actions favoring immigrants' effective integration within the hosting community. The new tendency is witnessed by the constant reduction of the share of public money invested to promote integration and by the growing securitization of Romanian immigration promoted through an increasingly populist rhetoric accompanied by controversial measures often in contrast with the European norms, such as collective expulsions of Romanian immigrants. What seems clear is that this new political tendency cannot be reduced to a short-term consequence of the recent electoral developments but represents itself a more stable course. The 'bipartisan' nature of the new trend is confirmed by the recent decrees approved by the new Berlusconi government, which just 'update' measures adopted and implemented by the previous center-left government (*pacchetto sicurezza*) following the murder of Giovanna Reggiani.

The emerging picture is therefore generally blurred with dark-grey nuances. The elites seemed to have adopted a functionalist strategy – that did not change its character following Romania's accession – but which seems to have a clear dividing line in 2007. Before that moment, the functional priority of the Italian stakeholders was clearly to grant Romania full support for the EU membership in order to maximize economic/diplomatic assets for Italy; this had to be pursued even ignoring voters' opposition. Once Bucharest was granted a place in the club, the 'functional' priority of the Italian elites seemed to have changed. After having opened the door to 'their lover', they seem to be ashamed of it in public. The priority of most Italian political elites appears to be the maximization of public support. They do so by adopting populist claims and following citizens' attitudes rather than shaping their opinions. This is particularly evident with respect to the Romanian immigration as there seems to be a ground for competition among political elites to grant voters' support in a relatively 'cheap' way.

Our study is mainly exploratory, its focus being on the two different approaches noticed within the Italian society towards the largest group of immigrants in the recent history. Further research may analyze the reasons behind the Italian public's attitudes and thus shed light on the apparent dilemma that Romanians in Italy face: if their people are connected for centuries by cultural and political traditions, what is the explanation for contemporary tensioned relationships on the Italian territory? In this respect, it can explain the general public's varying degree of tolerance towards immigrants through socio-demographic background and political opinions. Regardless of government's commitment to proactive actions aimed at facilitating intercultural integration, citizens' level of education coupled with an active and satisfying professional life may contribute to a better understanding of others' cultures and traditions. Both education and professional life imply by definition a high level of interpersonal interaction which provides fertile ground for higher awareness and greater tolerance towards otherness. Usually, respondents less involved in interpersonal contacts and less exposed to social and cultural diversity tend to display the strongest negative attitudes towards immigrants.

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# New Regionalisms and Radical Identity Formation in Latin America: Towards an “Alter-Global” Paradigm

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## Abstract

*The post-Cold War period has witnessed the simultaneous emergence of a new trend of regionalism and a radicalized form of identity politics in Latin America, in parallel with the rise of numerous new left governments and alter-globalist social movements confronting neo-liberalism. In fact, the globalization of this continental struggle through a new trend of regionalism is a process which illustrates the fact that in today's world, national, regional and global identities are complexly entwined beyond “well-established” dichotomies such as nationalism-cosmopolitanism. This paper suggests that regionalism could be an efficient tool to promote the formation of new collective identities at the global level by linking social struggles at the national level to the global resistance movement against neo-liberalism, as observed in the current Latin American experience of new regionalism. The first part of the paper would attempt to explain the actual significance of regionalism and the challenge of “identity formations” under globalization, and would develop an alternative theoretical approach based on Mittelman's underrated concept of “transformative regionalism” (2004), besides elaborating the basic premises of the New Regionalism School. In turn, the second part would discuss the transformative potential of the new Latin American regionalisms through the involvement of social movements, mostly based on the experience of ALBA, but not without mentioning also the experience of TELESUR, UNASUR and Bank of the South. Finally, the concluding parts would deal with alternative policy recommendations and the emerging research agenda of new regionalism in Latin America, with a special focus on the case of the rising food sovereignty (globalization of peasant identities) and counter-hegemonic mass education movements (the “HEFA regime”) within the context of “radical identity formation”. Thereby, the paper attempts to explain how local identities could intertwine with radical projects of regional identity formation so as to develop globally “new collective identities” with an advocacy for “democratic globalization”.*

**Keywords:** ALBA; Alter-Globalization; Counter-hegemony; Food Sovereignty; Identity Formation; New Regionalism; Transformative Regionalism; UNIALBA

## Introduction: New Regionalisms and Radical Identity Formation in Latin America

From a critical globalization perspective, one could state that the early 21st century is mainly shaped by three successive developments: “the failure of neo-liberalism, the crisis of the East Asian export-led growth model and Latin American efforts to advance an alternative regional development strategy” (Hart-Landsberg, 2009, par. 1). In parallel with what Hart-Landsberg argues, the emergence of a new Latin American regionalist initiative expresses itself as a direct outcome of the loss of capitalism's credibility in its “both free-market and state-directed forms”

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under neo-liberalism (2009, par. 5). Latin America, as “the first test subject of neo-liberalism” was considered to be at “the center of the so-called neo-liberal revolution” (Kellogg, 2007, p. 187) and to have been experienced the “most pernicious form of neo-liberalism” (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 27). However, this region has now become “the cutting edge of struggles worldwide against neo-liberalism” (Robinson, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, not surprisingly, the new Latin American regionalism appears to be a major constituent of the alter-globalist resistance against neo-liberalism at the present day, engendering a new process of radical identity formation.

The emergence of a new Latin American trend of regionalism and regional identity formation has inevitably sound implications for area studies in Latin America and the Caribbean, generating a new study agenda of regionalism and identities which is remarkably rich in discussion. Intense discussions of the 1990s on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) have been considerably expanded following the consecutive emergence of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), The New Television Station of the South (TELESUR), Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and Bank of the South. This development reflects the “plurality” of different regionalization processes, tools and models that rely on different scales of radical identity formations at local, national and regional levels in Latin America. This societal, rather than “institutional” phenomenon represents a new wave of regionalism, replacing the outdated post-Cold War regionalism under neo-liberalism.

Accordingly, the paper aims at indicating newly emerging research opportunities in the study of interactions between different supra-individual identities and at developing an alternative theoretical framework for future researches from the lenses of regionalism studies, as well as contributing to current efforts for policy recommendation on challenges raised by multiple facets of identities in social, economical and political contexts. This paper attempts to go beyond the conventional understanding of regionalism and identities, and to focus on understanding the current process of regionalization and its existing challenges such as the role of the social movements and the “transformative capacity” of other existing social agencies. The main hypothesis of the paper is that, as opposed to former regionalisms framed by Western-centric biases overemphasizing stability, hegemony, elitism, economism and security; newly emerging Latin American regionalisms promote deep socio-cultural, pluralistic and democratic transformations which go beyond the hegemonic limitations of acute security concerns, authoritarian forms of identity politics, and an overrated obsession of economic integration. This trend confronts the conventional understanding of regionalism which is conceived as a top-down process led by regional elites and backed by hegemonic politics. This paper suggests that regionalism could be an efficient tool to promote the formation of new collective identities at the global level by linking social struggles at the national level to the global resistance movement against neo-liberalism, as observed in the current Latin American experience of new regionalism.

The first part of the paper will attempt to explain the actual significance of regionalism and the challenge of “identity formations” under globalization, and will develop an alternative theoretical approach based on Mittelman’s underrated concept of “transformative regionalism” (2004), besides elaborating the basic premises of the New Regionalism School. In turn, the second part will discuss the transformative potential of the new Latin American regionalisms through the involvement of social movements, mostly based on the experience of ALBA, but not without mentioning also the experience of TELESUR, UNASUR and Bank of the South. Finally, the third part will deal with alternative policy recommendations and the emerging research agenda of new regionalism in Latin America, with a special focus on the case of the rising food sovereignty (the alter-globalization of peasant identities) and counter-hegemonic mass education movements (the “HEFA regime”) within the context of “radical identity formation”. Thereby, the paper attempts to explain how national identities could intertwine with radical projects of regional identity formation so as to develop “new global identities” with an advocacy for “democratic globalization”.

## New Regionalism Studies and the Relevance of the Transformative Regionalism Approach for Latin America

Peter J. Katzenstein, in his popular work entitled *World of Regions* which considerably shaped the regionalism studies of the post-Cold War period in the 2000s, proposed a regionalist understanding of today's world affairs, claiming that the authority of nation-states has been reinserted in the process of globalization through a growing global tendency named "internationalization" (2005, p. 18). According to Katzenstein, one could not talk about the absolute decline of nation-states, but the continuing importance and reconstitution of the power of states thanks to the internationalization process during which nation-states are "reaffirmed" as the basic actors of the international system (2005, pp. 16-18). Katzenstein argues that the inter-capitalist competition and the collapse of the socialist system have reinforced regional politics, and consequently, the 1990s have witnessed "an explosion of regional initiatives" and of regional trade agreements (pp. 22-24). As an outcome, regions have become a "substantially more important venue of conflict and cooperation than in the past" (p. 24). Katzenstein claims that in the 2000s, especially since the onset of the so-called "war on terror", "regionalism has matured and is now in plain sight" (p. 42).

The thesis of Katzenstein's work relies on two major premises. The first premise consists of the fact that we live in a world of porous regions shaped by two intertwined, cumulative and interactive processes called globalization and internationalization which coexist, reinforce and complement each other (Katzenstein, 2005, pp. 21, 30, 35). The second major premise defends that our world of regions is shaped and organized by the U.S. Imperium (2005, p. ix). Katzenstein does not even hesitate to emphasize that "our contemporary world does not float freely" (p. 208) and it is "embedded deeply in an American imperium" (p. 1). Based on these premises, he further states that "the new economic regionalism is occurring at the center of the Americas" (p. 228).

On the other hand, Katzenstein asserts that since "regions are not only geographically given but also politically made" (p. 86), national, sub-national and local identities tend to complement regional identities (p. 76). In a similar manner, he points out regional identities do not tend to replace national identities, but represent an important catalyst which contributes to the further evolution of micro-identities (p. 77).

Broadly speaking, Katzenstein's Western-centric account tends to privilege the Western hegemony and its "stabilizing" role in the Global South through regionalism, with an overemphasis on economism and security issues. Regionalism is understood by Katzenstein not as a vehicle of progressive transformation, but as a hegemonic instrument of the U.S. which aims primarily to "stabilize" the so-called "porous regions" of the world. However, his recognition of the importance of identity issues within the regions represents an important anchor for future efforts to avoid the domination of the economist, statist and even Western-centric arguments in regionalism studies.

The proponents of new regionalism tend to agree with Katzenstein's first major premise insofar as "globalization and regionalization can occur simultaneously" and they are complementary to each other (Boas, Marchand & Shaw, 2005, p. 3). In addition, many proponents recognize Katzenstein's argument on the importance of identity issues. However, while agreeing mostly with Katzenstein's general premises on the growing importance of regions, regionalisms and identity issues, they rise to notice the necessity of redefining regionalism and deepening of the analysis of identity politics (Boas, Marchand & Shaw, 2005).

New regionalists such as Gamble and Payne (1996) seem to disagree with Katzenstein by arguing that regionalism is an expression of the declining U.S. hegemony. However, they insist on the same old argument that new regionalism is nothing but an elite-driven response to the post-Cold War order as a form of adjustment to neo-liberalism (quoted in Nordhaug, 2005, pp. 75-76). In a similar way, Hettne (2003, pp. 359-369) associates the growing new regionalism with the emergence of the multipolarity and neo-mercantilism, and openly disagrees

with Katzenstein that independently of the U.S. imperium, new regionalism corresponds to a spontaneous and multidimensional process, in contrast to the Cold War regionalism imposed by the super-powers. Finally, new regionalists such as Boas, Marchand and Shaw (2005, p. 11) oppose the orthodox account of regionalism which overemphasizes the role of formal and institutional agencies, insisting that regionalism “is not necessarily a state-led process” (p. 1). Rather, they concentrate on the “plurality of regionalisms” and cultural implications of the new regionalism based on concepts such as “governmentality”, “identities”, “informal agencies” and “networks” (Boas, Marchand & Shaw, 2005, pp. 6, 11). According to Boas, Marchand and Shaw (2005, p.9), the articulation of micro- and macro-regional identities which also involves “regional transnationalized indigenous identities” is very critical to the study of contemporary regionalisms. In other words, it is very important to recognize the cultural aspects of regionalisms which go beyond the state in stimulating a common sense of belonging and shared responsibility (Boas, Marchand & Shaw, 2005, p. 173).

On the other hand, alter-globalist regionalists such as Mittelman (2004) also associate regionalism with globalization, similarly to the post-Cold War regionalism. However, their point of departure differs from other new regionalist accounts in terms of their alter-globalist subjectivism which privileges the role of ideology and knowledge (Mittelman, 2004, pp. 3, 97-98). Mittelman (2000, pp. 165, 167) views globalization as a hegemonic project from a Gramscian perspective, and concentrates his efforts to capture focal points of counter-hegemonic resistance which is on the rise.

According to Mittelman, the global resistance “centers on reterritorialization” (Mittelman, 2004, p. 20). Consequently, new regionalism which is nothing but an articulation of this “reterritorialization” constitutes “both a component of and response to globalization” (Mittelman, 2000, p. 227), hence the importance of new strategies of resistance based on “transformative regionalism”. For Mittelman (1996, p. 208), the term “transformative regionalism” implies a bottom-upward strategy of alter-globalist and counter-hegemonic resistance which rests on the strength of self-government and mobilization of the civil society and social movements, but which does not exclude the role of the state as an active agent of development and integration.

Mittelman (2004, p. 5) considers globalization “as a syndrome of processes” which relies upon a “triangulated structure” of global division of labor and power, new regionalism and resistance politics of social movements. The global division of power and labor constitutes the anatomy of the global “triangulated structure”. In parallel, the bottom-upward strategy of alter-globalism consists of radically transforming this anatomy from below, i.e. by relying upon the resistance of social movements which would lead the regionalization process in order to be able to transform the global division of power and labor. Inventing counter-hegemonic representations, creating a new common sense, propagating critical knowledge so as to challenge pre-given representations and the existing common-sense lie at the heart of this multiphase strategy of transforming the global division of power and labor from below (Mittelman, 2004, p. 98).

According to Mittelman (2000), new strategies of social transformation should take into account the emergence of politics of identity as a consequence of the global restructuring of the division of labor and power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While, on the one hand, globalization centralizes wealth and power, on the other, it also tends to decentralize social activities and to fragment identities in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and gender (Mittelman, 2000, p. 23). The global restructuring of the division of labor and power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century involves the fragmentation of labor into different identities (Mittelman, 2000, pp. 46, 60-61). For Mittelman (2000, p. 61), this engenders a highly paradoxical situation: While capital and markets are increasingly globalized, labor is more and more segmented.

In Mittelman’s view (2000, p. 72), as a consequence of a globalized production process, identities are not solely state-based but re-imagined as transnational constructions. However, this fragmentation largely takes place in the realm of leisure, i.e., in the communities or household,

and in activities such as sports, neighborhood associations and festivals (Mittelman, 2000, p. 46). In order to eradicate the fragmentation effect of the neo-liberal production process, Mittelman suggests formulating a counter-hegemonic strategy of cultural resistance. As he states, this strategy consists of “forging a political culture of resistance – a counter-hegemony – and organizing a countermovement”, and it should aim “toward a reinvention of the interactions between production and identity” (Mittelman, 2000, p. 57).

Therefore, in Mittelman’s language, transformative regionalism constitutes a solid ground to start a counter-hegemonic project for the construction of new collective identities in favor of a “democratic globalization” and in opposition to the authoritarian forms of identity politics under neo-liberalism (Mittelman, 2000, pp. 59, 95). As opposed to neo-liberalism which limits the power of state and further impoverishes the subordinated classes, this alternative project requires “a strong state permitting broad access to power and a vibrant civil society pressing for democratic politics” (Mittelman, 2000, p. 95). In this manner, the formation of new collective identities at the local and national levels could only be reflected into the regional and even global level through transformative regionalism which advocates an alter-globalization from below. One could state that transformative regionalism engenders a process of “radical identity formation” promoting the plurality cultures both in the region and in the world, while opposing “authoritarian forms of identity formation” under neo-liberalism which tend to impoverish the subaltern classes.

It seems that among all of these previous approaches, the one that Mittelman proposes could entirely capture the contemporary Latin American reality. Primo, as opposed to Katzenstein’s optimist approach in favor of the U.S., newly rising Latin American regionalisms are substantially far from being dependent upon the so-called U.S. imperium. Secundo, although new regionalists such as Gamble and Payne recognize the implications of the decline of the U.S. hegemony in the formation of the post-Cold War regionalism, they still consider regionalism as a top-down process in terms of neo-liberal adjustments. However, Mittelman prefers to stress the grassroots dynamics of regionalism which tend to be in favor of the social change, in parallel with what is now observed in Latin American in the context of ALBA. Tertio, despite that fact that new regionalists such as Hettne oppose Katzenstein conventional view regionalism is a highly dependent process upon the U.S., they fail to surpass the Western-centric and elitist biases, replacing the U.S. with the neo-mercantilist and elitist model example of Europe. However, while old initiatives of the 1990s such as MERCOSUR took the European regionalism as a model example, new initiatives such as ALBA emphasize the original character of Latin American region. Quarto, new regionalists such as Boas, Marchand and Shaw tend to overemphasize the informal processes of regionalism which do not prevail in the new Latin American reality, despite their merit of embracing the cultural implications of new regionalism. In contrast, Mittelman states that transformative regionalism does not rely upon a dualism between states and informal agencies, but promotes a close coordination between different social agencies. Similarly, the ALBA experience consists of the alliance of strong states with transnational social movements such as La Via Campesina. Finally, although many regionalist accounts give reference to the importance of identity politics, Mittelman views the politics of identity at the center of social transformation as the catalyst for the construction of a regional and global counter-hegemony. This is very much in parallel with the ALBA experience which embraces indigenous demands and cultural concerns of the subaltern classes.

Mittelman, in his book entitled the *Globalization Syndrome* (2000), specifies that transformative regionalism was still in its embryonic phase as an emerging tendency. But recent developments in Latin America indicate that transformative regionalism has henceforth completed its initial phase, gaining a more concrete existence. Therefore, under this conjuncture, to develop the scope of Mittelman’s approach with new researches and case studies has become a greater challenge.

## The Anatomy of New Regionalisms in Latin America

### *The Clash of Regionalisms*

The Latin American regionalism is built on a long historical heritage which reflects the contentious past of the continent. As from the beginnings, the Latin American regionalism was divided into two rival visions (Bull, 2005, p. 13): the Latin American project symbolized in the heritage of Simón Bolívar, and the U.S. vision which originates in the famous Monroe Doctrine and which is often associated with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

In fact, the foundations of the Bolívarian Latin American regionalism have been laid by Francisco de Miranda who proposed the concept of “Patria Grande”. He strived for a federation of Latin American countries, as expressed in his *Plan for a Free and Independent Government of Southern America* which was written in 1790. As opposed to Miranda’s efforts, in 1889, the U.S. convened the First pan-American Conference and proposed a League of American Republics that José Martí qualified as a sign of the U.S. expansionism (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 253). On the other hand, the genuine Latin American regionalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which preserved the anti-expansionist tradition of Miranda, Bolívar and Martí has been symbolized in the struggle of Augusto Cesar Sandino’s who waged an armed struggle against the U.S. marines and proposed his Plan of Implementation of Bolívar’s Supreme Dream against the U.S. expansionism in 1929 (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 253).

The tension between two competing visions of regionalism (expansionists and anti-expansionists) also continued in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Following the Cold War, mainstream regionalists were eager to declare the victory of the U.S. vision of regionalism in the continent. However, as De La Barra and Dello Buono state, the Latin American nations have reached a critical nodal point in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The failure of neo-liberalism, rise of the new social movements, accession to power of leftist governments and decline of the U.S. hegemony have exposed the crisis of the “actually existing” integration model in Latin America (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, pp. 250-251).

The “actually existing” integration model which imposes the U.S. vision of regionalism consisted essentially of an elite-driven neo-liberal integration scheme (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. xxiv) which was disconnected from popular politics and which, according to some observers, also include MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South) (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 249; Kozloff, 2008, p. 55). Although MERCOSUR formally differs from conventional regional projects such as the FTAA in terms of its social dimensions, one could not deny the fact that MERCOSUR does not represent a substantial rupture from the neo-liberal model. As such, it would be inappropriate to include this organization to the new trend of regionalisms in Latin America which is characterized by its “transformative” nature. First of all, as modeled on the European Union (Kellogg, 2007, pp. 195-196), MERCOSUR does not fit the model of transformative regionalism which opposes Eurocentrism. Secondly, the transformative regionalism necessitates the participation of social movements in the process, which is unobservable in the case of MERCOSUR.

### *ALBA and TELESUR: Transformative Regionalism in Motion*

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the foundation of ALBA has opened a brand new era for future researches on critical regionalism. In terms of its unusual structure, popular dynamics and innovative mechanism, ALBA represents a great exception in the history of regionalism. However, it is surprising to observe that so far, the affinity of the critical regionalists for the recent achievements of ALBA was surprisingly low, considering the lack of innovative and

comprehensive researches on this topic. Six years after its foundation, the argument that the future of ALBA still remains undetermined has become outdated, as an excuse to delay the publication of such comprehensive researches. In our time, the ALBA experience not only develops the praxis of regionalism, but also enriches the theory of regionalism in multiple ways. In this direction, it is noteworthy to stress that this situation provides a great opportunity for testing and further developing Mittelman's approach of "transformative regionalism".

The origins of ALBA go back to 2001 during which various Latin American states, trade unions and social movements explicitly reacted against the crisis of the "actually existing" integration model and rejected the U.S. vision of hegemonic regionalism by firstly attempting to ban the FTAA. This process has resulted in the official foundation of ALBA in 2004 with the initiative of Cuba and Venezuela. The ALBA initiative now embraces many other Latin American states such as Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, not without mentioning the observer states such as Grenada, Haiti, Paraguay and Uruguay.

In Mittelman's terms, the "transformative" capacity of ALBA has been already reflected in its main objectives:

- To promote trade and investment based on cooperation and with the aim of improving people's life, not making profits,
- To promote cooperation for free healthcare and education,
- To integrate the energy sectors to meet people's needs,
- To create an alternative media to promote the Latin American identity and counterbalance the US hegemony and neo-liberal media,
- To ensure land distribution and food security,
- To develop state-owned corporations,
- To develop basic industries to ensure the economic independence of member states,
- To promote workers' movements, student movements and social movements,
- To promote environmentally friendly projects (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 255).

As De La Barra & Dello Bruno (2009) emphasize, in terms of its objectives, guiding principles and achievements, ALBA substantially differs from other regional projects such as MERCOSUR, Andean Community (CAN) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

The transformative and counter-hegemonic context of ALBA works itself to a large extent through its internal organizational structure which enables the direct participation of social movements in the regionalization process. As known, the core structure of ALBA is composed of three councils: Council of Presidents, Council of Ministers and Council of Social Movements. While the Council of Presidents is directly responsible of the political orientation of ALBA as the highest body, the Council of Ministers which is composed of the Political, Social and Economic Councils assumes the role of elaborating proposals and projects, similar to the role played by the Council of Social Movements (Muhr, 2010b, pp. 19-20). As to the Council of Social Movements, through this council which focuses mostly on socio-economic and cultural issues such as land distribution, free healthcare, free education and food security, largest social movements in Latin America like the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) and Via Campesina are able to participate to the regionalization process, embodying and overseeing the work of the two other councils (Muhr, 2010b, pp. 20). The Council of Social Movements assumes the role of elaborating collaboration programmes with social organizations in non-ALBA countries, besides supporting the work of the Program Grannacionales (Muhr, 2010b, p. 20). This council also ensures the radical representation of different of identities in the continent. The distinctive feature of the council is that it relies on the principle of direct democracy, while the structure of the Council of Presidents and the Council of Ministers is based on the principle of participatory democracy (Muhr, 2010b, p. 19). It is noteworthy to add that in terms of counter-hegemony and

radical identity formation, the internal structure of ALBA is shaped by new instruments of change such as the ALBA Houses, i.e. the cultural centers of ALBA, and the ALBA Cultural Fond aiming at sustaining a regional network of publishers, art education, art events and cultural centers (De La Barra & Dello Bruno, 2009, pp. 255-257).

In Williams' view (2009), the fundamental architecture of ALBA is comprised of three major components: Grannacionales, the PTAs and the Bank of the ALBA (59). In Mittelman's language, their contribution to the transformation of the global division of labor in favor of the oppressed is considerably significant.

According to Williams (2009, p. 60), Grannacionales refer to inter-state programs and joint-ventures for the provision of basic human services such as education and healthcare and development of basic industries such as food, industry, petrochemicals and steel. The strategic aim of Grannacionales consists of "establishing lateral linkages between countries so as to maximize employment opportunities and the overall development of ALBA nations" (Williams 2009, p. 61).

Grannacionales could be divided into two categories. While programs such as ALBA Health and ALBA Education could be considered under the heading of Program Grannacionales (or Project Grannacionales); companies such as ALBA Transportation and ALBA trade could be categorized under Company Grannacionales. Although Grannacionales are collectively (bilaterally, trilaterally or multilaterally) owned, in principle, 51% of the generated revenue goes to the host country (Williams, 2009, p. 60). According to Muhr (2010b, pp. 1, 17), Grannacionales constitute the key players of the "counter-hegemonic" and "revolutionary governance structure" of ALBA.

ALBA does not consider trade and investment as an end in itself, but as instruments to promote sustainable and fair development, taking into account the interest of those who are most affected by neo-liberal policies. In this direction, the creation of the Peoples' Trade Agreements (PTAs) as a new type of treaty and an alternative to the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) represents a remarkable achievement (De La Barra and Dello Bruno, 2009, p. 256). As defined by Williams, the PTAs refer to "trade initiatives comprised of bartering arrangements that capitalize on each country's comparative advantage" (Williams, 2009, p. 64). The essence of the PTAs consists of ensuring mutual benefit, employment expansion, access to markets and resources conservation. Moreover, the PTAs are also able to provide proper mechanisms to develop Grannacionales (Williams, 2009, p. 65). Under the PTAs, the essence of the trade does not rely upon the competition for the market share, but rather prioritizes "bartering arrangements based on beneficial and productive complementation with special and preferential treatment for less developed nations" (Williams, 2009, p. 74). In contrast to the neo-liberal free trade arrangements, bartering agreements ensure exchange by ending the reign of market forces. Most importantly, the PTAs tend not to sacrifice the national sovereignty in the name of expansion by ensuring the right of states to regulate tariffs, subsidies and price controls (Williams, 2009, p. 74).

The Bank of ALBA which is created in 2008 with a capital more than \$1 billion represents the third pillar of the ALBA architecture. This bank aims at establishing a new financial structure to promote sustainable economic and human development and to foster the regional integration process (Williams, 2009, p. 66). Therefore, the bank provides funds for multiple regional projects which also include Grannacionales. As such, the Bank fosters infrastructural, educational, socio-cultural and health developments through low cost credits with flexible repayment and without conditionality. In contrast to the undemocratic internal mechanism of the neo-liberal financial institutions, each member is equally represented in the decision making process of the Bank (Williams, 2009, p. 67).

Within the framework of ALBA cooperation, Cuba has sent 30.000 doctors and teachers to Venezuela, and helped to build thousands of clinics and schools in order to pull millions of people out of illiteracy and to provide them provide free health care (Hattingh, 2008, par. 8). As Hattingh (2008, pars. 9-10) mentions, ALBA helped Bolivia to expand its public schools and hospitals, to

develop its soy industry and to upgrade its gas sector to consolidate its energetic self-sufficiency. Similarly, a similar kind of socio-cultural and economic transformation has been largely promoted also in countries such as Nicaragua, Haiti and the Dominican Republic (Hattingh, 2008, pars. 11-12).

The transformative capacity of ALBA is clearly observed in the example of TELESUR, another regionalist initiative led by ALBA and created in 2005. TELESUR is qualified as the first multi-state public-service television channel in the world (Burch, 2007, p. 227). As Burch mentions, the goal of TELESUR consists of “developing and implementing a hemispheric televised communications strategy, of world-wide reach, to promote and consolidate the progression of change and regional integration, as a tool in the battle of ideas against the hegemonic process of globalization” (Burch, 2007, p. 227). In conformity with the bottom-upward structure of ALBA, TELESUR has not neglected the importance of the role of social movements and radical identity formation in the regionalization process of Latin America. Accordingly, TELESUR has set up a “Latin American content factory” which compiles video production from a variety of sources, including community television, social movements and independent producers with an alternative content (Burch, 2007, p. 231).

The transformative role of TELESUR in the new Latin American regionalization process appears to be more critical, considering the current structure of the Latin American media which suffers from a high level of concentration of ownership and a high level of content importation. Salö mentions that in 1996, 6 % of the total audiovisual imports to Latin America came from within the region as compared to 86 % of the imports which came from the U.S. In 1998, only 30 % of the TV programs originated from the region (Salö, 2007, p. 12). It is highly striking to observe that news about the region originate to a large extent from Western sources. In addition, less than one-third of the programs eventually originate from the region. While 70 % of the programming is imported, the U.S. contributes to the 62 % of the importation (Copley, 2005, par. 8). Under these circumstances, the role of TELESUR as a domestic and regional TV channel is critical in terms of socio-cultural transformation and radical identity formation in Latin America. In Mittelman’s language, TELESUR is a highly efficient instrument of radical identity formation and social transformation at inventing counter-hegemonic representations, creating a new common sense, propagating critical knowledge so as to challenge pre-given representations and the existing common-sense.

### ***UNASUR and the Bank of the South: Regional transformation in slow motion***

The foundation of UNASUR in 2008 could be also considered as a major development in the emergence of transformative regionalism in Latin America. As Bennett specifies, this organization corresponds to an “outgrowth” of the South American Community of Nations which was created in 2004 as an extension of the Andean Community and MERCOSUR (Bennett, 2008). According to the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR, the major aim of the organization consists of building “in a participatory and consensual manner, an integration and union among its peoples in the cultural, social, economic and political fields, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among others, with a view to eliminating socioeconomic inequality, in order to achieve social inclusion and participation of civil society, to strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of strengthening the sovereignty and independence of the States” (Zimmerman, 2008, par. 2). On the other hand, UNASUR, as an emerging initiative aiming at reducing the Latin American reliance on the U.S., has also attempted to establish a collective security mechanism in the region. In this direction, the South American Defense Council, considered as the “South American version of a NATO-style organism” was created under the umbrella of UNASUR (Jackson, 2009, p. 29).

The Bank of the South which was created in 2007 constitutes another fundamental pillar of the UNASUR initiative, considered as a very first step towards a “New Financial Architecture” in Latin America (Ponsot, 2009, p. 1). In 2008, following the Ministerial Meetings in Montevideo, UNASUR announced that the subscribed capital of the Bank was \$7 billion, while the authorized capital was \$20 billion (Ortiz & Ugarteche, 2008, p. 4). Similar to the Bank of ALBA, this bank was presented as a radical alternative to the existing neo-liberal financial institutions.

According to Hart-Landsberg (2009, par. 49), despite the fact that the agenda of the Bank of the South is much more limited as compared to that of the Bank of ALBA, its potential for the promotion of regional integration tends to be greater, since it includes most of Latin American countries. However, besides Brazil’s disinclination, the deepening of the global crisis has slowed down the process of regional financial integration through the Bank of the South.

### **Towards a new research agenda? The case of food sovereignty and mass education movement in Latin America**

As noted previously, the emergence of a transformative and counter-hegemonic regionalism in Latin America provides a significant amount of material for future researches in various fields. In parallel, the revolutionary mass education and food sovereignty movements are two promising areas within the framework of the transformative regionalism approach.

First of all, considering the transformative and hegemonic potential of the education, the new mass education movement in Latin America corresponds to a primary area of research. Secondly, the regionalization of food sovereignty in Latin America seems to be a quite relevant area for future researches in terms of the contribution of social movements to the regionalization process, given that the emergence of the food sovereignty movements in the Global South represents a brand new and promising topic in critical globalization and social movements studies.

The “transformative” and “counter-hegemonic” implications of the regionalization of the mass education in Latin America have been brought to agenda by Thomas Muhr. Muhr (2010a, pp. 47-49) specifies that the origins of the regionalization of the mass education in Latin America, i.e. the emergence of the so-called “HEFA governance regime” leans upon the regionalization of the Venezuelan “Higher Education for All” (HEFA) rationale. According to Muhr, the key elements of the HEFA regime consist of “the development of the common ALBA basic and medium education curriculum, a set of own ALBA quality indicators; and the mutual recognition of titles or diplomas awarded by ALBA programmes, from which close to 14.000 higher education students benefited in 2009” (Muhr, 2010a, pp. 48-49).

In the regionalization of the mass education within the ALBA members, the role of the ALBA Education Program Grannacionales is crucial. As Muhr (2010a, p. 48) mentions, the ALBA Education carried out the creation of numerous under-graduate and graduate programmes in medicine, education and oil geopolitics at the University of the Peoples of ALBA (UNIALBA) and the National Experimental University of the Peoples of the South (UNISUR). As described by Muhr (2010a, p. 48), UNIALBA is organized based on a satellite structure “with at least one ‘nodal’ university in each ALBA country”. On the other hand, UNISUR rests upon the existing Venezuelan educational infrastructure shaped by the Alma Mater Mission, a mission which aims at transforming Venezuela’s existing higher educational institutions and creating new institutions (Muhr, 2010a, p. 48). The Alma Mater Mission defines UNISUR as follows: “UNISUR is a Venezuelan university with an International profile oriented to solidarity-based cooperation, aimed at promoting the liberation and union of the Nations of the South through the development of education, research and social networking processes based on the recognition of political plurality and cultural diversity, the promotion of a pluri-polar, fair and supportive world, and the practice of an inclusive, transforming and liberating education” (Alma Mater Mission,

2009, par. 1). Accordingly, the Mission emphasizes that UNISUR represents a “collective, people-oriented, anti-hegemonic and revolutionary project” (Alma Mater Mission, 2009, par. 3). At this point, as a short reference to the “transformative regionalization” of the food sovereignty movements in Latin America which would be treated below, it is noteworthy to mention that the Latin American Agroecological Institute Paulo Freire (IALA) has been created within the framework of the Alma Mater Mission in collaboration with the Venezuelan government and two notorious social movements in the continent, MST and Via Campesina (Muhr, 2010a, p. 48).

The term “food sovereignty” was developed in 1994 by Via Campesina, an international peasants’ organization which is also a major member of the Council of Social Movements of ALBA, shaping the agrarian policies of the Latin American regionalization. As declared in the Declaration of Nyeleni in 2007, the “food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (*The Nyeleni Declaration*, 2007, par. 3). According to Bello (2009, pp. 136-137), the goal of self-sufficiency, the increasing role of state enterprises, cooperatives and small farmers in the agricultural production and the elimination of the rule of transnationals over the agricultural system are among the most fundamental principles of food sovereignty. In this regard, the ALBA integration challenges the rule of transnationals through the Grannacionales and accordingly prioritizes the role of state enterprises and cooperatives in the production process by also promoting the edification of food sovereignty in Latin America.

In fact, the problem of food sovereignty is an increasingly alarming question for Latin America, considering the fact that there are 52 million hungry people in the continent, and the annual increase of the number of hungry people between 2008 and 2009 was 6 million (Marquez, 2009, par. 1). As a response to this challenge, in 2008, the ALBA members decided to launch a regional alliance against the global food crisis and to create a food security fund of \$100 million (Venezuela World, 2008, par. 2), and they signed an Agreement for the Implementation of Cooperation Programmes in the area of Food Security and Food Sovereignty in order to promote the agro-industrial development for the production of cereals, leguminous, oilseeds, meats and milk (SELA, 2008, p. 4). In 2009, the members decided to create a supranational food company for the aim of “guaranteeing food sovereignty” in Latin America, with an initial investment of \$49 million (Suggett, 2009, pars. 1-3). The same year, the ALBA Food Programme allocated \$9 million for an agricultural project in Haiti which is the poorest country in Latin America, and also developed ten projects of \$13 million in eight different Latin American countries (Marquez, 2009, par. 18).

## Conclusions

In parallel with Katzenstein’s observations, the Latin American experience of regionalism illustrates the construction of new collective identities at the global level, as well as the re-affirmation and re-constitution of power of nation-states in world affairs. On the other hand, as opposed to Katzenstein’s arguments, the increasing importance of nation-states and regionalism does not pave the way for the consolidation of the U.S. hegemony but promotes a multidimensional understanding of regionalism which does not solely privileges the security and economic concerns in Latin America. As some proponents of the new regionalism school claim, the regionalization process as an outcome of the multipolarization of world affairs is rather a spontaneous and multidimensional phenomenon which promotes the “change” at the expense of the “neo-liberal stability”. In addition, as opposed to the old regionalism, the newly emerging regionalism does not correspond to a state-led and elitist process, but also includes social movements and promotes the plurality of identities as active elements of the new regionalization process.

Therefore, it has been argued that among different versions of the new regionalism theory, Mittelman's approach of transformative regionalism represents an efficient tool for not only grasping the Latin American reality as a whole, but also understanding the development of all these supra-individual identities, as well as the outcome of the relationships between them. Mittelman foresees the emergence of a new kind of regionalism which promotes a deep and bottom-upward socio-economic change within the society relying on an active cooperation between the social movements and states on the basis of an "alter-global" consensus. Therefore, the creation of PTAs, the ALBA Cultural Fond, the ALBA Houses, the Council of Social Movements, Grannacionales, TELESUR, the Bank of the South and UNISUR; each of these represents a particular instance of transformative regionalism in the continent. They all contribute to the process of inventing counter-hegemonic representations, creating a new common sense, propagating critical knowledge so as to challenge pre-given representations and the existing common-sense. In this respect, the case of the newly rising and regionalizing food sovereignty movements (the new food regime opposing the rule of transnationals) and of the regionalization of the mass education (the so-called HEFA governance regime opposing the knowledge hegemony of capitalism) is quite illuminating in terms of transformative regionalism.

### ***Policy Recommendations for Transformative Regionalism***

In this direction, based on Mittelman's approach of "transformative regionalism", one could draw several policy recommendations for a radical construction of new collective identities at the global level by linking national struggles through the formation of new regional identities. In the post-Cold War period, the rise of neo-liberalism fostered the increasing importance of identity politics in a paradoxical context which tends to centralize the wealth and power and to empower capital and the markets, while, on the other hand, impoverishing and fragmenting the subaltern classes. As observed in contemporary Latin America, transformative regionalism aims at forming a close alliance of strong states and vibrant civil societies for the democratic transformation of the top-down structure of neo-liberalism. This transformation necessitates the elaboration of an alternative and counter-hegemonic form of cultural resistance through the reinvention of the interactions between production and identity on the basis of a new conception of regionalism and democratic representation. Transformative regionalism does not rest on old regionalism's conventional tools limited to the economic integration and security concerns, but it also creates its own tools of socio-cultural inclusion and representation. However, since the process of identity formation under neo-liberalism depends upon an undemocratic and authoritarian structure which tends to subordinate the subaltern classes, some components of identities forged during the post-Cold War period could involve certain reactionary elements such as religious and ethnic fundamentalism. Thus, the role of transformative regionalism is not solely limited to the inclusion of all identities for their peaceful coexistence at all levels, but also consists of evolving the existing identity structures to form new collective identities on the basis of counter-hegemony, hence the term "radical identity formation" as opposed to "authoritarian forms of identity formation". In this manner, transformative regionalism constitutes a major tool in order to surpass the contradiction between local, national and global levels of identity formation, as well as to include and to empower the local identities in the project of "democratic globalization".

### ***A New Research Agenda for the Study of Transformative Regionalism***

On the other hand, this paper also attempted to indicate newly emerging research opportunities in regionalism and area studies, and to develop an alternative theoretical framework for future

researches, besides contributing to the formulation of new policy alternatives to neo-liberal forms of identity formation. The paper suggested going beyond the conventional understanding of regionalism, and focusing on understanding the current process of regionalization and its existing challenges such as the role of the social movements, the increasing significance of identity politics and the transformative capacity of the existing social agencies.

Most of previous research efforts on the new Latin American regionalism are limited so far to general inquiries, hence the continuing need for more specific research projects which would rely upon case studies and field researches. In terms of the transformative regionalism approach, the real challenge for future researches consists of displaying the implications of the involvement of social movements in the counter-hegemonic alter-regionalization processes and radical identity formations. More specifically, this paper suggests that initial research projects dealing with the paradigm of transformative regionalism could start with the problematics below which occupies the actuality of Latin American politics: the impact of transnational food sovereignty movements on the radical identity formation in the context of ALBA, i.e. the development of a radicalized peasant identity in Latin America, and the role of a regionalized mass education in the radical identity formation of the region.

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# Predictors of Attitudes Towards the Rights of Ethnic Minorities of Student Teenagers in a Romanian City

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## Abstract

*The article will endeavor to build a causal model of ethnic attitudes of students in grades 8 to 12 from a great Transylvanian city with a large Hungarian population. The theoretical model built at the beginning of the study was tested applying multivariate statistical techniques to data of a survey of about 2500 teenagers. My results show that attitudes about the rights of members of minorities are attributable to both individual and contextual factors. On the one hand, gender, cognitive constraints and self-esteem play an important role in this attitudinal make up. On the other hand, the relative positions on in-group and out-group in the special context of interaction – in my case the classroom – are playing important parts in determining how strong the biases will be.*

**Keywords:** Ethnic Attitudes, Romanians and Hungarians, Teenagers, Transylvania, Path Analysis

## Introduction

Explaining the birth of social attitudes is one of the main tasks of social psychology. Among this type of attitudes, a remarkable place is held by those referring to people of other ethnic belonging. The representation of people, members to other ethnic groups, is a critical topic in multiethnic settings, especially when these groups are in competition. In contrast with the permanent actuality of the subject of ethnic attitudes in Romania, especially in Transylvania, with a painful new start in an acute conflict that has happened two decades ago and which has gone through a dynamic path of recognition and/or competition ever since, the numbers of researchers dealing systematically with the processes of ethnic tolerance and intolerance socialization in Romania is rather low.

This paper will attempt to contribute to the development of an explanatory model of ethnic tolerance constitution via modeling the predictor of these attitudes in the case of secondary students – grades 8 -12 – enrolled in lower secondary schools (*gymnasium*) and high schools in a large Transylvanian city where an important Hungarian population lives along with the Romanian majority. I define ethnic tolerance as the willingness to provide economic, social and political rights to other ethnic groups. I will start my endeavor by setting up a theoretical framework of reference, then I will analyze the degree in which the variation of attitudes about minority rights can be explained using the various characteristics suggested by the theory.

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## Theoretical sketch of the genesis of ethnic attitudes

Perspectives of causes of ethnic tolerance and intolerance can be classified into two broad categories: individualist models, which emphasize individual variables, on the one hand, and contextual models, on the other, in which the explanation of reciprocal attitudes of majority and minority employs variables that describe the situation in which the interaction between the two groups takes place. In the following pages I will describe the main positions and assumptions of these two relatively vague theoretical families with the aim of guiding the empirical effort.

### Individualist models

In the early period of research devoted to ethnic tolerance, Samuel Stouffer (1955) asserted that intolerance is the natural disposition of individuals. His point of view was greatly reflective of the grim experiences of the Second World War and of the Cold War. Further theorizing in social psychology, especially Tajfel's famous works (1981) on social identity have later brought an important contribution to the understanding of the mechanisms by which intolerance or, on the contrary, the acceptance of those who are different, may appear as products of certain individual traits or of micro-interaction effects. Besides the assumptions of categorization, of the recognition of the likely impact of in-group/out-group differentiation, more recent developments of social identity theory have admitted the importance of psychological motivation of discrimination. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), the main psychological motive of discriminative behavior is that of enhancing positive distinction and self-esteem. Researches done later have shown that people with lower self-esteem tend to manifest more often discriminative behaviors and attitudes, although a causal relationship was not firmly established (Brewer, 2003).

Gender also appears among the predictors of ethnic tolerance. Because they suffer higher levels of discrimination, girls perceive least ethnic discrimination or ethnic identification (Agirdag, Van Houtte, & Van Avermaet, 2010; Maxwell, 2009). Thus, in various contexts, men appear displaying more in-group and out-group biases as well as less tolerance concerning members of other ethnic groups.

Research on ethnic tolerance has among the most solid results noticed in the positive relationship between the dependent characteristic and education (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003; Gaasholt & Togeby, 1995). One explanation would be that education frees people from cognitive constraints, helping them to tune in with the liberal-democratic principles of ethnic tolerance. An alternative causal mechanism is invoked by the socialization theory: the negative correlation between education and nationalism or ethnic exclusionism is due mainly due to the dissemination of the democratic value systems through the education system (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003). I have found a similar argument when researching the covariates of acceptance of gender equality (Hatos, 2009). This socialization effect can be indicated by age, by school results or by the type of educational institution i.e. by the length of staying in school, by school engagement and by the educational success proven by the type of school the student is enrolled in – in the case of upper-secondary students.

Moreover, it can be assumed that the manifestation of a contextual political socialization effect can be apparent at individual level and might differentiate the attitudes of minority students – mostly Hungarians – from those belonging to the majority group. Thus, the emancipationist discourse of the Hungarian elites has strongly emphasized the ideas of equality and tolerance between majority and minority in Romania. Such an approach is instrumental for the Hungarian minority considering the inferior political status of Romanian Hungarians' ethnic institutions. Considering the Hungarians status in Romania, and especially the presumed effect of exposure to such a discourse, it is plausible the hypothesis that Hungarians will support equality in rights between majority and minority on a larger scale.

The impact of education can interact with other predictors: according to Gaasholt (1995), minority

students in Denmark – mostly immigrants – with lower educational achievements are more tolerant, though, than their better achieving colleagues from the majority group due to their more intense participation in civic organizations which might have, again, an effect of lowering cognitive constraints. On the other hand, Coender's (2003) comparison between European nations suggests that the impact of education is influenced by macro-cultural factors like the democratic traditions of the country. This last plausible relationship cannot be tested with our data which is only at one country-level.

Heated debates aroused in the late fifties of the previous century when Lipset (1959) argued that working classes, more than any other social classes, are predisposed to authoritarian and anti-democratic attitudes including intolerance against out-groups. One would expect that, according to Lipset, the measure of tolerance be correlated with indicators of socio-economic status and social background with their various dimensions accounted in my research: educational capital, material and cultural capital, as well as external indicators of background material status, like situations of international migration and the absence of one or the other of the parents. However, as the many criticism of this theory have shown (Dekker & Ester, 1987), Lipset's theory resisted little to its many revisions. Therefore, my article will test if proof for the existence of such a 'working class authoritarianism' actually can be found in my data and if it resists checks for its robustness.

## Contextual factors

Employing contextual variables to explain ethnic attitudes relies on famous models like that of the structural theory of heterogeneity and inequality of Blau (1977) or the more operational one of ethnic attitudes proposed by Allport (1979), Blalock (1967) and Massey, Hodson and Sekulic (1999). All of these theories approach the nature of the effects of between-groups interactions on mutual attitudes and consider that the reciprocal acceptance of minority and majority is the result of specific population arrangements as well as of power distribution, especially when happening in ethnic enclaves.

According to the 'contact hypothesis', as it is mostly known, diversity fosters interethnic tolerance and social solidarity. However, several conditions have to be fulfilled for interethnic contact to produce increased tolerance. Research testing the contact hypothesis provide more evidence in favor of the alternative argument, the conflict hypothesis (Putnam, 2007) according to which, usually, diversity produces an increase in in-group and out-group bias. Allport had already asserted in 1955, in his famous book on the nature of prejudice, that one of the preconditions of positive effects of interaction between different ethno-cultural groups is the equal status of the groups. In 1992, a meta-analytical synthesis by Mullen, Brown and Smith (1992) concerning the tests of Allport hypothesis shows that in-group bias is increasing in positive relationship with the group's relative status in laboratory settings, but decreases, in fact, in field investigations. Another research review, written by Pettigrew (1998), suggests that contact lowers prejudice without the results being, though, very conclusive in this regard. In an inquiry of ethnic attitudes made on a sample of 10.000 inhabitants of Yugoslavia, right before the ethnic clashes that led to the disappearance of that country, Massey and his collaborators (1999) conclude that ethnic intolerance is the strongest in ethnic enclaves, the most intolerant of all subjects being the members of the majority caught in enclaves dominated by the minority, this exacerbation being explained by the resentments and the restrictions to their power which their situation is inducing. Moreover, members of minority groups living in enclaves were less tolerant than in the situation of dispersal among members of the majority, which is a reaction to the power derived from their status of majority and to the anxiety of being member of minority, as well.

All the mentioned researches suggest variations in the attitudes regarding minority groups as function of the composition of the collectivities in which minority and majority group members are living together. On the one hand, between-group contact – I think first of Romanians and

Hungarians – can, according to the contact hypothesis, lessen tensions and increase tolerance. On the other hand, the relatively unequal status between groups can induce an upsurge of intolerance. Thus, I expect intolerance to be significantly higher among students of Romanian ethnicity placed in classrooms where Hungarians are in a majority where, as in the Yugoslav case, the resentments provoked by the limitations to their dominant status can lead to the rejection of the out-group. In an analogous way, Hungarian students in classes where they are in majority should be less tolerant as a reaction to the increase in their power that their enclave situation brings in or, on the contrary, they could be more tolerant, if we are to follow the Yugoslav model described above. Important questions are generated by the rests of situations derived from the other possible combinations which include ethnicity and the ethnic composition of educational collectivities.

## Data and method

I have used the data set resulted in the 2007 survey of the research project entitled ‘Teenagers – future citizens’ (N=2988 grades 8-12, Grant A 497/2006 from the Romanian National University Research Council.) to test some of the predictions based on the theoretical blueprint. In order to do that I have modeled the variation in the score of attitude towards minorities recorded by teenagers who were at that moment students in Oradea according to a set of predictors retained from the theory. Novel in this approach is the introduction of a dichotomous variable which distinguishes classes with a Hungarian majority from the rest, which get the value 1 when the proportion of Hungarian students reaches at least 75%.

## The dependent variable

The above mentioned survey included a scale designed for measuring attitudes about the rights of ethnic minorities which I have adapted from the questionnaire that was used in the IEA’s international research on civic education (Cived)<sup>2</sup>. Then, the items were named, simply, attitudes about women and attitudes regarding minorities (Schulz & Sibberns, 2004).

**Table 1:** *The distribution of tolerance items (N=2988, grades 8-12, Oradea)*

	<b>Totally against</b>	<b>Rather against</b>	<b>Rather in favor</b>	<b>Totally in favor</b>	<b>DK/NA</b>
Members of all ethnic groups should have equal chances to a good education	2.7	5.5	28.2	52.0	11.6
Members of all ethnic groups should have equal chances to obtain good jobs	2.8	5.8	27.3	53.0	11.1
Schools should teach students to respect the members of all ethnic groups	3.3	6.8	28.2	49.2	12.4
Members of all ethnic groups should be encouraged to run for public offices	5.0	12.7	32.5	29.5	20.3

<sup>2</sup> The items in the IEA Cived survey were referring to immigrants. This is the reason international comparisons with our data are not possible.

Confirmatory factor analyses show that the above items are grouped along a single factor which corresponds to attitudes towards minorities. The alpha Cronbach of the scale is 0.72.

The relatively large number of missing values made the imputation of values, for those who answered *Don't know* or provided no answer, unfeasible. The attitude measure, constructed as a sum of the four items, was computed on a subset of 2488 cases, while the missing cases added up to 477 cases.

Other variables involved in the analysis are described in table 2.

**Table 2: Independent variables in the analysis**

Variable	Measurement	Description
Gender	Dummy (1=male)	Males: 47.2%
Age	Numeric	Average age: 16.1
Type or residence	Dummy (1=rural)	Rural residence: 26.6%
Ethnicity	Dummy (1=Hungarian)	Hungarians: 14.0%
<b>Socioeconomic background</b>		
Education of mother less or equal lower secondary	Dummy (1=yes)	Mother with low education: 7.6%
Education of mother - at least higher education	Dummy (1=yes)	Mother with higher education: 23.1%
Mother housekeeper	Dummy (1=yes)	Mother housekeeper: 14.7%
Education of father (1=higher education)	Dummy (1=yes)	Father with higher education: 23.7%
Material endowment of the family	Numeric – count of expensive goods at home. from a list of 7	Average of material endowment: 4.9
Cultural endowment at home	Numeric – count of cultural goods at home. from a list of 3	Average of cultural endowment: 1.19
<b>Family structure</b>		
Number of siblings	Numeric	Average of number of brothers: 1.4
Father absent	Dummy (1=yes)	Father absent: 4%
Mother absent	Dummy (1=yes)	Mother absent: 1%
Father left for work abroad during the last year	Dummy (1=yes)	Father abroad for work last year: 10.5%
Parents have divorced during the last year	Dummy (1=yes)	Parents divorced: 9.3%
<b>Student adjustment and cognitive constraints</b>		
Student's GPA in the previous semester	Numeric	Average GPA: 8.8
Type of school	Dummy (1=theoretical lyceum)	Theoretical lyceum: 49.5%
Self-esteem	Numeric – measured using a 6 item variant of Rosenberg's scale of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965)	Average self-esteem: 18.8
<b>Context</b>		
Ethnic composition of the class	Dummy (1=above 75% Hungarians)	Students learning in classes where Hungarians are more than 75%: 11.7%

## Results

The main assumptions from the literature were tested using multivariate procedures: OLS regression in a first phase and path analysis secondly. I will start by presenting the results of the OLS regression, the discussion being completed with the results of the path model.

Although the data used are nested, checks for Inter-correlation coefficients, that suggest if the within group homogeneity of dependent variables is large enough to make a multi-level approach necessary, proved that the effects of clustering are rather weak. Thus, for the within schools inter-class correlation I have obtained a value of 0.041, while the within classrooms inter-class correlations insignificantly higher: 0.054. This might suggest that the variations in attitudes about minorities are accountable mainly to individual factors, rather than to contextual ones measured at the level of school collectivities. Moreover, based on these computations, I have rejected the necessity of using multi-level modeling in the further multivariate analyses.

The OLS regression tested the linear effects of all independent variables on the dependent one. For the sake of simplicity, I publish only the effects that are significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 3:** OLS regression of attitudes toward minorities (only significant effects are published)

	B	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig
<b>(Constant)</b>	11.455	0.714		16.039	0.000
Ethnicity (1=Hungarian)	0.789	0.312	0.127	2.534	0.011
Main ethnic group in the classroom (1-Hungarian)	-1.176	0.330	-0.185	-3.536	0.000
Mother's education (1=higher education)	-0.427	0.154	-0.073	-2.698	0.007
Mother's occupation (1=housekeeper)	-0.398	0.181	-0.074	-2.790	0.005
Parents abroad for work (1=father abroad)	-0.536	0.205	-0.063	-2.386	0.028
Gender (1=male)	-0.884	0.137	-0.181	-6.538	0.000
GPA in the previous semester	0.309	0.081	0.111	3.903	0.000
Self-esteem	0.062	0.022	0.075	2.757	0.006
<b>Variables without significant parameters at the 0.05 threshold</b>					
Type of school (1=theoretical lyceum)					
Place of residence (1=small town)					
Place of residence (1= rural)					
Absence of parents (1=mother absent)					
Age (in years)					
Parents have divorced during the last year (1=yes)					
Father's education (1=Higher education)					
Endowment of home with cultural goods					
Mother's education (1=Lower secondary)					
Number of siblings					
Father's occupation (1=worker)					
Material endowment of home					
Religion (1 = Neoprotestant)					
Parents abroad for work (1=mother abroad)					
Parents absence (1=Father absent)					

The above model has a relatively low determination coefficient ( $R^2=0.08$ ) suggesting that, perhaps, a different approach for modeling attitudes towards minorities might be more feasible. Besides this frustrating result, the parameters are a little surprising. The most important effect is that of classroom ethnic composition: belonging to a class where most of the students are of Hungarian background brings an important lowering of the tolerance towards minorities score. Considering the fact that belonging to the Hungarian ethnic group translates into an increase of the tolerance of minority rights, this impact of the class' ethnic composition can be interpreted in at least two ways: either we deal with a radicalization of attitudes in the situation in which members of the minority are reunited in homogenous collectivities (enclaves) or the recorded effect applies mostly to Romanians and those belonging to other ethnic groups than the Hungarians which are enrolled in classes in which most of the students declare themselves Hungarians.

**Table 4:** Average of attitudes toward the rights of minorities according to the ethnic composition of the class

				Attitudes toward the rights of minorities
Class with a Hungarian majority (>75%)	No	Student's ethnicity	Other	13.48
			Hungarian	14.26
	Yes	Student's ethnicity	Other	12.05
			Hungarian	13.22

Table 4 clarifies the puzzling effect of ethnicity and class ethnic composition. Hungarians and the others (98% are of Romanian descent) have similar values of the score of attitudes toward the rights of the minorities when they are in majority. Minority status, relative to the composition of the classes, affects in different ways the attitudes of Romanians and Hungarians. (Considering the size of Romanians in the 'Other' group, one can call it the Romanian group, for the sake of the argumentation.). Accounting for a minority, Hungarians in classes with sizeable Romanian component have scores of dependent variable which are larger than in any other cases, while Romanians in Hungarian enclaves proved the lowest scores of tolerance of rights of minorities. When they are in majority, both Romanian and Hungarian students display similar ways of perceiving the proper distribution of rights for the majority. If we reject an uncontrolled socialization effect, one can speculate that the relative status of persons belonging to the two ethnic groups, when they are in collectivities in which the in-group is in numerical majority, or at least is large, are similar. Referring to Massey's theory. I infer that for Hungarians, classes with a majority of the in-group members do not function as enclaves.

These results partially confirm the expectations based on the contextual theories of Allport and Blalock on the dependence of tolerance. Students from the lower status group, i.e. the Hungarians, increase their levels of tolerance when they are dispersed in the majority group, while those with the higher status are frustrated or resentful when they are captive in enclaves of minorities. Moreover, the attitudinal reaction of Hungarians which are in a minority position suggests that the rhetoric of ethnic tolerance is instrumental for the members of the minority groups in settings in which they are in smaller proportion than the majority.

Measures of background educational capital also have a surprising impact upon the dependent variable. There is an apparent paradox here since both the holding of a higher education degree by the mother and her occupation in low status jobs have the same effect of increasing intolerance. This might be justified by a non-linear relationship between the status of the family and ethnic attitudes, a working hypothesis which finds proof in the analysis of the relationship between the education of the mother and the dependent variable.

**Table 5:** Averages for attitudes about the right of minorities by levels of education of mothers

		Attitudes about rights of minorities
Last school finished by mother	Less than 8 grades or equal	13.23
	9-12 grades, including baccalaureate and vocational school	13.47
	Post-upper secondary school, technical school, college	13.64
	Higher education	13.39
	I don't have a mother	13.28

The table shows a reversed U shape relationship between the two variables. Thus, the most intolerant students are those from families poorest or richest in educational capital, while tolerance is at maximum for students with mothers with middle level certificates.

Tri-variate analyses of the above relationship, controlling it for ethnicity or the father's education, do not help in clarifying the situation and thus the impact of the mother's education on ethnic attitudes remains an interesting open-ended question<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, the parameters of the occupational status of parents confirm our hypotheses: low status of the mother, working abroad in case of the father, corroborated with the above mentioned effect of the mother's low status show that intolerance is rather inherited in low status families, a result that probably also reflects the fact that tolerance is a cultural effect of well-being, as the theorizations of Inglehart (1999) emphasize. The significant effects of the mother's status indicators, compared to those of the father's, which are all non-significant, could also raise questions.

Surprisingly, on the other hand, being male has a strong effect on the dependent variable: boys are much less tolerant than girls, this being, in fact, one of the strongest effects. At this level of the analysis I can only speculate that intolerance is part of gender role, competitive and aggressive, which is systematically internalized by the boys in our country. Such an effect had been already recorded in a systematic manner in the IEA data of the CIVED survey from 1999, where it was emphasized that girls are readier than boys to admit access of immigrants to various entitlements. In this regard, Torney-Purta and his collaborators (2002) are forwarding several hypotheses: either girls are educated to be more conformist, or are expecting in a lesser degree than boys to be in competition for jobs with members of other ethnic groups or, finally, because they have suffered some forms of discrimination are more able to show empathy from this perspective. From this last perspective, could the great discrepancy in attitudes between boys and girls at this early stage in their life reflect the imbalance in power between the two gender categories? Or is it rather an indicator of anticipatory socialization: preparing the girls for a life of discrimination and exclusion entails making them more tolerant and less resentful?

The rest of the parameters are in convergence with the theory: tolerance increases in line with cognitive sophistication, as the parameter of GPA shows, and with self-esteem as well, supporting thus the thesis that intolerance appears as a consequence of a psychological motivation to solve a low self-esteem.

Several unanswered questions remain regarding our research issue. Thus, the fact that the mother's education has, in contrast to the education of the father, a significant effect is an interesting specificity. The same is true in the case of the relationship of the parents' educational capital and tolerance where we have evidence of a negative correlation which is, however diminished by the student's own academic accomplishments. A possible explanation could be formulated in terms of competition for status positions: the negative reaction of those from educated families may reflect the frustrations that competition for status brings about if it is biased by restriction of access to various positions due to ethnic monopoly in ethnically heterogeneous collectivities.

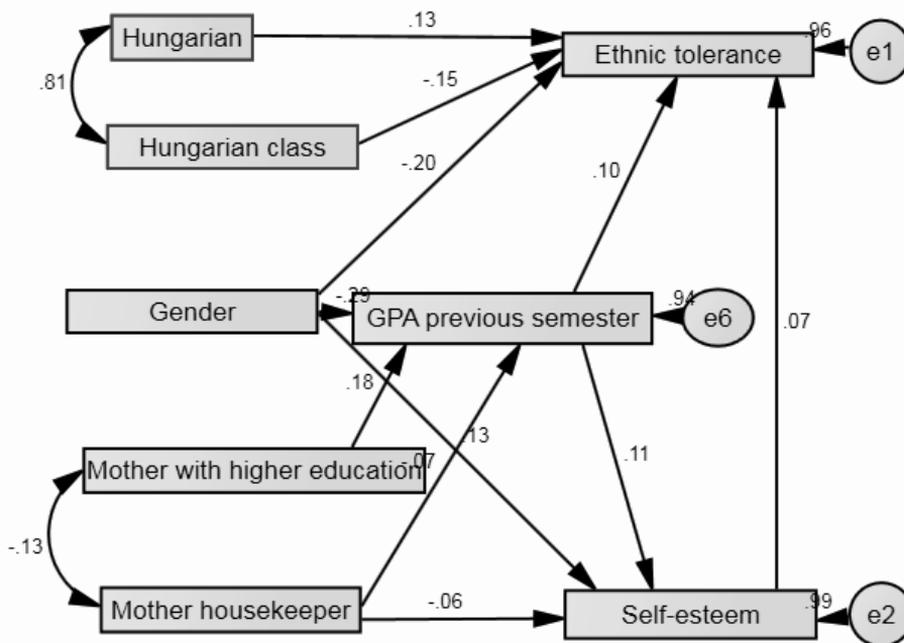
Further studies will have to address the methodological limitations of our verificationist exercise. The most urgent requirement is to adequately test the impact of ethnic composition of educational collectivities, taking into consideration the clusterization effects, though the ICC's at both levels – of class and schools – are rather low. On the other hand, most probably non-random missing values, with large frequencies for some variables including the dependent one, could have distorted the regression parameters. Finally, some of the variables might have been affected by reliability issues due to prestige reactions – like indicators of socio-economic status or of academic accomplishment.

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3 I have tested this relationship also using the data of the first wave of the research, that were collected in 2006 and the results proved to be slightly different: the correlations seems to be rather negative, such as students whose parents hold higher education degrees are the least tolerant. In the 2006 data, the relationships are similar for the mother's and father's education.

**Path model**

A methodological problem that can be overcome by our data set is that of clarifying the causal relations among variables for which the cross-sectional character of the data does not incur insurmountable difficulties. Path modeling therefore allows a welcomed clarification. The model created on the basis of theoretical grounds and of the conclusions supported by the OLS regression does not change dramatically what I have already underlined: the context of interaction and the relative status in these situations, ethnic belonging and gender are the most powerful predictors of attitudes about the rights of members of ethnic minorities. Being a boy, for instance, poses a double menace to tolerance: a direct one, indicated by the effect of gender on the dependent variable and an indirect one through the massive negative impact of being of male gender on academic results.



**Figure 1:** Path model of ethnic tolerance (CFI=0.987, RMSEA=0.034)

Nonetheless, the path model suggests that, in contrast with the OLS regression's results, socio-economic status does not have a direct impact on the investigated attitude but one that is mediated through academic achievements and self-esteem. In other words, tolerance for the rights of members of ethnic minorities has a class component. We can, therefore, talk about 'the intolerance of the popular classes' which is explainable, according to my results, through the serious cognitive constraints that affect the students from social categories with lower educational and economic capitals. My very important result from the above path diagram is that 'working class intolerance' is not produced directly by a deprived social environment but mediated through channels of psycho-sociological adjustment, indicated here through academic performance and self-esteem.

**Table 6:** *Parameters of the path model*

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
GPA	<---	Mother housekeeper	-0.170	0.049	-3.478	***
GPA	<---	Male	-0.518	0.034	-15.046	***
GPA	<---	e6	0.832	0.012	68.255	***
GPA	<---	Mother with higher education	0.370	0.041	8.980	***
Self-esteem	<---	e2	2.907	0.038	76.742	***
Self-esteem	<---	GPA	0.348	0.071	4.924	***
Self-esteem	<---	Mother housekeeper	-0.500	0.152	-3.293	***
Self-esteem	<---	Male	0.763	0.113	6.733	***
Ethnic tolerance	<---	e1	2.407	0.037	65.799	***
Ethnic tolerance	<---	Hungarian	0.938	0.254	3.696	***
Ethnic tolerance	<---	GPA	0.280	0.067	4.176	***
Ethnic tolerance	<---	Male	-0.984	0.110	-8.944	***
Ethnic tolerance	<---	Self-esteem	0.056	0.018	3.153	.002
Ethnic tolerance	<---	Hungarian class	-1.182	0.274	-4.307	***

\*\*\*<0,001

## Conclusions

The variables that I have used in my multivariate models have limited capacity to explain the variation of the attitudes towards the rights of the members of minority groups in the sample. However, from the OLS regression and the results of path analysis several important inferences, regarding the theoretical assumptions, can be made.

Thus, both contextual and individual factors - ethnic belonging, ethnic composition of classroom, gender and academic achievement have sizeable impact on the willingness to recognize the rights for minorities. The results generally confirm the psycho-sociological literature that highlights that contact has an effect upon in-group/out-group biases depending on the relative status of the groups which is also partially a function of the composition of groups in which interaction happens. Members of minority groups are the most tolerant, proving the internalization of the liberal discourse of tolerance which is instrumental for status preservation, while members of the majority, which found themselves in minority enclaves, are the least tolerant, as a reaction to frustrations generated by the restrictions to their power and status.

Yet, the effect of gender is the strongest in the path model, highlighting either the pervasive attitudinal effects of the widespread patriarchal culture in which Romanian teenagers are socialized or the known effect of 'girl tolerance' which springs from their general weaker social position and possible anticipatory socialization for a social career of discrimination and exclusion. On the other hand, the strong impact of GPA emphasizes the fact that tolerance is a function of eliminating cognitive constraints when democratic principles are taught. Another significant result is that, if one can talk of a 'working class intolerance', as Lipset proposed several decades earlier, it is rather mediated through measures of psychological and social adjustment – in our case academic accomplishments and self-esteem – which are the actual direct effects of socio-economic background.

Several important limitations apply to the above mentioned conclusions. First, the data used in the analysis are not exactly complete to fit the requirements to assess the contact hypothesis. Interaction settings measured in the data – ethnic composition of the classroom – do not cover all the plausible contexts for interethnic interaction of our subjects. Thus, my data set did not contain data on the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood or of families' social networks. Extending

the analysis to this aspect could help shed more light on the soundness of the contact hypotheses. Secondly, as one can infer, the number of cases corresponding to some of the situations referred to in my research are rather low for robust conclusions. This is, for example, the case of Romanians that are students in classes in which the majority of the students are Hungarians: their number is 30, which is 1% of the entire sample.

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# Integration, Identity and Participation in a Changing Europe

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## Abstract

*The paper analyzes the prospects of building European identity in the changing environment of the EU enlargements. Drawing on data from Eurobarometer surveys, the study specifically looks at citizens' perceptions and images of EU and their availability to participate in European affairs. The article points out different views about the meanings and expectations regarding the EU project. Although both national and international contexts play a significant role in fostering specific representations of EU, there is no clear-cut divide between the citizens of "old" and "new" Member States (MS). Instead, one can notice a more complex picture in terms of identification with the EU. In general, people from different MS tend to feel on average more attachment to their country (and sometimes to their own village/town/city) than to the EU. Moreover, individuals from "old" MS do not necessarily have higher levels of attachment to the symbols of EU than those living in "new" MS. In addition, the level of effective knowledge on how EU actually works remains at relatively low rates throughout Europe, regardless of a country's date of accession to the EU. Consequently, the socialization effects of the European integration process seem to remain weak in terms of fostering the emergence of European identity.*

**Keywords:** Integration, Identity, Participation, Socialization, European Union

## Introduction

European identity encompasses multiple meanings and there are many ways in which this controversial concept can be defined, depending on the theoretical perspective one adopts (Bruter, 2009; Carey, 2002; Eder, 2009; Fossum, 2003; Lacroix, 2009; Quintelier & Dejaeghere, 2008). Previous research dealing with this topic points out at least two divergent strands of argument in the academic debate about European identity. The first one is based on a top-down normative approach aiming to answer the following question: *who can be considered European and who cannot?* From this perspective, the relevant and core elements of what can be defined as European identity rest both on a set of common values, principles and norms on the one hand, and a set of rights and duties basically sanctioned in the regulations regarding European citizenship, on the other hand. The second strand of argument is based on a bottom-up perspective of European identity which basically starts from an empirically testable question: *who feels European and who does not?* This approach defines European identity as a feeling of belonging, identification and attachment with Europe and particularly with EU's institutions, processes and policies. I adopt the second approach outlined above.

In this paper I shall discuss the prospects of building a European identity. More specifically, I plan to evaluate if there is a socialization effect of European integration in terms of fostering both the emergence of European identity and stimulating public participation in European affairs. The main research question explored here is whether the EU integration process has developed

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a sense of allegiance that is sufficient to sustain it as a legitimate political entity. This sense of belonging and identification with Europe is important since it points to citizens' feedback to the EU's processes and policies aimed at building a sense of European identity which could constitute the basis for citizens' participation and democratic legitimacy of the Union (Fossum, 2003; Petithomme, 2008).

The basic argument for this collective identity formation process is that Europe needs a *demos* conscious of itself (Eder, 2009), and the identity of this *demos* as a constituent of the European democratic polity can be constructed in time, through continuous exposure to EU's symbols, institutions, processes and policies. This is, in a simplified manner, the main argument put forward by the supporters of the European socialization process. The empirically testable implication of this argument is that citizens of countries with a longer EU membership time span will report both higher levels of knowledge of EU institutions and mechanisms, and more intense feelings of attachment and identification with EU's institutions and norms.

Contrary to these claims, this paper aims to point out that building European identity is not simply a matter of time. In this sense, state membership in the Union, even if it has been granted 50 years ago, seems to remain weak in terms of fostering the citizens' feelings of attachment and identification with the EU, its institutions and symbols. Therefore, integration and longer exposure to the EU's institutions and policies constitute no guarantee that: a stronger sense of belonging to the EU will emerge in the future, more attachment to its institutions and symbols will be fostered, and public participation in European affairs will increase.

The paper proceeds in four sections. First, I shall outline the socialization effect hypothesis and its main implication for European identity formation. Then, I shall proceed with a section concerning data and the methods used in this paper. Afterwards, I shall present and discuss the main findings of the study and finally, draw the conclusions of the paper.

## The Socialization Effect Hypothesis and Its Implications on European Identity Formation

Empirical research on European identity most often adopts some variants of social identity paradigm (Eder, 2009). Social identity theory was originally developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. From this perspective, identity is a set of perceptions about "us" as individuals or as a group in relation to: other individuals or groups; our position in the social system(s). Consequently, building social identity refers to a process of drawing difference, of distinguishing one's social group from others (Brettell & Sargent, 2006). An individual has multiple social identities since social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002, apud. University of Twente, 2004). In other words, it is an individual-based perception of what defines the "us" associated with any *internalized group membership* (University of Twente, 2004).

Social identity theory asserts that group membership creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group. According to Eder (2009, p. 432), social identity paradigm is useful because it allows us to use existing survey data which measure the degree to which people start to be 'proud' of their 'institutions' (or at least to trust them) and 'identify' with Europe. Moreover it allows research on identification with symbolic representations of European institutions such as a flag, an anthem, a representative building, or the memory of common celebrations. Such symbols are made the object of 'knowledge' or 'identification' with Europe (Eder, 2009). However, Eder (2009) criticizes social identity theory as a paradigm for researching European identity because it inappropriately assumes that strong identifications and good knowledge of EU symbols and institutions imply strong identities. He also argues that there is a long way from identification to identity. Despite these arguments, to

which I subscribe to a certain degree, I believe this approach might be useful in revealing the weak feedback of citizens to the EU-led identity building mechanisms, which tries to reinforce its citizens' belief in the purpose of the organization.

The basic arguments of the European socialization effect hypothesis start from defining EU as an "output oriented democracy". This means that EU's legitimacy is derived mainly from its capacity to promote policies that solve complex problems at EU level (Petithomme, 2008). Conceiving EU as an output-oriented democracy is based on a well-documented observation pointed out by organizational research: all organizations tend to reinforce their members' belief in the purpose of the group. This process is broadly defined as "socialization": communication and the subsequent internalization of the group's norms and the value of the organization and its activities (Payne, 1991). Following the same logic, fostering EU's legitimacy would imply that EU as an organization would persuade its citizens that its institutions and policies are valuable and worthy of popular support. Moreover, it is believed that, in the long run, the benefits provided by the EU (for example in terms of peace, security and prosperity) and enjoyed by its citizens, would foster the emergence of a sense of belonging and identification to EU as a polity (Petithomme, 2008).

Within the European socialization approach, identity formation is conceived as a top-down multiple stage process. This means that, first, European elites would promote integration of European states into a common organization (i.e. the EU). Then, in response to the benefits of integration and to the socialization process led by EU's institutions, the citizens of EU would gradually develop a sense of European identity (Petithomme, 2008). In a simplified manner, the main idea of socialization thesis is that European integration would gradually foster European identity. The explanation of this rests on the argument that continuous exposure to EU's symbols and the continuous institutionalization of the EU's system of governance would stimulate the process of European identity formation (Bruter, 2005, apud. Petithomme, 2008). Consequently, according to this top-down approach, EU's institutions play the active role of socialization agents building European identity, while the citizens are giving feedback to the EU's institutions in this identity formation process. In this paper, I shall examine only the latter part of this identity-making process, namely the way citizens respond to the socialization efforts of EU's institutions.

The socialization effect hypothesis has significant implications which are empirically testable with the Eurobarometers' data. For instance, if the socialization effect hypothesis is correct, one should expect that data aggregated at national level would point out a continuously growing number of persons identifying with EU as they are exposed for a longer time span to the EU institutions and policies. This is what Bruter (2005, p. 38, apud. Petithomme, 2008) explicitly asserts: "the emergence of European identity in a given country is closely linked to the date of EU membership." In other words, this means that citizens of "older" MS would display a stronger sense of European identity than those of "new" MS, since the former category has been exposed to the European socialization process, on average, for a longer time span. This also implies that citizens of "old" MS hold a better knowledge of the way in which EU actually functions than individuals from the "new" MS; citizens from the "old" MS are more familiarized than citizens belonging to "new" MS with the common norms, values and symbols on which European identity could eventually be built.

## Data and Methods

In order to test the potential socialization effect of European integration, I shall compare Member States (MS) grouped according to their date of accession to the EU. More specifically, most of the comparisons are between "old" and "new" MS in terms of their citizens' knowledge, identification and attachment to the EU institutions, processes and symbols. I created a new grouping variable

of the respondents (having the values: 1. Old MS, 2. New MS) and added it to the original Eurobarometer datasets. In the group of “old” member states I included the respondents which live in countries that have acquired the EU membership status until 1995 (EU15).<sup>2</sup> In the group of “new” MS, respondents from countries of Central and Eastern Europe, along with Cyprus and Malta, were included<sup>3</sup>. The paper is based on systematic comparisons of the data available from the Eurobarometer surveys commissioned by the European Union in 2006, 2007, and 2009. In some instances where data are available, I presented different trends using a longer time span. The data were collected from all EU’s 27 member states, as well as from candidate countries (although these are not included in the analysis).

## Results

### *Information on European issues*

In order to meaningfully participate in European affairs and feel attachment to the EU project, people need to have a certain level of information about the way EU functions institutionally. This level of knowledge about EU can be analyzed on at least two dimensions: subjective and objective. The subjective level of perceived amount of information about EU political affairs is usually measured in Eurobarometer (EB) surveys by asking respondents two types of questions: one concerns the perception of respondents about their own level of information on EU and the other one concerns the respondents’ perception about the level of knowledge about European issues of people living in their own country<sup>4</sup>. The objective level of knowledge is usually measured in EB surveys by asking interviewees different quiz types of questions about EU, its institutions and procedures.

Regarding the subjective dimension, Europeans generally feel that their compatriots do not have enough information about European political affairs. For instance, in EB67<sup>5</sup> from the spring of 2007, only around 22 percent of the respondents believe that people in their country are very well or fairly well informed about European political affairs. In the same EB<sup>6</sup> survey, the perceived level of information slightly rises when interviewees are asked about their own knowledge about EU, about 30 percent of the Europeans consider that they are well informed about European political affairs. The perceived level of information about the EU’s institutions and policies seems to have remained relatively constant over time. For instance, data in EB66<sup>7</sup> report from Autumn 2006 points out that the relatively low level of subjective knowledge about EU seems to be persistent over time: about three quarters of the Europeans, questioned in different EB surveys from 2000 to 2006, declare that they know a bit or almost nothing about EU, its institutions and policies.

Figure 1 points out very small differences between old and new MS in terms of the percentages of the interviewees believing that, in their country, people are well informed about EU political

2 Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

3 Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

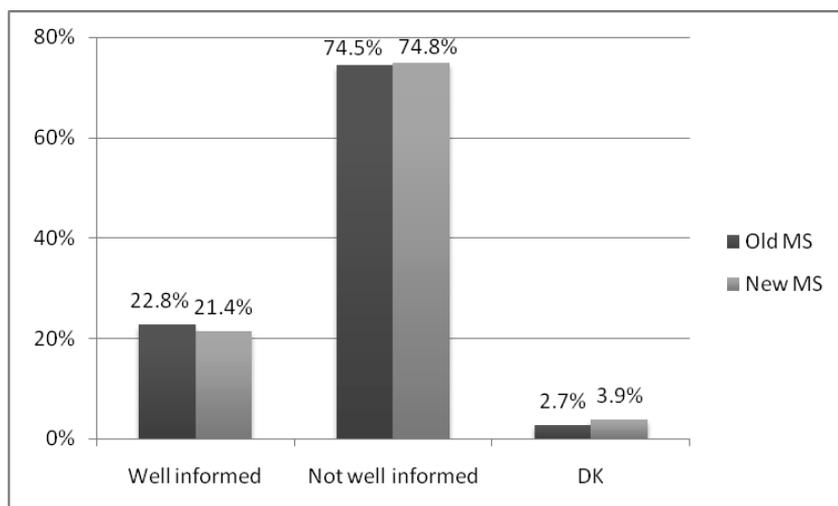
4 Usually these questions are asked in a slit ballot scheme as was the case in EB67 where half of the respondents were asked one question and the other half responded to the other question.

5 Question QA22a in EB67: “Overall, do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY), people are well informed or not about European political affairs?” p.120.

6 Question QA22b in EB67: “Overall, do you think that you are well informed or not about European political affairs?” p. 125.

7 Question QA14 in EB66.1: “Using this scale, how much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions”, p.147.

affairs<sup>8</sup>. This small difference between respondents from old and new MS (22.8% compared with 21.4%) is proven statistically significant by a Chi Square test of association [ $\chi^2(2) = 12.08$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ], mainly due to the large sample we use here ( $N = 13436$  valid cases). However, the effect size coefficient, Cramer's  $V = 0.03$ , indicates an extremely low association<sup>9</sup> between the variable which groups the respondents into old and new MS and the variable<sup>10</sup> concerning the perceived level of information about EU.



**Source:** own elaboration based on EB67, QA22A: “Overall, do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY), people are well informed or not about European political affairs?”

**Figure 1:** *Perceived level of information about EU political affairs in “old” and “new” Member States*

We can discern the same pattern of responses in the case of personal knowledge about EU issues. Respondents in old member states tend to report in a slightly higher proportion that they are well informed (“very well” and “well informed” categories in the original EB67 dataset)<sup>11</sup> about EU political affairs compared to interviewees in new member states (31% compared to 29.2%). While this small difference is statistically significant [ $\chi^2(4) = 76.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ], the effect size of the relationship remains weak, Cramer's  $V$  coefficient = 0.076, for  $N = 13280$  valid cases.

Objective knowledge about EU was measured in EB67 (Spring 2007) via a set of 3 “quiz” types of questions about: the number of MS of the Union; the way the European Parliament is elected; and the mechanism of establishing the President of the Council of the European Union<sup>12</sup>.

8 Among both group of countries, Slovenia is the only country where this opinion is shared by the majority of people interviewed (51% consider that their compatriots are well informed). This opinion is shared by 42% of interviewees in Luxembourg, 37% in Denmark, Estonia, Ireland and Malta, 35% of Latvians and 32% of Austrians and Slovaks. On the other hand, support for this opinion is far lower in Portugal (9%), Cyprus (12%), Bulgaria (14%) and Romania (15%) (EB67 full report, p. 120)

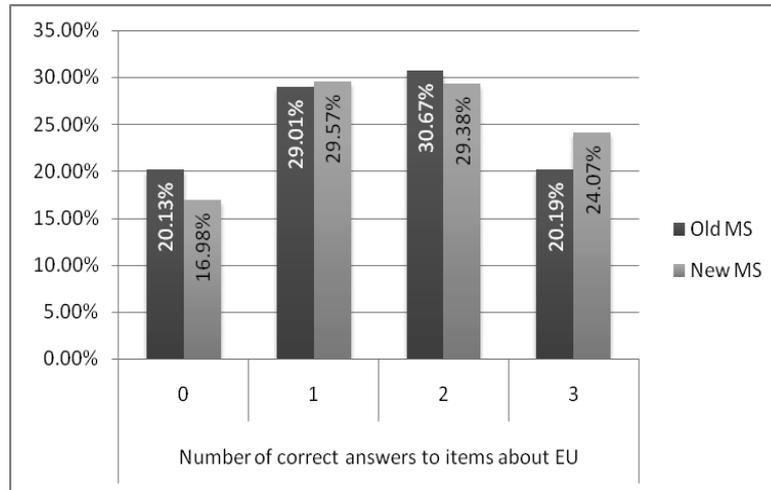
9 The effect is below 0.10 which is Cohen's (1988) criterion for a weak effect size.

10 Responses to QA22a were re-coded in this analysis from five categories (1 = „Very well informed”, 2 = „Fairly well informed”, 3 = „Not very well informed”, 4 = „Not at all informed”, 5 = „DK”) to 3 categories (1 = „Well informed”, 2 = „Not well informed”, 3 = „DK”).

11 For cross-tabulating the grouping variable of countries (old and new MS) and responses to QA22b I used the original 5 categories in EB67 (1 = „Very well informed”, 2 = „Fairly well informed”, 3 = „Not very well informed”, 4 = „Not at all informed”, 5 = „DK”).

12 QA17, EB67: “For each of the following statements about the European Union could you please tell me whether you think it is true or false? 1. The EU currently consists of fifteen Member States; 2. The members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens

On average only half of the Europeans correctly evaluated the statements presented in the survey, namely 57.3% correctly answered that the number of MS is not 15, 45.4% indicated that the members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the people, 48.5% of the respondents knew that every six months a different MS took the Presidency of the Council of the EU.<sup>13</sup> Almost 80% of the Europeans correctly answered to at least 1 question, while only 20.8% correctly evaluated all 3 items in this quiz set.



Source: own elaboration based EB67, QA17

Figure 2: Objective knowledge about EU

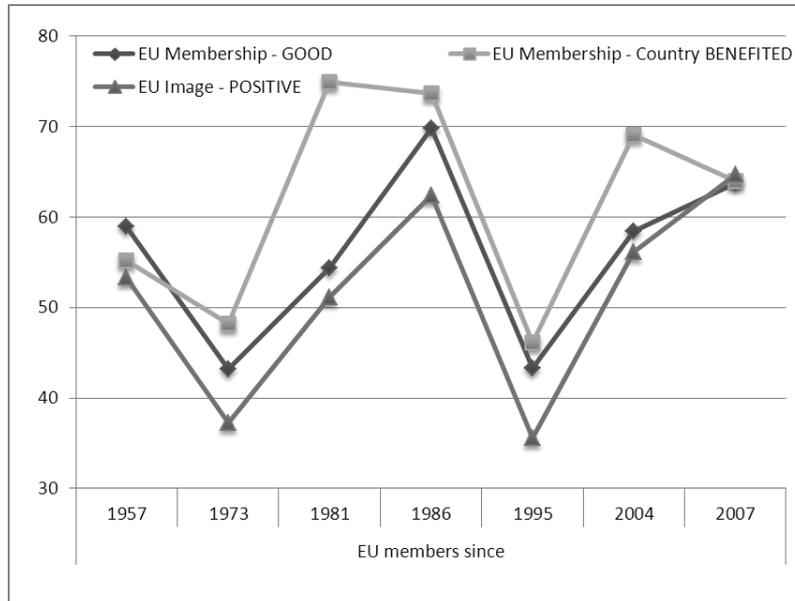
Figure 2 shows the percentage of correct answers obtained in old and new MS. We notice that percentages of the two groups are very close in the middle categories (1 and 2 correct answers), while they tend to diverge more on the extreme categories (0 and 3 correct answers). On the category of most knowledgeable Europeans (i.e. 3 correct answers), respondents from new MS outperform interviewees from old MS (24.07% compared to 20.19%). In order to test if there are statistically significant overall differences between respondents of old and new MS we have applied the Goodman and Kruskal *tau* test (the Lambda test showed the relationship insignificant,  $\lambda=0$ ,  $p=0.872$ , probably due to the higher concentration of values, around 60% of respondents, in the middle categories, 1 and 2 correct answers). Even if the Goodman and Kruskal *tau* = 0.001 is statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ), it's very small value points out an extremely weak influence of membership "status" (old versus new MS) on the objective level of information about EU held by the respondents. If we take into consideration the average number of correct answers, we can notice again that respondents from old MS lag behind interviewees from new MS (1.51 compared to 1.61 correct answers). The difference is small but statistically significant according to *t* test [ $t(25026) = -5.513$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. However, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, the effect size of membership status (old vs. new MSS) on the level of objective knowledge is practically negligible ( $r = 0.034$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.069$ ).

of the EU; 3. The members of the European Parliament will be directly elected by the citizens of the EU; 4. Every six months a different Member State becomes the President of the Council of the European Union." I excluded from my analysis the third item of this set since it was asked only to subsample of the respondents (N=1689) from new MS.

13 While this statement was correct at the moment when the EB67 survey was carried out (Spring 2007) it is no longer correct now, after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. Treaty of Lisbon creates the function of President of the European Council elected for two and a half years, eliminating so the previous 'rotation' mechanism evaluated by the respondents of the survey used here.

### *Perception of European Union's image and membership benefits*

The image of EU (positive/negative) seems to be closely linked both to the way respondents evaluate their countries' membership to the EU (good/bad thing) and the benefits resulted from this membership. Figure 3 presents the relationships between these variables, grouping the respondents from the 27 MS according to each country's accession year to the EU.



**Source:** Own elaboration based on EB67: QA9A, QA10A, QA11

**Figure 3:** *Perception of EU's image and membership benefits*

The lines in this figure represent percentages of respondents in each group of countries who believe EU membership is a good thing for their country; their country benefited from EU membership; and have a positive or fairly positive image of EU. The trend is more or less similar for all three lines: the groups of countries where respondents tended to have higher/lower percentages at one variable also tend to have higher/lower percentages at the other two variables. The pattern of convergence between the three lines is best illustrated in the case of the 2007 EU accession group (Bulgaria and Romania), where the values on all three variables coalesce around 64%. On the other side, the distance between the percentages is higher in the cases of the 1981 MS (Greece) and 2004 MS group (Countries from Central and Eastern Europe plus Cyprus and Malta), where the respondents, although they believe in quite a high proportion that their country has benefited from EU membership, report in a relatively lower proportion that EU membership is a good thing and that EU has a positive image in their view. We can also notice that there is no linear trend concerning the positive image of EU (i.e. "older" MS do not necessarily have a more positive image than "newer" MS).

The graphical illustration of the relationships between the variables presented above is also confirmed by the statistical tests of association. For instance, the respondents for whom EU has a positive image<sup>14</sup> also tend to consider EU membership a good thing<sup>15</sup>, in every group of countries regardless of the year of accession to the EU (Spearman's Rho is above 0.500, and significant at  $p < 0.001$  for each of the 7 accession groups), indicating a strong correlation between the variables. As figure 3 already pointed out, there is a lower association between EU's positive image and the perception of the benefits EU membership has for respondents' country ( $\lambda$  symmetric ranges between 0.154 and 0.314, at  $p < 0.001$  for each the 7 accession groups). At the same time, there are significant differences between the groups of countries belonging to the 7 EU accession waves (Kruskal Wallis  $H(6) = 1083.477$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The highest difference in terms of positive image of EU is between the citizens of the 1973 group (Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark) and the citizens of the 2007 group (Bulgaria and Romania) (Mann Whitney  $U = 1267896$ ,  $z = -22.021$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.33$ ).

### ***Attachment and identification with EU and its symbols***

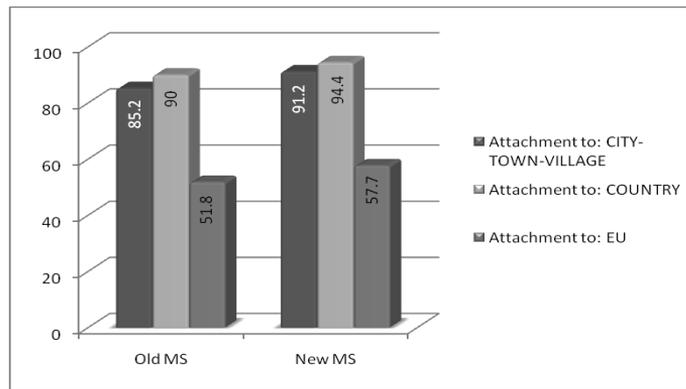
Most Europeans feel more attachment to their own country or even to their city/town/village than to European Union. The same pattern is discernable when we compare the attachment level of respondents from old and new MS (see Figure 4<sup>16</sup>). In both old and new MS, respondents tend to feel more attachment first to their own country, then to their own locality and lastly to European Union. However, the reported levels of attachment to all three entities mentioned above are slightly higher in new MS compared to the old MS (85.2% compared to 91.2% for the attachment to own city/town/village, 90% compared to 94.4% for the attachment to own country and 51.8% compared to 57.7% for the attachment to the EU). Although these differences are statistically significant, the effect size of membership status (old versus new MS) on the attachment to the European Union remains practically very low (Goodman and Kruskal  $\tau = 0.001$ , at  $p < 0.001$ ).

Mobility also seems to be related to the attachment to the EU. EB67 (2007) indicates that respondents born in a European Union country other than the country where they currently live are more likely to feel attached to the European Union (65% versus a European average of 53%). According to the full report of EB67, this observation is also held true in the case of respondents whose parents were born in a European Union country other than the one where they currently live: the same percentage of respondents in this category (65%) feel attached to the European Union. However, the effect size of both the national background of the respondents and their parents on the attachment to the EU remains very weak (Goodman and Kruskal  $\tau = 0.001$ , at  $p < 0.001$ ).

14 I recoded QA11 inverting the original values so that 1=very negative, 2= fairly negative, 3=neutral, 4=fairly positive, 5=very positive.

15 I recoded QA9A inverting the original values so that 1=Bad thing, 2=Neither good/nor bad, 3=Good thing

16 Graph bars represent percentages of those who answered they feel: 1=very attached and 2=fairly attached to each of the 3 entities represented by the variables in the legend of the graph.



Source: own elaboration based on EB66: QA33\_1, QA33\_2, QA33\_4

Figure 4: Local, national and European loyalties

According to EB67 data, almost all Europeans are familiar with the European flag (95%), believe it is a good symbol for EU (85%) and that it stands for something good (78%). However, when it comes to identify with this symbol, we can notice a diverse picture. For instance, the Dutch have, on average, similar levels of identification with the flag as individuals from Turkey which is not even a member state. In addition, old members as Germans and Italians show similar levels of identification like new members, such as Poles, Czechs and Slovaks.

While on average 54% of Europeans tend to identify themselves with the EU flag, respondents from new MS report higher levels of identification with this symbol, compared to their counterparts from old MS (55.5% compared to 53.6%). The difference is even higher if we look at the interviewees who report that they don't tend to identify with the EU flag (39.6% in old MS and 30.5% in new MS<sup>17</sup>). Chi Square test of association [ $\chi^2(2) = 394.102, p < 0.001$ ] proves these differences to be statistically significant. However, the effect size coefficient, Cramer's  $V = 0.121$ , indicates a low association between the variable which groups the countries of respondents into old and new MS and the identification with the EU flag variable.

Identification with the EU flag is related to several variables linked to the EU's image. As one should expect, Europeans who evaluate their country's EU membership as a good thing tend to identify with the EU flag in higher proportions than those who believe EU membership is a bad thing [ $\chi^2(4) = 2725.65, p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.229$ ]. Similarly, those who believe their country has benefited from EU membership identify themselves in higher proportion with the EU flag, compared to those who believe their country has not benefited from EU membership [ $\chi^2(4)^{18} = 2623.70, p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.222$ ]. In the same way, those which hold a positive image of EU are more prone to identify with the EU flag [ $\chi^2(8)^{19} = 4090.04, p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.279$ ]. Trust in EU is also associated with the identification with the EU flag [ $\chi^2(4)^{20} = 3972.06, p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.273$ ].

17 The difference to 100% is represented by those who answered *Don't know* to this question QA43\_3 in EB67.

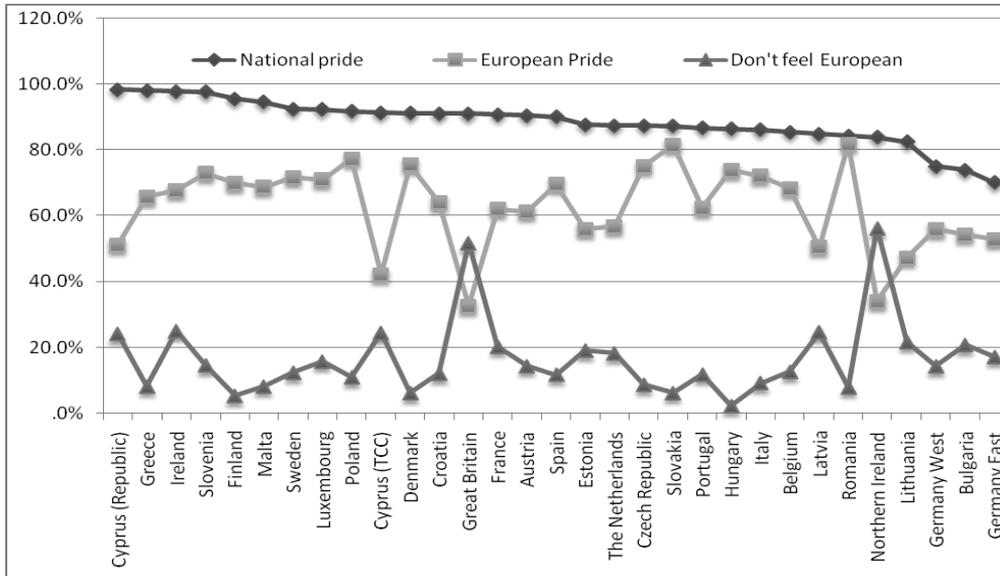
18 The "Don't Know" category was included in the statistics for the Chi Square test, although this category of responses is not included in Table 1, for space economy reasons.

19 For computing this  $\chi^2$  test, I the recoded question QA11 (1=very negative, 2= fairly negative, 3=neutral, 4=fairly positive, 5=very positive) which has been collapsed in Table 1 into 3 categories for space economy reasons.

20 For computing this  $\chi^2$  test, I used the original question QA16\_7 which also includes the "Don't Know" category which has been omitted in Table 1 due to space economy reasons.

### *National and European identities*

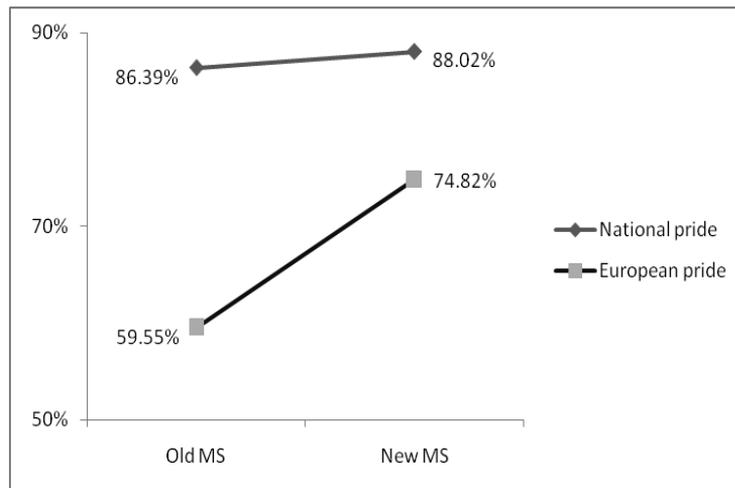
The relationship between national and European identities seems to be complex and does not necessarily follow an exclusionary pattern (i.e. either national or European). Figure 5 points out that national pride remains at higher rates than European pride for every country included in the EB 66.1 survey, carried out in autumn 2006. National and European prides display very close levels in Romania and Slovakia, whereas the difference between the two prides is the highest in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Cyprus (and also the Turkish Cypriot Community). However, there is no clearly discernable pattern of relationships at country level.



**Source:** own elaboration based on EB 66.1: QA31 and QA32. For each question I present the percentages inside the first 2 categories of answers: “1. Very proud 2. Fairly proud” of being [European]/[Nationality]. I also included the responses to “5. Don’t feel European” category of question QA32.

**Figure 5:** National and European prides

At individual level, national and European prides are positively correlated; therefore some of the respondents who exhibit higher levels of national pride also tend to have higher levels of European pride. The influence of one type of pride on the other, although statistically significant, remains relatively modest in terms of effect size (Spearman’s rho = 0.238, N = 23131,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, if we split the sample into two groups (respondents from old and new MS), we get a higher correlation coefficient for the new MS group (Spearman’s rho = 0.351, N = 4466,  $p < 0.001$ ) compared to the old MS group (Spearman’s rho = 0.210, N = 18665,  $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, national and European prides seem to be more closely linked for citizens of new MS (more ‘inclusive’ in terms of displaying both national and European prides in the same time) than for citizens of old MS (who are more ‘exclusive’ i.e. either national or European pride). The relationship between the two types of pride in old and new MS is graphically illustrated in Figure 6.



**Source:** Own elaboration based on EB 66.1, QA31, QA32. For each question I present the percentages inside the first 2 categories of answers: “1. Very proud; 2 Fairly proud” of being [European]/ [Nationality]

**Figure 6:** National and European prides in “Old” and “New” MS

Respondents from new MS exhibit on average higher levels of both national and European prides. While the difference between the two groups in terms of national pride is small (86.4% in old MS and 88% in new MS), the difference is much larger for European pride (59.65 in old MS compared to 74.8% in new MS). The difference between the levels of national pride in old and new MS is proved statistically insignificant by a two-samples Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ( $K-S z = 1.096$ ,  $N = 24115$ ,  $p = 0.181$ ), while the difference of European pride is statistically significant, although the effect size of old/new MS variable on European pride is low ( $K-S z = 10.776$ ,  $N = 23386$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.07$ ). The difference between national and European prides is higher inside the old MS group (86.4% compared to 59.6%) than inside the new MS group (88% compared to 74.8%).

If we combine national with European pride<sup>21</sup>, we obtain 4 categories of respondents: those who exhibit neither national, nor European pride; those with national pride only; those with European pride only; those with both national and European prides. Table 2 compares the proportions of these 4 categories of respondents in old and new MS. The percentage of respondents who exhibit both EU and national prides in new MS is higher than that in old MS (70.5% compared to 56.4%; the EU27 average is 59.5%). Conversely, ‘exclusive’ national pride is more frequent in old MS than in new MS (30% compared to 17.6%, EU 27 average is 27.3%), while the ‘exclusive’ European pride is more present in new MS (4.4% compared to 3.1%, EU 27 average is 3.4%). In old MS the percentage of the respondents with neither national, nor European pride is higher than in new MS (10.5% to 7.6%, EU27 average is 9.8%). Overall, there are statistically significant differences between respondents from old and new MS in terms of types of pride they exhibit [ $\chi^2(3) = 435.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer’s  $V = 0.132$ ].

21 I recoded both national and European pride into dichotomous variables (No, not proud/ Yes, proud of [NATIONALITY]/ [EUROPEAN]). Then, I computed a new variable (“Type of pride”) combining the recoded national and European pride variables.

**Table 1:** *Types of pride in 'Old' and 'New' MS*

Type of pride	Old MS	New MS	EU27
No pride	10,5	7,6	<b>9,8</b>
Only European pride	3,1	4,4	<b>3,4</b>
Only national pride	30,0	17,6	<b>27,3</b>
Both national and European prides	56,4	70,5	<b>59,5</b>
<b>Total</b>	100,0	100,0	<b>100,0</b>

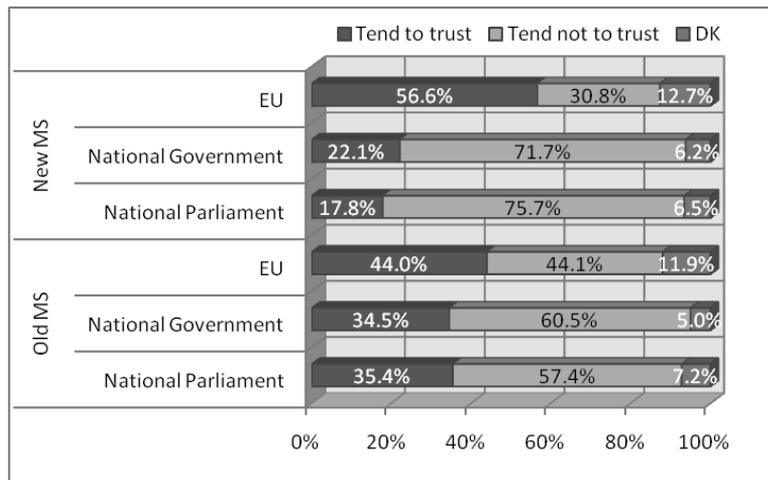
\*% on columns.

**Source:** own elaboration based on EB66.1 dataset

In terms of perceiving their identity, the majority of EU27 respondents to EB66.1 (question QA30) consider themselves to be not only national citizens, but also European ones. For instance, 16.4% of them often view themselves as national and European citizens (16.7% in old MS and 15.1% in new MS), 39.6% do so sometimes (37.9% in old MS and 45.8% in new MS) and 44% think of themselves as only national citizens (45.4% in old MS, 39.1% in new MS). Consequently, respondents from new MS tend to think of themselves as both belonging to a nation and to Europe in higher proportions than respondents in old MS. The differences discussed above are statistically significant, but the effect size is very low [ $\lambda(2) = 0.026$ ,  $p=0.005$ ].

### ***Identity, participation and the future of Europe***

Citizens in new and old MS report different levels of trust in European and national institutions (see Figure 7). On average, individuals from new MS have higher level of trust in EU than their counterparts from old MS (56.6% compared to 44%,  $\chi^2(2) = 351.06$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.114$ ). However, the situation is reverted when it comes to national political institutions. Respondents from new MS have lower levels of trust in their national Government (22.1% compared 34.5% in old MS,  $\chi^2(2) = 321.15$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.109$ ) and Parliament (17.8% compared to 35.4% in old MS,  $\chi^2(2) = 691.75$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.161$ ). Overall, Europeans tend to trust more the EU than their national political institutions regardless of their residency in old or new MS. But, as figure 7 points out, the difference in trust levels for EU compared to trust in national institutions tends to be higher in new MS. One potential explanation for the lower trust in national institutions in new MS might be the dissatisfaction with the functioning/efficiency of these institutions and also the perceived degree of corruption which is attributed to them by some of the respondents.

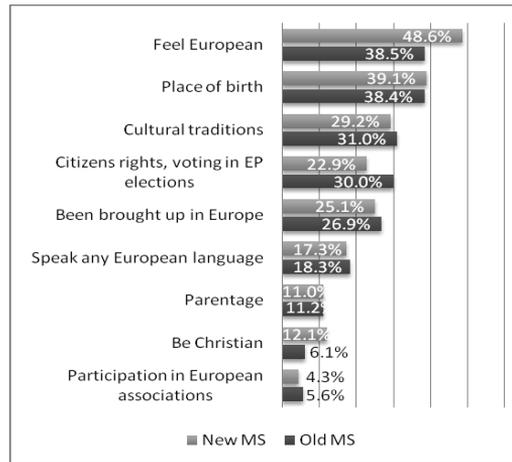


Source: personal elaboration based on EB71.3, July 2009: QA9(3,4,5)

Figure 7: Trust in EU and national institutions

Citizens from old and new MS have more or less the same conception regarding the most important characteristics of being European. Figure 9 shows that, with a few exceptions, respondents from old and new MS gave the same order of importance to the characteristics of being European listed below. Feeling European is perceived to be the most important element of European identity (48.6% in new MS, 38.5% in old MS,  $\chi^2(1) = 190.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.08$ ). Being born in Europe and cultural traditions are also considered to be relatively important by similar percentages of respondents from new and old MS (39.1% compared to 38.4%, the difference is not significant at  $p < 0.05$ , respectively 29.2% compared to 31%, the difference is not statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$  level).

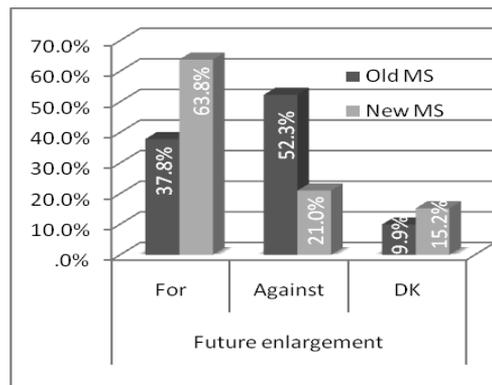
More than one in four Europeans (EU27, 28.5%) believe that to exercise citizenship rights and especially voting in European elections constitute an important characteristic of being European. On this item, respondents from old MS score higher than interviewees from new MS (30% compared to 22.9%,  $\chi^2(1) = 112.59$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.065$ ). Internalizing specific EU granted rights as a core element of identity might be an important characteristic for making up a civic dimension of European identity. Conceiving identities in these terms could have important consequences for the willingness of citizens to participate in European affairs. Identification with EU in terms of civic rights and duties is believed to be one of the factors which might engage political commitment and participation (Wessels, 2005). For instance, turnout rates in the European Parliament elections of 2004 and 2009 were significantly higher in old MS than in new MS (MS10 for 2004 elections and MS12 for 2009 election). Wessels (2005) finds support for the hypothesis that low identity goes with low turnout or what he calls the *political community deficit hypothesis*. According to Wessels (2005), one of the explanations (among many others) for the lower turnout in European elections lies in the fact that the perception of EU as a political community based on civil and political rights and duties is weaker in the East than in the West. This seems to be in line with our finding that citizens in old MS, in a higher proportion than their counterparts from new MS, attribute to European identity the elements of participation and engagement, such as voting in elections, which are specific to a legitimate political community.



% of respondents choosing items as important for being European  
**Source:** Personal elaboration based on EB71.3, July 2009: multiple response set QE3 (items 1-9).

**Figure 8:** *The elements of European identity*

Regarding the future of EU, the views of citizens from old and new member states converge on most of the potential priorities of the Union in the next years (i.e. social and health issues, economic affairs, fighting crime, foreign policy, education policy, cultural policy, etc.). Nevertheless, there are also several issues on which they diverge (i.e. immigration policy, environment issues, climate change have a greater salience in old MS, while issues related to internal market, solidarity of regions, and energy issues are more salient in new MS). However, further enlargement of the EU to include new countries in the coming years is among the issues on which the greater divergence exists between citizens of old and new MS. Figure 9 points out that respondents from new MS tend to favor future enlargement of EU in a much higher proportion than interviewees from old MS. An important majority of 63.8% in new MS are for enlargement, compared to only 37.8% in old MS. On the other side, the majority of citizens in old MS are against further enlargement (52.3%), while only 21.0% in new MS believe that other countries should not be excepted in the Union [ $\chi^2(2) = 1792.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.258$ ].



**Source:** personal elaboration based on EB71.3, 2009, QA15(2)

**Figure 9:** *Further enlargement of EU*

## Conclusion

Despite being subjected to socialization processes in different national and international contexts, citizens of “old” and “new” EU member states display a certain degree of convergence in terms of conceiving and expressing their European identity. Contrary to what supporters of the European socialization effect hypothesis might claim, there is no clear-cut divide between the citizens of “old” and “new” EU member states in terms of identification with the EU. Moreover, the level of perceived and effective knowledge on how the EU actually works remains at relatively low rates, regardless of the date of accession to the EU. Despite longer exposure to EU’s institutions, individuals from “old” member states do not necessarily have higher levels of attachment to the symbols of the united Europe (i.e. flag) than those living in “new” member states. In general, there are no striking differences between citizens of old and new MS in terms of supporting EU integration, and in terms of their evaluations concerning EU’s image and benefits of their country’s membership to the Union.

Citizens from Western and Eastern parts of the Union have relatively convergent views about the priorities of the EU, displaying similar levels of optimism/pessimism concerning the future of the EU. The most striking difference concerning the future of the EU project is related to further enlargements, most of the people from new MS being in agreement with it, while a majority in old MS is against. Citizens in old and new MS share similar views on what the most important things for being European are (place of birth, cultural traditions, language, etc.). The levels of participation in EU politics are at relatively low (and decreasing) rates throughout Europe, but they are even lower in member states from Central and Eastern Europe.

People from different EU member states have a mix of multiple collective identities, which might compete but also might reinforce each other. In this mix of identities, European identity is at the moment not the dominant one, as citizens of Europe still tend to feel on average more attachment to their country (and sometimes to their own village/town/city/region) than to the European Union. Compared to European pride, national pride remains at higher levels in each EU member state, although the difference between the two types of pride is bigger in old MS. This might suggest that the narratives on which national identities are built in old MS could be more binding and more exclusive than in new MS. Comparing data on national and European prides reveals that citizens in new MS are more prone to accept and add a European layer to the national/local ones.

The relative convergence of old and new MS in terms of European identity could be interpreted both as good and bad news for evaluating the prospects of building European identity. It is good news, since convergence in the ways European identity is perceived in different member states provides a strong basis for the development of a coherent European Union, recognized as such by its citizens. On the other hand, convergence is bad news, since after decades of exposure to the institutions and policies of EU, citizens of “old” member states have not really progressed in terms of developing a sense of strong European identity. From this point of view, the socialization effects of the European integration process seem to remain weak. Without a shift in the integration paradigm, there are small chances that the EU will increase its effectiveness in terms of fostering the emergence of a European identity.

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# Lifeform: An Explanation of Prejudices of Young People

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## Abstract

*In the present article we intend to point out the relationship between prejudice and national concepts in different national contexts among students. We tried to justify that the explanation based on the view of prejudices by Fuchs and Case - according to whom prejudice is not an attitude but a way of life - is valid in different national contexts. For this reason the procedure was applied in our survey in order to validate the conception in three (Hungarian, Finnish, Russian) different cultural-political contexts, and also to use it as a reference model in determining the explanation of prejudice. The second aim was to reveal the structural relationships between the national attitudes of the model and attitudes towards minority groups.*

**Keywords:** Prejudice, National Attitude, Lifeform, Survey Research, Comparative Analysis

## Introduction

A number of research shows that strong prejudices towards minority groups are characteristic to young people living in disadvantageous socio-cultural life-environment (Murányi, 2005). Could that explain that prejudice is mainly typical for those young people whose cultural, family and living circumstances are in one way or another marginalized or characterized by some kind of social disadvantage? In a former study (Murányi-Szabó, 2007) we tried to answer this question with the help of the explanation based on the conception of prejudices introduced by Fuchs and Case (1989). According to Fuchs and Case “... *prejudice is not an attitude, but a way of life*” (1989, p. 302), i.e. embedded in the entire life situation. It can be connected to the concept of ritual density. *High ritual density* is a result of continuous interactions within unchanged group boundaries, characterized by shared experiences and restricted linguistic codes. Most interactions in closed groups are performed according to similar patterns. *Low ritual density* is a result of interactions within open group boundaries. High ritual density is a more presuming prejudice, while low ritual density is a resulting tolerance. The variety of group memberships and the

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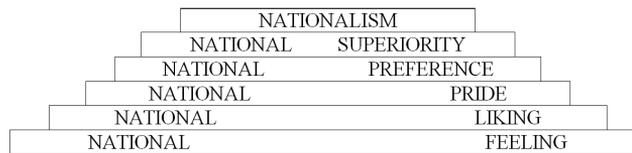
differences between group norms encourage group members to choose alternative interpretations or participate in interactions according to various "rites" (Fuchs-Case, 1989).

The data of the previous study were collected in a survey carried out in 2005 with five thousand respondents, all high-school students from four Hungarian counties and the capital (Budapest). In the study the attempt was made to find an empirical explanation along Fuchs's and Case's conception about *why* socially disadvantaged students attending lower prestige high schools are more prejudiced than young people belonging to other social groups. We noticed that the questionnaire was suitable for the examination of connections between ritual density and prejudice. One group of variables was related to prejudice (acceptance and rejection of members of peer minority groups, the importance of problems relating to minorities) and the other group of variables was related to lifestyle (media consumption, association activity, family communication, free time activities). We proved that the bias of students is manifested in rejection of their minority peers, as well as their standpoint regarding to the importance of minority issues as an organic part of their way of life, which depends on their social position. The differences in prejudices between the groups, characterized by different ritual density, show that basic norms and values are acquired by an individual being a member of different collectivities. The respective group membership is a central part of the overall socialization process, thus it is understood as a sequence of interactions.

In 2008 we had an opportunity to approach the question in the framework of an international comparative research. We tried to justify that Fuchs's and Case's conception is valid in different national contexts and different age-groups. For this reason the procedure (the same questionnaire, though adapted to national circumstances) was applied in our survey in order to validate the conception in three (Hungarian, Finnish, Russian) different cultural-political contexts on the one hand and also to use it as a reference model in determining the explanation of prejudice on the other hand.

In addition to the mentioned task we expanded the original (Hungarian high-school students' survey, 2005) questionnaire with a new viewpoint. We wanted to examine the structure of attitudes organized around the notion of the nation and explore the relationship between national sentiments and attitudes towards minority groups. The model of H. Dekker and D. Malová (1995) stands out among the few empirical investigations which focused on nationalism as a political orientation. According to their approach national attitudes can be conceptualized as a set of attitudes towards one's people and country, differing in strength and affect. Nationalism is merely one of the component attitudes of the set. Empirical research has shown that the component attitudes of the model (national feeling, national liking, national pride, national preference, national superiority and nationalism) are discrete sentiments organized into a cumulative hierarchy. The concept of nationalism, that is used in this paper was developed by Dekker (1996) and his colleagues. They argued that in the field of nationalism research the most important obstacles are the poorly defined concepts, and they showed that the concept of nationalism is used in the literature to cover four main categories, often in a rather confusing way. In some contexts nationalism means a political ideology or a political movement, in other contexts it indicates the process of nation building, and finally it stands for a particular political orientation of individuals. Focusing on the political orientation of individuals they pointed out that the concept of nationalism is frequently considered to be identical for a number of different national orientations (such as national consciousness or national feeling, national identity, loyalty to the nation, patriotism) and it is also used as an "umbrella concept" intermingling separate dimensions (such as belief in kinship or blood-tie, the desire for separation, the wish for pure or homogenous nations, ethnocentrism and so on).

In order to clarify the concept of nationalism further - as an attitude of certain individuals - Dekker and Malová introduced a complex structural model of national attitudes. In this model nationalism is one of the building blocks. They hypothesized - and empirically validated - six main attitudes related to the concept of one's own country and people. The six attitudes differ in the kind of affect they are (positive, negative or neutral) and in the strength of the feeling itself. The most basic one - national feeling - is neutral and denotes the feeling of being part of the nation. The other five are assumed to be positive in the basic model. The five positive attitudes are national liking, national pride, national preference, national superiority and nationalism.

**Table 1:** *The structure of national attitudes*

The attitudes are arranged into a cumulative hierarchy, that is, they indicate separate and hierarchically arranged stages of attitude development in the context of the nation. Each stage requires its fulfillment before the next can be developed that embeds all the lower levels. The model had been empirically tested and verified on student samples in the Netherlands, in Slovakia, in Hungary and in the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain (Kelemen, 1992; Dekker et al., 2003; Murányi, 2005). The results confirm both the existence of the hypothesized six attitudes and their structural relationships.

The aim of the present article is twofold. First, we set out to test the Dekker-Malova model and Fuchs's and Case's conception on different national contexts. The second aim is to reveal the structural relationships between the above-mentioned national attitudes of the model and attitudes towards minority groups. Considering the size and characteristics of the sample, our research is essentially a diagnostic-like pilot study. In the first part of the article, we briefly introduce some main characteristics of the countries according to prejudice, we outline the method and the indicators of the survey. The second part contains the data analysis.

## Characteristics of prejudice in the three countries

### *Hungary*

After the change of political system we can concisely approach the prejudice of the Hungarian society with results of sociological and social psychological research (Murányi, 2005). Researchers apply a negative judgment to the concept of prejudice which is based on the majority-minority relation. This judgment is directed towards ethnic, deviant, national and strange out-groups. The research proves that the deviant groups and the Gypsies are the least sympathetic out-groups for the majority. During the research on the sample of adults the impact of socio-cultural factors was studied. The result of this research showed that education level and cultural background have a principal influence on the anti-Gypsy attitudes. There is a consensus about the direction of the education influence: higher education leads to less prejudice. In addition to the impact of social indicators, the territorial distribution of minorities is also an important analysis viewpoint (Enyedi-Erős, 1999; Enyedi et al., 2002).

The results of the TÁRKI (Social Research Institute) survey in 2002 answer the question of how anti-Semitism, anti-Roma and anti-foreigner attitudes have changed in Hungary over the last decade. Anti-Roma attitude has fallen relative to the 1990s, and xenophobia and anti-Semitism have not changed, whereas in the popular perception it is anti-Roma feeling that has grown the most. Openly discriminatory anti-Roma opinions became less frequent. Despite this, it is noticeable that attitudes towards the Roma remain essentially negative and, in comparison with other ethnic groups, the rejection of the Roma is at a very high level. A high proportion of the adult population is characterized by an openly xenophobic attitude. Xenophobia is exhibited most often by those who are older, less educated and temporarily or permanently excluded from the labor market. The open rejection of refugees is connected to a negative perception of the social effects of immigration (Fabian et al., 2004).

In the nineties *The Civic culture of Teenagers in Hungary* was one of the most important researches among the young people (Szabó & Örkény, 1998). The empirical basis of the analysis comes from a representative survey which was carried out in 1996 among graduate year students in more than 100 secondary schools. The aim of this research was to explore what kind of emotions, recognition, stereotypes or attitudes they have towards the nation, nationhood and minorities. One of the questions was whether the students would have accepted or rejected another student as a peer in the same bench in the classroom. The range of options was as follows: Arabs, Gypsies, Romanians, Transylvanian Hungarians, Chinese, Russians, Slovaks, Germans and Jews. The respondents had to decide that from this repertoire of ethnic backgrounds which peer they would feel the least comfortable with. One third of the students would accept having a peer of one of the ethnic groups listed above sitting next to them. The proportions of ones who would not accept a peer of any of these ethnic groups sitting next to them was rather low.

### ***Finland***

Recently only one national study<sup>4</sup> was concerned with prejudices of young people in Finland (Virrankoski, 2001). The main results of the study were: the proportion of those who had quite strong ethnic prejudices had risen in Finland during the 1990s from 15 per cent to 27 per cent of the respondents. The prejudices were more dominating in the schools where there were no immigrant students than in the schools where students had contacts with immigrant peers. Most girls and about 50 per cent of boys supported the idea that there should be more discussion about racism in schools during the lessons. 20 per cent of the boys and 4 per cent of the girls accepted the extreme nationalist and racist ideology of skinheads, who were a major anti-immigrant subculture among young Finns in the 1990s. 70 per cent of girls and about 50 per cent of boys totally disapproved of the skinhead ideology and actions.

In those studies (Jaakkola, 1999; 2009) which have investigated attitudes of Finns (whole population) towards immigrants, young people have not been studied separately. The studies reveal some age specific differences of attitudes among Finnish people older than 14 years old. The main results of these studies have been that generally the attitudes of Finns have become less prejudice oriented (instead they have become more tolerant). The higher the socioeconomic status of the respondents the more tolerant they are. The more a person has contacts with immigrants/foreigners the more tolerant she/he is. There is a quite sharp division between tolerant and prejudiced young people, on one hand young men (15-29 years of age) are the least tolerant people in Finland. In addition, young women are also more prejudiced than the women of older cohorts. But on the other hand, the most tolerant people are the young people. Thus young people have more extreme opinions than older people. There was also remarkable difference between the attitudes of people living in urban and rural areas. Urban people were more tolerant than rural people. The ethnic hierarchy of minorities living in Finland was the following: most preferred immigrants are Estonians, then in order followed: Chinese, Polish, Russian, and Somali immigrants. The order has been the same during the last 20 years. Russians have been in previous studies as disliked as Somalis. In the last study Russians are more liked than Somalis but far below all other groups.

### ***Russia***

The relevance of studies regarding ethnic relations and discrimination as experienced by young people in modern Russia is undisputed. Some researchers highlight the necessity of investigating

<sup>4</sup> This study was based on a survey (n=1026) in Finnish compulsory schools. The respondents were at the 15-16 years of age.

xenophobia and prejudice formation especially in the context of the patriotism education program in Russia (Borusyak, 2004).

There have been several large scale sociological surveys, where young people were the object of study and which were aimed at investigation of everyday racism (Puuronen et al., 2007) and ethnic relations. The studies tend to concentrate on Moscow youth (Borusyak, 2004; Podrostky, 2007) the city with the highest hate crime rate in Russia (according to the data collected by the human rights agency SOVA in 2007). One significant comparative survey (Puuronen et al. 2007) examined everyday racism and discrimination in four Russian cities — Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Krasnoyarsk. Thus the results of the survey are valuable for grasping the attitudes of young people from economically and culturally diverse regions in Russia.

Since Russians are the ethnic majority in the Russian Federation one may think that it is most relevant to speak of prejudice as a lifeform in terms of prejudices of Russians against other ethnic groups. However, this is not so, as in Russia not all the Federal subjects have Russians as the ethnic majority (for instance the Republics of Tuva, Dagestan, Tatarstan). And secondly, there is a strong level of prejudice on the level of local and non-local relations, which is best demonstrated by prejudice of the young Moscow residents against the newcomers from other regions - especially students (Borusyak, 2004).

One of the consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet Empire has been the growth of immigration from some of the former republics of the Soviet Union and neighboring countries (e.g. China). One of the side-processes of immigration to Russia is illegal immigration, which according to the rough estimates accounts for 4.5 million people annually (Krassinets et al., 2000). Therefore anti-immigrant issues are central in the ultranationalist rhetoric and are the issue for the political mobilization of the youth. It is evident, that the ultranationalist rhetoric is undergoing transformations. Dominant anti-Semitic discourse is becoming substituted by the anti-immigrant discourse, which has supporters both in the political organizations of the youth, supported by the government, and in the social movement organizations, which act as the anti-system political actors (such as the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, DPNI).

One area, which is highly relevant to the studies of prejudice as a lifeform is the role of the Internet. The studies on the use of the Internet by the various ultranationalist organizations and web-communities (Aitamurto, 2007; Rock, 2005; Zuev, forthcoming) demonstrate that the Internet is the channel of communication between the marginalized social movement organizations, the Russian New Right intellectuals, the ultranationalist Parliament deputies and the youth subcultures. The significance of Internet as an alternative channel for communication in Russia is tremendous because the space for the political activism of the groups, which instead of collaborating challenge the state, is diminishing (Lonkila 2008; forthcoming). Ultra-nationalism opposes the current leadership, political and social structure. It puts the opposition under constant pressure from the state and the only accessible channel of communication about preparation of upcoming meetings, rallies or marches is the Internet. The Internet has become the front stage of information struggle between the anti-immigrant and human rights organizations, as well as the place of the more extreme forms of communication between the extreme-right web community and anti-fascist web community.

### ***Research methodology***

The questionnaire was applied in a non-representative, self-administered survey consisting of 304 students (100 Hungarian, 104 Finnish, and 100 Russian). The respondents were social sciences students at three universities (University of Debrecen, University of Kuopio, and Siberian Federal University). 22 per cent of the sample were 20-year-olds, 8 per cent were less than 20 years old. The largest age group consisted of students above the age of 20, and this section made up 71 per

cent of the sample. The gender representation was not balanced - the sample consisted of 80 per cent females and 20 per cent males. (Because of the non-representative sampling, we could not carry out examinations of statistical hypothesis between the three samples).

## Indicators of prejudice

In this paper (and during the research) we use a minority definition, which is closest to the approach of Tajfel: „[minority is] a category of people... at the receiving end of certain attitudes and treatment from the »outside«” (Tajfel, 1981). We measured prejudice in three dimensions.

*Prejudice (social distance) towards national-ethnic groups.* One of the questions was whether students feel disturbed by students who are members of different national or ethnic groups. In Russia Gypsies are the most victimized ethnic group together with the Chechens (Zuev, 2007), so these two groups were excluded as the point was to find out the degree of acceptance/rejection of other groups and having these two groups would influence greatly the distribution of the responses. However we examined the same number of national and ethnic groups in the three different subsamples (Hungarian, Russian, Finnish) therefore we could compare the results.

**Table 2:** „What would your opinion be if your university mate was a member of the following groups?” (Should disturb answers, percentages)

I would be disturbed, if he/she were...	Hungarian	Finnish	Russian
Gypsy	30	12	-
Romanian	11	2	-
Jewish	8	1	9
Chinese	9	0	11
Serbian	7	1	-
Congolese	6	2	-
Arabic	4	7	10
Russian	4	5	1
Slovak	9	0	-
German	2	0	7
Croatian	1	1	-
Finnish	0	0	3
Minority living of boundaries	0	0	-
Chuvash	-	-	11
Tatar	-	-	11
Azerbaijanian	-	-	26
Belorussian	-	-	4
Ukrainian	-	-	7
Armenian	-	-	14
African	-	-	4

Firstly we made a composite variable with simple addition and averaging, which related to the total sample.

**Table 3:** *Average of prejudice towards national-ethnic groups in the sub-samples (How many groups disturbing an average)*

Russian	1.18
Hungarian	0.91
Finnish	0.29
Total	0.78

Considering the prejudice towards national-ethnic groups Table 3 shows that the Finnish students seem to be least prejudiced, and in contrast, Russian students are the most prejudiced. (In spite of the fact that Gypsies and Chechens were excluded in the Russian research).

*Acceptance of minority groups.* The survey questionnaire contained four items related to majority attitudes towards the minority groups. The four items contained concerns with minority – without naming specific groups. For answering these questions, a four-point scale – ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 4 (very important) was used. First, we constructed <sup>5</sup> a one hundred point scale (0: very important, 100: not at all) in each item and composed – using simple addition and averaging - a contracted variable with these four recoded variables (Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.824).

**Table 4:** *Scale of the importance of juridical and moral aspects of acceptance of the minority groups (0-100 scale: 0: very important, 100: not at all important, means)*

„Are the followings issues important for you?”	Mean of scale
protection of minorities	42
ethnic rights	40
accepting differences	22
fighting against racism	23
Mean of combined scale	32

All of the four problems (acceptance of difference, anti-racism, protection of minorities, minority rights) with values less than fifty points show that the four problems are rather important for the students. It is very interesting that the protection of minorities was less important than fighting against racism.

**Table 5:** *Means of minority's acceptance scale in the sub-samples (0-100 scale, means)*

	Hungarian	Finnish	Russian
protection of minorities	44	28	54
ethnic rights	41	25	55
accepting differences	35	7	26
fighting against racism	29	16	26
Mean of combined scale	37	19	40

Moral acceptance of the minority groups is higher than juridical acceptance, a fact that holds particularly true amongst Russian respondents. The explanation to this may be rooted in the understanding of the law and rights in the Russian context. The law and legislature are still not seen as powerful tools of regulation of human action as the personal, informal action and attitude.

<sup>5</sup> The scale transformation was the following: 1-0; 2: - 33,3; 3 - 66,6; 4: 100.

*Acceptance of ethnic groups.* Students were given four items and asked to tell whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements included. Like in the previous prejudice dimensions, we constructed a one hundred point scale (0: totally disagree, 100: totally agree) in each of the four items and prepared a composed index with four recoded variables (Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.643).

**Table 6:** *Agreement with statements regarding ethnic groups (0-100 scale, 0: totally disagree, 100: totally agree; means)*

The rights of certain ethnic groups in our country should be limited.	30
All means are acceptable to protect the interests of one's own ethnic group.	21
Marriages of people belonging to different ethnic groups are not acceptable because they result in the degeneration of the nation.	15
True friendship is possible only with the people from the same ethnic group.	10

**Table 7:** *Means of ethnic group's acceptance scale in the sub-samples (0-100 scale, means)*

<b>Russian</b>	29
<b>Hungarian</b>	22
<b>Finnish</b>	7
<b>Total</b>	19

In this case similarly to considering the two previous types of prejudice the Finns proved to be the least prejudiced ones.

On account of the three prejudice dimensions to be comparable we standardized the three contacted variables (social distance, acceptance of minority groups and acceptance of ethnic groups). In the next part we will characterize the prejudice of young people by using a new variable which was composed by the addition and averaging of the standardized three variables.

**Table 8:** *Means of standardized prejudice variables in the sub-samples (means)*

	<b>Prejudice towards national-ethnic groups</b>	<b>Acceptance of minority groups</b>	<b>Acceptance of ethnic groups</b>	<b>Combined prejudice</b>
<b>Russian</b>	0.231	0.372	0.501	0.373
<b>Hungarian</b>	0.071	0.232	0.138	0.146
<b>Finnish</b>	-0.291	-0.584	-0.615	-0.508

The means of the scores show that the three types of prejudice are greater than the average among Hungarians and Russians, while it is lower than the average among Finnish students.

### Indicators of lifeform

Since we wanted to follow the operationalization of the 2005 research, we did not proceed from some kinds of definition of lifeform. Therefore we have regarded the following (in the same way as the research of 2005) items for the characterization of lifeform: media consumption, association activity and communication. The common characteristic of the nine variables is that they all are

connected to everyday interactions. They improve the possibility of communication, so probably they characterize low ritual density.

The first group of variables (watching television news, watching political-public television programs, reading newspaper) contributes to the recognition of dissimilarity from own social-cultural pattern.

We constructed three computed variables based on a similar logic. Since the examined media (television news, political-public television programs, newspaper) was different in the three countries,<sup>6</sup> we made in each sub-sample a cluster analysis (quick-cluster) with answers to the three questions („*How often do you watch the following television news? How often do you watch the following political-public television programs? How often do you read the following newspapers?*”).

If the respondent belonged to the “Frequent consuming” group (cluster), the value of the computed variable was 1. If the respondent belonged to the “Rare consuming” group the value of computed variable was 0. For answering the first two questions a four-point scale – ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (often) - was used. For answering the third question a five point scale – ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (each day) – was used.<sup>7</sup>

Russian respondents are characterized by the lowest media consumption related to politics and news. This suggests that lifestyles of the Russian youth and their peers in terms of information consumption and media influence are quite different. It may be assumed that post-soviet legacy still has repercussions on the lifestyle of young people from Russia. One could also attribute the low level of media consumption to the structure of the subsample which is dominated by female respondents, and measures in the survey are not fully expressing the media interests of the female population. One of the important points that should be made here is the control of the TV by the government and the practical absence of any plurality of voices on TV - this feature of TV makes the medium to be ignored. Newspapers are also not a popular form of media for the Russian youth, if the news are watched they would be watched on the Web.

The second group of variables contains association activity and church attendance. The association activity can serve as source of different world concepts and world interpretations. The primary socialization is very important, therefore we have also taken into account the fact of the family member’s association activities.<sup>8</sup>

Considering the frequency distribution of the answers, we grouped answers given to the question (“*How often do you attend church or a religious event?*”) according to the following: rarely (never, only in case of family events); often (only in occasion of notable ecclesiastical holidays;

6 Television news: 1. In the Hungarian survey: M1/M2, Duna TV, Hír TV, TV2, RTL Klub, Helyi TV, BBC, Sky Europe, CNN, TV5. 2. In the Finnish survey: TV1, TV2, MTV3, Nelonen, FST5, PaikallisTV, BBC, Sky Europe, CNN, TV5. 3. In the Russian survey: Первый, РТР, НТВ, Афонгово -9, ТВК-6, Культура, 7 канал, Би-Би-Си Евроньюс (Euronews), Новости в Интернете. 4. In the Irish survey: RTE1, RTE2, BBC, TV3, TG4, SKY, CNN.

Political-public television programs: 1. In the Hungarian survey: Este, A szolás szabadsága, Kérdések órája, Politikai barométer, Jó estét, Magyarország, Aktív, Fókuszban, Heti hetes. 2. In the Finnish survey: Ykkösen aamutv, Huomenta Suomi, A-studio, Inhimillinen tekijä Priima, Arto Nyberg, 45 minuuttia, Spotlight. 3. In the Russian survey: Времена, К барьеру! Постскриптум, Реальная политика, Момент истины, Порядок слов, Человек и Закон, Неделя.

Newspaper: 1. In the Hungarian survey: Blikk, Magyar Hírlap, Magyar Nemzet, Metro újság, Népszabadság, Népszava, helyi, megyei napilap. In the Finnish survey: Helsingin Sanomat, Savon Sanomat, Karjalainen, Kansan Uutiset, Nykypäivä, Vihreä lanka, Uutispäivä Demari, Suomenmaa. 3. In the Russian survey: Известия, Российская Газета, Коммерсантъ., Вечерний Красноярск, Московский Комсомолец, Аргументы и Факты, Комсомольская Правда.

7 The result of cluster-analysis (quick-cluster) according to

- watching television news (percentages): Hungarian (often: 60, rarely:40); Finnish (often: 43, rarely: 57); Russian (often: 38, rarely:62).

- watching political-public television programs (percentages): Hungarian (often: 47, rarely: 53); Finnish (often: 37, rarely: 63); Russian (often: 27, rarely: 74).

- reading newspapers (percentages): Hungarian (often: 34, rarely: 66); Finnish (often: 53, rarely: 47); Russian (often: 34, rarely: 66).

8 „*Are you a member any kind of associations?*” (yes answers, percentage): Hungarian: 23, Finnish: 78, Russian: 22. „*Do you regularly attend some kind of club or association?*” (yes answers, percentage): Hungarian: 33, Finnish: 40, Russian: 30. „*Is there a person in your family who is a member of any kind of associations?*” (yes answers, percentage): Hungarian: 21, Finnish: 70, Russian: 17.

time by time, each year several times; several times on a monthly basis; once a week or several times a week).<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, one can say that entrance to religious life plays greater role in the life of the Russian youth and this can be attributed to the influence of the church in the Russian internal politics. Church attendance is higher which is also characteristic of the post-soviet youth. However, social solidarity or group boundaries are no longer based on the common religious practice (Fuchs and Case p.308). The level of association activity is low, and it can be explained by the post-soviet tendency of to be less involved in any formal, official associations or clubs, but instead have informal, subcultural grounds for solidarity.

The last group of variables contains two types of communication: within the family and with friends. They also contribute to plural world interpretations. The same thirty topics<sup>10</sup> were in the questionnaires of the five data surveys, so we were able to make two similarly computed variables with answers to both questions (*“How often do you talk about the following topics with your tighter family (who you live with)?”*, *“How do you talk about the following topics with your friends?”*) Firstly we made separate cluster analyses (quick-cluster) with answers to the two questions. According to the logic used earlier we made combined variables using the results of cluster analysis: the value of the variable is 1 (or 0) if the respondent belongs to the “often” (or “rarely”) cluster.<sup>11</sup> (The appendix contains the detailed results of the cluster-analyses).

Results on which communication type is more prevalent show that Russian respondents tend to attach more importance to communication with friends rather than with family. Thus influence of family on the plural world interpretation for the Russian youth may be not as great as that of the friends.

Finally, we made the lifeform variable with a simple addition of nine variables which characterize the lifeform based on three dimensions (media consumption, association activity and communication). The values of combined lifeform variable are between 0 – 9 points, the mean score of the scale for the whole sample is: 3.98.

**Table 9:** Means of lifeform variable in the sub-samples (means)

<b>Finnish</b>	4.97
<b>Hungarian</b>	3.77
<b>Russian</b>	3.14
<b>Total</b>	3.98

The averages of the scores show that the lifeform is greater than the average among Finns, while it is lower than the average among Hungarians and Russians. In consideration of Fuch’s and Case’s conception the bigger average of lifeform indicates the lower level of ritual density. (The bigger media consumption, association activity and communication means - a lower ritual density.) For this we can say that the Finnish students are characterized by low ritual density and the Russian

<sup>9</sup> Church attendance in the sub-samples (percentages). Hungarian (often: 38, rarely: 62); Finnish (often: 29, rarely: 71); Russian (often: 34, rarely: 66).

<sup>10</sup> The topics: operation of the authorities; relationship with the other sex; taxation; domestic-policy life; stars, famous men; crime; civil associations; home husbandry, money; health, illness, hygienics; ethnic minorities; ideological questions; school life; school accomplishment; environmental pollution; foreign policy events; hungarian/ finnish/ russian ethnicity; culture of different countries; artistic creations; a holiday or a trip; dressing, appearance; political parties; politicians; lifestyle of relatives; sport; poverty; musical taste, musicians, groups; science, technique; television programmes; religion; parents’ job, job tensions.

<sup>11</sup> The result of cluster-analysis (quick-cluster) according to communicating with family/ friends in the sub-samples (percentages). Family : Hungarian (often: 65, rarely: 35); Finnish (often: 68, rarely: 32); Russian (often: 54, rarely: 46); Irish (often: 38, rarely:62 .Friends : Hungarian (often: 56, rarely: 44); Finnish (often: 81, rarely: 19); Russian (often: 63, rarely: 37).

students are described by a rather high ritual density while the level of Hungarian students is approximately on the average.

### Structural model of national attitudes

In our study the nationalism scale was constructed by selecting and translating 19 relevant items from the 1995 Dutch survey and also from the questionnaire used in Slovakia in 1995/1996, and in Hungary. The survey confirmed that the scale was suitable for our total sample as well – we had results as in the previous studies. The whole national attitude scale proved to be highly reliable (Cronbach - alpha = 0.894 for all nineteen items) as well as most of the subscales, yielding Cronbach - alphas ranging from 0.826 to 0.556 with the exception of the National Preference scale with a low alpha of 0.440.

**Table 10:** *The scale of national attitudes*  
(0-100 scale, 0: totally disagree, 100: totally agree, means)

Nationalisms (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.682)	
I feel all Hungarians / Finnish / Russians are members of a big family which I also belong to.	43
I feel I share common roots, common origins with other Hungarians / Finnish /Russians.	64
I think all Hungarian / Finnish / / Russian / people should live in Hungary / Finland / Russia.	25
Hungarians / Finnish / Russians should not mix with other nations	19
People of other than Hungarian / Finnish / Russian nationality should leave the country	19
National Superiority (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.596)	
Hungary / Finland / Romania / Russia is the best country to live in	46
In general I like Hungarian / Finnish / Russian people more than people from other countries.	39
In general Hungarian / Finnish / Russian people are better than their nationalities.	26
National Preference (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.440)	
I prefer to live most of my life in Hungary / Finland / Romania / Russia than in any other country	62
In general I prefer to have Hungarian / Finnish /Russian people as my personal contacts than people from other countries	32
National Pride (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.810)	
I am proud of Hungary / Finland / Romania / Russia.	66
I am proud to be Hungarian / Finnish / Russian.	72
I am proud of what the Hungarian / Finnish / Russian people achieved.	72
National Liking (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.778)	
I like Hungary / Finland / Romania / Russia.	79
It is good to be a Hungarian / Finnish / Russian.	77
In general I like Hungarian / Finnish / Russian people.	73
I like the Hungarian / Finnish / Russian language	84
National Feeling (Cronbach $\alpha$ : 0.730)	
I feel I am Hungarian / Finnish / Russian.	84
I feel Hungary / Finland / Romania / Russia is my country.	77

**Table 11:** *Support for the six attitudes in the sub-samples (0-100 scale, 0: totally disagree, 100: totally agree, means)*

	Hungarian	Finnish	Russian	Total
<b>national feeling</b>	83	83	77	81
<b>national linking</b>	75	81	79	78
<b>national pride</b>	60	75	74	70
<b>national preference</b>	52	45	45	47
<b>national superiority</b>	37	36	37	37
<b>nationalism</b>	38	26	39	34

These results - proving that the model works in several countries and languages regardless of the fact that various items have essentially different connotations in the different national contexts - further contribute to the strength and the validity of the model. The particular patterns of support shown in the various items received in different countries are comparable but significant local variances do show up.

The results show indeed a gradual decline of support for the attitudes positioned higher in the hierarchy except for the first two levels - national feeling and national linking - where the distance is smaller.

We investigated the correlations between the subscales. The correlations were in the moderate range, varying from 0.351 to 0.811, only none of them exceeding 0.800, which justified the separate but interrelated treatment of the subscales.

**Table 12:** *Correlation coefficient matrix of the national attitude subscales*

	national feeling	national liking	national pride	national preference	national superiority
<b>national liking</b>	0.735				
<b>national pride</b>	0.636	0.818			
<b>national preference</b>	0.455	0.343	0.345		
<b>national superiority</b>	0.400	0.408	0.430	0.592	
<b>nationalism</b>	0.370	0.384	0.374	0.486	0.639

Assuming that the previously confirmed hierarchy is a cumulative one – i.e. each stage must be reached before the next can be developed – it would ideally mean that differences between attitudes at the shortest distance are lower than those between attitudes at a larger distance in the hierarchy. Computing the mean of dissimilarity of the attitudes represented by the subscales was very successful in proving the hypothesized structure of the hierarchy - the larger the assumed distance between the levels, the more dissimilar the attitudes are. These results appear in the dissimilarity matrix below as a pattern where figures become higher reading the matrix from top to bottom and from right to left.

**Table 13:** *The mean of dissimilarity matrix of the national attitude subscales (means)*

	<b>national feeling</b>	<b>national liking</b>	<b>national pride</b>	<b>national preference</b>	<b>national superiority</b>
<b>national liking</b>	2.6				
<b>national pride</b>	10.9	8.3			
<b>national preference</b>	33.5	30.8	22.5		
<b>national superiority</b>	44.0	41.3	33.0	10.4	
<b>nationalism</b>	46.7	44.1	35.7	13.1	2.6

To sum up, we have successfully validated the Dekker-Malova model of nationalism on an international sample. Despite the differences in the amount of support expressed in relation to some of the items of the scale in different countries the model in itself proved to be applicable on a sample of five countries, exhibiting similar structural characteristics as those formulated in the original theory.

### The relation between prejudice and ritual density

Finally, we will examine the relationship between prejudice and ritual density. We will be able to justify empirically the Fuchs and Case theory, if ritual density separating groups characterizes significantly different intensities of prejudice.

In the first step we constructed a variable of two values. One of the values of the new variable is equal to 1 (if ritual density combined ranging from 0 to 2) and the other value is equal to 2 (if combined ritual density ranging from 7 to 9). So we can describe the complete sample with two dissimilar (low and high) ritual density groups.

**Table 14:** *The prejudice of groups according to ritual density (means of standardized variables)*

	<b>Combined prejudice</b>	<b>Prejudice towards national-ethnic groups</b>	<b>Acceptance of minority groups</b>	<b>Acceptance of ethnic groups</b>
<b>Low ritual density group</b>	0.091	0.051	0.146	0.084
<b>High ritual density group</b>	- 0.148	- 0.174	- 0.213	- 0.147

The score averages of prejudice variables verify our expectation: the degree of prejudice is the smallest in the low ritual density group, while it is the largest in the high ritual density group. It is true that the difference is significant in the case of contracted prejudice, but the tendency is also evident at the other three variables.

Our conclusions are restrainedly valid because of the low elements of the sub-sample, for this reason caution is necessary considering that the total sample tendency proved to be true to all three sub-samples.

**Table 15:** *The prejudice of groups according to ritual density in the sub-samples (means of standardized variables)*

	Hungarian	Finnish	Russian
<b>Low ritual density group</b>	0.078	-0.518	0.411
<b>High ritual density group</b>	0.296	-0.481	0.224

We presume that it is an interesting question to consider what the relationship between national attitudes and prejudice is. The correlation coefficients indicate that the whole of the nationalism subscale has a positive relationship with prejudice. The first three stages – from national feeling to national pride – have low relationship with prejudice while the top three levels – from national preference to nationalism – show highly positive correlations. It is valid to the complete sample and also to the sub-samples: prejudice grows with the increase of the national attitude.

**Table 16:** *The correlation between national attitudes and (combined) prejudice (Pearson - correlation coefficients)*

	Hungarian	Finnish	Russian	Total
<b>national feeling</b>	0.145	0.169	0.022	0.044
<b>national linking</b>	0.137	0.069	0.001	0.024
<b>national pride</b>	0.168	0.213	0.084	0.072
<b>national preference</b>	0.358	0.298	0.208	0.261
<b>national superiority</b>	0.485	0.413	0.416	0.387
<b>Nationalism</b>	0.624	0.361	0.433	0.564

In a wider context this study also raises the question - far beyond the scope of the present work - whether we can postulate national affiliation or national identity which is neutral in affect and is unrelated to prejudices towards minorities.

## Conclusion

The present study focuses on issues related to prejudice and national attitude conceptions among students living in different national contexts. We proved both conceptions: on the one hand the connections between ritual density and prejudice, on the other hand the structural relationship between national sentiments and attitudes towards minority groups. We consider these results important, however they are restrainedly valid. Taking into consideration the fact that the sample has not been probabilistic and of the low number of cases, further research will require suitable methodological conditions (appropriate-sized sample and probability sampling). Because of all these our results only point out that further examination of the two conceptions could be useful.

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# Habermas on European Constitution and European Identity

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## Abstract

*For the last two decades or so philosophers have been reflecting on a set of practical and political concerns in connection with the new political structural arrangements beyond the nation-state. In this article two essays by Jürgen Habermas shall be examined. An attempt shall be made to tackle Habermas' philosophical concepts of personal and collective identity as well as the role that a constitution may play in building the post-national constellation. It has been shown that Habermas has normative answers. Firstly, according to him, the fragile balance between the legal order and the particular cultures and traditions of a community has to be protected by the constitutional state. For that reason the political culture has to be "decoupled" from the majority culture. Secondly, the democratically structured attempt to achieve shared meaning has to find the delicate balance between the context-transcending universal normative claims and the claims of particular individual and collective life. Thirdly, it is possible to expand legally mediated civil solidarity trans-nationally, across Europe – we may recognize this development as the emergence of European identity –, since the process of democratic will-formation of citizens may get loose from the structures provided by the state if both shared democratic political cultures as well as a European-wide public sphere exist. The European Constitution may have a catalytic function in materialization of these conditions. It has been shown that in his deliberations Habermas tried to find a reflective equilibrium between the normative and the empirical.*

**Keywords:** Habermas, EU, Constitutionalism, Identity, Trans-National Solidarity, European Constitution

## Introduction

For the last two decades or so philosophers have been reflecting on a set of practical and political concerns, about the new political structural arrangements beyond the nation-state. For example we can think of Habermas', Rawls', Taylor's and Walzer's essays on the post-national constellation. In what follows I shall examine two essays written by Jürgen Habermas<sup>2</sup>: *Multiculturalism and the Liberal State* (Habermas, 1995) and *Why Europe Needs a Constitution* (Habermas, 2001) and make an attempt to tackle Habermas' philosophical concepts of personal and collective identity and the role that a constitution may play in building the post-national constellation.<sup>3</sup>

In his address on multiculturalism Habermas raises the following puzzling question: "The controversial issue is briefly the following: Should citizens' identities as members of ethnic, cultural, or religious groups *publicly* matter, and if so, how can collective identities make a difference within the frame of constitutional democracy?" (Habermas, 1995, p. 849). In the

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2 Habermas' writings on Europe raise so many questions and hint at so many agendas that it is a vain effort to address all.

3 The European project is also present concern in his journalistic work and for the last ten years or so Habermas has devoted lot of thought to contemporary events. We may mention his recent speech in Frankfurt advocating the need for the extension of the concept of human rights to encompass human dignity. (Cf.: Habermas, 2010) We may say that he divides his deliberations between his philosophical system and the contemporary questions of our lifeworld.

second essay Habermas argues in favor of a European Constitution. Thus, the question is: if essentialist notions of identity are not accepted – either personal or group or national ones – then in what circumstances could group/collective identity help with constructing a more global, European identity?

It would be inappropriate to attempt any overall outline of Habermas' wide ranging relevant works to give a proper background to the matter in question, but it is necessary to say a few words, on one hand regarding Habermas' theory of communicative actions, and on the other hand, related to his democratic theory. In the second volume of his *The Theory of Communicative Action – Lifeworld and System. A critique of functionalist reason* – Habermas distinguishes three elements of reproduction processes maintaining the structural components of the life world: 1. “The cultural reproduction ...secures a *continuity* of tradition and a *coherence* of knowledge sufficient for daily practice.” 2. “The social integration of lifeworld ensures that newly arising situations are connected with existing conditions in the world in the dimension of social space: it takes care of coordinating actions by way of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations and stabilizes the identity of groups to an extent sufficient for everyday practice. The *coordination of actions and the stabilizations of group identities* are measured by the *solidarity* among members.” (Habermas, 1987, p. 140) 3. “Finally, the socialization of members of a lifeworld ensures that newly arising situations are connected to existing situations in the world in the dimension of historical time.” (Habermas, 1987, p. 141).

Regarding Habermas' democratic theory, his *The Postnational Constellation and Between Facts and Norms: Contributions Toward a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* are noteworthy. In a postscript to *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas states that “that there is a conceptual or internal relation, and not a simple and historical contingent association, between the rule of law and democracy. ... For the individual, private rights cannot even be adequately formulated, let alone politically implemented, if those affected have not first engaged in public discussion to clarify which features are relevant in treating typical cases as alike or different, and then mobilized communicative power for the consideration of their newly interpreted needs. ... The modern legal order may draw its legitimacy only from the idea of self-determination: citizens should always be able to understand themselves also as authors of the law to which they are subject as addressees. ... Today ...a discursive or deliberative model replaces the contract model: the legal community constitutes itself not by way of a social contract but on the basis of a discursively achieved agreement.” (Habermas, 1996, pp. 136-137). Regarding the question as to why discursiveness is the important feature of democracy for our present purposes, it is convenient to refer to Shivdeep Singh Grewal's admirable paper attempting to find the connection between Habermas' “journalistic” and more theoretical works. Grewal emphasizes that, according to Habermas, the third stage of social evolution within the modern state may be described as “a tension between system and lifeworld” and this has “a distinctly linguistic nature”. The clashing languages are “the specialized ‘languages’ of price and law in the field of economy and the lifeworld-constructing ‘practice of everyday speech, sharing its *telos* toward mutual understanding”. “As such, suggests Habermas, the lifeworld must be at pains to insulate itself against unwarranted incursions by systemic imperatives, lest it come unquestioningly to accept them as the sole rationales of social life. The institutionalization of such lifeworld ‘resistance’ forms the core of Habermas' democratic theory.”<sup>4</sup> (Grewal, 2005, p. 195).

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4 Cf.: Habermas, 1998.

## The identity of citizens

### *Affiliations and identity*

At a first glance the above quoted question from Habermas' essay on multiculturalism – “should citizens' identities *publicly* matter” – suggests a sharp distinction between personal and collective identities. This initial consideration seems to be affirmed by the popular use of the term identity. In common usage identity seems to refer to a stable psychological and cultural object that may integrate into a community. The community itself is the sum of the individuals, of the different and unique identities. But an identity cannot develop and cannot be comprehended without connections to other people. In David A. Hollinger's apt phrasing – which is in accordance with Habermas' theory of lifeworld – “(t)o share an identity with other people is to feel in solidarity with them: we owe them something special, and we believe we can count on them in ways that we cannot count on the rest of the population. To come to grips with one's true identity is to ground, on a presumptively primordial basis, vital connections to other people beyond the family.” (Hollinger, 2006, pp. 23-24). In the modern human condition it is evident that one may have multiple identities – national, ethnic, religious, professional, sexual, and so on – as he/she may have many active relationships. Therefore, solidarity/identity is willed experience, an active affiliation unlike a community-membership. “Solidarity implies a special claim, even if modest in dimensions, that individuals have on each other's energies, compassion, and resources.” (Hollinger, 2006, p. 24). A membership in a community can be imagined to be purely formal without ethical and/or emotional binding. Such a formal affiliation might be the key feature of citizens of the new member-states of the European Community. Unquestionably, if we comprehend the meaning of identity/solidarity as being primarily a willed process of affiliation then we may counter the prejudice that the “dynamics of affiliation” are to be programmed by natural processes or by authority of traditions or by sheer state-power.<sup>5</sup>

To develop our point it is important to take into consideration that solidarity/identity is always embedded in some historical, social and power situation. It is not only the psychological and cultural dimensions of one's identity that has to be claimed and provided. According to Hollinger, solidarity/identity “when understood as performative, is also a commodity of shorts”. “Hence the problem of solidarity has a political-economic structure as well as a social-psychological one” (Hollinger, 2006, pp. 27-28). It follows that we have to address the specific political, economic and cultural arrangements and their institutions in connection to the problems of identity/solidarity. At this point we have to turn back to the questions of Habermas, namely “Should citizens' identities as members of ethnic, cultural, or religious groups *publicly* matter...?” and “Why does Europe need a constitution?”.

In the essays that are subjects of our analysis Habermas does not attempt to define the concepts of collective identity, or of equal respect but explores instead the conditions of collective identity construction and the political role that European identity may have in dealing with the contemporary problems of immigration in close connection with his democratic theory. Without going into detailed argument we can say that the characteristic of Habermas' approach is a confidence in the compatibility of the real values of humanity in principle, but it has to be brought about, it cannot be the result of some kind of automatism. In a democratic society the willed interactions of citizens may bring into being shared perspectives and values.

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5 Hollinger notes that contemporary philosophers, sociologists, political scientists as Appiah, Benhabib, Brubaker, Gutmann, Lie, Smith ponder on the problems of solidarity/identity. Cf.: Note 13. p. 30.

### *Constitutionalism*

*Multiculturalism and the Liberal State* is a response to Charles Taylor's *The Politics of Recognition*. Habermas does not accept either liberalism or communitarianism as understood by Taylor and defines his stance as one in between. Concerning the principles of equal respect for and equal protection of everybody, liberalism defends human rights since the individual human being makes moral claims and is the subject of rights – it is in his/her liberty to pursue his/her own life project. However, Habermas does not consider the individualistic sense to be adequate with regard to rights. On the other hand, the communitarians commit themselves to the reproduction of traditions and cultural forms. Invoking the crimes committed in order to preserve certain traditions (e. g.: we can think of the so-called honor killing), Habermas states that “(l)egal guarantees of survival would deprive members exactly of this freedom to break off their own tradition – and would thereby destroy the very space for hermeneutical appropriation which provides the only way to maintain cultural forms” (Habermas, 1995, p. 850). However, we have to adopt the intersubjectivist approach of the communitarian project according to Habermas. In the intersubjectivist context, the liberal equal protection clause means that “(e)verybody has the same right to develop and maintain their identity in just those intersubjectively shared forms of life and traditions from which they first emerged and have been formed during the course of childhood and adolescence. From such membership rights, almost all of the immunities, protections, subsidies, and policies would follow, which Taylor demands for the French minority in Canada in his essay. These rights *need* not be conceptualized in terms of collective rights; moreover, they *should* not be so designated for the (self-defeating) purpose of granting ‘survival’.” (Habermas, 1995, p. 851). Habermas leaves it to us to make a distinction between a membership right and a collective right. Following the ideas of Hollinger we can paraphrase the intersubjectivist approach to the demand of equal protection. We can say that one's identity has to be grounded to other people beyond the family, thus solidarity/identity is a willed experience, an active affiliation unlike a community-membership.

In the same way Habermas reflects on further important points: first, he considers the possibility of a clear-cut distinction between private and public identities of citizens. According to Habermas, the actual demarcation between them cannot be ontologically established. Private and public are in a complementary relationship being in constant flux and their state of balance is also regulated by specific historical circumstances. This is also the case concerning the dichotomy of good and right or of the universalism of constitutional principles and the particularistic context of each political community. This last tension is especially important for Habermas' conception of European constitution.

To put it in a different way, in the first place, the fragile balance between the legal order and the particular cultures and traditions of a community – between system and lifeworld – has to be protected by the constitutional state. For that reason, the political culture has to be “decoupled from” the majority culture “with which it was originally fused, and in most instances, still is”. (Habermas, 1995, p. 852). As an example, we can think of romantic nationalism. Romantic nationalism nationalizes the culture and establishes the nation-state on this common culture. The idea behind romantic nationalism is that national culture – the particular way of life of the nation-constituting majority – is the expression of the common inner life as unifying force. In this way the majority culture gains supra-individual identity and at the same time the minority culture is doomed to extinguish.

Second, since citizens “share a political culture shaped by a particular history”, they interpret the constitutional principles from their particular political perspective, “which provide at the same time the base for constitutional patriotism”<sup>6</sup> (Habermas, 1995, p. 851). In his *The Postnational Constellation* concerning the idea of constitutional patriotism, Habermas emphasizes once more

6 On constitutional patriotism cf. Habermas, (1992).

that the solidarity of citizens may be transformed into the more abstract base of constitutional patriotism only if the majority culture ceases to be the political culture (Habermas, 2006a, pp. 70-71). The abstract processes and principles help the communication of different lifeworlds. Although in this address Habermas does not further explain his theory on constitutional patriotism, in my view, Habermas' main point is that what makes it worthwhile living in a particular state arises neither from dedicating oneself to a realization of abstract rights nor are they some kind of pre-given (substantial, natural, traditional, etc.) values or 'we-feeling', but the concrete, particular, commonly shared aims, values worked out in the ongoing free, democratic interactions between citizens. (Némedi, 2000, p. 255). This democratically structured attempt to achieve shared meaning has to find the delicate balance between the context-transcending universal normative claims and the claims of particular individual and collective life. The shared aims and values have to concern the handling of common actual and future problems, the traditions, the culture (local, regional and national, etc.). The binding force of these shared values and aims has its roots in the citizen's own, particular hermeneutical processes of interpreting the universal laws and values. In his essay *What is a People?* Habermas says that the necessary condition of reaching shared decision is solidarity which appeared among the citizens of 19<sup>th</sup> century nation-states. (Habermas, 2006a, p. 23). Now we can thus rephrase our initial question: In what circumstances could identities (personal- or collective/group- or national) help with constructing a more global, European identity, since none of these can be culturally neutral.

### *Philosophical and political backgrounds*

In the closing paragraphs of his address, Habermas gives hints of both the philosophical and political backgrounds of his stance on the issues as to how to find the proper balance of political identity and majority culture in modern constitutional democracy (Habermas, 1995, pp. 852-853). Regarding the philosophical background, Habermas maintains that although the term 'legal person' is an artificial construct it can be and should be "constructed as socialized individual". The state as community of legal persons is the sphere where legal individuals "are supposed to recognize each other as free and equal". Natural persons are by definition socialized individuals and "individuated by their unique life histories". The requirement of equal respect, however, also holds for all natural persons. Habermas is "critical of the liberal assumption that human rights are prior to popular sovereignty" and they may not be forced upon citizens in democratic states. Conversely, human rights may not be arbitrarily thrown out. Consequently, "human rights must be conceived in such a way that they are enabling rather than constraining conditions for democratic self-legislation".

Regarding the political context of Habermas' argumentation, the most important idea is the identity politics<sup>7</sup>, a "struggle for recognition" of the suppressed collective identities. (Habermas, 2006a, pp. 67-69, 71-72). In Habermas' view, the recognition of minority identities cannot be traded off for material goods. It is a membership right (as being distinguished from the collective right) that is at stake. One of the most important aspects of identity politics is law. In this respect, I consider that personal membership rights could mean free access to one's own collective/group-culture; it is the right of non-interference – it is someone's duty not to prevent him/her free access to a particular group/collective culture. Regarding the problem of collective/group rights, Habermas finds it paradoxical that it is the claims of recognized groups that can have constitutional protection – e.g. women and ethnic minorities.

Concerning the questions of the content, of the functioning and even of the attributing group rights Habermas does not offer any hint. But if we take into consideration that he formulates as

7 This is the main issue in the exchange between Habermas and Taylor. Cf.: Taylor (1992) and Habermas (1993). Cook (1997) gives an excellent analysis of the dispute.

follows, “but even if collective rights *were* compatible with the individualistic design of modern legal orders based on subjective rights ...” (Habermas, 1995, p. 850), we can draw the conclusion that collective/group rights may not be regarded as basic as individual rights.

### *Immigration and civil solidarity*

At the end of his address, Habermas briefly refers to the problem of immigration. First of all, considering the situation of a receiving country, we understand that it does not have legal reasons for a liberal immigration policy but that it may have moral ones. Secondly, if we take into consideration the case of the immigrant, we may recognize his/her legal right to asylum. Applying Hohfeld’s analysis of legal rights could help us comprehend more clearly which is the main issue. The right to asylum belongs to the liberty rights or privileges since no one has a duty to allow him/her to exercise the right and it is compatible with others inhibiting the practice of this kind of right.<sup>8</sup> Hobbes’ natural person can personify this privilege. Similarly, a legal immigrant has to attest to the constitution of the receiving country. According to Hohfeld’s classification, naturalization means endowing someone with claim rights, powers and immunity among others. That is, if someone who claims a right demands that the state and/or other citizens has/have the duty of service or of not interfering. In brief the new citizen is endowed with rights (provision, service, etc.) and duties. However, “(a) legally required *political* socialization may not have an impact on other aspects of the collective identity of the immigrants’ culture of origin” (Habermas, 1995, p. 853). We therefore have not got closer to solving the problem of constructing European identity. In the future we may face unforeseeable consequences. In this respect we may find very much to the point Schmitter’s comment: “EU is not a mere repetition of previous nation, state and regime-building processes and it may well be leading to an outcome that is unprecedented.” (Schmitter, 2006, p. 47).

Considering another aspect of the immigration-problem even Habermas states the above discrepancy clearly: “(S)imply policing the Fortress of Europe is not a real answer to these problems ... In truth the key question is whether it is possible to expand civil solidarity trans-nationally, across Europe.” But he does not deliberate the problem and in the next sentence he immediately states that “(a)t the same time, a common European identity will develop all the quicker, the better the dense fabric of national culture in the respective states can integrate citizens of other ethnic or religious origins.”<sup>9</sup> (Habermas, 2006b). Contrary to cosmopolitan<sup>10</sup> liberalism of Habermas and to Rawlsian political liberalism, David Ingram considers the first and foremost problem “that the rights of groups no less than the rights of individuals will have to be politically recognized within liberal democracy typically and not just occasionally. Only in this way can the rights of women, immigrants, and subnationalities be fully protected”. That is to say, “an adequate account of human rights must accommodate differences in social standpoint, both within and between nations” (Ingram, 2003, p. 386). In David Ingram’s view, the only lasting basis on which to build peace and justice is an international democratic federation of liberal democracies and interest groups. So, on the indispensableness of a European-wide federation Habermas and Ingram are in concert.

8 W. E. Hohfeld: *Fundamental Legal Conceptions as Applied in Judicial Reasoning*. Hohfeld’s classification is discussed e.g. in Miller, D. (ed.) (1991). *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell. See under rights. And cf. Knowles, D. (2001). *Political Philosophy* London: Routledge, pp. 139-140.

9 His speech held on being awarded the state prize of North-Rhine Westphalia.

10 This time I can’t go into the details, here I understand the term ‘cosmopolitan’ as someone “who puts right before country and universal reason before the symbols of national belonging” (Nussbaum, 1994).

## European Constitution

### *Aims of integration*

The essay from 2001 *Why Europe Needs a Constitution* applies the ideas of *The Postnational Constellation and the Future of Democracy* - we can say that Habermas reorganizes his arguments around this very pressing and current question. Concerning the need for European constitution, Habermas develops his reasons in three steps. The first recalls the demands for European unification immediately after WWII and contrasts it with the contemporary academic and political projects contemplating the carrying on of this project. He proceeds, arguing that none of the original aims of the integration (ending warfare, protection against Nazism, especially the crimes against European Jewry, economic growth and welfare) may be regarded as adequate justification of furthering the European project. Since we may not go into details to sum up this line of arguments following the analysis of Christian Joerges, we can state that although the original ideals of the post-war period may not be considered as outdated, they have lost their mobilizing strength (Jorges, 2005, p. 250). In addition, it is not at all clear for the European citizenry how the necessary coordination of many fields of the lives of the member states will affect their material concerns. Others say that one of the reasons behind the constitutionalization debate is “the ambivalent heritage of law in Europe”. Accompanied by Derrida, Habermas joined to this line of thinking and made an important manifesto on this subject in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2003. “The memory of the failures and weaknesses of the law” can be considered to “provide an indispensable waymarker in the debate on good European constitutionalism”. (Jorges, 2005, p. 247).

The second line of Habermas’ argument is in favor of an “ever closer union” (Habermas, 2001, p. 6). He assents to the speech of French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin delivered in 2001: “Till recently the efforts of the Union were concentrated on the creation of monetary and economic union ... But today we need a broader perspective if Europe is not to decay into mere market, sodden by globalization. Since Europe is much more than a market, it stands for a model of society that has grown historically.”<sup>11</sup>

To develop his third point, Habermas draws attention to the empirical fact that “national governments, whatever their internal profiles, are increasingly entangled in transnational networks, and thereby become ever more dependent on *asymmetrically negotiated* outcomes.” Unfortunately – says Habermas –, economic globalization is no more than a transnational form of capitalism. Therefore, the pressing question is whether a neoliberal vision is compatible with the prevalent normative European self-understanding – according to which the formative background for social solidarity is provided by the political tradition of the workers’ movement, the social doctrines of Christianity and social liberalism. “In terms of a comparative cultural analysis, we might speak of the unique European combination of public collectivism and private individualism.” (Habermas, 2001, p. 10). Concerning the problems of globalization and the transnational form of capitalism it is necessary to initiate public debate to find possible solutions. By putting forward the idea of public debate concerning the neoliberal vision, Habermas implicitly brings into play the republican idea of law-making. He warns that the logic of the market has to be complemented with public deliberation or, to put it differently, the logic of the system has to be harmonized with the lifeworld (Habermas, 2006a, pp. 76-77). The procedural outcome of creating the necessary conditions of public debate could be the “creation of a more encompassing political framework” (Habermas, 2001, p. 12). The project of Europe cannot succeed without an elaborated political project.

At this point we have to refer directly to the arguments of the essay *The Postnational Constellation and the Future of Democracy*. In Habermas’ view, the process of democratic will-formation of

11 Speech to the Foreign Press Association, Paris, 28 May 2001. Quoted by Habermas (2001, p. 9).

citizens owes its legitimacy to three factors: participation, voting and open deliberation. This means that the process of deliberation – and democratic legitimation – may get loose from the structures provided by the state. This way, e.g. non-governmental organizations could have the necessary legitimation and take part in international bodies (Habermas, 2006a, pp. 100-101).

Likewise, Habermas argues that the “discrepancies between an advanced economic and a retarded political integration could be overcome by the construction of higher-order political agencies, capable of ‘catching up’ with the pressures of deregulated markets” (Habermas, 2001, p. 14). At the same time, the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ of the European authorities is to be dealt with. The most pressing task is to answer the question as to how the European Commission could be endowed with legitimacy. Habermas puts forward his general thesis: “we should support and promote the project of a European Constitution” (Habermas, 2001, pp. 13, 15). I have to add that the democratic deficit is a problem not only on European but also on state-level. One can think of the ever-present antisemitism and the growing problem of xenophobia. Habermas is well aware of this problem – this matter has been tackled above in connection to the questions of collective/group rights.

### *European-wide public sphere*

Regarding the structural problems of the Union – dense integration through market and loose integration of governments – and the political deficit resulting from the situation of missing “European people”<sup>12</sup>, Habermas refers to the portion of the citizen body of Europe in which final authority is located. In this respect, Habermas draws attention to the voluntaristic character of a civic as opposed to ethnic nation since civic nation originates in both the stabilizing contexts of traditional communities as well as in the democratic processes. The formation of consciousness of the national political subject is a “painful process of abstraction, leading from local and dynastic identities to national democratic ones” (Habermas, 2001, p. 16).

In this line of argument we may discover that Habermas has the American Constitution as the ultimate ideal in his mind (Rogowski & Turner, 2006, p. 5). So, we may refer to Alexis de Tocqueville, who states in his *Democracy in America* that freedom – the most important value of the human world – can only be maintained in circumstances formed by self-imposed duties and relations in all spheres of human life, in short, under the shelter of democratic constitution and civic society. The civic deliberations concerning the pressing questions of lifeworld may transcend the structures provided by the state and Habermas anticipates that European citizenry can emerge in this process.

How could the results of the ongoing process of deliberation be reified, especially if we think of them as unconfined by state boundaries? In other words, in addition to a shared democratic political culture there are necessary empirical conditions “for the extension of that process of identity formation beyond national boundaries” (Habermas, 2001, p. 16), namely these are European civil society and public spheres. In Habermas’ view a constitution may have a catalytic function in materialization of these conditions. The constitution could initiate a circular movement of stating what has already changed and fostering additional development of the fulfillment of the conditions. In this manner “(t)he focus of politics would move to some extent from national capitals to the European centers” – even the initiatives of citizens at large could have a presence in Brussels (Habermas, 2001, p. 17).

But the most essential network to be created is the “European-wide public sphere” which would facilitate the mutual contact, institutionalized democratic decision-making in all political and non-political bodies and an infrastructure for mass communication. Over time it could be the

12 Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, *Welchen Weg geht Europa?* Munich, 1997. Quoted by Habermas (2001, p. 15).

ground of public-opinion-formation. However – warns Habermas – “(a) European-wide public sphere must not be imagined as a projection of a familiar design from the national onto European level” (Habermas, 2001, p. 18). In other words, in Habermas’ view the European Union should not be imagined as a super-nation-state although he gives neither detailed description of a different kind of system/network of human contact nor of the new practices.

In this respect Habermas first addresses the problem of political unity and linguistic diversity in Europe. He considers that the integrity of different national cultures depends on the equal and mutual recognition of different languages. English could serve as a working language for the purposes of cross-border communication. Secondly, the political unity requires a shared political culture. Shared political culture cannot be the commonness of substantial elements rather it has to be a kind of attitude, a balanced response to the structural conflicts and lasting tensions. “These are dispositions that act as a spur to critical reflections on our blind spots, and to a de-centering of selective perspectives.” (Habermas, 2001, p. 20). The egalitarian and individualistic universalism which informs the normative self-understanding is considered to be the third indispensable element of a shared European culture. Habermas regards all of the three necessary elements as the achievements of modern Europe. His confident statement is “the challenge before us is not to *invent* anything but to conserve the great democratic achievements of the European nation-state beyond its own limits.” (Habermas, 2001, p. 6). At this point we may refer back to the Habermasian ideal of constitutional patriotism and we recognize a tension. “Whilst it takes the ethnic or cultural ‘*demos*’ out of constitutionalism and democracy, it arguably retains a ‘personification’ of political community because it relies on the ultimately substantive – in the sense of community-specific – idea of constitutional patriotism” – says Wilkinson (Wilkinson, 2002).

### ***Future of European cooperation***

Returning to the essay on constitutionalism, at the end of it Habermas gives a list of problems to be answered in the near future: 1./ defining “the territorial boundaries of the Union”; 2./ distributing competences between federal and national institution; 3./ deciding “which countries will finally belong to, and which are to be excluded from, the Union” 4./ finding a workable balance between majority and consensual decisions in order to meet the requirements of the principles of equal protection; 5./ securing the possibility of inter-parliamentary discourses. Again, we may ask in practice whose task it is to solve the above questions, who will answer them: whether highly prepared specialists or European-wide referendum or intergovernmental negotiations, etc. For our current purposes it is enough to note that the first and the third questions are addressed by many e.g. Benhabib, Wilkinson, and Castles, etc. – all of them think that some kind of solution could be reached by furthering the ideal of federalism.

Finally, Habermas addresses the two different attitudes toward the future of European cooperation. He mentions the ‘federalists’ and the ‘sovereignists’; the federalists “regard the harmonization of important national policies as urgent” and the sovereignists would like to deprive all central institutions of all fiscal powers. Accordingly – he states – “no reform of procedures and institutions can succeed before the content of the political project behind it becomes clearer” and a European Constitution could settle the core political issues (Habermas, 2001, p. 26).

According to Mike Wilkinson the deeper significance of the constitutional discourse is a concern for democratization and a particular vision of integration. We can recognize the ambivalence inherent in the concept if we take into consideration that both Europhiles and Eurosceptics advocate a European constitution. The discussion is about the “relationship of a constitution not just to democracy in the abstract or to a *demos* as a given, but also to a ‘*demos*’ in particular. It is not only that the precise boundaries of the community are questioned (and changing), but

also the claim that at a non-state level there is a political community capable of sustaining a public sphere, civil society or a constitution at all” (Wilkinson, 2002). If we try to analyze the types of desired constitutions we can differentiate between neo-liberal and social democratic attempts. “For those who favor a move from a liberal market to a social democratic transnational ‘Rechtsstaat’ through constitutional integration the theoretical background which provides much of their intellectual currency is a vision of Habermasian deliberative democracy and his procedural law paradigm – perhaps the most compelling theoretical resolution of the tension between constitutionalism and popular sovereignty.” (Wilkinson, 2002). The base of the procedural law-paradigm is the association of free and equal persons under law and the state has to secure equal opportunity for the use of equally granted basic rights. Wilkinson finds problematic to apply this theory to supranational level although Habermas is optimistic in this respect<sup>13</sup>: “The forms and procedures of the constitutional state, together with the democratic mode of legitimation, simultaneously forge a new level of social integration.” Habermas furthermore claims that “the ethical-political self-understanding of citizens in a democratic community [can] be taken as the fluid content of a circulatory process that is generated through the legal institutionalization of citizen’s communication”<sup>14</sup>. Wilkinson warns us not to take the idea of ‘circulatory’ process as self-evident: we cannot be sure “whether the constitutionally regulated circulation of communicative power – from public sphere to political system – is the norm or the exception in contemporary ‘democratic’ societies” and there is a possibility that the top-down system of the paternalistic model of power is the norm (Wilkinson, 2002).

### **Problems**

In his speech held in 2006 Habermas disappointedly established that “the theme of Europe has been devalued, the national agenda has taken priority” (Habermas, 2006b). He names four risky problems “that will remain unsolved if we stuck along the way to a Europe that is politically capable of action and bound in a democratic constitutional framework”. These problems are: 1./ The European member states have lost their democratic substance as a result of European unification since Brussels decides upon more and more questions and the member-states only apply the decisions to the national law. The whole process eliminates the political public of the member states. “There is no European public space.” 2./ It is long overdue to develop the “classic international law to a politically defined world community”. 3./ Since “the relationship of politics to the market has gotten out of balance on a global scale” the national governments are powerless in establishing “acceptable social standards”; 4./ The fundamentalist challenge to cultural pluralism can only be answered on European level. Therefore in this respect the main question is for Habermas “whether it is possible to expand civil solidarity trans-nationally, across Europe”. We may recognize this question to be the other side of the question having been raised above: how could be, if at all the European identity formed in practice. And concerning the readiest means: is it possible to convert previous nation-or state-building processes to European level?<sup>15</sup> May we find positive instances of trans-national civil solidarity?

13 As quoted above from Habermas (2001, pp. 16-17).

14 Habermas, J. (1998), *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, C. Cronin, C. & de Grief, P. (eds), (pp. 159, 161) Cambridge: MIT Press - quoted by Wilkinson.

15 We may cite again Habermas’ confident statement: “the challenge before us is not to *invent* anything but to conserve the great democratic achievements of the European nation-state beyond its own limits.” (Habermas, 2001, p. 6).

*Trans-national civil solidarity*

Turning our attention exclusively to these last questions we have to consider again the problem of identity formation. Following Habermas we have mentioned above that civic nation – as opposed to ethnic nation – has its origins in traditional communities and in the voluntaristic context of democratic processes. The process of identity construction is a never-ending story and in this respect we cannot speak about final results. Whenever we engage in collective action and/or collective deliberation we thereby also engage in the constitution of a ‘we’, our collective identity. So, pure deliberating processes like democratic processes can form collective identity (Habermas, 2001, p. 15). Modern collective identity can emerge from a process of public debate concerning common aims, collective actions and different ideas of collective identities e.g. historically given culturally specific narrative resources and vocabularies, and their interpretations – these all have their origins in the particular lifeworlds. As we have seen above in his essay ‘*What is a People?*’, Habermas says that the necessary condition of reaching shared decision is solidarity. In this respect we can distinguish two types of solidarity: one is based on the immediate, direct social practices and norms of the particular lifeworld and the “legally mediated solidarity”. Legally mediated solidarity between strangers springs from democratic citizenry and this solidarity does not necessarily come to an end at the borders of nation-states. “[Legally based] solidarity – the third source of societal integration besides money and administrative power – arises from law only indirectly, of course: by stabilizing behavioral expectations law simultaneously secures symmetrical relationships of reciprocal recognition between abstract bearers of individual rights. These structural similarities between law and communicative action play a constitutive role in the production (and application) of legal norms.” (Habermas, 1996, p. 136). Legally based solidarity is not a stable condition but a process of constant struggle and negotiation regulated by concrete laws. The ephemeral results of this negotiating process can be captured and assume a new stability by being enacted. This way the circular movement of negotiations and new codifications can shelter what has been already achieved and initiate new development of lifeworlds, norms and identities. As we have seen in the essay on multiculturalism, the actual demarcation between private and public identities of citizens or between good and right or between the universalism of constitutional principles and the particularistic context of each political community cannot be ontologically established according to Habermas. These are complementary relationships in constant flux and their state of balance is regulated by specific historical circumstances. Solidarity goes hand in hand with respect and recognition. The subject of respect and recognition is some other collective identity, some other culture or a concrete member of some other collective identity/culture. In Habermas’ view the foremost issue of the “struggle for recognition” is the inclusion all of the suppressed collective identities into the sphere of the constitutional protection (Habermas, 2006a, p. 69). The second issue is to integrate the republican feelings of the inhabitants into patriotic constitutionalism, and this can be reached if the historical symbiosis of republicanism and nationalism is ended (Habermas, 2006a, p. 71).

In the impressive volume – *The Shape of New Europe* – of Rogowski and Turner the focal points are Jürgen Habermas’ arguments for a European constitution. I refer only to the essays of Philippe C. Schmitter and of Richard Kearney. They represent two very different standpoints concerning the constitutional ideals of Habermas. Schmitter in his contribution to the volume argues that the European Union does not need a constitution for three reasons: The constitution as an act of foundation does not have sense because “(t)he founding moment has already occurred – a half century ago”; secondly, EU is succeeding with successive treaties; thirdly in the coming years when EU will have to face both the effects of monetary unification and the problems generated by enlargement. The EU will need “the flexibility provided by the lack of an agreed distribution of competences between it and its member states and, especially, the absence of a common definition of its political end-state.” (Schmitter, 2006, pp. 46-47)

Kearney states that the being of postnational constellation is a fact and chooses as his example the historic British-Irish Agreement of 1998. “The zero-sum game of mutually exclusive ‘national identities’ was over. For the first time in history, the emerging postnationalist scenario allows the citizens of Northern Ireland to profess different degrees of allegiance to an expanding range of identifications: from regional townland, parish or province to national constitution (British or Irish or both) and to the transnational union of Europe.” (Kearney, 2006, p. 169). Kearney also states that “what the Belfast Agreement allows, in short, is that the irrepressible need for identity and allegiance be gradually channeled away from the fetish of the nation-state, where history has shown its tenure to be insecure and belligerent, to more appropriate levels of regional and federal expression” (Kearney, 2006, p. 179). “There is no such thing as primordial nationality. If the nation is indeed a hybrid construct, an ‘imagined community’, then it can be re-imagined in alternative versions. The ‘postnational constellation’ envisaged by political visionaries as diverse as John Hume and Jürgen Habermas, need no longer be considered a utopian dream.” (Kearney, 2006, p. 180).

## Conclusion

In Habermasian spirit we may say that post-national democracy or democracy beyond the state could be a possible alternative for Europeans. The basic elements of the shared European identity are formed both by democratic processes and by drawing the relevant lesson of European history (e.g.: of nationalist excesses). The member-states of the European Union should not forget their national traumas of the dark times of Europe. The mutual recognition of these traumas and their comprehension may have identity creating force. In this respect Ingram speaks about toleration, which means “openness to interdependency and mutual vulnerability”. He is also optimistic concerning the possibility of European federation “(u)ntil this federation becomes a reality (and we have no reason to think that it cannot), full toleration and trust between nations will remain elusive.” (Ingram, 2003, p. 387)

Summarily we can say that Habermas has normative answers for the questions of European, national and group identities. This is not surprising. Political philosophy is practical philosophy and its main task is to deliberate the possible answers to the question of what we ought to do in certain circumstances. Thus, concerning our initial question, namely, in what circumstances could the different types of identity (personal- collective/national identity) help with constructing a more global, European identity we may have an answer. It is possible to expand legally mediated civil solidarity trans-nationally, across Europe – we may recognize this development as the emergence of European identity –, since the process of democratic will-formation of the citizens may get loose from the structures provided by the state if both a shared democratic political culture and a European-wide public sphere exist. The European Constitution may have a catalytic function in materialization of these conditions. In his deliberations Habermas tries to find a reflective equilibrium between the normative and the empirical. Habermas’ “journalistic” works are in close connections with the most pressing issues on the European agenda. His considerations and proposed solutions are to be deliberated and following his theoretically based insights we might get promising visions of further deliberations for attaining European self-understanding and avoiding destructive tendencies.

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# From France to the World: The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)

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*“We created a federation of ‘movements’ at a time when organic agriculture was weakly organised and needed activists and volunteers to push the idea” Denis Bourgeois (1997).*

## Abstract

*The formation of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) at Versailles, France, in 1972 set organic food and farming on a strong future trajectory. It was an initiative of France’s Nature et Progrès, and driven by its then President, Roland Chevriot. IFOAM was founded with the support of a small cluster of kindred organisations: Rodale Press of the USA; the Soil Association of the UK; the Soil Association of South Africa; and the Swedish Biodynamic Association. None of these five organisations bore the term ‘organic’ in their title, nevertheless, the choice of name acknowledged ‘organic’ as the term to signify their common cause. It secured ‘organic’ as the core narrative element and as the international descriptor of what is now a clearly identifiable and differentiated segment of the global food and farming sector. From the outset ‘biodynamic’ was accepted as a special case of ‘organic’. The formation of IFOAM created an entity which united the aspirations, the philosophies and the hopes of disparate groups each with roles primarily restricted to national advocacy. IFOAM has grown to a federation of 804 organisations from 111 countries. Organic production statistics are now reported by IFOAM from 154 countries and organic sector retail sales are reported to be US\$51b annually. IFOAM is based in Bonn, Germany, and as the global umbrella advocacy group for the organic sector it is without peer.*

**Keywords:** Organic Agriculture, Organic Farming, Biodynamics, Certified Organic, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)

## The Differentiation of Agricultures

Agriculture has been practised for more than 10,000 years (Bellwood, 2005). For most of that period there were no synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. This was an era of *ancien régime* organic agriculture where the practices were *de facto* organic.

In 1909 Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch demonstrated a process for the synthesis of ammonia from its gaseous constituents, nitrogen and hydrogen (Bosch, 1932; Haber, 1920). This achievement was rapidly developed into industrial scale production, and the Haber-Bosch process made cheap synthetic fertilizer available to farmers for the first time. It was an innovation that was rapidly adopted and it led to a transformation of agriculture (Smil, 2001). World War II witnessed the accelerated development of synthetic pesticides, including DDT. By that time there was already a nascent organic agriculture movement.

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In the first decade of the twentieth century, Franklin King, a Professor of Agricultural Physics, was an early nay-sayer against the approach of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). King resigned his USDA position, travelled to China, Japan and Korea, and researched the practices of what he referred to as 'permanent agriculture' (Paull, 2006a). King (1911) published his findings in *Farmers of Forty Centuries, or Permanent Agriculture in China, Korea and Japan*. In that book, King (p. 274) called for a "world movement" for alternative agriculture and the promotion of permanent agricultural practices. He noted that "China, Korea and Japan long ago struck the keynote of permanent agriculture ... it remains for us and other nations to profit by their experience, to adopt and adapt what is good in their practice".

Over a ten day period in the summer of 1924 Rudolf Steiner presented a course at Koberwitz (now Kobierzyce, Poland) to farmers, many of them Anthroposophists (Steiner, 1924a, 1924b). Steiner introduced the concept of the farm as an organism, as a living entity in its own right. His message was that modern agriculture was on a wrong track and he urged participants that the agricultural suggestions and directions that he gave in the course should be tested experimentally. Steiner died the following year, but his injunction to test and then share was taken up by the Experimental Circle of farmers. This culminated in the publication by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer in 1938 of *Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening* (Paull, in press).

The term 'organic farming' appeared for the first time in Lord Northbourne's 1940 book *Look to the Land* (Paull, 2006b). Northbourne's book was a manifesto of organic agriculture in which he clearly articulated a contest which he characterized as: "organic versus chemical farming" (1940, p.81). This terminology of 'organic' as a differentiated mode of agriculture promptly appeared thereafter in the USA, Australia and elsewhere.

In the USA, publishing entrepreneur Jerome Rodale published the first issue of *Organic Farming and Gardening* in 1942. Now as *Organic Gardening* and published by Rodale Inc., it is the world's first as well as the world's longest running continuously published periodical to identify itself as 'organic'.

The world's first advocacy group specifically established to promote 'organic' farming was the Australian Organic Farming and Gardening Society (AOFGS) which was founded in Sydney in October 1944. After WWII restrictions on paper were lifted, the AOFGS published a quarterly journal, the *Organic Farming Digest*, with the first issue dated April 1946. It was the world's first 'organic' periodical published by an 'organic' association (Paull, 2008).

Other organisations and periodicals appeared in the decades that followed, with varying emphases and adopting a variety of terminology, but having in common a disquiet with the dominant direction, philosophy and practices of food production. Now a leading organics advocate, the UK's Soil Association, founded in 1946, at its inception placed its emphasis on the soil, urged soil research, and made no mention of 'organic' in its foundational *Memorandum and Articles of Association* (Douglas, 1946).

The earliest set of principles declared by an organics organisation appears to be that presented by the Australian Organic Farming and Gardening Society (Paull, 2008). A declaration of principles is something that consistently eluded the UK Soil Association for decades as it was long preoccupied with soil, compost and science, and enmeshed with its 'Haughley Experiment' (Balfour, 1962).

## Versailles, France, 1972

A meeting held in Versailles, France, on 5 November 1972, marked a significant milestone for organics. It was perhaps nothing more than coincidence that the date was Guy Fawkes Day. Five national organisations came together to form an international organisation, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

**Table 1:** *The five founding organisations of IFOAM.*

Organisation	Country
Nature et Progrès	France
Rodale Press	USA
Soil Association	UK
Soil Association of South Africa	South Africa
Swedish Biodynamic Association	Sweden

The prime mover for that founding meeting was Parisian engineer, Roland Chevriot, President of the French national farmer organisation, Nature et Progrès (Bourgeois, 1997; Geier, 2007). Nature et Progrès was founded in 1964 by a group of: “Agronomists, doctors, farmers and consumers”<sup>2</sup> (Roure, 2007, p.9). Nature et Progrès had been formed to develop organic production, to promote the benefits of organic food (“produits bio”), and to warn of the dangers of modern agriculture and pesticides<sup>3</sup> (Roure, 2007).

Roland Chevriot had been the President of *Nature et Progrès* for two years when he developed the idea of organising “a big national conference”, and then, to take advantage of that conference, to bring together representatives of kindred organisations and to launch “an international federation” (Bourgeois, 1997, p.12).

Denis Bourgeois had then just completed a BA. He states that: “my dissertation had been on organic agriculture in France” (Bourgeois, 1997, p.12). Chevriot offered him the task, without pay, of helping to organise the conference for November 1972. Chevriot, he says, was: “a master in the art of getting the ball rolling, doing great things starting from nothing”.

Chevriot’s idea of an international federation “came to him in May [1972], when he made a trip to the USA” (Bourgeois, 1997, p.12). On a business trip to the US, Chevriot took the opportunity to meet with Bob Rodale of Rodale Press. Jerome Rodale, the founder of the world’s first ‘organic’ journal, and America’s leading advocate of organics over the past three decades, had died the previous year on 2 June 1971 (Rodale, 1971). His son, Robert ‘Bob’ Rodale, had worked with his father since 1948, and by 1956 Bob Rodale was President of Rodale Press (Gross, 2008). By the time of meeting with Chevriot, Bob Rodale was well experienced as the Editor of *Organic Farming and Gardening* (Rodale, 1962).

According to Bourgeois (Bourgeois, 1997, p.13), Chevriot discussed the idea of an international organics federation with Bob Rodale, and “this talk had played an important role in his decision to implement the idea”.

Bourgeois (Bourgeois, 1997, p.13) recalled that he had sent out “probably more than fifty” invitations in total for the inaugural meeting. This would put his acceptance rate at about ten percent. Of the name ‘International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements’, he relates that it had been: “invented ... to give a name to the project in the letters that we sent around”. Bourgeois’ recollection, of the choice of name, is that: “this matter was not discussed at the initial meeting and every one took the provisional name for granted, so the name IFOAM came into being”. The acronym has the advantage of being pronounceable, as ‘i foam’, and the disadvantage of sounding reminiscent of a washing-up detergent.

The inaugural IFOAM meeting was genuinely ‘international’, with representatives from Europe, Africa and USA (Table 1), and biodynamics was represented from the outset. Asia was not represented at the inaugural meeting, and nor was the Pacific. New Zealand’s *Humic Compost Society* had been founded in Auckland in 1941 and became the *Soil & Health Association of New*

2 The original French: “Agronomes, médecins, agriculteurs et consommateurs”.

3 The original French: “... ils souhaitent développer ce mode de production, promouvoir les qualités nutritionnelles et sanitaires des produits bio et sensibiliser les personnes sur les dangers de l’agriculture moderne et notamment des produits chimiques de synthèse (pesticides)”.

*Zealand* in 1972 (Paull, 2008). It was perhaps precluded from the founding meeting due to the ‘tyranny of distance’ and the attendant costs.

In Australia, at least some of the first wave of organic organisations had failed by 1972. The trail-blazing Australian Organic Farming and Gardening Society was wound up in 1955 (Paull, 2008). The *Living Soil Association of Tasmania* which had been founded in Hobart in 1946 had ceased by 1960 (Paull, 2009b). A second wave of organics advocacy groups in Australia was in a formative stage at this time.

In June 1972 when Chevriot and Bourgeois were planning the new federation in Paris, the Organic Farming and Gardening Society of Tasmania was founded (Stevenson, 2009). The Soil Association of South Australia (SASA) was founded in 1975 (Langley, 1975), however its precursor organisation, the Soil Association (South Australian Group) had been formed in 1965. I did not locate a Bourgeois invitation letter to the inaugural IFOAM meeting in the recently formally established SASA archive (Paull, 2009d). For whatever the reasons, distance, cost, or lack of an invitation, there was no Antipodean representation at the IFOAM founding.

According to Geier (2007, p. 117):

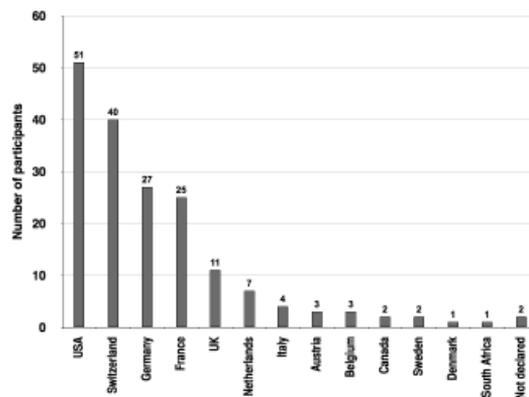
“At the time organic farming was anti-establishment, if not absolutely revolutionary. This spirit was reflected in the early days of the federation, when no minutes or records were kept and no hierarchal structure or positions were wanted or established”.

IFOAM embodied in its name King’s (1911, p. 241) call for a “world movement”, Northbourne’s (1940, p.81) advocacy of “organic” farming, and the international vision of “great and fruitful results for all humanity” of Steiner (1924a, lecture VIII, p. 20).

IFOAM was initially, by design, a federation without a president (Geier, 1998). To be registered in France as a non-profit organisation the alternative to a president was: “at least three responsible persons” (Geier, 1998, p.1). Three Frenchmen took the roles: Claude Aubert as Secretary; Roland Chevriot as Treasurer; and Denis Bourgeois as Administrator (Geier, 1998).

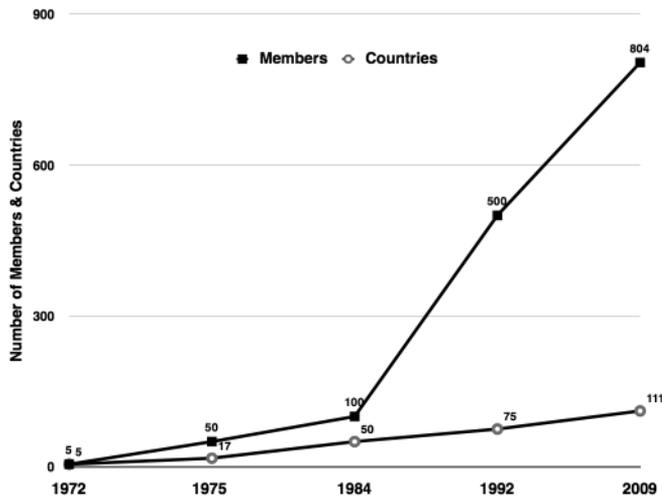
## Growth

By 1975 IFOAM had grown to 50 members with 17 countries represented (Geier, 1998). The first IFOAM conference appears to have been ‘Towards a Sustainable Agriculture’ held in Sissach, Switzerland (Besson & Vogtmann, 1978). The conference attracted 179 participants from a total of 13 countries (Fig. 1).



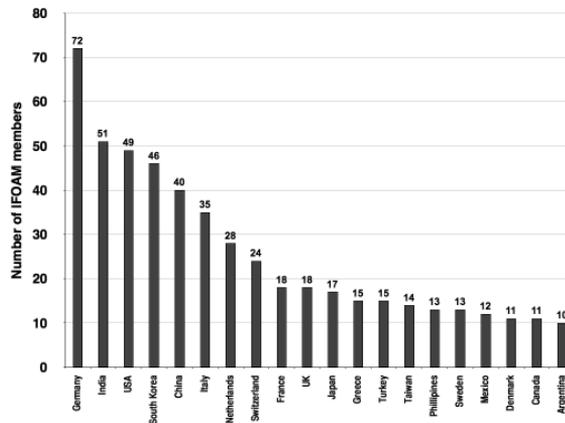
**Figure 1:** Country of domicile of participants in the first IFOAM conference, 1977, N=179 (Data source: Besson & Vogtmann, 1978).

By 1984 there were 100 members from 50 countries (Geier, 1998). The next five years was a period of dramatic expansion with the IFOAM membership growing to 500 and spanning 75 countries (Geier, 1998). This rapid expansion was put down to, firstly, IFOAM overcoming its “merchantphobia” and accepting many new processor and trader members and, secondly, from 1986 onwards, to an influx of members from the “third-world” Geier (1998, p.3). Membership of IFOAM has continued to grow, with currently 804 member organisations in 111 countries (IFOAM, 2009c) (Figs. 2 & 3).



**Figure 2:** The growth of IFOAM from 1972 to the present, as measured by the number of members and the number of countries represented (Data Sources: Geier, 2007; IFOAM, 2009c).

The rapid geographic diffusion of the organics meme is illustrated by the contrast of countries represented in Fig. 1 and Fig. 3. At the 1977 IFOAM conference there were no participants from Asia. Participants from USA and Switzerland dominated that conference, accounting for more than half of the attendees (Fig. 1).



**Figure 3:** Ranking of top 20 countries (N=111) by membership (N=804) of IFOAM in 2009 (Data Source: IFOAM, 2009c).

The membership figures for IFOAM in 2009 reveal that three of the top five countries are now from Asia (India, South Korea, China) (Fig. 3). This 'shift' towards Asia is also exemplified by the composition of the current World Board of IFOAM, elected at the IFOAM Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Vignola, Italy in 2008, in which four of the ten members are from Asia (there are also two from Europe, and one from each of: Africa; Oceania; North America; and South America) (IFOAM, 2009e). At the 2008 AGM meeting, bids from Taiwan, Philippines and Korea competed to host the forthcoming Organic World Congress. Members awarded Korea the right to host the triennial Congress to be held in 2011, the first to be held in Asia (IFOAM, 2009d; Paull, 2009a).

## The Present

At the time of the founding of IFOAM advocates of organics were viewed as "marginal and eccentric" (Geier, 1998, p.1). By way of contrast, IFOAM is now engaged with many multilateral organisations including the United Nations and presents a unified voice of the organics sector in a variety of international forums including:

- ECOSOC Status with the United Nations General Assembly;
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD);
- Codex Alimentarius Commission (FAO and WHO);
- World Trade Organization (WTO);
- United Nations Environment Program (UNEP);
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and the
- International Labor Organization of the United Nations (ILO) (IFOAM, 2009b).

IFOAM's current definition of 'organic agriculture' is:

"Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved" (IFOAM, 2008a).

IFOAM is unequivocal in declaring that organic agriculture is a principle-based agriculture (IFOAM, 2005, 2006). IFOAM has worked to articulate, refine and proliferate a set of principles and has taken the lead to be guided by principles rather than scientism. The current statement of four principles - health, ecology, fairness and care - is presented in Table 2.

IFOAM's motto is: "Uniting the Organic World" (IFOAM, 2008b, p. 5). It is easy to imagine that Roland Chevriot would be proud of the evolving stature of his 'child' and approving of its stated objective: "Our goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of Organic Agriculture" (IFOAM, 2008b, p. 6).

**Table 2:** IFOAM's four principles of organic agriculture (IFOAM, 2006).

IFOAM's four principles of organic agriculture
Principle of health: Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.
Principle of ecology: Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.
Principle of fairness: Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities
Principle of care: Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

Nature et Progrès, however, is faring less well than its progeny. Nature et Progrès is a member of IFOAM, but appears trapped in a bureaucratic cul-de-sac. It operates its own organic standard and maintains its own logo under a participatory guarantee scheme (PGS). It is now “not allowed to call its products ‘organic (or ‘biologique’ in French) due to [it lacking] the third party certification requirements of the EU regulation” and consequently “organic shops are starting to refuse the N&P products” (IFOAM, 2009a). The dilemma and the irony for Nature et Progrès is that the ‘success’ of unification and proliferation has led to the increasing bureaucratization and governmental regulation of the organics sector. While the ‘parent’ persists on its own organics path, it is being progressively marginalized as the international organisation that it spawned becomes progressively mainstreamed.

IFOAM has most recently published organic agriculture data from 154 countries, reporting a total of 35 million agricultural hectares under organic management, 1.4 million organic producers, and 488 organic certification bodies (Willer & Kilcher, 2010). These are worthy achievements which genuinely give IFOAM something to brag about, nevertheless, only 0.81% of the world’s agricultural land is organically managed (Willer & Kilcher, 2010). At the current rate of adoption, to achieve an IFOAM Otopia of 100% organic agriculture globally, would take four or fifty four decades - the former if a geometric rate of increase were to be maintained, and the latter if an arithmetic rate of increase were to eventuate (Paull, 2009c).

## Concluding Remarks

IFOAM is a remarkable success story, the bold idea of a Frenchman to safeguard and promote healthful food production. If it was a grocery item, it might be labelled: “Made in France from local and imported ingredients”. Roland Chevriot successfully planted his conviction that chemical agriculture is not a pathway to global health and well-being. Chevriot’s creation has grown from its modest inception in 1972 to be a creditable global peak body for the organics sector. IFOAM was a reification of F. H. King’s distant call from 1911 for a ‘world movement’.

IFOAM has succeeded in overcoming differences in language, culture and philosophy, to unify those who share disquiet at certain directions that modern agriculture and food production are taking, while accommodating and even fostering a diversity of views and practices within its own ranks.

Three decades before the founding of IFOAM, Northbourne (1940, p. 115) had already predicted that:

“It is a task for generations of concentrated effort, slow and laborious, needing all available skill and resources ... A combination of cooperation and individual effort ... And those engaged will be fighting a rearguard action for many decades, perhaps for centuries”.

IFOAM challenges the power and wealth of pesticide and biotech companies. It is an asymmetric contest and while the achievements of the organics sector to date are great, the task ahead is even greater.

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# Conceptual Referent for Happiness: Cross-Country Comparisons

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## Abstract:

*This paper is based on the Conceptual Referent Theory of Happiness, which states that people must have a conceptual referent for what a happy life means in order to assess their life as a happy one. The paper studies the existence of heterogeneity across countries in the inclination towards different conceptual referents for happiness. Empirical information comes from surveys applied to students in Cuba, Norway, and South Africa. It is found that there is statistically significant heterogeneity across countries regarding the conceptions of happiness and the way different inclinations towards these conceptions relate to happiness. This heterogeneity is relevant because it implies that the relevant resources for happiness may differ across countries and, moreover, across cultures.*

**Keywords:** Happiness, Conceptual Referent, Cross-Country Comparisons, Social Construction

## Introduction

The Conceptual Referent Theory of Happiness (*CRT*) states that people hold different conceptions for what a happy life is, and that these conceptions play a role in the resources that are relevant for having a happy life. The theory is also important to understand the manner in which people behave in their pursuit of happiness.

The theory states that conceptions of happiness differ not only across people, but also across cultures, since the conception one holds is not independent of the specific personal and social context one lives in and grew up. Hence, the conception of what a happy life means – but not necessarily the notion of happiness being the ultimate goal – may vary across cultures.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the theory states that differences in the conception of happiness do extend to the relevant resources for a happy life; thus, resources that may be crucial for some people and in some cultures could be irrelevant for other people and in different cultures. The theory has been tested in Mexico, where it was found that people hold different conceptions for happiness (Rojas, 2005) and that the conception a person holds is relevant for the role of income as an

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3 This argument has been advanced by Rojas (2005, 2007), as well as by Camfield *et al.* (2006). For a group of studies on the relationship between culture and subjective well-being see Diener and Suh (2000)

explanatory variable of happiness (Rojas, 2007). However, a cross-culture research is needed to test the theory's postulate about differences across cultures.

This paper is based on a survey applied in 2005 to 476 university students in three countries: Norway, South Africa and Cuba, to test the theory's postulate for differences across cultures. Even though the process of globalization could imply that students be relatively culturally homogeneous across countries, it is possible to state that there are big cultural differences among these countries based on their language, world location, history, political and economic regimes, and dominant religion and values, among other criteria.

The investigation finds that people are equally happy in the three countries, even under different social conditions, and that people significantly differ across countries in their view of what happiness means.

Section 2 deals with *CRT*'s justification and relevance, as well as with the construction and operation of a typology of conceptual referents for happiness. Section 3 explains the cross-country surveys, and the construction of happiness and conceptual-referent variables. It shows that there are no significant differences in happiness across countries. Section 4 studies differences in the conceptions of happiness across countries, and the way in which these conceptions relate to happiness. Section 5 deals with the socio-demographics of conceptual referents for happiness and its differences across countries. Section 6 formulates some final considerations.

## On the Conceptual-Referent for Happiness Theory

### *On the Theory*

The Conceptual Referent theory (*CRT*) focuses on a person's notion of what a happy life is (Rojas, 2005)<sup>4</sup> The theory states that one must have a conceptual referent for what a happy life is in order to appraise life and respond to subjective well-being question.<sup>5</sup> Hence, *CRT* states that "a person has a conceptual referent for a happy life and that this referent plays a role in the judgement of her life and in the appraisal of her happiness. In consequence, *CRT* claims that a person's judgement about her happiness is contingent on her conceptual referent for a happy life." (Rojas, 2005, p. 262)

Without neglecting the role played by transient emotions,<sup>6</sup> the *CRT* emphasizes that a happiness assessment involves a judgemental process, in which a person must select the information and issues that are relevant for assessing life as a happy one.<sup>7</sup> As Lyubomirsky (2001) states "As many psychologists and philosophers have noted, people do not only experience events or situations passively. Rather, all life events are 'cognitively processed'... – that is, construed and framed, evaluated and interpreted, contemplated and remembered... – so that each individual may live in a separate subjective social world" (p. 240).

*CRT* differs from philosophical and top-down approaches to happiness (Tatarkiewicz, 1976; McFall, 1989; Chekola, 1974; and mostly all philosophers), which are basically deductive and

4 In a broad sense, the conceptual referent a person holds is part of what a person is; therefore, it could be considered as part of her personality, if personality is understood in a broad sense, comprising "not simple traits but also the goals for which individuals typically strive." (Diener, 1999, p. 224) See also Emmons (1986) and Little (1989)

5 Thus, *CRT* is directly concerned with the process through which a person makes a judgment of her well-being, rather than with the surrounding survey conditions. A conceptual referent for a happy life is needed to make a judgment and to express a reported happiness, even in the case of a quick judgment.

6 Schwarz & Strack (1991, 1999)

7 Diener & Lucas (2000, p. 41) have proposed an Evaluation-Theory model "in which SWB (subjective well-being) depends on people's evaluations of self-relevant information. Attention is selective and therefore the factors that determine its focus are likely to influence evaluations of events."

normative in their consideration of what a happy life is. *CRT* borrows from philosophical discourse, but it focuses on people's own understanding of the concept of happiness; which is the concept at work when they are assessing their life as a happy one. As stated by Haybron (2003, p. 210) "The concept of happiness is, as I noted earlier, a folk notion; 'happiness' is not a technical term for theorists to use as they please. Happiness is primarily a matter of *practical* concern for ordinary people trying to lead good lives. Empirical researchers are no more entitled to co-opt it for their parochial purposes than moral theorists are. And it is quite possible that, left to their own devices, empirical researchers would arrive at a conception of happiness that is not especially well-suited for dealing with the practical concerns of laypersons."<sup>8</sup>

*CRT* also stresses the importance of heterogeneity; this is: the conceptual referent is not the same for every person. Thus, the relevance of the conceptual referent for happiness a person holds is that it provides an explanation for people behaving differently in their pursuit of happiness. A related argument has also been made by Diener & Fujita (1995), Diener & Lucas (2000) and Eid & Diener (2004)

Rojas (2007) shows that heterogeneity in the conceptual referent extends also to the explanatory structure of happiness. This means that the set of variables and the nature of their relationship that explains a person's happiness are contingent on her conceptual referent. Some explanatory factors are relevant for some people but not for others, and this depends on their conceptual referent. This fact contributes to explain why people may follow different paths in their pursuit of a happy life; as well as why people may be happy even under different social conditions. Thus, *CRT* is important for understanding what resources are relevant for having a happy life and why these resources may differ across persons and across nations. It breaks with the assumption of universality in the explanatory structure of happiness across people and cultures.

### ***On building a typology of conceptual referents***

What do people mean when they state they are happy or unhappy? What do they have in mind when they appraise their life as a whole in order to answer a subjective well-being question? Does everybody have the same conceptual referent for happiness? To study the conception of happiness that people hold when assessing their life as a happy one it is useful to build a typology of happiness conceptions. Then, people can be asked about their inclination towards different conceptions of happiness. Rojas (2005) presents a typology of happiness concepts constructed on the basis of an extensive review of philosophical essays about what happiness is.<sup>9</sup> Philosophers hold complex and opposite views on many issues, and this is especially true when dealing with happiness.<sup>10</sup> The investigation simplified and classified philosophical views into eight conceptual referents for happiness: *Stoicism, Virtue, Enjoyment, Carpe Diem, Satisfaction, Utopian, Tranquillity, and Fulfilment*.<sup>11</sup>

The words of philosophers, bearing a high degree of sophistication, are not easily understood

8 There is a related literature on lay theories of happiness (Furnham, 1988; Furnham & Cheng, 2000). However, lay theories have focused more on attributed causes of happiness rather than on the understanding of happiness itself.

9 The author is grateful to Lourdes Rodríguez for her work in the construction of the philosophical survey (Rodríguez, 2001). Being the topic so widely discussed, this survey can not claim to be exhaustive.

10 The philosophers' work on what happiness is both reflects -in a very refined way- and inspires the common wisdom that resonates in the minds of ordinary people and which influences their pursuit of happiness.

11 The main objective for creating a typology is to reduce and condense a large set of issues into a simple classification, which can be used for research purposes. It is obvious that some of the richness of the philosophical debate is lost in the process of simplification. In addition, a philosopher's thought is very complex, and Table 2 can not capture such a complexity; therefore, the placement of a philosopher's thought in the typology must be considered as a source of inspiration rather than a categorical statement about his position; the investigation's objectives require it to be so.

by common people. Thus, the conceptual referents for happiness must be presented in simple and recognizable phrases common people can relate to. A focus-group exercise in Mexico led to a set of phrases people can easily understand and which maintain the conceptions' essence as much as possible. The eight conceptual referents, a brief description, and the set of simple phrases are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Typology: The Conceptual Referent for Happiness*

Conceptual Referent	Some References	Brief Description	Simple Phrase
<b>Stoicism</b>	Marco Aurelio, Epictetus.	Happiness is a permanent state of contentment with life and with what happens in life. This state implies renunciation, austerity, acceptance, and resignation; taking things as they are and as they come out.	„Happiness is accepting things as they are”
<b>Virtue</b>	Socrates, Descartes, Saint Thomas of Aquino.	Happiness is a spiritual state produced by the feeling of acting properly, according to one's consciousness.	„Happiness is a sense of acting properly in our relations with others and with ourselves”
<b>Enjoyment</b>	Hedonism and Utilitarianism of Bentham, Mill, La Mettrie. Positivism of Comte.	Happiness is joyfulness and absence of pain, it is the enjoyment of those goods that provide comfort. It is the satisfaction of all human needs and wants.	„Happiness is to enjoy what one has attain in life”
<b>Carpe diem</b>	Erasmus	Happiness is the present pleasure and gratification, it is about enjoying now as much as possible.	„Happiness is to seize every moment in life”
<b>Satisfaction</b>	Psychological approaches, Argyle, Sumner	Happiness is a feeling of life's elation that comes with an intuitive judgement about oneself and about one's surrounding world.	„Happiness is being satisfied with what I have and what I am”
<b>Utopian</b>	Plato, Thomas Moro, Kant, Kierkegaard, Bloch.	Happiness is an ideal that guides human action. It is perfection itself conceptualised as the synthesis of virtue and pleasure. It is a desired, yet unreachable good, at least in this life.	„Happiness is an unreachable ideal we can only try to approach”
<b>Tranquillity</b>	Epicurus, Diogenes, Adam Smith.	Happiness is a state of tranquillity, the absence of worries that takes place with prudence, moderation, measurement, and judicious wants.	„Happiness is in living a tranquil life, not looking beyond what is attainable”
<b>Fulfilment</b>	Aristotle, Chuang Tzu	Happiness is the realization of our nature and the fulfilment of our essence as human beings. Happiness is in that activity that constitutes the ultimate goal of each human being.	„Happiness is in fully exercising our capabilities”

Source: In Rojas (2005)

## Cross-Country Surveys

### *Sampling*

Data were collected in 2005 among students from the University of Tromsø, Norway (N= 144), students from the University of Western Cape, South Africa (N = 182) and students from the University of Havana, Cuba (N = 150). All three are convenience samples, as participants were recruited from lectures or at the campus. There were 111 (77%) females in the Norwegian sample, 139 (77%) females in the South African sample, and 69 (46%) females in the Cuban sample. Mean ages (with Range and Standard deviations) were 24,4 (R = 19-48, SD = 6.0); 24.0 (R=18-44, SD = 5.3) and 22.1 (R = 14 - 48, SD = 4.8) respectively for the three samples.

### *Construction of a happiness variable*

*Happiness* was measured by means of the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). The SHS is a 4-item inventory, asking participants to indicate the extent to which they identify themselves as a happy person on a 1 to 7 scale with varying end point labels. The Cronbach alpha's for the scale were  $\alpha = .82$ ;  $\alpha = .74$ ; and  $\alpha = .64$  for the Norwegian, South African, and Cuban samples respectively. The English and Spanish versions of the SHS were provided by Sonia Lyubomirsky, and the Norwegian version was translated and back-translated from the English version by three bilingual persons.

Tables 2 and 3 present basic statistics for the happiness variable and for their statistical comparison across countries.

**Table 2:** *Mean and Standard Deviation Values for Happiness*

By country			
	Norway	South Africa	Cuba
Mean	4.61	4.71	4.60
Standard Deviation	1.15	1.17	0.76

**Table 3:** *t-Test for Comparison of Mean Happiness Scores across Countries*

Referent	Norway-S.A.	Norway-Cuba	S.A.-Cuba
t-value	0.8	0.1	1.0

**Note:** Test does not assume equal variance

It is noticed in Tables 2 and 3 that there are no significant differences in mean values of happiness across countries. It can be stated that Norwegians, South Africans, and Cubans in the sample are equally happy. However, there is a smaller standard deviation in Cuba with respects to Norway and South Africa; in other words, happiness in Cuba is distributed in a more egalitarian way than in the other two countries.

### *Conceptual-referent-for-happiness question*

People in the survey were asked to evaluate each conceptual referent for happiness separately and to provide an answer in a scale that goes from 1 to 5, where 1 is associated to an ‘in complete disagreement’ answer and 5 to a ‘in complete agreement’ answer. Hence, rather than choosing just one referent, people were allowed to express their agreement with each conceptual referent. Thus, it is likely for some people to be in agreement with all referents.<sup>12</sup>

The following question was asked: “*Happiness can have different meanings for different people, and we can more or less agree with the different conceptions of happiness. For you, How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the meaning of happiness?*” The statements under consideration are the simple phrases presented in Table 1. The Cronbach alpha’s for the eight conceptual referents in the typology are  $\alpha = .36$ ;  $\alpha = .70$ ; and  $\alpha = .51$  for the Norwegian, South African, and Cuban samples respectively.

## Cross-Country Comparisons

### *Mean Values for Conceptual Referent Scores*

Table 4 presents the mean values for each conceptual referent across countries. It is observed that Norwegians give high scores for referents such as *satisfaction*, *carpe diem*, and *enjoyment*. They also agree with a *fulfilment* referent. Norwegians clearly disagree with referents such as *utopian* and *stoicism*. In general, Norwegians tend to have - on average - outer-oriented conceptions of happiness.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4:** Mean Values for Conceptual Referent Scores

Referent	By country		
	Norway	South Africa	Cuba
<b>Stoicism</b>	2.89	3.41	2.63
<b>Virtue</b>	3.56	4.06	3.84
<b>Enjoyment</b>	4.41	4.46	4.47
<b>Carpe diem</b>	4.46	4.35	4.03
<b>Satisfaction</b>	4.61	4.41	4.33
<b>Utopian</b>	2.04	3.34	3.92
<b>Tranquillity</b>	3.31	3.26	2.06
<b>Fulfilment</b>	4.28	4.25	4.45
<b>Average value for scores</b>	3.69	3.94	3.72
<b>Number Observations</b>	143	179	145

On average, South Africans agree with conceptions such as *enjoyment* and *satisfaction*; and in a lesser degree with conceptions such as *carpe diem*, *fulfilment* and *virtue*. There is no referent South Africans clearly disagree with.

<sup>12</sup> Previous research about the conceptual referent for happiness has asked the interviewed to select just one referent. Another possibility would be to ask the interviewed to allocate a given number of points among the eight conceptual referents, which would be an application of the LaBorda method.

<sup>13</sup> An outer-orientation emphasizes the role of a person’s external factors in her pursue of happiness; while an inner-orientation emphasizes the role of a person’s inner or internal factors in her pursue of happiness. See Rojas (2007) for an explanation of the outer-inner classification of conceptual referents.

On average, Cubans agree with *enjoyment*, *fulfilment* and *satisfaction* conceptions. They tend to disagree with the *tranquillity* and *stoicism* conceptions. Thus, on average, outer-oriented conceptions for happiness dominate in all countries. However, Norwegians are the only group that tend to disagree with a *utopian* conception, while Cubans tend to disagree with a *tranquillity* conception. Norwegians and Cubans share their disagreement with a *stoicism* conception. It is clear that these statements are based on average scores and that some dispersion may exist within each country.

Table 5 shows the results from a statistical comparison of mean scores across countries. Therefore, it is possible to evaluate whether there are significant differences across countries in people’s agreement with some conceptions of happiness.

**Table 5:** *t-Test for Comparison of Mean Scores across Countries*

Referent	Norway-S.Africa	Norway-Cuba	S.Africa-Cuba
<b>Stoicism</b>	3.5 <sup>*</sup>	1.6 <sup>**</sup>	5.1 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Virtue</b>	4.8 <sup>*</sup>	2.3 <sup>*</sup>	2.0 <sup>**</sup>
<b>Enjoyment</b>	0.5	0.6	0.1
<b>Carpe diem</b>	1.1	3.8 <sup>*</sup>	2.8 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Satisfaction</b>	2.2 <sup>*</sup>	3.1 <sup>*</sup>	0.8
<b>Utopian</b>	9.4 <sup>*</sup>	13.8 <sup>*</sup>	4.2 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Tranquillity</b>	0.4	9.2 <sup>*</sup>	8.7 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Fulfilment</b>	0.3	1.7 <sup>**</sup>	2.0 <sup>*</sup>

**Note:** <sup>\*</sup> Difference is significant at 5 percent  
<sup>\*\*</sup> Difference is significant at 10 percent  
 Test does not assume equal variance

A comparison between Norwegians and South Africans’ agreement with the different conceptions for happiness indicates that the former manifest greater agreement with the *stoicism*, *virtue* and *utopian* conceptions, while they manifest less agreement with the *satisfaction* conception. Thus, South Africans are, on average, more inner-oriented (and less outer-oriented) than Norwegians.

A comparison between Norwegians and Cubans’ agreement with the different conceptions for happiness indicates that there are statistically significant differences in all but the *enjoyment* conception. Cubans show less agreement than Norwegians with the *stoicism*, *carpe diem*, *satisfaction* and *tranquillity* conceptions; and more agreement with the *virtue*, *utopian* and *fulfilment* conceptions.

There are also significant differences between South Africans and Cubans. South Africans manifest relatively more agreement with conceptions such as *stoicism*, *virtue*, *carpe diem*, and *tranquillity*; and relatively less agreement with the *utopian* and *fulfilment* conceptions.

**Conceptual Referent Scores and Happiness**

The CRT states that the conceptual referent for happiness a person holds may be relevant for her assessment of life as a happy one. Assessing a life as happy does not only depend on the external conditions a person faces (*livability* of the environment, in Veenhoven, 2000), but also on how this person evaluates these external conditions. The correlation between the inclination to a specific conception of happiness and the happiness level may vary across conceptual referents, showing the importance played by the conceptual referent a person holds on her life’s judgement. In addition, the correlation may differ across countries, indicating that a person’s judgement of her life depends on the combination of her environment-specific conditions and her criterion for making a judgement. Thus, an inclination towards a specific conception of happiness may lead

to a person's favourable assessment of her life under some specific social conditions but not under different conditions.

Table 6 shows correlations between each referent score and happiness. It is noticed that, within each country, there are important differences in the correlation between referents' scores and happiness across conceptions. There are also important differences for each referent across countries.

**Table 6:** *Correlations between Conceptual Referent Scores and Happiness*

By Country			
	Norway	South Africa	Cuba
<b>Stoicism</b>	0.20**	0.06	0.13
<b>Virtue</b>	0.16*	0.33**	0.04
<b>Enjoyment</b>	0.13	0.33**	0.17*
<b>Carpe diem</b>	0.12	0.40**	0.24**
<b>Satisfaction</b>	0.20**	0.24**	0.13
<b>Utopian</b>	-0.32**	-0.06	0.02
<b>Tranquillity</b>	-0.12	-0.05	-0.01
<b>Fulfilment</b>	0.15*	0.23**	0.03

**Note:** \* Significant at 5 percent.

\*\* Significant at 1 percent.

In Norway it is remarked that *stoicism* and *satisfaction* show relatively high positive correlations with happiness; while *virtue* and *fulfilment* are also significantly related to happiness. *Utopian* shows a significant negative correlation. The high and positive correlation between *stoicism* and happiness is noteworthy, since this referent shows a relatively low mean value in Norway. It is also noteworthy that *carpe diem* and *enjoyment*, which are referents with high mean scores, are not significantly related to happiness.

In South Africa, outer-oriented referents such as *carpe diem*, *enjoyment*, *satisfaction* and *fulfilment* are significantly related to happiness. *Virtue* is also positively and significantly related to happiness.

The Cuban case is special because happiness is high and there is little dispersion across the sample. However, it is found that the *carpe diem* score is positively and significantly related to happiness. *Enjoyment* is also related to happiness, although to a lesser degree.

Regression analysis is used to further explore the relationship between conceptual-referent scores and happiness across countries for each referent. Regression analysis is preferable because it allows studying the marginal impact of an increase in one referent score while holding the other scores constant. However, high correlation among scores implies that multicollinearity is present in the estimation. Hence, even though the estimated coefficients are unbiased, significance values for the *t*-test may be misleading. Thus, the study focuses on the estimated coefficient values, rather than on their *t*-test. The regression controls for gender, age, and years of education.

Table 7 presents the results from the exercise.

**Table 7: Regression Analysis**

Happiness as explained variable, conceptual-referent scores as explanatory variables						
	Norway		South Africa		Cuba	
	Coef.	Prob>t	Coef.	Prob>t	Coef.	Prob>t
<b>Intercept</b>	2.493	0.063	1.554	0.071	4.506	0.000
<b>Stoicism</b>	0.210	0.006	-0.083	0.252	0.018	0.731
<b>Virtue</b>	0.147	0.152	0.262	0.019	0.017	0.805
<b>Enjoyment</b>	-0.086	0.540	0.069	0.650	0.009	0.938
<b>Carpe diem</b>	-0.026	0.861	0.445	0.000	0.097	0.187
<b>Satisfaction</b>	0.237	0.143	0.046	0.707	0.041	0.669
<b>Utopian</b>	-0.306	0.000	-0.114	0.118	-0.024	0.728
<b>Tranquillity</b>	-0.142	0.101	-0.018	0.818	-0.035	0.557
<b>Fulfilment</b>	0.234	0.066	0.084	0.464	-0.034	0.709
<b>Female</b>	-0.077	0.739	0.113	0.627	-0.087	0.544
<b>Age</b>	0.004	0.812	0.025	0.150	-0.001	0.948
<b>Education</b>	0.026	0.650	-0.045	0.336	-0.016	0.667
<b>R-squared</b>	0.24		0.29		0.04	

Based on the estimated intercepts, it is observed that happiness tends to be relatively high in Cuba, and it is little sensitive to the scores for the conceptual referents and the demographic characteristics. The conceptual referent *carpe diem* constitutes the exception, showing a slightly positive relation with happiness in Cuba. The low R-square in Cuba indicates a poor goodness of fit for the regression; it seems that conceptual referent scores and basic socio-demographic variables have little explanatory power of Cuban students' happiness.

The intercept is very low in South Africa, and happiness is very sensitive to the *virtue* and the *carpe diem* scores; and it is slightly sensitive to the *utopian* score.

There are important differences across countries for the association of each conceptual-referent score to happiness. *Stoicism* has a large and slightly significant association to happiness in Norway, but its association is null in the other two countries. *Virtue* has a large and significant association to happiness in South Africa; its association is small in Norway and null in Cuba. *Carpe diem* is strongly relevant in South Africa, it is also relevant in Cuba, but it has no association to happiness in Norway. *Satisfaction* has a significant association to happiness in Norway, but no association in Cuba and South Africa. *Utopian* scores are negatively related to happiness in all three countries; its association is extremely large in Norway. *Tranquillity* is slightly related to happiness in a negative way in Norway, but not in the other countries. *Fulfilment* is strongly related to happiness in Norway, but not so in the other two countries.

Hence, it is clear that the association of each conceptual-referent score on happiness is contingent on the specific surrounding conditions; thus, it differs across countries.

## The Socio-Demographics of Conceptual-Referent Scores

Using data for Mexico, Rojas (2005) found that the probability of holding a conceptual referent for happiness depends on a person's age, gender, and education. The survey gathered information about age, gender and education of the interviewed; thus, it is possible to study whether there are significant differences across countries in the relationship between a person's socio-demographic characteristics and her degree of agreement with each conceptual referent for happiness.

## Socio-demographic variables in the survey

In Norway and South Africa the survey gathered information mostly from students. The Cuban survey also focused on educated people. Thus, the sample contains information for young and adult people, with age ranging between 14 and 48 years old, and a mean value in the early twenties. The Norwegian and South African samples have a large majority of females, while the Cuban sample is balanced by gender. Education is relatively high in Cuba and Norway, and it is relatively low in South Africa.

Table 8 presents the corresponding descriptive statistics for the socio-demographic variables in the survey.

**Table 8:** *Socio-Demographic Information*

Descriptive statistics by country					
Country	Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Norway	Age	19	48	24.4	6.0
	Gender	0	1	0.2	0.4
	Education	11	19	14.8	1.8
South Africa	Age	18	44	24.0	5.3
	Gender	0	1	0.2	0.4
	Education	9	19	13.8	1.9
Cuba	Age	14	48	22.1	4.8
	Gender	0	1	0.5	0.5
	Education	9	19	15.3	2.2

**Note:** age and education in years. For gender, female = 0 and male = 1.

## Socio-demographic variables and conceptual-referent scores

This section studies the way in which the extent of agreement with each conceptual referent relates to a person's age, gender and education. It focuses on studying differences across countries.

Ordered - probit regressions are used because conceptual-referent scores can be understood as categorical variables, their value indicating different degrees of agreement with each specific statement.

The following specification is run to study differences across countries:

$$CR_{kij} = f_{Ordered\ Probit}(Age_i, Gender_i, Edu_i) \quad (1)$$

$$k = 1, 2, \dots, 8. \quad j = 1, 2, 3.$$

where:

$CR_{ki}$ : score of person  $i$  in country  $j$  for conceptual referent  $k$ .

$Age_i$ : age in years of person  $i$ .

$Gender_i$ : person  $i$ 's gender. 1 if male, 0 if female.

$Edu_i$ : education of person  $i$ , in years.

Table 9 presents the results from the econometric exercise.

**Table 9: Socio-demographic Variables and Conceptual-Referent Scores**

Ordered-probit regressions by country									
Sample	Variable	Stoicism	Virtue	Enjoyment	Carpe Diem	Satisfaction	Utopian	Tranquillity	Fulfilment
Norway	Gender	-0.508**	-0.276	-0.609***	-0.709***	-0.697***	0.084	-0.392*	-0.073
	Age	-0.004	0.008	0.022	0.000	-0.033*	-0.008	0.024	0.002
	Education	0.028	-0.018	0.010	0.059	-0.017	-0.050	-0.006	-0.059
South Africa	Gender	-0.437**	-0.389*	-0.626***	-0.480**	-0.653***	-0.107	-0.560***	-0.024
	Age	0.045***	0.033**	0.019	0.012	0.020	-0.006	0.030*	0.040**
	Education	-0.008	0.047	-0.020	-0.018	-0.001	0.037	0.087*	0.043
Cuba	Gender	0.213	0.095	0.357*	-0.273	0.212	-0.106	-0.200	0.164
	Age	0.023	0.017	0.034	0.049*	0.009	-0.058**	-0.026	0.042
	Education	0.009	0.046	-0.001	-0.072	-0.020	0.160***	-0.002	-0.001

Note: \*\*\* significant at 1 %

\*\* significant at 5 %

\* significant at 10 %

Significance tests for Gender, Age and Education refer to testing the null hypotheses of coefficients being equal to 0.

### ***Stoicism***

The probability of agreeing with a *stoicism* conception of happiness is smaller for men than for women in Norway and South Africa. It is slightly higher for men than for women in Cuba, although the coefficient is not statistically significant.

This probability does not change with age in Norway and Cuba, but it increases with age in South Africa.

Education does not make a difference in the probability of agreeing with a *stoicism* conception of happiness. It is important to remark that samples in the three countries consist of highly educated people; although there is some variability in years of education, all people in the sample can be considered as highly educated.

### ***Virtue***

Both in Norway and in Cuba, the probability of agreeing with a *virtue* conception of happiness is independent of a person's gender, age, and education.

It is found that in South Africa men have a lower probability than women of agreeing with this conception, and that this probability increases with age in South Africa.

### ***Enjoyment***

Men have a lower probability than women of agreeing with an *enjoyment* conception of happiness in Norway and in South Africa. The situation completely reverts for Cubans.

Age and education do not make a difference in the probability of agreeing with an *enjoyment* conception in any of the three countries under consideration.

### ***Carpe Diem***

Men manifest a lower probability of agreeing with a *carpe diem* conception than women in all three countries. This situation is very strong in Norway, a little less strong in South Africa, and almost negligible in Cuba.

This probability also increases with age in Cuba.

### ***Satisfaction***

The probability of agreeing with a *satisfaction* conception is lower for men than for women in Norway and South Africa, but not so in Cuba. Older Norwegians also have a smaller probability of agreeing with this conception.

### ***Utopian***

Gender, age and education do not make a difference in the probability of agreeing with a *utopian* conception of happiness in Norway and South Africa; this probability declines with age and increases with education in Cuba.

### ***Tranquillity***

Women have a higher probability than men of agreeing with a *tranquillity* conception of happiness in Norway and South Africa. This probability increases with age and education in South Africa.

### ***Fulfilment***

The probability of agreeing with a *fulfilment* conception of happiness increases with age in South Africa, but not so in Norway and Cuba. Gender and education do not make a difference in any country.

## **Conclusions**

This investigation has shown that the conceptual referent for happiness may vary across countries. Students from three countries with dissimilar socio-economic, political and historical backgrounds were asked to express their agreement with a group of statements associated to different happiness conceptions.

It was found that South Africans have a greater inclination towards conceptions such as *stoicism*, *virtue* and *utopian*, and a smaller inclination towards the *satisfaction* conception, than Norwegians. Cubans have greater inclination towards conceptions such as *virtue* and *utopian*, and less inclination towards *satisfaction*, *carpe diem*, and *tranquillity*, than Norwegians. There are also significant differences between South Africans and Cubans. South Africans manifest relatively more agreement with conceptions such as *stoicism*, *virtue*, *carpe diem*, and *tranquillity*; and relatively less agreement with the *utopian* and *fulfilment* conceptions.

Heterogeneity across countries in the conceptual referent for happiness is important because the influence of external conditions on a person's assessment of life as a happy one does depend on how one evaluates these external conditions. Hence, the study of differences in socio-economic conditions across countries does not provide enough information to assess the subjective well-being situation in those countries. Due to heterogeneity in conceptual referents across countries, it is necessary to measure directly subjective well-being rather than to presume it on the basis of socio-economic conditions. Factors that are relevant for a happy life in Norway may be of little importance in Cuba and in South Africa, and vice versa. The investigation finds that Norwegian,

South African, and Cuban students in the sample are equally happy, even under very different socio-economic and political conditions. Heterogeneity across countries in the way happiness is assessed could play a role in explaining this finding.

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# Determinants of Parent Involvement in Romanian Schools<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*The paper is focused on exploring the factors that facilitate parent involvement in their child's education and school life. A sample of 670 Romanian school principals from the Cross-National Survey of School Principals in South East Europe (SEE) countries 2008 was used. Two-step linear regressions were run in order to predict parent participation in school meetings, parent engagement in school activities and parent influence in school governance, as reported by school principals. The results indicated that the level of parents' organizations influence on school governance, school administration, and teaching methods is as important as the school background (size, location, budget, principal's experience, and shares of vulnerable children).*

**Keywords:** School Principals, Parent Involvement in School, South East Europe

## Theoretical background

Parent involvement encompasses a broad range of parenting behaviours, from supervising children's homework to attendance at parent-teacher organization meetings (Feuerstein, 2001). Parent involvement has been shown to be positively related to children's educational performance in international research (Barnard, 2004; McWayne et al., 2004; Jeynes, 2003; Fan & Chen, 2001; Feuerstein, 2000), prompting us to examine whether the same relations have been found in previous Romanian studies.

Tufiş (2008) and Agabrian (2007) found meaningful associations between parenting and children's school performance. Haragus et al. (2009) also found, in the case of Romania, that contextual factors (such as the support received from parents and teachers) have a significant effect on children's educational performance. Agabrian and Millea (2005) examined the role of parent support in children's school achievement based on Epstein's *theory of the intersection of the influence spheres* and built a model that included parenting, home support for learning, parents' involvement in volunteering activities and in decision/making in school, their involvement and collaboration to solve community issues, and overall communication between parents, schools and communities. Given that the results of the studies conducted in Romania highlighted a significant relationship between parent involvement and children's educational performance, and that parent involvement is seen as a positive factor for children's school success, the present study will focus on exploring the factors that attract parents to school activities.

The article is informed by an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), that describes the developmental process as an interaction of several subsystems: the *microsystem* (the setting

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in which the individual lives: immediate family, school, community, peer-group, etc.); the *mesosystem* (the relations between microsystems); the *exosystem* (experiences in a social setting in which an individual does not have an active role but which nevertheless influence experience in an immediate context); the *macrosystem* (or the cultural context in which individuals live); and the *chronosystem* (the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course). The present study is focused on the importance of the mesosystem, more precisely on the interrelations between family and school. In doing so, the article mainly considers three types of activities from Epstein's (1996) framework of parent involvement: *communicating* (attending school-meetings), *volunteering* (engaging in school activities), and *decision-making* (influencing school governance).

In identifying the determinants of parent involvement in school, the author was inspired by Feuerstein's (2001, p.29) observation that there is a need for a new research agenda that moves beyond individual-and family-level demographics to school-level characteristics that may be more easily manipulated by teachers and administrators. This decision was also supported by the results of a recent Romanian study (Hatos, 2008) indicating that school-level characteristics (like the quality and the intensity of the cooperation between students and teachers, between the teachers themselves, the distribution of material resources, facilities and human resources) have a significant impact on academic results. Haragus et al. (2009; 2010) also found significant associations between pupils' academic performance and contextual factors, such as children's relation to teachers, to parents and to other community (neighbourhood) members, as well as school and community characteristics.

As Feuerstein (2001) noted, most studies on school-effectiveness focus on the relationship between school-level factors and student achievement, rather than on the relationship between school-level factors and parent involvement. Studies that have investigated school-level influences on parent involvement reported a variety of factors that can be grouped under three broader categories: staff characteristics, student characteristics, and school characteristics. Thus, staff characteristics, such as age, experience, racial composition, disposition toward parents may affect teachers' ability and interest to work with parents; student characteristics, such as socio-economic status and minority composition play a crucial role in determining parent involvement; school characteristics, such as location (urban, suburban, rural), size, academic focus, climate and sense of community may influence levels of parent participation (Feuerstein, 2001, p. 32).

The theoretical framework of this study is provided by the theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977), a theory that often helped explain the differences in parent involvement. According to this theory, schools represent and reproduce middle-or upper-class values and forms of communication as school teachers come from predominantly middle-or upper-class backgrounds. Parents coming from similar social backgrounds can easily relate to teachers and get involved in school-life, while parents who belong to working-class find it difficult to do so. These differences in parent involvement may lead to the reproduction of status relations among groups (Bourdieu, 1977). This is of particular interest in disadvantaged areas where most parents are working-class and schools benefit from less facilities and qualified personnel – which could diminish cultural differences between the school environment and parents' background. Coleman (1988) developed the notion of social capital to refer to the social networks available to parents that enhance students' academic opportunities. According to Coleman, all schools have the social structures that influence students' performance, but some schools possess more social capital than others. However, Coleman does not question social inequalities, but rather states that social networks are resources available to all parents. It is worth noting that, for the present study, the social networks available to parents are understood as parents' organizations. The role of parents' organizations is to represent parents' interest in all interactions with school and to communicate with parents and on behalf of parents, thus constituting a meaningful social network for parents in general. The current study considers this assumption when analysing the overall parent involvement in school.

The school-level factors that influence parent involvement can be of considerable interest to school policy-makers as some of these factors (school climate, inclusiveness, consideration of

parents' and parents' organizations interests) may be influenced more easily than the individual factors (e.g. socio-economic status). Thus, the paper intends to identify the conditions in which parents tend to be more engaged in their children's school-life.

## Method

Data for this study were taken from the *Cross-National Survey of School Principals in South East Europe (SEE) countries 2008* that was collected from a nationally representative sample of school principals in ten SEE countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldavia, Serbia, Kosovo, Romania, Montenegro)<sup>3</sup>. In Romania's case, the survey used a random monostadial stratified sample consisting of 670 principals from schools with grades I to VIII (primary and middle schools). The sample is representative of the target population (6.135 schools with grades I-VIII) with an error margin of +/- 3% at 95% confidence level. The questionnaire was structured in 7 modules: school background information, school-parent communication, opportunities for parents to support school activities, parenting training services for parents, parent involvement in school governance, general attitudes, and a country-specific module. As the instrument was designed to measure school principals' reports on parent involvement, a major limitation of these data is the lack of objectivity and the absence of third-party information.

The main research question of the study is: What are the factors that influence parent involvement in Romanian schools? In order to answer it, school-and parent-related factors shall be considered from the perspective of cultural and social capital. Previous studies found that parent communication with schools, parent volunteering and membership in parent-teacher organizations were more heavily influenced by school characteristics (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Kerbow & Bernhardt, 1993). Such findings imply that only some schools have the ability to improve levels of parent participation in the schooling process, depending on their social capital (Coleman, 1988). Therefore, the following research question emerges (RQ1): How does parent involvement vary according to the school background?

In Shatkin and Gershberg's (2007) findings, schools where parents are given meaningful decision-making authority and principals actively facilitate parent involvement, report improved school performance and school-community relations. As parents' organizations represent important social networks for parents, mediating their interests in the relation with the school, we shall assume that there is a significant association between parents' organizations activity and the degree of school involvement on behalf of parents in general, thus formulating another research question (RQ2): What is the relation between parent organizations activity and parents' overall involvement in schools?

Parent involvement was defined, using the variables provided by this questionnaire, through three types of activities that also appear in Epstein's (1996) framework: communicating (attending school-meetings), volunteering (engaging in school activities), and decision-making (influencing school governance).

In order to measure the parent participation in school meetings, the question used was "Please estimate the percentage of parents in your school regularly (at least half time of meetings) engaged in: a) form-teacher – parents meetings, b) teacher – parents meetings, c) school principal – parents meetings". Four answer choices were provided: 1) less than 25 percent, 2) over 25 but less than 50 percent, 3) over 50 but less than 75 percent, 4) over 75 percent, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 3 items is good (Cronbach alpha > 0.8). To create the *parent participation in school meetings* variable, the items measuring parents' attendance to all three types of school meetings (with form-teacher, teachers and school principal) were summed up.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see <http://www.see-educoop.net/aciq>

To measure parent engagement in school activities, first an open-ended question was used: *which do you consider to be the three school activities in your school that most successfully engage parents?* All responses were coded and it resulted that the three most successful school activities: school festivities, administrative activities, and extracurricular activities. Second, another question was used: *Please estimate the percentage of parents that have engaged in: a) school festivities, b) administrative activities, c) extracurricular activities.* Four answer choices were provided: 1) *less than 25 percent*, 2) *over 25 but less than 50 percent*, 3) *over 50 but less than 75 percent*, 4) *over 75 percent*, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 3 items is acceptable (Cronbach alpha > 0.7). The *parent engagement in school activities* variable was created by summing up parents' total participation in these three most successful school activities. However, this variable was composed from an open-ended question, and we considered only the cases where the 3 most popular activities were quoted when estimating the percentage of parents engaging in them. Therefore, for this variable we have only 247 valid cases for analysis (out of 670).

For measuring the overall parent influence in school governance, the following question was used: *Indicate the extent of influence in general parents in your schools have in practical school life in the following: a) evaluation of teachers' performance, b) hiring and firing of teachers, c) selection of textbooks and other teaching materials used in class, d) setting priorities for the school budget, e) social activity planning, f) development or up-dating of school policies and regulations, g) decisions taken at classroom level, h) decisions taken at school level.* Four answer choices were provided: 1) *not at all*, 2) *little*, 3) *some*, 4) *to a great extent*, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 8 items is good (Cronbach alpha > 0.8). All items in this variable were summarized to create the *parent influence in school governance* variable.

Originally, we intended to create a global indicator of parent involvement, therefore we correlated these 3 variables (Parents' participation in school meetings, Parents' engagement in school activities, and Parents' influence in school government). However, only *Parents' participation in school meetings* and *Parents' engagement in school activities* correlated significantly ( $r=0.531$ ,  $p<0,001$ ). Due to the high number of missing cases in *Parents' engagement in school activities* variable, we opted to analyse the two indicators of parent involvement separately, so as not to diminish the total number of cases entered in the regression analyses. Also, *Parents' influence in school government* correlated poorly with *Parents' participation in school meetings* ( $r=0.163$ ) and with *Parents' engagement in school activities* ( $r=0.172$ ), therefore it cannot be included into a composite variable.

Table 1 shows the frequency of parents' engagement in various school activities as reported by school principals. It can be seen that in most schools there is an increased parent participation in school meetings (between 50-75% of the parents attending such meetings in nearly one half of the schools in the sample). In over 50% of the schools a high share of the parents (between 50-75%, over 75%) engage in the three most successful school activities as mentioned above. However, in most schools (88.8%) parents have little or no influence in school government.

**Table 1:** *Descriptive analysis of parent involvement*

Parent involvement variables	%
Parents' participation in school meetings	
Less than 25%	8.0
Over 25%. but less than 50%	22.2
Over 50%. but less than 75%	48.4
Over 75%	21.4
Parents' engagement in school activities	
Less than 25%	12.1
Over 25%. but less than 50%	34.5
Over 50%. but less than 75%	37.2
Over 75%	16.2
Parents' influence in school government	
Not at all	32.8
To little extent	56.0
To some extent	6.9
To a large extent	4.3

These figures suggest that some schools are more successful than others in involving parents in their children's school life. In order to find out what makes the difference, factors related to schools' background were examined (Table 2).

**Table 2:** *School background variables (N=670)*

Variables	%	Dummy variables
<i>School principal's gender</i>		<i>Gender</i>
Women	51.9	Women = 1
Men	48.1	Men = 0
<i>School location</i>		<i>Location</i>
Urban	25.2	Urban = 1
Rural	74.8	Rural = 0
<i>School size</i>		<i>School size (3 var.)</i>
Small ( $\leq 99$ pupils)	23.9	Small = 0; Average, Large = 1
Average (100-499 pupils)	63.7	Average = 0; Small, Large = 1
Large ( $\geq 500$ pupils)	12.4	Large = 0; Small, Average = 1
<i>School budget</i>		<i>Budget</i>
Sufficient	77.5	Sufficient = 1
Insufficient	22.5	Insufficient = 0
<i>Principal's experience as a director</i>		<i>Principal's experience (3 var.)</i>
Low ( $\leq 5$ yrs)	51.3	Low = 0; Average, High = 1
Average (6-15 yrs)	28.7	Average = 0; Low, High = 1
High ( $\geq 16$ yrs)	20.0	High = 0; Low, Average = 1

School principal positions are equally distributed among women and men. However, the sampled schools are located predominantly in rural areas (74.8%). Principals were asked to *estimate the total number of pupils enrolled in your school in the academic year 2007/2008*. In order to create the "school size" variable, schools have been broken down (according to the reported number of pupils) into three categories: *small* (schools with up to 99 pupils), *average* (schools with 100 to 499 pupils) and *large* (schools with over 500 pupils). Most schools in our sample were of average size (63.7%).

Principals were asked to describe *the school budget for the 2007/2008 school year* in terms of being able to pay the utility bills, using a categorical scale of four levels: 1) *very good*, 2) *sufficient*, 3) *insufficient*, 4) *extremely bad*. To create the variable measuring school budget, the four categories were reduced to two by summarizing the first two under the label *sufficient* (covers all utility bills) and the last two under the label *insufficient* (hardly covers the utility bills). Nearly a quarter (22.5%) of the sampled schools had an insufficient budget for the 2007/2008 school year.

The principals were asked to *report the number of years you have been the director of this school*. A variable indicating principal's experience was created, by grouping the reported number in three categories: *low* (up to 5 years), *average* (between 6-15 years) and *high* (16 years or more).

The school background variables were recoded into dummy variables (Table 2) in order to be used in regression analyses predicting parent involvement patterns.

An important factor in the school background profile is the percentage of children belonging to vulnerable categories (Table 3). Principals were asked to estimate *the share of children that: a) come from a household without regular income, b) come from single parent households, c) come from households with one parent working abroad, d) come from households with both parents working abroad, e) come from orphanages, f) belong to an ethnic minority*, using a categorical scale of four levels: 1) *less than 5%*, 2) *more than 5%, but less than 10%*, 3) *more than 10%, but less than 25%*, 4) *more than 25%*. The above mentioned items cannot be used as a scale measuring vulnerability, as its internal consistency is low (Cronbach alpha > 0.5), therefore the items shall be used independently. According to principals' reports, the biggest problems that occur to over 25% of the children in their school are poverty (63.2%), migrated parents (11.6%, 4.2%) and being a member of the Roma minority (11.3%). Each item was recoded into a dummy by splitting values into two categories, by summarizing the first two under the label *under 10%* (=0) and the last two under the label *over 10%* (=1).

**Table 3:** Shares of vulnerable children in schools

Share of children who:	<5%	>5 to <10%	>10 to <25%	>25%	Dummy var.
Come from a household without regular income [ <i>No reg. income</i> ]	10.6	12.1	14.1	63.2	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1
Come from single parent households [ <i>Single parent</i> ]	57.8	28.2	11.3	2.7	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1
Come from households with one parent working abroad [ <i>1 migrated parent</i> ]	50.2	22.7	15.5	11.6	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1
Come from households with both parents working abroad [ <i>2 migrated parents</i> ]	77.5	13.1	5.2	4.2	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1
Come from orphanages [ <i>Orphans</i> ]	97.2	1.4	0.7	0.7	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1
Belong to an ethnic minority [ <i>Ethnic minority</i> ]	72.7	8.5	7.5	11.3	Under 10% = 0 Over 10% = 1

Other factors that must be taken into consideration when analyzing parent involvement are parent organizations: *School Board* (SB), *Parents' Committee* (PCOMM) and *Parents' Council* (PC). As the questionnaire was addressed only to school principals, the activity of parent organizations is evaluated in terms of principals' degree of satisfaction.

In order to measure principals' level of satisfaction with School Board, principals were asked to answer the following question: *How satisfied are you with parental members of the School Board (SB) from the view of: a) the attendance at SB meetings, b) the input provided at SB meetings, c) the SB support provided to solve problems related to school life, d) the extent at which SB decisions*

are communicated to Parents' Council. Four answer choices were provided: 1) *not at all*, 2) *to a limited extent*, 3) *to some extent*, 4) *to a large extent*, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 4 items is good (Cronbach alpha > 0.8). Therefore, the items of the scale were summarized and divided to four in order to form a single variable: *principals' satisfaction with parent members of the SB*. It resulted that principals are rather satisfied with School Board activity (Table 4). Besides ensuring a very good communication with Parents' Council, School Board members attend and provide quality input at school meetings in a quite satisfactory manner; however, principals tend to be less satisfied with the support provided by the School Board to solve school-related problems.

**Table 4:** *Principals' satisfaction with parent members of the School Board (SB)*

Principal is satisfied with:	Not at all (%)	To a limited extent (%)	To some extent (%)	To a large extent (%)
a. The attendance at SB meetings	2.4	15.2	55.6	26.8
b. The input provided at SB meetings	5.8	20.1	54.4	19.7
c. The SB support provided to solve problems related to school life	7.5	24.6	49.0	18.9
d. The extent at which SB decisions are communicated to Parents' Council	3.0	11.2	58.7	27.1

The question *How much does the Parents' Committee influence the following areas in the daily life of your school: a) pedagogical methods used by teachers, b) content of lessons, c) the planning of extracurricular activities, d) the planning of school infrastructure development, e) helping pupils to value education, f) facilitating increased involvement of parents in school life*, was used to measure principals' perception of Parents' Committee (PCOMM) influence on the daily life of the school. Four answer choices were provided: 1) *not at all*, 2) *to a limited extent*, 3) *to some extent*, 4) *to a large extent*, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 6 items is good (Cronbach alpha > 0.8). Therefore, the items of the scale were summarized and divided to six, in order to construct a single variable: *principals' perception of Parents' Committee influence on the daily life of the school*. According to Table 5, Parents' Committee has little or no influence on the teaching methods used in class and even less so on lesson content. Parents' Committee is not expected to shape the educational process, but rather to play a complementary role, helping pupils to value education and facilitating other parents' involvement. Parents' Committee also plays an important part in planning extracurricular activities and planning school infrastructure development.

**Table 5:** *Principals' perception on Parents' Committee (PCOMM) influence on the daily life of the school*

PCOMM can influence the following:	Not at all (%)	To a limited extent (%)	To some extent (%)	To a large extent (%)
a. Pedagogical methods used by teachers	56.2	34.4	7.4	2.0
b. Content of lessons	74.0	22.2	3.0	0.8
c. The planning of extracurricular activities	15.6	29.4	49.0	6.0
d. The planning of school infrastructure development	27.4	36.7	31.1	4.8
e. Helping pupils to value education	10.4	19.9	51.8	17.9
f. Facilitating increased involvement of parents in school life	8.1	23.3	53.3	15.3

School principals' perception on Parents' Council (PC) prerogatives was measured using the question: *In the case of your school, are members of the Parents' Council entitled to: a) participate at meetings where school level decisions are taken, b) actively participate in the elaboration of new school policies, c) initiate the modification of existing school policies, d) initiate the adoption of new policies, e) veto the adoption of rules they disagree with.* Three answer choices were provided: 1) *under no circumstance*, 2) *by invitation only*, 3) *without restrictions*, along with no response options. The internal consistency of these 5 items is good (Cronbach alpha > 0.8). Therefore, the items of the scale were summarized and divided to five, in order to form a single variable: *principals' perception of Parents' Council prerogatives*. In what concerns the prerogatives of Parents' Council, it appears that participation at meetings where decisions are made and taking part in the elaboration of new school policies are the two most popular activities exerted with no restriction or by invitation (Table 6). Principals are more reserved regarding Parents' Council's right to initiate the adoption or the modification of existing school policies and to veto the adoption of rules they disagree with.

**Table 6:** *Principals' perception of Parents' Council (PC) prerogatives*

PC has the right to:	Under no circumstance (%)	By invitation only (%)	Without restrictions (%)
a. Participate at meetings where school level decisions are taken	0.6	24.9	74.5
b. Actively participate in the elaboration of new school policies	5.0	28.1	66.9
c. Initiate the modification of existing school policies	16.8	22.2	61.0
d. Initiate the adoption of new policies	20.1	22.3	57.6
e. Veto the adoption of rules they disagree with	11.1	19.5	69.4

From the previous descriptive analyses concerning parent involvement, at least 2 categories of schools emerged: (1) *schools with low parent involvement* (participation in school meetings of under 50%, engagement in successful school activities of under 50%, influence in school governance to a little extent or not at all); and (2) *schools with high parent involvement* (participation in school meetings of over 50%, engagement in successful school activities of over 50%, influence in school governance to some or to great extent). By relating parent involvement to schools' background and parent organizations activity, the study aims to investigate the factors that facilitate parent participation.

## Results

### *Factors favouring parent involvement*

In order to answer the research questions (RQ1 and RQ2) and identify the factors that lead to increased parental involvement (participation in school meetings, engagement in school activities, influence in school governance), variables concerning school background and parent organizations activity were used as predictors in two-step linear regression analyses.

*Parent participation in school meetings.* The proportion of variance in parent participation in school meetings accounted for by the 2 sets of variables along with the standardized beta coefficients are reported in Table 7.

It appears that 8.2% of the variance in parent participation in school meetings is due to school background related factors. Thus, a higher participation in school meetings is more likely to occur in schools with a sufficient budget ( $p < 0.05$ ), located in rural areas ( $p < 0.001$ ), having a small size ( $p < 0.01$ ) and lower rates (under 10%) of ethnic minority children ( $p < 0.001$ ) and lower rates of children from poor families ( $p < 0.05$ ).

By adding parent organizations activity to the model, some of the school background variables

become insignificant (school budget), while others (poverty level) decrease in significance ( $p < 0.01$ ). Factors related to parents' organizations activity added a 10.9% increase in the variance explained. Higher levels of parent participation in school meetings is associated with principals' high level of satisfaction with the activity of parents school board members ( $p < 0.001$ ), with principals' perception that Parents Committee has a high influence on daily school life ( $p < 0.05$ ) and with principals' belief that Parents Council has unrestricted prerogatives ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The final regression score for parent participation in school meeting was  $R^2 = 19.1\%$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The variables related to parent organizations activity added more explanatory power to the model than demographic variables, indicating that they are more important than the variables related to school background.

**Table 7:** Two-step linear regression results

Variables	Parent participation in school meetings (N=468)	Parent engagement in school activities (N=167)	Parent influence in school governance (N=467)
1 <sup>st</sup> Step Results			
School background			
Budget (0 = insufficient)	0.092 *	0.184 *	0.142**
Location (0 = rural)	-0.107 *	-0.183 *	-0.016
Principal's experience (0 = low)	0.062	0.156 *	-0.037
School size (0 = small)	-0.119**	-0.118	0.060
No reg. income (0 = under 10%)	-0.139**	-0.131	-0.114 *
Single parent (0= under 10%)	0.029	-0.077	0.028
1 migrated parent (0 = under 10%)	-0.004	0.132	0.011
2 migrated parents (0 = under 10%)	-0.028	0.089	0.012
Orphans (0 = under 10%)	0.013	0.037	0.085
Ethnic minority (0 = under 10%)	-0.122**	0.002	-0.017
2 <sup>nd</sup> Step Results			
School background			
Budget (0 = insufficient)	0.041	0.163 *	0.079*
Location (0 = rural)	-0.106 *	-0.193 *	0.008
Principal's experience (0 = low)	0.064	0.169*	-0.032
School size (0 = small)	-0.131**	-0.127	0.010
No reg. income (0 = under 10%)	-0.104 *	-0.143	-0.070
Single parent (0= under 10%)	0.056	-0.055	0.047
1 migrated parent (0 = under 10%)	0.001	0.144	-0.002
2 migrated parents (0 = under 10%)	-0.052	0.065	0.027
Orphans (0 = under 10%)	-0.010	0.011	0.047
Ethnic minority (0 = under 10%)	-0.115**	0.015	-0.010
Principals' reports on PO activity			
Principals' satisfaction with SB members	0.266***	0.200 **	0.068
Principals' perception of PCOMM influence	0.104 *	0.051	0.095 **
Principals' perception of PC prerogatives	0.088 *	0.093	0.582***
Step 1 Variance explained (df=10)	0.082***	0.157 **	0.044 *
F:	4.079	2.905	2.119
Step 2 Variance explained (df=3)	0.191***	0.222 **	0.423***
F:	8.243	3.359	27.275
R <sup>2</sup> Change:	0.109	0.065	0.395
F change (df=3):	20.392	4.266	106.237

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Note:** PO = Parents' Organizations; SB = School Board; PCOMM = Parents' Committee; PC = Parents' Council

*Parent engagement in school activities.* Table 7 summarizes the beta values and the predictive power of the two-step regression model for parent engagement in school activities. School background variables account for 15.7% in the variance explained. Higher levels of engagement in school activities are associated with sufficient school budget ( $p < 0.05$ ), with rural location ( $p < 0.05$ ) and with the principal's higher level of experience as a school director ( $p < 0.05$ ).

As variables related to parent organizations activity are entered in the model, the beta coefficients of these variables slightly decrease, but maintain the same level of significance. Principals' perceptions on parent organizations activity variables provide an increase of 6.5% in the explained variance. Thus, parent engagement in school activities is positively associated with more satisfactory levels of School Board members activity ( $p < 0.01$ ).

For parent engagement in school activities, the final regression score was  $R^2 = 22.2\%$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This score indicates that school background characteristics have a stronger impact on parental engagement than parent organizations activities.

*Parent influence on school governance.* The regression coefficients and beta values of the two-step regression model predicting parent influence in school governance are reported in Table 7.

School background variables account for 4.4% in the variance in parent influence in school governance. A higher parent influence is more likely to occur in schools with sufficient budget ( $p < 0.01$ ) and with lower levels of poor students ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, when adding variables related to parent organizations activity to the model, higher parental influence is found only in schools with sufficient budget ( $p < 0.05$ ).

When entering parent organizations activity variables, the explanatory power of the model increases with 39.5%. Parent influence in school governance is higher in schools where Parents' Committee is more involved in the daily life of the school ( $p < 0.01$ ) and where Parents Council has unrestricted prerogatives ( $p < 0.001$ ).

The final score of the regression model for parent influence in school governance is  $R^2 = 42.3\%$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The most important variables associated with parent influence on school governance are related to parent organizations activity rather than to school background. By offering parent organizations the power to make decisions concerning curricular and extracurricular matters, the overall level of parent influence in school governance increases.

## Discussion

The two-step regression models provided some insight into the types of variables that may lead to improved levels of parent involvement. The results demonstrated that in order to increase parents' participation to school meetings, the school background (rural location, small size, higher poverty levels, Roma ethnicity) is nearly as important as the activity of parents' organizations. In smaller schools and in schools located in rural areas, parent participation in school meetings seems to be higher, probably because smaller communities of parents tend to be more united. On the other hand, parents who do not have a regular income and parents who belong to the Roma minority are less willing to participate in school meetings, probably because, although poverty and social disadvantage have a serious impact on parenting, perceived deficits in families are likely to make parents feel powerless and perhaps less capable of building productive bonds with professionals (Hartas, 2008). Here, satisfactory parents' organizations' activity is associated with higher parent participation in school meetings, perhaps because these organizations function as social networks for parents and motivate them to get involved.

In regards to parents' engagement in school activities, the results showed that the school background (sufficient budget, rural location, principal's higher level of experience) plays a more important role than the activity of parents' organizations. Parents seem more willing to engage in school activities in schools that have enough funding and where principals are more experienced

and know how to encourage them. Also, higher engagement levels were found in rural schools, as in rural areas parents have more time available for such activities.

However, parents' influence in school governance is more significantly shaped by the activity (and authority) of parents' organizations than by the school background. It seems that, regardless of school characteristics, if parents' organizations are active, parents in general acquire more power of decision in school governance. In this case, parents' organizations function as networks that represent parents' interests in the relation with the school.

To answer RQ1, school background has a strong impact on increasing parent participation in school meetings (through factors such as rural location, small size and lower shares of poor and minority children) and parent engagement in school activities (factors such as sufficient school budgets, rural location and more experienced school principals); however, school background does not have a strong impact on parents' influence in school governance.

To answer RQ2, parent organizations activity has a strong impact on increasing levels of parent participation to school meetings (factors such as School Board's activity, Parents' Committee influence on daily school life and Parents' Council's unrestricted prerogatives), on increasing the level of parent engagement in school activities (School Board's activity), and mainly on increasing levels of parents' influence on school governance (through factors such as Parents' Committee's influence on school life and Parents' Council's unrestricted prerogatives).

The findings of this study support Feuerstein's (2001) conclusions according to which, on the one hand, student characteristics, such as socio-economic status and minority composition, play a crucial role in determining parent involvement, and on the other hand, school characteristics, such as location and size, influence the levels of parent participation. Moreover, parents' organizations seem to be effective mediators between schools and parents, their satisfactory activity being positively associated with parent involvement. Nonetheless, it must be noted once again that these data represent principals' perceptions, therefore the findings must be treated with caution.

## **Recommendations for improving school policies**

These findings may prove to be useful to school policymakers, as involving parents' organizations may be influenced more easily than the factors pertaining to pupils or to school backgrounds. Teachers and school administrators who seek to improve the levels of parent participation are therefore advised to provide more prerogatives to parents' organizations.

Parent and community participation in school governance may have positive impacts on community development by fostering improvement in school performance and school-community relations. These outcomes may occur where parents are given meaningful decision-making authority in schools and principals actively facilitate parent involvement (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). Thus, principals may actively shape pupils' school performance by simply providing more decision-making power to parents' organizations (Parents' Committee and Parents' Council), which will lead to an increase in the level of parent influence over school governance. This will also result in establishing a stronger bond between the school environment and the home environment, which often leads to better student achievement and outcomes.

Russel and Granville (2005) found that the majority of parents want to be more actively involved in their children's education. However, patterns of communication and cultural norms and expectations may pose barriers to their involvement. Furthermore, the requirements of parents vary: some may need advocacy, guidance, or information about education and parenting, whereas others may have the capacity for advocacy and are ready to share power and responsibility with the professionals (Hartas, 2008). As the study shows, parents with more knowledge about school governance and better communication skills should be included in parent organizations. Through their activities, they can and should involve less informed parents in the schooling

process. Parents' values, culture, and socialisation practices shape the decisions they make about their involvement with schools. Thus, building on these forms of social and cultural capital is likely to foster stronger connections between schools and parents. This can be done by stressing the similarities rather than the differences between children with different social backgrounds (ethnicity, income etc.) and by focusing on the positive aspects of each disadvantaged group.

In a study of family learning and community development, Ranson and Routledge (2005, p. 69) stress the need to move from the focus on the "external and instrumental" to the "internal goods" present in families and communities, and build on them to support parents' functions as active citizens and advocates of their children's rights (Hartas, 2008). In order to do so, a greater focus on vulnerable families is needed. It is suggested that school policies should encourage the potential resources and capabilities of disadvantaged families and develop strategies to include these parents in school life. In doing so, schools might build on parents' values, culture, and socialisation practices, as an improved relation between family and school means higher levels of school performance for disadvantaged children. This means that teachers need to consider the needs of children and parents from vulnerable categories and to relate to them accordingly – something that may be acquired by introducing various intervention programs in schools with low levels of parent involvement.

It is equally important that resources are allocated particularly to schools with lower budget and with higher shares of vulnerable children, as their need for professional support personnel and for implementing intervention programs is the highest. What policymakers need to bear in mind is that by increasing parent involvement they also increase children's school performance. On the long run, this means lower public costs<sup>4</sup> produced by school failure<sup>5</sup>.

In conclusion, this paper presented the factors that foster parent involvement in Romanian schools. However, the findings of the study are limited, as they only account for school principals' perceptions. For greater validity, this data set needs to be triangulated with parents' reports on school involvement and also with third-party data on families' socio-economic status (SES), parents' education, children's school performance, etc. Future studies may address the relation between increasing parent organization activity and overall parent involvement in school, as well as their impact on children's school performance.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Psacharopoulos (2007, p.7), the public costs associated with school failure are social (increased criminality; lower positive spill over effects on co-workers; lower rate of economic growth; lower intergenerational effects on children and parents; lower public health status; higher level of unemployment; lower social cohesion) and fiscal (lower tax revenues; higher unemployment and welfare payments; higher public health expenditures; higher police expenditure; higher criminal justice expenditure).

<sup>5</sup> Psacharopoulos (2007, p.4) defines school failure as: a school system failing to provide services conducive to learning; a student failing to advance to the next grade and eventually becoming a drop-out; students leaving school without having acquired competencies and skills that are demanded in the labour market.

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# Attitudes of Teachers Concerning the Use of ICT Equipment in Education

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## Abstract

*Although the personalities, attitudes of students and the material conditions of schools are continuously changing, several studies have proved that it is the quality of the teacher's work that most affects student performance. In the past few decades we could observe the development and gaining ground of information and communication technologies (ICT), which process, of course, has an impact on the activity of teachers, as well. Studies (e.g. STEPS, Töt, 2001) have proved that the change and development of infrastructure in itself do not precipitate profound and significant changes in the practice of teaching and its results. The spread of technology in the environment is but for nothing, it is primarily the attitudes, willingness, and activity of teachers that cause changes. There are some that cannot imagine their lessons without the new technology, but there are others who totally reject the use of computers in schools. The new devices provide today's teachers with several possibilities, but the realization of these is determined by countless factors.*

*This study analyzes the attitudes of pedagogues in the Hungarian public education to ICT devices and their use in the lesson. We present some findings of our Nationwide ICT research carried out in early 2009, by way of an online questionnaire, during which 1146 primary or secondary school teachers from nearly 400 towns or villages answered our questions.*

*The replies showed that the principles advocated by interviewees and their daily practice differ, while in several cases the replies were polarized according to sex or age. We also analyzed what advantages or disadvantages our interviewees pointed out in the use of computers in schools, and closely related to this, we also examined what changes the pedagogues deem necessary in order to make the use of ICT devices in the lesson more intensive.*

**Key words:** Impact of ICT, Attitude Study, Classroom Management, Teacher Education, Hardware

Everyone is aware of the fact that the level of qualification significantly influences the job they pursue, as well as their social status. Basic level qualification usually allows for the applicant to hold some badly-paid jobs, and they are not really in the position to be picky, since it is rather difficult to find employment. On the other hand – due merely to their work– the majority of society has a low opinion about such people's personalities, while the same persons attribute almost only positive features to, say, a company manager, simply on account of the position of these. Obviously, in an ideal situation everyone could hold the position that best suits their individual skills, industriousness, and ambitions, but, of course, it is seldom the case. This discrepancy is a failure not only for a given person but for society as well, which in turn wastes opportunities embedded in people (Sági, 2006). Thus the question of how to maximize children's academic achievements is of key importance. To increase efficiency conditions related to personnel, materials, subject-matter, and changes have to be analyzed. This is exactly why numerous experts have examined, in numerous ways, the factors that determine the quality of education. Long lines of analyses have proved that, among different educational factors, (such as

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school management, teachers, students' activities, personalities, attitudes, and tangible assets) it is the quality of the teachers' work that best influences students' academic achievements. Rosenthal and Jacobson's article on the Pygmalion-effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) showed as early as the 1960s that a student's positive or negative assessment alone results in measurable differences as for achievement. Students with bad results that achieved bad results at the start-of-term test, but which were known by the pedagogue to be talented and in for intellectual liberation, achieved better results at the end-of-year cognitive test than those that proved more gifted at the beginning of the year but were more unfavorably assessed by teachers. This effect, the "self-fulfilling prophecy", does not necessarily function in a direct way; teachers are generally not even aware of how greatly they may influence their students' behaviors and achievements.

### Teachers' personalities

If we ask someone to tell us about their school years, teachers with great influence – either positive or negative– will surely be part of this recollection. Similarly, if teachers or teacher-candidates are asked to confess what made them choose this profession, most of them will first mention one or two of their teachers that have somehow determined their choice. This is why profession-related personality traits have been in the focus of teacher training and researches on teachers.

There have been attempts at identifying personality traits that enhance efficient tutorial work and, in order to do so, various "wish lists" (traits list) based on demand surveys were compiled. This type of survey has been favored up to this day because through varied data collection methods it is relatively easy to answer the question of what makes a good or even ideal teacher tick. The question may be examined by different methods and through different groups: students, parents, educational politicians, or teachers themselves may be interviewed but, as school is compulsory, everyone has some kind of opinion on the topic. According to Judit Szivák, this type of survey dates back to 1896, when Kratz interviewed students on the characteristics of an efficient teacher (Szivák, 2002). Some decades later, at the beginning of the 1930s, Hart asked 10,000 students to characterize the teachers they favored, that is, those tutors from whom they had learnt the most. Popular teachers were identified by attributes such as fair grading, an understanding behavior, good pedagogical skills, an unbiased attitude, friendliness, and benevolence. However, those that had been the most influential and had been thought to be efficient were described in a slightly different way. They received the following line of features: a demanding attitude towards students, excellent expertise, good classroom management, discipline, and diverse methodological repertory (Hart, 1934). The difference between the two lists shows the difficulty of this problem, for even the teachers differentiated between the two aspects and formulated two types of requirement against teachers. If we try to unify these two lists, that is, to prescribe what teachers should do to be popular and efficient at the same time, they would have to face rather incongruous pairs of traits. For example, a friendly and understanding teacher might consider the tiredness of students to the maximum, that is, their current troubles; however, this might as well lead to the decrease of discipline and/or level of expectation. As opposed to controversies, overt or covert problems, traits did not cease to be collected, though these later surveys were not as popular (according to Barr & Emans, up to 1930 over 200 wish lists had been compiled. Qtd. in Harrell, 2004).

We also have to keep in mind that the research results were greatly affected by the type of school, the country, and the social and political environment in which the examinations had been carried out. For instance, Wright & Alley (1977) in the USA of the 1970s found that the requirement for an ideal teacher is to be fair and helpful. This teacher does not differentiate among students, but is friendly and maintains discipline and order in the classroom. Strangely enough, however, the documents of the Fifth Congress on Education held in Hungary in 1970 listed the following necessary pedagogical skills: "observational skills, imagination, striving for

perfection, tact, organizational skills, ability to form community and public opinion, and the ability to subordinate own individual ideas to the unified pedagogical processes formulated by the teaching community” (Boros, 1979, p. 139). The difference in requirements well portrays the spirit of the age, as well as the fact that emphasis had gradually shifted to the description of skills and systems of skills in the wish lists.

Éva Sallai designates seven skills that facilitate a teacher’s work: communicational skills, varied and flexible behavioral patterns, quick adaptation to situations and constructive shaping of situations, violence-free and constructive conflict resolution methods, the ability to co-operate, the ability to analyze pedagogical situations and phenomena, and mental health (Sallai, 1994). Although the areas listed cannot really be ranked, we think that the most important condition for teachers to achieve efficient work is to have a varied and flexible behavioral pattern. It is essential that a teacher be able to choose the most efficient solution out of several behavioral patterns by flexibly adapting to the given situation. If the teacher fails to do so and applies only few habitual solutions, their work becomes a mere routine and neither of the partners will find pleasure in their collaboration. Nevertheless, diverse behavioral repertory itself is insufficient; teachers can efficiently use it only if they possess the ability to quickly adapt to situations and constructively shape situations. “A teacher has to have a good grip of the situation, the possible ways to change, and the consequences of them” (Falus, 1998, p. 102). To a great extent, it is due to the partial lack of these skills and abilities that many teachers avoid using ICT equipment in the classroom. The failures of these devices, to identify the type of failure and to remedy them, were many times problematic for teachers even some years back. (It will suffice to think of the task of connecting and tuning a VCR and a TV set.) Today, when computers and their accessories are used, problems of this type occur more frequently. In such cases, teachers have to act in seconds to remedy the problems or change the original idea and turn the lesson in a totally different direction.

Although in the last decade the analysis of different competencies became the center of researches<sup>2</sup>, the listing of teachers’ traits has not ended. The committee established at the Lisbon negotiations of the European Council – held in March 2000– also compiled such a list that characterizes the ideal teacher, according to the members: “adaptability, flexibility, creativity, intuition, endurance, ability to cooperate, communication skills, problem-solving attitude, inclination to take risk, the ability to make decisions, motivation, strength, enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, positive attitude, abundance in resources, systematic character, organization, determination, perseverance” (Kárpáti & Hunya, 2009, pp. 86-87). In today’s shifting social, economic, and political environment, experts found that only such a diverse list of traits can properly describe the optimal traits of teachers that are able to successfully accept and overcome the challenges involved in the appearance of ICT equipment in schools. It has never been doubted, not for a moment, that these new devices would dramatically shape the everyday practice of teachers.

### Impact of ICT on teachers’ activity

The problem is difficult and complex and may be analyzed from several different angles. Some experts think that to change the activities, a transformation of possibilities, mainly environmental conditions, is necessary (Gál & Geritz, 2003). If we accept this argument, the most important task is obviously to develop ICT equipment available in schools. The research called STEPS

<sup>2</sup> The starting point of the investigations was OECD’s DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) program jelentette, which was realized in a collaboration of the Swiss Federal Statistics Office, US Department of Education, and the US Center of Educational Statistics. The program defined competence, on the one hand, as an *ability to successfully tackle complex tasks in a given context*, while, on the other hand, the concept of key competencies was introduced, meaning competencies that are essential for work, life, acquisition of up-to-date education and which are important on an individual, social, and economic level alike.

(Study of the Impact of Technology in Primary Schools) carried out in 27 member states of the European Union and in Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Norway also shows that the conceptions of ICT developed as the Ministries of Education all focus on the development of infrastructure and teachers' digital competence, and not on the pedagogical utilization of the devices<sup>3</sup>. To make the equipment available is usually national or local governmental responsibility, but these authorities do not deem it their duty to ensure technological and pedagogical sustainability, which causes difficulties. Owing to the campaign-like developments, even technical standard is not maintained, and also rapidly developing ICT devices do not appear in proper quantity in schools. Naturally, this deficiency has an effect on teachers' activities. Apart from this, various researches (see STEPS, Tót, 2001) have proved that developing infrastructure alone does not bring forth profound and significant changes in the practice of teaching and its efficiency. "Change, besides infrastructural potential, depends greatly on the adaptability of the individuals, their willingness, motivation, and activity that are not exclusively generated through the change in the environment's technological level" (Török, 2008, p. 45). This is why it is necessary to examine individual attitudes beyond the development of equipment.

The members of society differ greatly with respect to computer and Internet use, and digital differences are present in every walk of life. Pedagogues also relate differently to opportunities presented by ICT devices. There are those that cannot imagine their lessons without the new technologies, but there are teachers that fully object to the use of computers in schools, moreover, some often have no knowledge of informatics whatsoever. Naturally, teachers do not have to know everything about technology. Nonetheless, as the goal is to create a new, more efficient teaching environment, the integration of ICT devices in different learning situations and in a system of activities more wide-ranging than before is necessary.

The new devices offer several opportunities to today's pedagogues that were unimaginable for earlier generations of teachers, but the realization of these is subject to different factors. The focus of my series of surveys was the following issue: through different samples and by differing methods we examined school activities, pedagogues' activities, and their attitudes to the use of ICT devices in the lesson. One of the most surprising results of my earlier studies (Buda, 2007, 2009) was offered by the questions directed at the technological equipment available in schools. It was found that the majority of pedagogues have rather insufficient knowledge about educational tools available in the school. Despite the fact that we asked about the number of devices, several people, instead of replying, confessed not to know the data, and others belied their lack of awareness by giving unreal figures (such as over 40 interactive boards in one school). Several institutions replied to the question in a "centralized" way by either sending out the real data to all teachers (and having the pedagogues copy those onto the questionnaire) or, in some cases, having an appointed person to fill in the questions on figures. Due to these problems, we excluded these questions from the further stages of the survey, but included questions investigating the advantages and disadvantages of using IT devices in education as well as those on the areas of application of interactive boards. The last stage of surveys was realized at the beginning of 2009, when in the framework of a national research we requested pedagogues in primary and secondary schools to fill in an online questionnaire. In the following, we wish to communicate some data of this survey.

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<sup>3</sup> Hungary also followed this developmental direction; SULINET programs launched in the 1990 also focused on the development of teaching tools and establishing Internet connection.

## Characteristics of the sample

The web address of the online anonymous and voluntary questionnaire compiled by us was sent in the spring of 2009 via email to the Hungarian public education institutions. Our database contained the contact addresses of directors and secretary's offices, and our request was not forwarded in all cases to the pedagogues of the institutions. Thus, in the end, our questionnaire was completed by 1146 primary or secondary school teachers from nearly 400 towns or villages. The breakdown by sex reflects the usual disproportion: 71% of the interviewees are female, 29% are male. They characteristically (79.8 %) live in unbroken families, but 7.7% are divorced, 10.3% are single, and 2.2% are widows or widowers. Over four fifths of the interviewees have at least one child. The most frequent family model is two children, but we found families with seven or eight children. The average age of the interviewees is 44.8 years, the youngest being 23 and the oldest 67. (Six people did not tell us their age.) On the basis of age, we delegated them to three groups of nearly identical sizes: for easier identification, we termed the first group, those between 23-40, as "younger age group"; the second, between 41-49 years, "middle aged"; and the third, between 50-67, as "third age." The majority of our interviewees, 653 people (57 %), work in primary schools, the rest teach in some secondary education institution (395 persons) or mixed-type institutions (95 persons). (Three people did not offer the type of their workplace.) They are highly qualified, as generally possessing over two (2.16) university or college degrees, but there were teachers with six, and even eight degrees. (In spite of this, however – as we will show – college or university education played a role in acquiring their IT knowledge in the case of only 41% of them.) Apart from the number of degrees, we asked them about the field of the first and last qualifications. 151 people acquired first degrees that may be delegated to the circle of IT qualification, while 240 had last degrees in the field. Among the latter, 50 persons majored in such a field after secondary school, meaning that they increased the level of their degrees with their newer qualification. As we did not ask about the majors of all degrees, on account of the existing data we can only state for certain that out of the interviewees at least 341 have a degree in informatics (as well). We have to add that persons with mixed-type qualifications (two or more majors in different disciplines) did not indicate in the questionnaire to have informatics qualifications as well, thus we studied the subjects taught by our interviewees. Most people, 303 persons indicated informatics. From the discrepancy in numbers it is clear that several people do not teach this subject although they have such qualifications. On the other hand, by collating the subject taught with the data on qualification available to us, we found that 502 pedagogues were qualified to teach informatics (too), on the basis of their degrees or their current teaching practice.<sup>4</sup> Note, however, that during our survey we found several surprising connections between qualifications and teaching informatics. By analyzing the replies it was found that at least 24 people teach informatics who, according to their statements, have no such teacher's degrees!<sup>5</sup> For instance, there were people teaching the subject with a degree in arts, and other persons with degrees in agricultural studies or another different degree in natural sciences, but we also found examples of people teaching IT with qualifications for teaching technical or competence-based subjects. In the light of all that, the question which asks our interviewees about the circumstances in which they acquired IT knowledge becomes even more intriguing. We indicated six areas as sources of IT knowledge, and the teachers were allowed tick more than one.

<sup>4</sup> The difference is owing to the majors of the third and fourth, etc. degrees, as well as to the mixed-type qualifications (for instance, English-Informatics).

<sup>5</sup> The term "at least" is used here as – assuming professional qualification – teacher's degrees were accounted for together with specialization in IT, while in the case of mixed-type qualifications we assumed one of the majors to be informatics. If these assumptions should not be realized, the number is of course higher than 24.

**Table 1:** *Sources of IT knowledge*

Source of IT knowledge	Number of references	Number of interviewees for whom only this single factor was significant
self-education	786	140
college/university	467	111
further education for teachers	418	45
family members, acquaintances	316	31
ECDL course	273	62
secondary school	125	4

393 people relied on only one source of information, including 4 that state to have only learnt such knowledge in secondary school (further, those are all women between 25-26). The other pole is inhabited by two persons, in whose case all six factors played a role in gaining knowledge. The decisive role of self-education in acquiring IT knowledge is owing to the lack of such education received at secondary school and, to a greater extent, in higher education programs, as the lack must be made up for. The prominence of self-education, however, is probably primarily due to the fact that the possibilities provided by new hardware and software generations could not be learnt, let alone utilized, in any other way. The figure on higher-education training knowledge provided more intriguing findings. As it was previously seen, only 502 were found among the interviewees that teach or could teach the subject, but out of the total sample, only 467 learnt IT in higher education. The deviation between the two figures already asserts a sort of anomaly, but the picture offered by the replies is simultaneously more and less favorable, as out of the 341 pedagogues surely having informatics degrees only 215 confessed not having learned IT knowledge at college or university! The data are shocking, on the one hand, as they yield a rather negative view of the quality and useful content of the trainings; on the other hand, we may assert that a significant number of non-IT majors received such trainings in a higher education institution.

The fact that only 125 teachers (11%) gained their knowledge in the course of their secondary education may be regarded as a criticism of IT education in secondary schools. As for the older generation, it is understandable, as when they were secondary school students such courses were not available. However, 19% of the interviewees are under 35 years of age and 30% of them under 40; they were surely taught some basic IT knowledge. We examined whether this difference is detectable.

**Table 2:** *The percentage of different factors that participate in the obtaining of IT knowledge in a breakdown by age groups*

Source of IT knowledge	younger generation (358 persons)	middle-aged (378 persons)	third age (404 persons)
college/university	59.2	35.2	29.2
ECDL course	17.6	27.5	25.5
family members, acquaintances	34.1	24.1	25.2
further education for teachers	19.8	41.0	47.3
secondary school	31.0	2.6	1.0
self-education	67.9	69.6	68.1

Analyzing the factors in a breakdown by age groups, self-education played a prominent role in all three age groups. There is a marked difference, however, with respect to the other factors. The significance of secondary school and higher education is still dependent upon age nowadays, and the discrepancy is logically related to the change in the role of further education. As the ECDL program also supplements the deficiencies of a formal training, it is understandably more important to the older age group. The age of the interviewee is related to the ages of relatives and acquaintances, and as a consequence the impact of these people also presents a generational difference: whereas young people already include digital natives, older people are all digital immigrants.

## Attitudes

At the beginning of this study, we found it important to learn the way pedagogues answering the questionnaire relate to technological and methodological progress, what they assess their own and their colleagues' knowledge to be. To learn the attitudes related to the educational use of the computer and individual as well as staff attitudes, we used different statements. We asked teachers to evaluate the statements on a four-grade Likert-scale (grade one signified full disagreement, while grade four reflected maximum concord). We received the following result:

**Table 3:** *Teachers' attitudes to the use of computers*

Statements	average
I like teaching	3.77
I am interested in new developments in technology	3.40
I continually update my teaching methods and equipment	3.35
I can operate a computer efficiently	3.29
I feel I am well-prepared to use a computer for educational purposes	3.14
My school is well-equipped with respect to ICT devices	2.87
School consumes all of my free time	2.84
Along with teaching I have time left for self-education	2.72
My fellow teachers use a computer in their daily practice efficiently	2.38
I am interested in the educational use of IT devices but have no appropriate knowledge of them	2.35
Few people in my school are interested in the use of computers in education	2.10
The staff meeting never involves the problem of using computers in class	2.04
I believe in the traditional "board & chalk" method	1.91

On top of the rank lies the love for the profession, although nine interviewees fully reject the statement. (Six of these teach natural sciences and some of them are even school principals!) The interviewees judge their own preparedness and interest as being more positive than their fellow-teachers': for instance, only 58 people were fully content with the efficient computer use of their colleagues. 88 interviewees are convinced that their schools have few people interested in the educational use of computers and 163 people declared that not one word of this subject is raised in staff meetings. We naturally do not wish to imply that in these schools the teaching staff does not use ICT devices at all as we have no information to that effect! Nonetheless, it gives food for thought that one sixth of the interviewees work in institutions where the school management does not regard the in-class use of computers a problem worthy of discussion or debate. Last in rank comes the statement on the privilege of the board & chalk method. 362 interviewees categorically reject the statement; only 32 people signaled their full disagreement (7 out of the 32 are, surprisingly, teachers of informatics).

Studying the problem in a breakdown by sexes, with the help of T-test, we may observe several differences.

**Table 4:** *Attitudes of teachers related to the use of computers by sex*

Statements	men	women
I like teaching	3.69 *	3.81 *
I am interested in new developments in technology	3.60 *	3.32 *
I continually update my teaching methods and equipment	3.26 **	3.38 **
I can operate a computer efficiently	3.47 *	3.21 *
I feel I am well-prepared to use a computer for educational purposes	3.40 *	3.03 *
My school is well-equipped with respect to ICT devices	2.95 **	2.84 **
School consumes all of my free time	2.76 **	2.87 **
Along with teaching I have time left for self-education	2.73	2.72
My fellow teachers use a computer in their daily practice efficiently	2.37	2.38
I am interested in the educational use of IT devices but have no appropriate knowledge of them	2.05 *	2.47 *
Few people in my school are interested in the use of computers in education	2.13	2.09
The staff meeting never involves the problem of using computers in class	1.98	2.06
I believe in the traditional "board & chalk" method	1.93	1.89

\* p<0.001 \*\* p<0.05

From the data it is evident that women prefer teaching and methodological renewal is also more characteristic of them than of men<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, the replies also show that renewal is less related to the use of ICT devices in teaching; men think of themselves to be more capable in this field. A direct consequence of this is that men think they use the computer more efficiently, although they do not spend time with self-education despite the fact that members of this sex have more free time than the opposite sex. We also examined the impact that age has on attitudes. Variance analysis showed significant differences in several statements. With the advancement of age, interest in technological novelties and the computer decreases, which substantially influences the preparation for their use. Older people feel they cannot really operate the computer, and use these devices in teaching less than their younger fellow-teachers. The older they are, the more unsatisfied they are with their own informatics competencies but more satisfied with such knowledge and interest of their colleagues. Most people think that the more aged and experienced a teacher is the less time they need to expend on tasks related to the school. Our interviewees denied this assumption as they feel that, conversely, school takes up more and more of their free time. The answer may partly derive from the fact that old people spend more time with self-education than younger persons; in spite of this – as seen previously – their informatics knowledge could be developed.

<sup>6</sup> We have no information on the content and magnitude of this.

## Use of Devices

In pedagogy, the dichotomy of theory and practice is quite common, and unfortunately it is not exceptional that there is a significant discrepancy between the two areas. That is why, we examined the frequency of the use of classroom equipment and came up with two ranks. In the first rank all replies were taken into account, while in the case of the second and third ranks, we disregarded those interviewees that do not use the given equipment at all. In the latter case the calculated values naturally increased, the distance between most often and least often used equipment decreased, and several elements of the rank were significantly modified.

**Table 5:** *Frequency of using school equipment in the classroom*

equipment	frequency of use	number of non-users	corrected frequency of use
course book	3.98	54	4.13 (1)
board & chalk	3.91	65	4.09 (2)
computer	3.22	172	3.62 (3)
reference books	3.01	119	3.25 (7)
projector	2.84	295	3.48 (4)
the Internet	2.79	268	3.35 (5)
CD-player	2.51	406	3.35 (6)
DVD-player	2.45	299	2.97 (10)
professional journal	2.37	266	2.79 (14)
literature	2.23	404	2.91 (11)
video player	2.18	382	2.78 (15)
tape recorder	2.04	604	3.22 (9)
OHP	2.01	503	2.82 (12)
art album	1.97	484	2.69 (16)
interactive board	1.76	745	3.24 (8)
slide projector	1.45	773	2.42 (17)
classroom response system	1.37	886	2.81 (13)

5: in almost every lesson; 4: several times a week; 3: every week; 2: rarely; 1: never

Rankings are not different in the respect that, despite the majority of interviewees do not regard themselves adherents to the traditional board & chalk educational method, they use this equipment most frequently apart from course books. That is, practice does not follow theory in this case either, which may be so for several reasons. The most obvious reason for this may be the deficient supply of technological equipment in schools. This could be an explanation, but, on the basis of the responses, it cannot be an appropriate one, as teachers tend to hold the technological equipment of their schools sufficient and 281 are fully content with the devices available to them. According to this, the reason for the prominent use of books, boards, and chalk lies in the problem of educational methods. (A separate study would be needed, however, for examining this problem in detail.) Apart from this, the availability of devices naturally also play an important role, which is traceable in the use of two of the most cutting-edge school ICT devices, interactive boards and response systems. Both are at the end of the rank with regard to frequency, but looking at an adjusted rank compiled

by disregarding negative responses we may establish a significant shift towards the center of the list. Out of different types of technological equipment, interviewees most frequently turn to computers and projectors, but CD-players and DVD-players are also made use of in classes. The latter is rather popular, but it follows from the adjusted frequency ranking that application is not too intense.

The infrequent application of OHP may surprise many. Indeed, some time ago this device was widely used (Halász & Lannert, 2006) and for a lot of teachers it was equivalent to the first-rate technology. Reduction, however, is evident, given that it has been replaced by more efficient technology in exemplification, such as computers and projectors.

We also analyzed the use of school equipment by factor analysis performed by the SPSS program. This method depicts the hidden system of relations among the variables, and new, artificial variables (factors) come into existence, which display the examined phenomenon in a simpler way than the original variables.

**Table 6:** *Factors of using equipment in the classroom*

Equipment		Factors				
		1	2	3	4	5
computer		.862	-.165	.041	.033	-.194
the Internet		.847	-.085	.051	.058	-.114
projector		.838	-.191	.079	-.011	-.169
interactive board		.673	.003	-.125	-.003	-.076
oral examination		.253	.252	-.188	.227	.065
CD-player		-.048	.810	.204	-.049	-.015
tape recorder		-.140	.773	.135	-.023	.049
literature		-.186	.692	.100	.266	.135
art album		-.123	.635	.170	.391	.060
video player		.091	.382	.703	.025	-.040
slide projector		-.066	.111	.667	.189	.099
DVD-player		.316	.403	.632	-.019	-.125
OHP		-.168	-.026	.619	.285	.163
professional journal		.074	.075	.210	.838	-.075
reference books		.033	.121	.148	.818	.041
course books		-.138	.141	.089	.074	.856
board & chalk		-.289	-.007	.031	-.077	.799
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	Total	3.001	2.631	1.958	1.782	1.546
	% of Variance	17.651	15.477	11.520	10.484	9.097

KMO=0.774; Sig. of Bartlett's Test=0.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

From the table we may see that the factor analysis method put the previous variables into five, well-distinguishable factors. The first factor holds the ICT equipment usage data, that is, one part of the teachers mostly uses these devices. The interactive board significantly influences their work along with the computer, the Internet, and the projector. Also, the testing system appears here, though its role is insignificant. The second factor implies an ambition for providing taste and supplying emotional warm-up, which are partly realized through using audio materials, but visual stimuli play an important role, as well. The third factor stresses visuality to a great extent, and for this traditional equipment, the video, the DVD-player, the slide projector, and the OHP is applied; these elements are positively closely connected to visuality. The characteristic of the fourth factor is the use of printed materials, primarily traditional school equipment, such as reference books and professional journals. The fifth factor represents conservative teachers, whose equipment system is made up of the classic course book/board/chalk trio. Their attitude is even more highlighted by the fact that the other appliances influence their work to a very insignificant degree, and in the case of ICT equipment, even this inconsiderable relation is negative.

By examining the use of devices in the lesson in a breakdown by different groups, we may find significant differences only by sexes. In this case, however, a substantial difference is detected in 12 out of the 17 devices, discrepancy which is parallel to the findings of the attitude survey. Computers, projectors, interactive boards, and the Internet are more frequently used by men, the rest – including printed tools and ICT devices not connected to the computer – by women.

## Applicability

The application of modern school devices requires not only technological background, but also user's knowledge and an appropriate area of application. We have previously disclosed the sources of computer knowledge; in this case, we will analyze the areas of school activities where our interviewees regard computers as the most useful. The questionnaire studying this area was adopted from the 2006 National Survey on Informatics in Public Education, supervised by Márta Hunya (Hunya, 2006)<sup>7</sup>. The questions were directed at the problem of to what extent may computers assist school work in the areas listed, according to the interviewees. The replies were placed in a five-grade Likert-scale, where grade one signified "not applicable" and grade five meant "highly applicable."

Our interviewees deem computers to be useful for various administrative tasks; 93% marked the two highest response values. Apart from this, however, the views on computer-supported student, teacher, and in-class activities are highly heterogeneous. People thought that computers are more applicable to the preparation of teachers than of students, but the device may better assist the individual researches of students, let alone students' in-class presentations. (The frequency of these activities, of course, is doubtful.) The most diverse replies were received as to the communication of various different groups. While, according to 83% of the interviewees, computers are applicable or highly applicable for student to student communication, the proportion is only 76.4% in teacher to teacher relationships, 52.4% in teacher to student communication, and only 39.4% in teacher to parent relationships. This is exactly the area that has undergone the greatest changes since the 2006 survey. While this is probably also due to the widespread use of the Internet and electronic mail, the major impetus in the progress was provided by the dynamic development of various networking and community pages. Today, the

<sup>7</sup> In 2006, as requested by the Ministry of Education, all of the Hungarian public educational institutions were asked to participate. In this study, however, the management of the given school was allowed to choose the teachers being interviewed. According to the study owners, the picture received during the analysis of the replies of the 3718 interviewees was better than the Hungarian average, but the data showed that the difference should not be too great.

**Table 7:** *Applicability of computers in different areas of school work*

Activity	2009	2006*	difference
Reports, making statistics	4.85	4.68 (1)	0.17
Keeping records of the students	4.78	4.63 (2)	0.15
Keeping records of the results and analyzing them	4.63	4.39 (3)	0.24
Students maintaining relations with one another	4.35	3.63 (13)	0.72
Students' individual research	4.32	4.26 (4)	0.06
Students presentations	4.26	4.10 (5)	0.16
Teachers' preparation	4.17	4.07 (6)	0.1
Helps in teachers' explanation	4.16	3.90 (9)	0.26
Teachers' professional development	4.16	4.05 (7)	0.11
Teachers' maintaining professional relations with other teachers	4.13	3.78 (11)	0.35
Completing project assignments	4.05	3.63 (14)	0.42
Students' individual practice	3.96	3.83 (10)	0.13
Examining, testing	3.81	4.01 (8)	-0.2
Co-operative work	3.69	3.50 (15)	0.19
Students' preparation	3.66	3.71 (12)	-0.05
Organizing students' work with PC	3.56	3.29 (16)	0.27
Teachers maintaining relations with students outside the classroom	3.48	2.76 (18)	0.72
Giving out and collecting assignments	3.30	3.08 (17)	0.22
Maintaining relations with the parents	3.12	2.48 (19)	0.64

\* calculated from the figures of the National Survey on Informatics in Public Education

1 = no help at all, 2 = almost no help, 3 = a little help, 4 = beneficial assistance, 5 = highly suitable

majority of secondary and also primary school classes are represented on *iwiw.hu* ("international who is who"), and it is not a rare case that students convince their parents and teachers to join the network. The other substantial difference between the frequency rankings of the 2006 and 2009 surveys is related to ideas on computer-supported testing. In 2006, due to differing requirements and various conceptions, interviewees deemed this potential area of utilization more important than in 2009. The discrepancy in numbers is not substantial, but as in 2009 people regarded computers more applicable for other activities than they had done 3 years earlier, the difference is remarkable between the two rankings.

## Threats

The ideas on the applicability of computers for various activities, in addition to knowledge and experience, also depend on the real or imagined threats associated with these devices. Therefore, we also examined to what extent do negative concepts related to students' computer and Internet use appear in the thinking of our interviewees. For the sake of comparativeness, this area was also examined with a questionnaire adopted from the National Public Education IT Survey. Replies in this case were also placed in a five-grade scale, grade one being total rejection of the given item, and grade five signifying highly severe threats.

**Table 8:** *Threats of students' use of computers and the Internet*

Threats	Average
Uncontrolled information is used	4.21
The role of oral communication diminishes	3.95
Students' linguistic command deteriorates	3.85
They "acquire" finished materials instead of working and studying	3.78
They do not learn how to write in nice hand	3.77
They are exposed to malevolent strangers	3.67
They live in a virtual world instead of reality	3.65
They establish fewer social relations	3.33
They are alienated from one another	2.93
Computers narrow their scope of interest	2.77

1 =not at all characteristic, 2 = small threat, 3 = rather frequent, 4 = severe threat, 5 = very true

According to pedagogues, the most significant hazard is the use of uncontrolled information, but they also regard the impact on communication remarkably negative. They fear primarily the deterioration of oral communication and of the means of linguistic expression, but the latter has a natural impact on the declining neatness of writing. Teachers deem negative socializing effects less severe and are least afraid of the contracting of students' scope of interest.

We get a more graded picture when conflating the three topmost hazards, by signifying more severe dangers and grading them along the lines of three possible replies – "may occur rather frequently," "severe threat," and "very true." We ranked the answers according to this adjustment.

**Table 9:** *Threats of students' use of computers and the Internet in % (threats regarded as most frequent)*

Threats	2009	2006	difference
Uncontrolled information is used	95.7	87.9 (1)	7.8
They "acquire" finished materials instead of working and studying	90.7	84.6 (3)	6.1
Students' linguistic command deteriorates	88.3	81.4 (4)	6.9
The role of oral communication diminishes	87.4	86.3 (2)	1.1
They live in a virtual world instead of reality	87.0	73.5 (5)	13.5
They are exposed to malevolent strangers	85.6	65.7 (9)	19.9
They do not learn how to write in nice hand	82.2	73.3 (6)	8.9
They establish fewer social relations	74.7	69.7 (7)	5.0
They are alienated from one another	64.0	66.2 (8)	-2.2
Computers narrow their scope of interest	58.6	59.8 (10)	-1.2

\* National Survey on Informatics in Public Education

1 =not at all characteristic, 2 = small threat, 3 = rather frequent, 4 = severe threat, 5 = very true

The use of uncontrolled information still comes first on the list, not in the least due to the fact that only six people think that the use of computers involves no such threats. This first rank is also corroborated by second-ranking replies to the question on the application of preliminary prepared materials, which, compared to the rank based on averages, traded places with the statement predicting the reduction of the role of oral communication. It is interesting to observe that the statement connected to the other, written, form of communication, also moved down the rank. It requires further study to see whether this is only a judgement of the statement or it implicates the devaluation of neatness of handwriting or even of handwriting itself.

As compared with the 2006 data, the most remarkable change is that in 2009 almost all potential threats were deemed more significant by our interviewees. Only two factors, "alienation" and the "contracting" scope of interest, received a more positive evaluation, but this change is rather meager. In contrast to this, responses reflect that the threat of students living in a virtual world where they are exposed to strangers has increased. The real danger has probably not increased to such a degree, but replies are influenced by experience (e.g. spam) and news supplied by mass media. More and more news pieces are related to Internet-based frauds, harassment, and sexual influencing. It is chiefly young people that are exposed to this, as their being inexperienced is usually coupled with a naiveté that is easy to exploit through the lack of control and with the help of anonymity.

## The Conditions of Change

### “Hardware”

Above we have examined the attitudes pedagogues have to the application of ICT devices in class, including, most specifically, computers and interactive boards. It was found that the principles adhered to by the interviewees and their daily practice differ. Data referring to this were supplemented by the responses given to the advantages and drawbacks of the application of computers, thus acquiring a more precise view of the factors leading to the difference between theory and practice. We may, however, focus the picture even more by learning what teachers replied to the following question: “What would you need in order to use informatics devices in class (more frequently)?” 887 persons have answered the question, including 628 – that is, over two thirds – who regard the improvement of conditions necessary. The most basic condition is to have more and more up-to-date devices. Depending, nonetheless, on the state of equippedness of the institutions and their experience, the interviewees have differing views on what improvement of the equipment means. Those much disadvantaged in this area would be satisfied with only little: “. . . *we do not have interactive boards or computers at all in our classrooms (except in the IT room). We have a single laptop and projector which we carry to class on our shoulders and in our hands, on the basis of a schedule created together with our colleagues. We can only carry out developments from tender funds (the municipal body maintaining the school is poor): we were happy with being able to acquire a photocopier, some computers, a laptop computer, and a projector in this way*” (age 52, female, primary school). Furthermore, there are also those that do not even think about the development of devices and would like to use those that are available: “*we should first be able to get into the IT room or be granted some classes in the interactive board room*” (age 39, female, vocational secondary school). Others are more straightforward than this and would like to realize the full-scale supply of devices: “*IT devices installed and operable in all rooms*” (age 51, female, grammar school), but “*not in place of repairing collapsing walls and leaking roofs!!!*” adds another fellow pedagogue. What several interviewees find to want is financial support for the purchases, but there are also those who think that devices “*should not be purchased by the schools but that the schools should be entitled to it along with the school building, similarly to heating, lighting, water, etc*” (age 61, male, mixed-type institution). Even where the supply of devices is of a high level there is much to improve, indicated by the demand for the availability of cutting-edge technology or the demand that not only the teachers but also students have their own computers in the classroom. Several teachers find necessary IT assistance for the safe and proper operation of devices, the degree of which is also pending – similarly to equipment purchases – the state of equippedness of the given institution. Technical assistance would be used in more poorly equipped schools to ensure that it is “*not the teachers that spend their breaks with collecting, setting up, then carrying back the devices at the end of the class*” (age 55, female, primary school). That is, it would be the technician that would carry “. . . *the laptop and projector from room to room like an armor bearer . . . until we are fully digitalized*” (age 45, female, primary school). Those that see wanting an auxiliary staff indeed wish to have an IT administrator: they would like to have a person that maintains the programs executed on the computers and makes possible the necessary auxiliary programs and settings. Some people, on the other hand, wish to see such assistance as would “rummage for materials” on their behalf, that is, properly compile and prepare different presentations and animations on the basis of predetermined scripts.

### “Software”

Naturally, it is not enough to have the technology available for the efficient use of ICT devices in the classroom, there is also a need for proper content and methodological preparedness. Several people miss digital material to present, data banks available, but there are also others that would like to have thousands of freely available materials for the interactive board. They communicate

their wishes, too: “. . . auxiliary materials that are not preordered but are module-based and can be reordered along other lines of thought (on the basis of the material and adjusted to the individual classes), and which are also based on some methodological view supporting skills development and cooperative work” (age 42, male, grammar school). Such individual concepts and wishes frequently remain unsatisfied, and duly some people are highly critical of educational material: “. . . what the school bought at a high cost from the publishers is from a professional perspective weak and many times useless” (age 38, female, primary school). “There are doubtless many useful things on SDT,<sup>8</sup> but a lot of it is useless. The pages download at a terrifyingly slow pace, are not available, or freeze the computer (not a fault of our system!); the educational material (e.g. documentaries) cannot be downloaded, and thus it can only be used in classrooms where there is Internet access, and we only have 1 or 2 such rooms. Thus, even if the material was useful, we could not use it!!!” (age 38, male, vocational secondary school). Some people urge content development for “personal” reasons, “. . . as I have no time and energy to create ‘everything’ myself” (age 35, female, vocational secondary school). Further, we found examples for the misplaced investment of energies, too: “. . . for the time being, I can only use what I created. I also experience that programs developed by me for the request of different institutions (NFI, SZP) are not distributed” (age 62, male, grammar school).

Irrespective of external conditions, the effective application of ICT devices also requires the preparedness and appropriate attitude of teachers. Out of the 1146 interviewees, 96 (8.4%) were satisfied with their use of the devices. “In my opinion, I use it as frequently as necessary” (age 56, female, grammar school); “I cannot use it any more frequently than this, and we have nearly everything from the subsidies for developments” (age 38, female, vocational secondary school). This, however, does not always mean that ICT devices are used in every class! “I use informatics devices in the majority of my classes (approx. 70%), and would not like to apply them any more than that” (age 45, female, mixed-type institution). Three interviewees gave reasons for not wanting to use the equipment more, and their self-restraint derives from the same sources in all three cases: “I think I use the possibilities of IT devices to the maximum in my classes. This is enough, as it would take away part of the significance of personal contact, which I deem an important principle of education” (age 54, female, primary school).

At the same time, in addition to the satisfaction regarding the use of devices, several responses reflect the problems that have been identified during the discourse on different conditions. Accordingly, the lack of devices appears here, as well: “In my opinion, I use computers for appropriate periods of time. The problem is not this but that my colleagues are also catching up, and thus I will have fewer possibilities to use the equipment, as there is only one portable computer and projector in our institution” (age 48, male, primary school). The reliability of devices is another restrictive factor, “When it works, I always use it” (age 37, female, mixed-type institution), similarly to the lack of usable digital contents, “I use it in every class, but if the digitalized versions of pictures and images in the course book would come with the books on CD or DVD, that would really assist the teacher’s work!” (age 47, male, primary school). There are some who are even more ahead and are thinking of how to assist students missing classes with the help of ICT devices, in order to ensure faster catching up, or how to make available for the parents any complex assignments made on the computer.

Among the reasons for the more frequent application of ICT devices in class, a relatively low number of teachers, 61 (5.3%), included factors that related exclusively to themselves. These few pedagogues indicated their own hesitation, the lack of will or proper mood (!) as hindering factors, and only one interviewee wrote about a need for external appreciation as motivation. Time is prominent among the factors mentioned by the interviewees; nearly two thirds of the 61 persons would like to have more time for preparation. It is not known whether they deem their IT knowledge as appropriate or include learning, too, in the time allotted for preparation, but out

<sup>8</sup> Sulinet Digitális Tudásbázis (Sulinet Digital Knowledge Base)

<sup>9</sup> NFI – Nemzeti Felnőttképzési Intézet; SZI – Szakképzési Intézet (NFI - National Institute for Lifelong Learning; SZI - Vocational Education Institute)

of the teachers several indicated separately their inadequate knowledge: *“I need to develop my IT knowledge – and develop it a lot”* (age 46, female, grammar school). There are also large differences in the amount of knowledge to gain. Some people would only like to learn how to install the equipment or use the devices, while others intend to use more spectacular presentations and wish to learn, e.g. the creation of Flash animation. Others still wish to improve their methodological preparedness: *“To know how to apply these things during teaching and learning”* (age 45, female, primary school). Several people feel that their lack of professionalism is a problem, and they would need much more practice to be more certain; the use of these devices would be only then integrated organically in their pedagogical practice. As we have previously seen, the necessary amount, profoundness, and content of practice vary, primarily on the basis of personal commitment. A perfect example is the subject of PE. Among our interviewees, five people stated that they would only be able to use ICT equipment in class if they did not teach PE. In contrast, out of those satisfied with their daily practice, two teachers indicated that they use such technology with pleasure in all of their classes, including PE: *“I exploit my possibilities to the maximum. I even use IT for PE. For instance, I show the animation of physical phenomena and other things”* (age 52, male, primary school). It is also important to note that in contrast to the 61 replies denoting some lack or deficiency, only 28 people indicated that, according to them, the more intense application of IT devices in class would be enhanced through trainings: *“to me it is trainings, free of charge, as only teachers are expected to finance their own obligatory further education from their meager salary”* (age 49, female, primary school).

Although our question, “What would you need in order to use informatics devices in class (more frequently)?” referred expressly to the interviewees’ personal needs, 16 people still found the key to change not in the external system of conditions, not in their own knowledge or training, but in other persons. According to five people, it is students that need to change. They are expected to be more attentive and to have more reliable, higher-level IT knowledge. 11 interviewees, on the contrary, criticized the preparedness and attitudes of their colleagues, thinking that they would need higher-level further education in order to be able to use IT devices more freely, to learn the rules of application, and, last but not least, *“. . . the majority of teachers would need to substantially change their views”* (age 60, male, vocational secondary school).

## Summary

On the basis of the data presented above, the majority of the pedagogues interviewed acquired their IT knowledge primarily in the course of self-education, and also extended such knowledge in the same way. Therefore, higher education should devote more attention to this field, moreover, the number of further education programs of this type should be increased, as – despite the fact that in the last few years the range of supply has widened and a strong support was present in the supply of further education courses centered on ICT – Hungarian teachers are still voicing a marked demand for further education programs providing IT knowledge required for teaching (cf. Hunya, 2006).

Yet, the interest in new technologies and the related methods, as well as the rather positive attitude, manifest themselves in a small degree in everyday practice. The role of the classic book-board-chalk asset system remains to prevail, while interactive boards, for instance, are used by few. Moreover, digital boards are very often made use of for activities which could be realized without this asset, that is, they in fact do not exploit the possibilities available. This problem also signifies that there are still gaps in the preparedness of pedagogues, but it is positive that the competent parties are also aware of this, and many make an attempt to change their or their colleagues’ attitudes. According to the large majority of our interviewees, however, to achieve quality improvement, the system of conditions must first be developed. This does not only mean the increase in the number

and quality of devices available, but also relates to the development of available content. Therefore, in order to enhance progress, these fields must be first successfully developed.

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# **Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, The Spirit Level. Why equality is better for everyone. London, Penguin, 2010. 346p.**

## **Book review**

*The Spirit Level. Why equality is better for everyone* is an excellent text that analyses the social cost of inequality for all members of society, as inequality does not harm only the poor, but also middle and high class. The Spirit Level is a masterpiece that places inequality and its effects as the main challenge of the future of the western democracies.

Richard Wilkinson, who is a professor Emeritus at the University of Nottingham Medical School, and Kate Pickett, professor of epidemiology at the University of York, point out, after many years of research, that poverty is not only a political or economic issue, but rather a medical and biological condition that affects everyone. The poor struggle for survival, as the rich suffer from anxiety, stress, fear and emotional problems, makes them seek comfort in obsessive shopping and consume psychoactive medicines.

According to Wilkinson, who has studied Economic History at the London School of Economics before training in Epidemiology and Pickett, who has studied Physical Anthropology at Cambridge and Nutritional Sciences at Cornell and Epidemiology at the University of California-Berkeley, countries with the biggest gap between the rich and the poor are confronted with many social and medical problems related to low levels of trust, low rates of life expectancy, poor children's educational performance, and scarce social mobility, as well as high levels of mental illnesses (including drug and alcohol addiction), high scores of infant mortality, high index of obesity, high numbers of teenage births, high rates of homicides and imprisonments.

The research of Wilkinson and Pickett is based on 23 rich countries, namely Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America, taking into main account the reports from the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Indicators, US Census Bureau: Gini ratios by state, survey data and census from different countries, as well as academic studies regarding social and medical issues.

"The Spirit Level" is divided into three parts with sixteen chapters, in which many facts and figures are presented in order to illustrate the correlation between key variables and consequences of income inequality. The first correlation shows that levels of trust between members of the public are lower in countries and states where income differences are larger. In this sense, people trust each other more in the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands than in Mediterranean countries. Sweden has the highest levels of trust, with 66 percent of people feeling that they can trust others. The lowest level of trust is noticed in Portugal, where only 10 percent of the population believe that others can be trusted.

On the other hand, the relation between income inequality and mental illness seems to be rather associated as is reported by Wilkinson and Pickett, who are also distinguished epidemiologists: "A much higher percentage of the population suffers from mental illness in the more unequal countries". In this context, it is not by chance that one million British children – one in ten

between the ages of 5 and 16 – are estimated to be mentally ill. It has been suggested that in any secondary school with 1,000 students, 50 will be severely depressed, 100 will be distressed, 10-20 will be suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder and between 5-10 girls will have an eating disorder. Meanwhile, in the USA, 6 percent of children have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a behavioral syndrome, characterized by serious distractibility, impulsiveness and restlessness.

Besides, almost 10 percent of children aged 3-17 faced moderate or severe difficulties in “the areas of emotions, concentration, behavior, or being able to get along with other people”. In this light, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain have fewer than 1 in 10 people suffering from mental illnesses, whereas in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK the numbers are higher than 1 in 5 people, and in the USA higher than 1 in 4.

Wilkinson, who is also an Honorary Professor at the University College London and visiting professor at the University of York, and Pickett, an expert in health care, consider that inequality is associated with low life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, shorter height, poor self-reported health, low birth weight and depression. However, they distinguish that differences in health may exist within any population.

In the UK, health disparities have been a major item on the public health agenda for over twenty-five years, and the current National Health Service Plan states that “No injustice is greater than the inequalities in health which scar our nation”. Similarly, many studies in the USA report that a 28-year difference in life expectancy appears at the age of 16 between blacks and whites living in some of the poorest and some of the richest areas. In this sense, life expectancy of middle class members is longer than those of working class in most unequal countries. In agreement with Wilkinson and Pickett, there are many different causes of death to see which have had the biggest class differences in health. However, they have found that deaths among working-age adults, deaths from heart disease, and deaths from homicide have the biggest class differences.

Obesity and unequal income are other factors that show the gap between the rich and the poor. The levels of obesity tend to be lower in countries where income differences are smaller. For example, in the USA, just over 30 percent of adults are obese; a level more than twelve times higher than the one in Japan, where only 2.4 percent of adults are obese. Besides, in the USA, there are no states with levels of adult obesity lower than 20 percent. Colorado has the lowest obesity prevalence at 21.5 percent, compared to 34 percent in Texas, which enlists itself with the highest one.

This relation with inequality and obesity by geographical region suggests: “The level of obesity among adults is higher in unequal US states”. The same tendency is noticed among children: “The level of obesity among children is higher in unequal countries”. In the Netherlands, 7.6 percent of children aged 13 and 15 are overweight, as in the USA one-third of children are overweight, standing for 25.1 percent.

Wilkinson and Pickett also analyze the relation between inequality and performance in education. According to the authors, children living in low-income families experience more family conflict and disruption and are more likely to witness or experience violence as well as live in more crowded, noisy and substandard housing, as the quality of the home environment is directly related to the income. Besides, the interaction between parents and children, as well as the care for kids, are linked to social inequality. The impact upon the aspirations, norms and values of people affects children’s educational performance. Social inequalities in early childhood development are entrenched long before the beginning of formal education, through brain development in prenatal stage. According to the report given by the authors, by the age of three, children from disadvantaged backgrounds were, from an educational point of view, already up to a year behind children from more privileged homes.

For example, “children are dropping out of high school more in the unequal states in the USA”. The lowest drop-out rates in the American states are noticed in Alaska, Wyoming, Utah,

Minnesota and New Hampshire, accounting for about 12 percent. In three states, Mississippi, Louisiana and Kentucky, more than a quarter of children drop out of high school with no educational qualifications. In terms of literacy scores in relation to parents' education across the developed world, taking four countries (the UK, the USA, Finland and Belgium) into consideration, it is noticed that the UK and the USA have the worst levels of inequality and literacy scores, compared to Belgium and Finland that have performed better. In this context, domestic conflict and violence, parental mental illness, poor resources and little time, and income background will affect development in children.

According to "The Spirit Level", there is a strong tendency for the more unequal countries to have higher teenage birth rates. At the top of the league of the group of rich countries, the USA has a teenage birth rate of 52.1 (per 1,000 women aged 15-19), more than ten times higher than the one in Japan, which has a rate of 4.6.

In the same way, in the UK there is a gradient in teenage birth rates per household income from poorest to richest. The percentage of young British women who become teenage mothers in relation to household incomes is an example of this correlation. Each year, almost 5 percent of teenagers living in the poorest quarter of homes have a first baby.

In fact, the most unequal countries of the developed world, the USA, the UK, New Zealand and Portugal have much higher teenage birth rates relative to older women's birth rates than the more equal countries, such as Japan, Sweden, Norway and Finland, which have teenage birth rates that are lower relative to the rates of birth of older women.

The research carried out by Wilkinson and Pickett shows that there are social class differences in both teenage conceptions and births, but the differences are smaller for conceptions than for births, because middle-class young women are more likely to undergo abortions. Teenage birth rates are higher in communities that also have high divorce rates, low levels of trust and low social cohesion, high level of unemployment, poverty and high crime rates.

Wilkinson and Pickett also study the relation between homicides and income, reaching the conclusion that homicides are more common in the more unequal countries. For instance, in the USA murder rate is 64 per million, more than four times higher than the one in the UK (15 million) and more than twelve times higher than that of Japan, which has a rate of only 5.2 per million. It is also noticed, as reported by the author, that homicides are more common in the more unequal US states. Louisiana has a murder rate of 107 per million, more than seven times higher than that of New Hampshire and Iowa, which are bottom of the league table with murder rates of 15 per million.

The authors consider that the association between inequality and violence is strong and consistent, and it is also noticed that there is a relation between feelings of shame, disrespect, humiliation and loss of face among people at the bottom of society, deprived of all the markers of status, who often react explosively when they feel threatened or when they try to gain status and social recognition through violence.

Another correlation analyzed by Wilkinson and Pickett is the frequency of finding that "the number of imprisoned persons is higher in the more unequal countries". In the USA, the number of imprisoned persons has been increasing steadily since the early 1970s. In 1978 there were over 450,000 people in prison, by 2005 there were over 2 million: the number had quadrupled. In the UK, the numbers have doubled since 1990, growing from around 46,000 to 80,000 in 2007. In fact, in February 2007, prisons in the UK were so full that the Home Secretary addressed judges, asking them to send only the most threatening criminals to prison. This contrasts strongly with what has been happening in some other rich countries. During the 1990s, the number of imprisoned persons was stable in Sweden, but declined in Finland; it rose by only 8 percent in Denmark, 9 percent in Japan. More recently, rates have dropped in Ireland, Austria, France and Germany.

Following the results of the research carried out by Wilkinson and Pickett, in the USA there are 576 people in prison per 100,000 which is more than four and a half times higher than the one

in the UK, at 124 per 100,000, and more than fourteen times higher than that of Japan, which has a rate of 40 per 100,000.

The authors of “The Spirit Level” point out that societies with greater inequalities, where social distances between people are greater, where attitudes of “us and them” are more entrenched and where there is a serious lack of trust and fear of crime, public and policy makers alike are more willing to imprison people and adopt punitive attitudes towards the “criminal elements” of society.

With reference to social mobility, as to the possibility to get better social or economic position, the authors indicate that countries with greater income differences tend to have much lower social mobility. In fact, far from enabling the ideology of the American Dream, the USA has the lowest mobility rate among these eight countries. The UK also has low social mobility, West Germany places itself in the middle, whereas Canada and the Scandinavian countries have much higher mobility.

As reported by Wilkinson and Pickett, the spending of a country on education is an indicator of its social mobility, as education is the main engine of social mobility in modern societies. It may be noticed that people with a higher degree of education earn more and have higher social status. In this sense, Norway is the most equal country; almost 97.8 percent spending on school education represents public expenditure. In contrast, in the USA, the least equal of this group of countries, only about two-thirds (68.2 percent) of the spending on school education is public money.

The authors also highlight those cultural differences that are created in societies with the greatest income differences, describing the way in which the amount of money and resources become of paramount importance in order to emphasize cultural social differences, in terms of the accent of rich people, their clothing, language, choice of reading matter, the television programs they watch, the food they eat, the sports they practice, the music they prefer, and their appreciation of art, which will contrast with the ones of the poor. The distinction and “good taste” of rich people is used to maintain their position in social hierarchy which will be translated into discrimination and downward prejudice to prevent those below them from improving their status. In this regard, the way in which class, taste and snobbery work to constrain people’s opportunities and wellbeing are, in reality, painful and pervasive means of creating social exclusion.

Wilkinson and Pickett conclude that more egalitarian countries live well with high living standards and much better social environments; according to their research, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Finland are more equal countries in social and economic terms than the UK and the USA of the list of rich countries analyzed by the specialists.

The “Spirit Level”, which is based on medical and scientific research, is an exceptional text that helps us understand the nature of inequality and gives us a dose of responsibility for the level of equality or inequality created in a country. Furthermore, the text proposes the development of politics based on recognition of such a society, as well as viewing politics as a way of improving people’s social and emotional wellbeing by changing their economic circumstances.

Nubia Nieto

# Vasile Boari and Sergiu Gherghina (Eds.) **Weighting Differences: Romanian Identity in the Wider European Context, New Castle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, 272 p.**

## Book review

A group of well established academics, some famous, others with a rather discrete public presence, met in November 2008 at the „Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca, under the auspices of several academic and cultural institutions, to discuss the intertwining of national and European identity, resulting in this book of collected papers. Although at a superficial glance the content of the volume may seem heterogeneous, one can easily find the three main motifs of the book which are I might say a representative sample of contemporary Romanian debates on identity, especially when the humanities are concerned: 1) national (i.e. Romanian in this case) identity and the quest for a European sense of attachment; 2) the criticism or the apology of nationalism; 3) the recent waves of international migration affecting Romania and especially the definition of Romania as a nation. Though my frame of analysis could appear to the editors and the authors themselves, as reductionist, the core of this excellently written and edited book is clearly informed by these themes.

One of the main messages of a great part of the authors is stated from the introductory chapter of the volume, written by the editors (Vasile Boari and Sergiu Gherghina) where the quest for the search of Europe’s soul is predicated. No wonder that the crisis of the European identity is equated by Vasile Boari in his chapter (*The European Identity Crisis*, pp. 41-60) to Europe becoming soulless, in fact more and more distant from its own cultural and spiritual specificity, that is the Christian tradition. The argument is similar, although largely unexpected from an economist, in Daniel Dăianu’s article (*A Strained European Model: Is There an Identity Crisis at Play?*, pp. 20-40) which is analysing the prospects of the European social and economic model in the context of the global crisis: grim future expects the European economies and societies if moral values like `honesty, trustworthiness, honour and respect, loyalty, hard work, education, family, community, altruism, compassion and love for one’s country` (p. 38) are not reinstated at the foundations of our societies. Localism based on the spiritual and cultural traditions of the European regions is promoted by Mihai Spăriosu in his essay as a last resort against the levelling forces of global economy with its deadly avalanche of `malls, consumerism, pop-culture, centralized bureaucracies and technocracies` (p. 76). To the argument that the Christian roots constitute the pillar of European spirituality and should therefore be included into the text of the European constitution Adrian Paul-Iliescu opposed vehemently the issue of the relevance for the future (as opposed to the presumed obsession for the past) and the alternative vision of Europe as an embodiment of open society for which cultural essentialism is not exactly the best recommended ingredient (pp. 110-111).

Andrei Marga in a philosophical *tour de force* (*Identities and Correlation of Identities*, pp. 78-

95) makes several important points concerning the topic of identity in contemporary social thinking, all regarding the tensions between European attachments and ethnic identification: 1) pre-1990 social theory largely ignored the theme of ethnicity as compared to other issues like social stratification; 2) ethnic identity has to be integrated into a theory of multiple identities for which Eric Ericsson and Luhmann provide the bases; 3) essentialist conceptions of the states – which usually entail nationalist emotions should be replaced by generative approaches to nation, a narrative of the state in which the focus shifts from the commonalities of the inhabitants to the ‘genesis of the nations’ (p. 84); 4) modernization is hindered by traditional ethnic identifications; 5) European identity has to be understood as a dynamic one, in an on-going genesis through the processes of European integration where multiple tensions and ambiguities are to be expected. Toader Nicoară and Simona Nicoară contemplate the perils that are faced by history as a discipline providing the raw material for the national narrative in the form of collective memory (*The Modern Nation, Daughter of Memory*, pp. 140-149). The obsessive commemoration of the past and the collective victimization and out-group hostility that are inherent to that (p. 146) should be answered by historians by ‘rediscovering the past as a present that used to be’ (p. 147). An important contribution to disseminating Romanians’ concerns over their collective identity is brought in the book by the review of Gabriel Andreescu (*The Paradox of National Identity: Its Cultural-Political Power vs. Theoretical Poverty*, pp. 150-167). While other authors approach in an analytic, be that theoretical or empirical, vein the problem of identity, Andreescu endeavours a synthesis of the Romanian studies in this area, where he follows, inductively, two main directions: ethnic and national myths, on the one hand, and self-stereotypes on the other. Whoever needs a cultivated digest on the Romanian national and ethnic ideologies will find this article valuable and even a pleasant lecture.

If the aforementioned articles are at the deconstructing side of the national narratives the two chapters by Ion Aurel Pop and Lucian Boia are at the other side. It is no coincidence that these two articles, written by two of the best Romanian historians, are placed at the end of the book as closing brackets. Ion Aurel Pop for example provides the reader with a brief history of the concept of Romanian identity in Romanian culture. Lucian Boia develops an interesting hypothesis connecting the historical and cultural traits of Romania to a specific geopolitical destiny, that of being at the borderline of civilizations and cultures which entails both isolation (i.e. remoteness) and openness (i.e. mixture) (*Romania, A Borderland*, pp. 260-268).

The anthropological questioning of identities, in their dynamic, layered and sometimes contradictory structure and existence is also represented in the volume. Aziliz Gouez (“*We Shall Bring You Our Vices*”: *Shifting Forms and Meanings of European Belonging in Romania and Italy*, pp. 113-139) discusses at length the political, cultural and economic avatars of belonging to Banat with a look on both the history of the place as well as on the micro-level effects of macro dynamics as the EU enlargement, transnational migration, economic globalization and the current economic downturn. Identity transformation is again put under analysis by Andrada Costoiu (*Romanian Diasporas: Transnational Practices and an Identity between Endurance and Hybridity*, pp. 210-243) who investigated the changes in identity suffered by Romanian immigrants in US, making the necessary distinctions between generations of immigrants and between immigrants before and after the fall of communism.

Starting his study from building hypotheses on the relationship between two opposing forms of attachments (nationalism vs. cosmopolitanism) and subjective well-being, Sergiu Bălătescu concludes after the analysis of Romanian Eurobarometer data that ‘all personal and national well-being variables influence the pride of being Romanian’ (p. 205) and ‘both personal and national well-being variables, as well as national identity indicators would influence the subjective well-being of the Romanians’ (idem). Against hasty generalizations and policy recommendations the author highlights that his results cannot make clear the causal relations between the involved variables more analytic effort being required to answer if patriotism can make people happy or,

more likely I would presume, happy people tend to feel stronger links to their communities (*National Identity and Happiness: A Quantitative Study with Romanian Data*, pp. 184-209).

To conclude, the book is rich in theoretical and methodological concerns and perspectives. Conceptual and historical analyses are combined with normative debates while the readers' understanding of Romanian discussions over the topic of identity is bolstered by several sound empirical articles. The international scholar could hardly find a better source on contemporary academic debates devoted to the issue of European and national identities. For those looking for certainties reading the volume will bring disappointment: it clarifies some questions of national and European identities without forwarding final judgments and sentences. For example it becomes clear that the status of Christian legacy is critical for the definition of European culture or that setting our national identity in European context requires a reappraisal of Romanian historical narratives (using the generative approach maybe, as proposed by Andrei Marga) but the answer to the dilemmas and tensions in today's structure of belongings, attachments and beliefs relies in the process of addressing them in an on-going public debate to such critical questions.

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