
Changing Borders, Stable Attitudes: The National and European Identity Before and After the Most Recent EU Enlargements

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Abstract: *This article investigates whether changes occur in the national and European identities of the citizens from the old and new Member States following the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. Complementary, it seeks to identify the major attitudinal determinants of national and European identities for the EU citizens. The analysis focuses on the 27 EU Member States and uses individual level data from the 2002-2009 Candidate Countries and Standard Eurobarometers. The descriptive statistics and multivariate quantitative analyses reveal that no relevant changes occur in the levels of national and European identities. The two types of identities coexist and are shaped at various levels. Their determinants appear to be quite stable over time, thus indicating no major alterations after the enlargement.*

Keywords: *identity, EU enlargement, attitudinal determinants*

Introduction¹

The most recent enlargements of 2004 and 2007 meant the formal inclusion of approximately 90 million citizens into the European Union (EU). The inclusion of 12 new Member States moved the EU border eastward and diminished the heavy influence of some Old Member States (e.g.: the Polish and Czech influence on the Lisbon Treaty). The macro-consequences of the enlargement were within a few years: faster circulation of capital throughout Europe, higher migration flows, rapid economic growth in Eastern Europe, and increased support for extreme right parties in many European countries. However, it is unclear if the enlargement coincides with changes in the attitudes of individuals towards their country or the EU. In this respect, this article investigates whether changes occurred in the national and European identities of the citizens from the old (EU15) and new Member States (NMS). Additionally, it focuses on determinants of national and European identities and their explanatory power before and after the enlargements. Accordingly, this analysis is driven by two interrelated research questions:

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Is there a change in the identity attitudes after the enlargement? If so, how do determinants of identity attitudes change over time?

To answer these questions, I focus on the 27 EU Member States and use individual level data from the 2002-2009 Candidate Countries (CCEB) and Standard Eurobarometers (EB). I use descriptive statistics and multivariate quantitative analyses to investigate the changes in national and European identities and their possible causes across years and countries. The tested explanations are density of political discussions, political attitudes (i.e. trust in the national institutions and EU), general retrospective attitudes (life satisfaction), economic variables (prospective evaluations), EU membership evaluations, and the left-right positioning.

The first section conceptualizes the term of identity and scrutinizes the layers of identity formation. The second section formulates a few testable hypotheses to explain the levels of national and European identity. Next, I briefly discuss the research design and variable operationalization. The fourth section provides general empirical evidence and includes the multivariate analyses of determinants for the national and European identities in the old and new Member States. The conclusions summarize the main findings and elaborate on their implications.

Identity Formation: From National to European Identity

The concept of “identity” has contextual meanings (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, p. 1). In its basic form, social identity is the complex of emotional and rational factors derived from the awareness of belonging to a group (Tajfel 1978, p. 63). This process implies both the positive identification with one owns’ group and the strengthening of particular features through a comparison with other groups (Tajfel and Turner 1979). At individual level, identity refers to the abilities of persons to acquire and internalize values characterizing the group to which they belong (Festinger 1954). The development of the group is modeled by the sense of common identity (Smith 1995). The modern period projected the state as a major driving force of identities. Various theories from the field of nationalism studies consider identity as a social, cognitive (Turner 1981; Turner 1991) and elite construct (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983) or as a product of ethnic (Smith 1998) and cultural interactions (Hutchinson 1994).

Defining “who we are” is a dynamic process, not static irrespective of the level of identity. The reasons for which individual attach loyalty to a certain group² are constantly evaluated and, consequently, the belonging is redefined. This happens as the sense of common identity that bound the members (Smith 1995), the value and emotional significance attached to the membership (Tajfel 1978, p. 63; 1981) are sometimes lost. There are instances in which the modification is rarely possible. For example, once the identity is formed on the basis of experiences accumulated within specific social culture, the bonds can hardly be broken (Dijkink 1996). However, the key point to remember is that identity shifts can sometimes occur. This process is not primarily based on exclusion. Although Huntington’s claim (2004) according to which we can define our belonging

² Identity is defined as the belonging to a certain group perceived by its members as different from other groups. For details, see Cottam et al. (2004, 45-46).

to a group as soon as we know the principles we are against does not completely lack empirical support, it also fails to capture the reality. In order to maintain the collective/group identity, the members have to retain particular norms, values, interests, and attitudes which provide a self-contained image shaping both their identity and relationships with other groups.

Following Anderson's (1983; 1991) conceptualization of the nations as "imagined communities", the rise of nationalism within contemporary Europe cannot be neglected. However, identity is not confined solely to the state, especially in Europe where the fully sovereign nation-state has reached an end (Habermas 1994). In this context, previous studies revealed two possibilities: a divergence between the national and European identity or a multi-stage identity formation. On the one hand, individuals consider their national identity as being threatened within a broader European context in which they interact with a multitude of cultures (McLaren 2002). As a result, they display negative attitudes towards the EU and thus provide solid bases for Euroscepticism. On the other hand, there are multiple layers of identity (Madens et al. 1996) in which the nation-state becomes the propeller of identity formation at the European level (Janssen 1991; Anderson 1998). According to the latter view, individuals often identify with several territorial communities simultaneously (Brewer 1993). The coexistence of national and European identities is thus possible; they are not opposites but heavily intertwined (Marks 1999; van Kersbergen 2000; Haesly 2001; Brutter 2003; Risse 2003).

The differences between the national and European identities are not limited to territoriality. The multiple identities interact differently with each other: some are separate identities (no overlap), others are cross-cutting (overlap without integration), others are nested (integrated), and marble cake (reciprocal influences) (Risse and Grabowski 2008, p. 2). Empirical evidence supports the idea that the European citizens display multiple identities. While there are continuous debates regarding the core common elements of such an identity (e.g. cultural vs. political vs. economic), there is a certain trend towards the European becoming a secondary identity for many citizens. Even if we consider the multi-layered approach and we refer to European identity as a second layer, there are a few relevant obstacles. First, the EU is a young community composed of old communities – the nation states – animated by individual strong feelings of separate belonging (Jansen in Boari and Gherghina 2009). Second, the European identity is built upon the national one. Very few characteristics shaping group identity – language, culture, historical experience, single economic and geographic areas, and shared necessity for security – can be reproduced at European level without being mediated by national layers. Consequently, very few people consider themselves Europeans without belonging initially to a country (Jacobs and Maier 1998). On a complementary key, European identity means allegiance to broader political values and principles such as democracy, tolerance, and transnational cooperation (Citrin and Sides 2004, 49). Third, the diversity of the 27 Member States creates a heterogeneous entity that adds a supplementary component to cognitive mobilization towards identity: the acceptance of other cultures (McLaren 2002). Such instances could fuel lower degrees of identification at European compared to national level.

Earlier studies provide empirical evidence supporting the coexistence of the national and European sets of loyalties: recent figures from survey data illustrate how dual national

and European attachments increased by 10% in less than a decade starting 1992 (Citrin and Sides 2004, 50). Such shifts in attitudes take place even in countries known for their Euroskeptical traditions such as the United Kingdom. The national and European layers of identity are strongly interconnected in contemporary EU. The debates from 2005 in France and the Netherlands reveal these two different identity perspectives: the cosmopolitan project corresponds to the elite-level appealed to political citizenship and rights, whereas the national-populist project centers on social citizenship, ethnic elements, and cultural authenticity, emphasizing the economic and cultural threats of enlargement (Fossum and Menendez 2005; Checkel and Katzenstein 2009, pp. 11-12).

Explaining Identity

One of the bases for group identity is the interaction between individuals. When the layer of reference is a political community – such as the nation-state or the EU – the complex decision making mechanisms and the sophisticated institutional arrangements can be understood mostly through communication and interaction. The high level abstraction of these processes is worsened by the inattentiveness and ignorance of people (Bennett 1996; Blondel et al. 1998). Accordingly, people who communicate may be better able to follow what happens and thus their identity will be enhanced. We expect intense political communication to positively influence the level of identity (H1).

The level of satisfaction with life can foster national and European attachments (H2). Such satisfaction is not limited to political or economic aspects, but it entails cultural and social components. Furthermore, earlier research explains how perceptions of favorable national and personal economic conditions positively correlate with attitudes towards the EU (i.e. support) in the Member States (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996; Anderson and Reichert 1996; Palmer and Whitten 1999; Tverdova and Anderson 2000). Thus, I expect positive assessments of the economic future to have a similar impact on the national and European identities (H3).

The relationship between political trust and identity is bidirectional. Berg and Hjerm (2010) illustrate how national identity can shape political trust in various ways, differentiating between civic and ethnic types of identification. At the same time, the causal arrow goes in the opposite direction as the political state is the reference object of the national identity. This is why citizens are expected to develop a higher sense of belonging to a state in which they have confidence. As the political institutions of the central administration – Parliament and government – are the primary tools for decision making within a state, I expect citizens trusting them to display a higher level of national identification. Rohrschneider (2002) argues that citizens that trust their national institutions have the tendency to vest confidence in the EU institutions as they trust the stances adopted by the national leaders at European level. This tendency of citizens to display attitudes towards the EU according to their evaluation of domestic political institutions is mostly observed with respect to the integration process (Franklin et al., 1994; Rohrschneider 2002). A similar logical mechanism is employed by identity formation and thus I expect trust in domestic political institutions to positively influence the national and European identities (H4). A similar argument can be developed about the trust in the EU that is expected to have a higher impact on the European identity than on the national one (H5).

The benefits of EU membership can also influence positively the sense of belonging (H6). Benefits are not restricted only to the economic dimension, but involve in addition freedom of movement, access to labor markets etc. it is intuitive to expect that respondents who perceive their country as being part of select club of prosperous and democratic states to foster a higher sense of national belonging. Similarly, the perception of EU as a source of benefits advances identification with it. For this hypothesis, I expect a stronger effect for the European rather than for the national identity. Finally, left and right have different meanings on the political spectrum. Traditionally, a positioning to the right of the spectrum indicates a tendency to favor the national entity. This is the only variable for which I expect divergent effects of the positioning: a positioning to the right to enhance the national identity, whereas a positioning to the left to favor a European identity (H7). However, differences may occur between old and new Member States as left and right have a different meaning in Western and Eastern Europe. Age is used as control variable.

Research Design

When referring to identity, the qualitative analysis is the most appropriate tool to examine and to explain the development over time and across countries. However, the quantitative analysis can help identifying general trends – the goal of this article. I use descriptive statistics to estimate how citizens from the EU Member States perceive who they are and to observe the relationships between the two levels of identity – national and European – across time. The analysis covers the 2002-2009 time period, i.e. two years before the largest enlargement from 2004 and two years after the most recent enlargement. The used data do not come from panel surveys that allow observing the shift in identity over time at the same individuals. Instead, I rely on data where different individuals are included in the surveys: Consequently, I cannot draw conclusions regarding the individual behavior. Whenever I refer to a change in the direction of national identity, I imply the general trend of the respondents from a specific country to position themselves more in this category than before.

The individual level data come from the CCEB and EB surveys, one from each year. I selected those with questions about identity or related items: CCEB 2002.1, EB 57.1 (2002), CCEB 2003.1, EB 60.1 (2003), EB 62.0 (2004), EB 64.2 (2005), EB 66.1 (2006), EB 69.2 (2008), and EB 71.3 (2009). The year 2007 is not included in the analysis as none of the surveys had questions about the European identity. These surveys are appropriate to map trends as they include large comparable datasets in terms of standardized questionnaires, sampling method, and data collection. All the “do not know” or “do not answer” responses are eliminated from the sample, being considered missing values.

The national and European identities are operationalized through two proxies. For the 2002-2006 surveys, the identity is considered the answer of the respondents to the following question: “Would you say you are very proud, fairly proud, not very proud or not at all proud to be [NATIONALITY - refer to citizenship]/European?” There are four initial response alternatives: “very proud”, “fairly proud”, “not very proud”, and “not at all proud”. The variable is recoded, the categories being merged two by two: the first two form the national identity category, whereas the last two form the category of people who lack national identity. For 2008 and 2009, when the battery of questions is modified

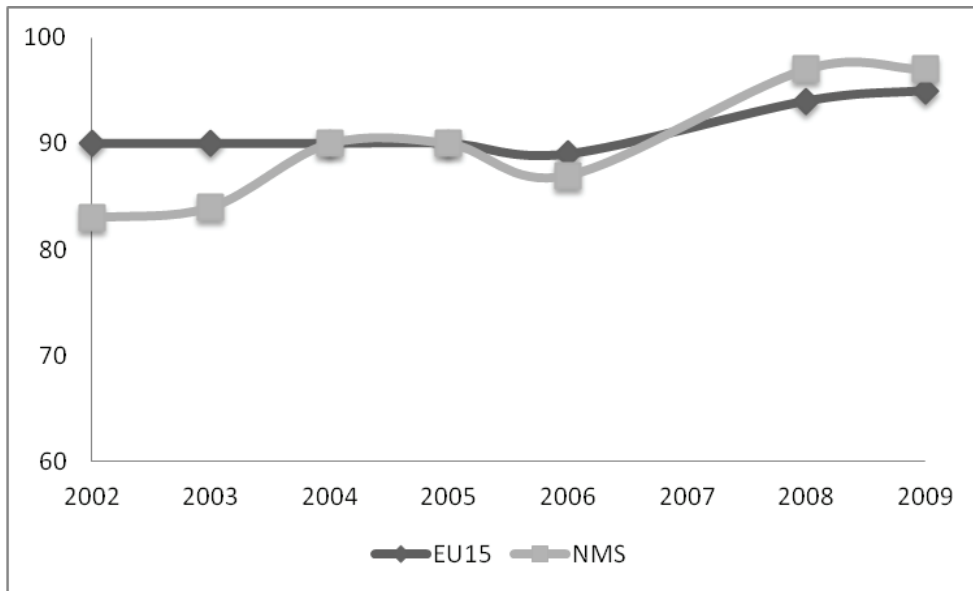
and these items no longer appear in the questionnaire, I use a different proxy. The asked question is: "People may feel different degrees of attachment to their town or village, to the region, to their country or to Europe. Please tell me how attached you feel to (...) our country/Europe?". The available answers are "very attached", "fairly attached", "not very attached", and "not at all attached". These are recoded into two categories, similar to the procedure from the 2002-2006 surveys. The proxies used for the identity variable are not identical. The pride of belonging to a nation is not the same thing with feeling attached to the same nation. However, they are functional equivalents for the purpose of this study. They both capture specific attitudes towards the country and Europe. The association coefficient between pride and attachment (run for the 2004 EB) is 0.9** (statistical significant at the 0.01 level).

The density of political discussions is operationalized as the answer provided to the question about how often a respondent discusses politics. The responses may be 1) never, 2) occasionally, and 3) frequently. The life satisfaction variable is operationalized as the answer to a question asking directly this; available responses were: 1) not at all satisfied, 2) not very satisfied; 3) fairly satisfied, and 4) very satisfied. The prospective economy is a dichotomous variable assessing the expectations of respondents about the future of their economic situation (as answer to a question using these words). Trust in domestic political institutions is an index reflecting the trust people have in political parties, legislature, and government. It ranges from 0 (no trust) to 3 (trust in all three); trust in the EU and EU membership are dichotomous variable. The left-right positioning is a three scale variable with three values (left, centre, and right), whereas age is a four category variable. All variables were scaled from the smallest to the highest assessment.

The Coexistence of National and European Identities

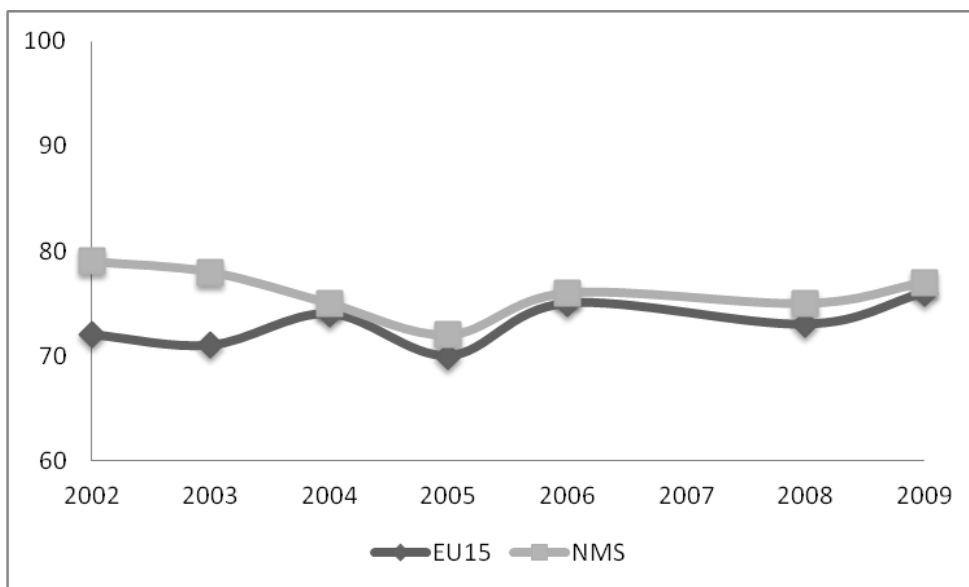
The logic emphasized in the theoretical framework indicates the coexistence of national and European identities. Two expectations are derived from those arguments: 1) the national identity to be stronger than the European one and 2) the dynamic of the two type of identities to be relatively independent. This section provides empirical evidence supporting both expectations. In this respect, it presents the general trends of national and European identity. It uses individual level data from CCEB and EB between 2002 and 2009 and distinguishes between the old and new Member States. Figure 1 reflects the longitudinal evolution of national identity with similar levels in the two types of Member States. Approximately 90% of the European citizens display attachment to their national identity, slightly more in the EU15 compared to the NMS. However, following the last wave of enlargement, the level of national identity in the NMS exceeds that from the EU15. Whereas the stability of national identity appears to characterize the citizens from the EU15, the NMS register a continuous (although minor) increase (with one drawback in 2006) throughout the examined period of time.

Figure 1: Level of National Identity among the citizens from Old and New Member States



By comparing the percentages in Figures 1 and 2, we can easily notice that there are more respondents attaching loyalty to their country than to Europe. The European identity is displayed, on the average, by three quarters of respondents; there are slightly more individuals from NMS feeling Europeans than those from the EU15. Overall, the European identity gravitates around the same values, with minor oscillations cross the years. A major downside appeared to be in 2005 when the consequences of the Constitutional Treaty's failure were visible and when some of the NMS encountered difficulties in the aftermath of their accession. Apparently, the year following the accession registers drawbacks with respect to the European identity (see 2008 in the figure). In general, two conclusions can be drawn. First, there are no relevant differences between the attachment to Europe of citizens from the old and new Member States. Although the beginning of the analyzed period marked a relatively high difference, by 2004 the levels were almost equal due to an initial decrease among the citizens of the NMS. Second, the enlargements do not appear to influence the levels of European identification on medium term; there are only short term effects (one year).

Figure 2: Level of National Identity among the citizens from Old and New Member States



One explanation for these low oscillations is the understanding attached by citizens to Europe. The theoretical framework emphasized the fuzzy meaning that a broader community like the EU can have to its citizens. Table 1 includes the different meaning attached by citizens to the EU in three different moments (2004, 2007, and 2009). These are not exclusive categories; the figures indicate the percentage of people who mentioned those features for the EU. The most popular meaning attached to the EU is the mobility of people, followed by peace. The latter is somewhat normal if we recall the theory mentioning that democracies do not go to war with each other. Two economic features are also pointed out by a relevant percentage of citizens: the Euro and economic prosperity. Such evidence confirms earlier findings that mentioned the support for the EU as mainly driven by economic and mobility factors. It is somewhat surprising that a relatively small percentage attaches the meaning of democracy to the EU given its positive efforts in Eastern Europe resulting in democratization (Pevehouse 2005; Schimmelfennig 2005; Gherghina 2009). Unemployment and bureaucracy are the two negative perceptions observable for a share between one fifth and one quarter of the European citizens.

Overall, two general trends are visible. First, there are some differences between the meaning attached to the EU by citizens from the old Member States compared to the meaning attached by citizens from NMS. For example, **peace, Euro, being stronger in the world and the EU as waste of money** are features identified much more by citizens from the EU15; the citizens from NMS see more the **EU in terms of economic prosperity, social protection, and mobility**. Thus, citizens associate the EU either with features broader than their nation-states (the case of the EU15) or with features corresponding to their needs (the NMS). Second, and more important for this longitudinal investigation,

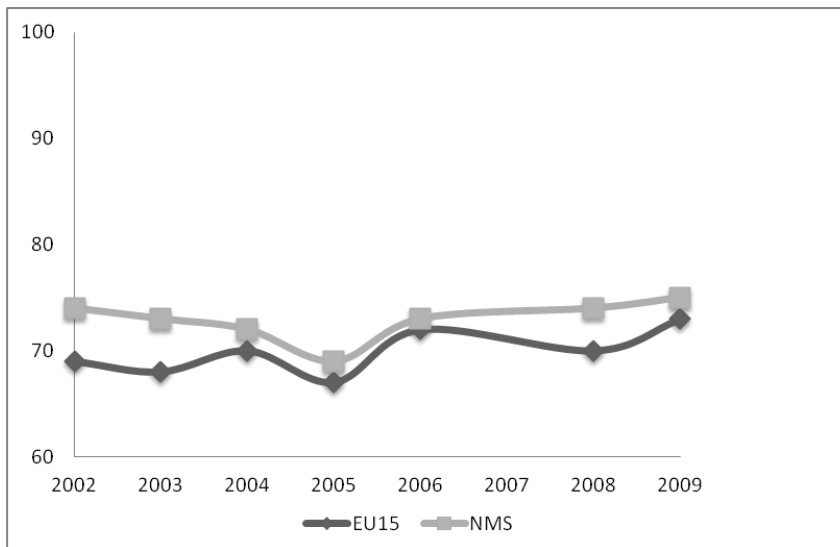
there are rare instances in which the meaning changes over time. Peace is one of those features, quite likely determined by the presence of troops belonging to some EU member State in Iraq or Afghanistan. Cultural diversity is another example, relevant for our case. In a nutshell, the stability of meanings can explain the relative stability of European identity across time.

Table 1: The EU Meaning for Citizens from the Old and New Member States (%)

	Peace	Economic prosperity	Democracy	Social protection	Free mobility	Cult. diversity	Stronger in world	Euro	Unemployment	Bureaucracy	Waste of money	Loss cult. Identity	Crime	Ext. border control
2004														
EU15	38	25	25	13	55	31	32	48	18	25	24	15	21	24
NMS	38	34	29	23	57	25	26	30	17	19	15	11	17	14
2007														
EU15	37	21	21	11	54	28	29	46	15	26	23	13	21	21
NMS	31	27	25	14	60	23	20	28	11	14	12	9	15	9
2009														
EU15	29	18	22	11	44	20	25	38	14	22	22	12	16	17
NMS	22	19	23	14	54	16	19	27	13	14	15	8	12	8

Figure 3 presents the percentages of citizens in the EU15 and NMS holding both identities. the levels and general trend are similar to those from the European identity. There are minor oscillations over time. Unlike the European identity, the dynamic of the citizens holding both identities differs between the EU15 and the NMS. The latter have a higher tendency of stability: with the exception of 2005, the percentage of citizens with the national and European identities is similar. Although there are visible some oscillations for the EU15 respondents, there are no clear connections between them and the enlargements.

Figure 3: Percentages of Citizens having both National and European Identity



These general trends lead to three conclusions. First, consistent with previous findings, there is a priority of the national over the European identity: more individuals identify themselves as nationals rather than Europeans. However, as illustrated in Figure 3, a large number of respondents has both identities. Second, neither national nor European identities appear to be influenced by enlargement. Whenever oscillations occur, they appear random. The major failure of the Constitutional Treaty and the first impact of accession in some new joiners had only minor consequences with respect to identity. If the stability of national identity is not surprising, at European level one could have expected a different dynamic given the increased number of Member States. However, the empirical evidence illustrates stable identification of citizens with Europe, primarily due to a similar understanding of the EU across time. Third, there are no relevant differences in the attitudes of citizens from old and new Member States, their degrees of identification and trends are fairly similar. The following section takes this discussion one step further; it investigates to what extent the determinants of the national and European identity function and change over time.

Converging Explanations

Table 2 includes the logistic regression coefficients for national identity at three moments in time: two years before the largest enlargement and the years following the two most recent enlargements. The evidence generally supports the hypothesized relationships with no relevant differences between EU15 and NMS respondents. There are two exceptions. First, the density of political discussions has a counterproductive role in the case of the citizens from EU15: those respondents who discuss less politics with their friends attach more loyalty to their country. For NMS the relationship is weak. Second,

the effect of the EU membership on national identity is mixed in the EU15 countries. For example, in 2005 respondents who consider that the EU membership is negative are more likely to have national identity, whereas in 2008 the situation is reversed. The third best predictors for national identity are life satisfaction, trust in political institutions and age (older respondents are more likely to have attachments to their country). At the same time, the prospective economy does not perform greatly in explaining national identity. Similarly, the EU related factors do not perform quite well indicating that national identity is shaped somewhat independently from the European processes. From a longitudinal perspective, two observations are relevant. The explanatory potential of the statistical models is quite stable across time. Second, there are isolated cases (e.g. the left right positioning in 2008) in which the direction and statistical significance of predictors suffers modifications. Consequently, similarly to the general trend from Figure 1, the explanations are relatively stable over time indicating no major changes in the attitudes of individuals.

Table 2: Determinants of National Identity

Variables	2002		2005		2008	
	EU15	NMS	EU15	NMS	EU15	NMS
Frequency of political discussions	0.62** (0.06)	0.98 (0.05)	0.62** (0.05)	1.04 (0.08)	0.90 (0.07)	1.14 (0.13)
Life Satisfaction	1.52** (0.05)	1.77** (0.04)	1.37** (0.05)	1.60** (0.07)	1.19** (0.06)	1.46** (0.10)
Prospective Economy	1.08 (0.04)	1.17** (0.04)	1.12* (0.05)	1.02 (0.07)	1.08 (0.07)	1.05 (0.12)
Trust in Political Institutions	1.29** (0.04)	1.55** (0.04)	1.34** (0.04)	1.36** (0.06)	1.20** (0.05)	1.39** (0.11)
Trust in the EU	1.07 (0.09)	1.03 (0.08)	1.24** (0.08)	1.21 (0.13)	0.96 (0.12)	1.46* (0.19)
EU Membership is Good	1.08 (0.06)	1.16** (0.04)	0.91* (0.05)	1.21* (0.09)	1.19* (0.07)	1.47** (0.13)
Left-Right Placement	1.51** (0.05)	-	1.42** (0.05)	1.21** (0.07)	1.12 (0.06)	0.95 (0.10)
Age	1.16** (0.04)	1.13** (0.03)	1.15** (0.03)	1.31** (0.05)	1.30** (0.05)	1.16 (0.08)
Constant	1.08	0.34	2.27	0.44	2.65	1.96
Nagelkerke R ²	0.08	0.13	0.08	0.07	0.03	0.06
N	8,815	6,991	10,575	6,288	10,553	6,383

Notes: Reported coefficients are odd-ratios (standard errors in brackets).

** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

A similar story is told by the statistical analysis for European identity (Table 3). The statistical models – performing much better than for national identity – have similar explanatory potential over time. There is general support for the hypothesized relationships, two exceptions are again observable. The political discussions have an ambiguous role in shaping the European identity, whereas the respondents positioned

to the right of the political spectrum are more likely to have this type of identity in the EU15 countries (contrary to our expectations). The most prominent variables are those connected to the EU: trust in the EU and the positive evaluation of EU membership. A citizen having confidence in the EU or considering the EU membership as positive is on average two times more likely to display European identity compared to those who do not trusty the EU. A positive evaluation of life and the favorable economic prospects foster European identity to a greater extent than in the case of the national identity. Moreover, contrary to what observed for the national identity, younger people appear more inclined to display European identity; however, the likelihood is somewhat weaker. Compared to the coefficients in Table 2, the European identity reveals slightly more differences between the EU15 and NMS, but they remain quite reduced in the overall picture.

Table 3: Determinants of European Identity

Variables	2002		2005		2008	
	EU15	NMS	EU15	NMS	EU15	NMS
Frequency of political discussions	1.06 (0.04)	0.96 (0.05)	1.10* (0.04)	1.12* (0.06)	1.25** (0.03)	1.19** (0.05)
Life Satisfaction	1.36** (0.04)	1.64** (0.04)	1.22** (0.03)	1.27** (0.05)	1.12** (0.03)	1.35** (0.04)
Prospective Economy	1.12** (0.03)	1.19** (0.04)	1.16** (0.03)	1.04 (0.05)	1.22** (0.04)	1.14** (0.05)
Trust in Political Institutions	1.12** (0.03)	1.02 (0.03)	1.10** (0.02)	1.00 (0.04)	1.12** (0.03)	1.02* (0.04)
Trust in the EU	1.99** (0.07)	2.95** (0.08)	2.24** (0.06)	2.16** (0.08)	2.07** (0.06)	1.74** (0.08)
EU Membership is Good	2.30** (0.04)	1.32** (0.04)	2.02** (0.03)	2.03** (0.06)	1.96** (0.04)	1.92** (0.05)
Left-Right Placement	0.98 (0.04)	-	1.02 (0.03)	1.22** (0.05)	0.96 (0.03)	1.20** (0.04)
Age	0.97 (0.03)	1.09** (0.03)	0.91** (0.02)	0.92* (0.04)	1.02 (0.03)	0.95 (0.03)
Constant	0.08	0.19	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.12
Nagelkerke R ²	0.21	0.18	0.22	0.19	0.20	0.15
N	8,494	6,702	10,478	6,447	10,523	6,358

Notes: Reported coefficients are odd-ratios (standard errors in brackets).
** p<0.01; * p<0.05.

Conclusions

This article aimed to identify whether changes in the identity attitudes occurred after the EU enlargements from 2004 and 2007 and what elements drive these changes. The first major conclusion, derived from the evidence presented in Figures 1 and 2, is that enlargement appears to have no effect on national or European identity; no relevant changes occur over time in either EU15 or NMS. The visible drawback occurred for

European identity around the fuzzy period following the failure of the Constitutional Treaty. Although more citizens identify themselves with their nation rather than with Europe, the European identity registers quite high and stable values. Such a stability can be caused by similar meanings attached to Europe by citizens over time (Table 1). The same holds true when analyzing the percentages of people holding both identities. The latter leads to a second conclusion: the national and European identities are not exclusive, rather complementary. However, their determinants are different. The national identity is primarily shaped by domestic components, whereas the European identity is related to the European processes. Third, the determinants of national and European identity have fairly similar explanatory power over time. Thus, no changes appear to be produced by the EU enlargement in the attitudes of the citizens.

By departing from the trends identified in this article, further studies can distinguish between identity components (e.g. social, cultural, political or economic) and focus on cross-national variation. In this respect, the meaning of identity for the EU citizens requires a detailed exploration to combine qualitative assessments and micro-level investigation focusing on the content of the self-declared belonging. Future analysis can explore the identity formation in the European societies and thus address the nuances arising from the various minority-majority relations or the nexus between national and European identity.

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