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# EUROPEAN TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL FIELDS AND IDENTIFICATIONS

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSNATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND STRUCTURED POSITIONS IN THE INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

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### Abstract

The article attempts to demonstrate the challenges for the development of European identity, which are also related to the erosion of spiritual capital on which Europe was initially built. The intensity of identifications with the European space significantly depends on the active participation in European transnational social fields, where circulation of social and cultural capital through transnational networks, institutions and cognitive frames substantially influences the existence of the European (transnational) habitus and accordingly the identifications. Further, the structural and cultural aspects of national social contexts are considered, implied by both the national structural-cultural specifics and the overall levels of national economic and cognitive development that may affect the levels and the ways in which individuals are able to participate in the European transnational social fields and identify with Europe. Using a hierarchical two-level, non-linear regression analysis the authors confirm the relevance of being included in transnational social fields at the individual level and demonstrate that the national context (particularly in terms of human development) does play a certain role in identifying oneself as European.

*Keywords:* social fields, transnational, habitus, regression, model

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### 1. Introduction

Identifications with the European space have been so far explored in numerous ways. European identity and its related notions are in itself ambiguous, variable, and not clearly formulated concepts. They have been tackled very differently in academic endeavours, as the understandings of the concept vary and the opinion concerning the proper meaning of the term differs among scholars. Its meaning has been attached to blurred geographic and

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symbolic boundaries, and shaped within various ideological and experiential constructions, which all contribute to its contestability. The concept of Europe itself contains many non-geographical meanings involving various political, cultural, and economic aspects. Europe is certainly a much wider concept than the European Union, as feeling European does not necessarily result in support for the latter [1]. Not just political but also academic discourse often equate both entities, which has put the European identity on very contested grounds and encouraged various discussions on the topic. Early publications on the identifications with the European space chiefly contrasted the European identity to a national one, with regional and local identities only playing a minor role in that respect [2]. The first publication containing the phrase ‘European identity’ was written by Daniel Lerner [3] and was followed by the heavily cited work of Ronald Inglehart [4]. Since then, its meaning has been attached to blurred geographical and symbolic boundaries and it has been shaped within various ideological and experiential constructions, which have all contributed to its contestability. The political connotations of the issue have raised many perspectives in the light of a constructivist and discourse critique. Essentialist approaches ensuing from ideas of common European grounds based on a national imaginary have been replaced by new perspectives of cosmopolitanism [5], constitutional patriotism [6], and supranational, European citizenship [M. Bruter, *Political identity and European elections*, <http://www.afsp.msh-paris.fr/activite/diversafsp/collgspgael04/bruter.pdf>]. Recently published works on the topic have approached European identity as a complex phenomenon influenced by personal advantages [2], social structural factors, and the social dynamics of transnational connections and interdependencies [7]. Institutionalised and politically fostered forms of exchange and interaction reflecting social, economic and cultural connectivity of the world have enabled infrastructure encouraging individual cross-border transactions. Social relationships and interactions have proliferated and lead to transnational social integration, mobility, affiliations and networks. European integration, inextricably connected to those processes, involving economic and political processes has widely affected social networks and forms of mobility of individuals within European countries. It has been argued that those transformations may catalyse a new type of integration and solidarity at the European level [8], and contribute to a shift in the political attachments and identifications away from national societies to the European and global level.

Our study is linked to recent important contributions on transnational interactions, European integration and identity formation [7, p. 147-164], which argue for a certain impact of transnational exchanges and participation in identifications with the European Union. Those identifications are closely intertwined with various transformations in social and cultural reality. They emerge as a result of contemporary processes influenced by the growth of global communication, mobility, media, consumerism and popular culture [9]. An important role in the development of these identifications is played by transnational social practices and participation of individuals in European

transnational networks and institutions. Individuals do not necessarily emotionally belong to Europe and the European Union, but the regular movement in European physical and cognitive space increasingly contributes to their attachments to it. Accordingly, individuals' perception of the European unity and construction of their identities may gradually change in terms of being Europeans to a much greater extent. Transnational mobility and cross-border networks of European citizens within a European context has been also explored in the context of certain variables, such as internationalisation, modernisation, and characteristics such as the respective country's geography, affect people's participation in cross-border activities [8]. However, the biggest limitation of the available research examining the factors influencing European identification can be found in the lack of a simultaneous consideration of the factors influencing an individual European citizen as well as factors from the national context in which individuals are still embedded. Both contexts seem to be crucial. On the one hand, identifications with the European space can emerge from the actual transnational social practices and connections, based on individual abilities, choices and expectations. But on the other hand, it has become obvious that transnational connections are highly stratified across society [7, p. 147-164], and European integration has become severely challenged by increased economic uncertainty and competition and massive immigration flows [10]. Those who predominantly identify with Europe are individuals who possess certain types of capital which exceeds national borders, and have more social skills, which allow them to take control over their actions [11]. In important contribution analysing the relationship between transnational interactions and European identity, Fligstein stressed the importance of social fields referring to politics, business, education, and civic associational life in making Europeans [7, p. 11]. Regarding the latter, we employ the concept of transnational social fields in order to deepen the understanding of the complex and ambiguous issue of European identifications. Although there have been a lot of studies emphasising the role of transnational connections in European integration and identification, the article tends by employing the issue of transnational social fields to clarify whether, and under what conditions, transnational interactions actually contribute to a subjective manifestation of Europeanisation and influence individual identifications.

Our first hypothesis is that (1) the intensity of identifications with the European space depends significantly on the active participation in European transnational social fields, where circulation of social and cultural capital through transnational networks, institutions and cognitive frames substantially influences the existence of the European (transnational) habitus and accordingly the identifications. Furthermore, individuals do not enter the transnational social fields and identify with Europe only directly and independently from the national environments from which they derive. Consequently, we need to identify the structural and cultural aspects of the national social contexts. We argue that these aspects are mostly implied by both the national structural-cultural specifics and the overall levels of national economic and cognitive

development that may affect the levels and ways in which individuals are able to participate in the European transnational social fields and identify with Europe. Consequently, (2) our second hypothesis is that the levels of economic and cognitive development – as well as the national structural-cultural specifics – of individuals’ national environments also significantly affect the intensity of their European identifications. Moreover, the same developmental differences between the national environments may also affect the contrasts in the levels of European identification between those who are able to participate in the transnational social fields and those who are not. This is the basis of our third hypothesis (3) that the intensity with which individuals’ participation in transnational social fields affects their European identification is affected by the national economic and cognitive levels of development,

In order to test our hypotheses, we applied a hierarchical two-level regression model [12]. The first hypothesis was tested at the first (individual) level of the regression model. The other two hypotheses required the second (national) level of the model to be tested. Some other factors assumed to be potentially relevant by previous research have been tested as well to control for their additional effects. The most complete dataset available to test our model is the Eurobarometer 73.4 survey from 2010 [13]. Thus, the operationalization of theoretical concepts takes into account the variables from this file.

## **2. Transnational social fields and identifications with the EU**

The concept of transnational social fields emerged from migration studies [14], focusing on how global processes and flows influence transnational processes, highlight issues of agency and community, facilitate the creation of new transnational social networks, and address issues of identity [15]. It offers elements of locality simultaneity and multiplicity of identities, and can elucidate the situation of many social groups; let them be migrants, entrepreneurs, students or individuals, which create their lives partly aside of the national spheres. Transnational social fields seem to enable us to consider the complex process of perceiving the self and others in this world of movement and help us to understand the contested contemporary identifications. We believe that the concept of social field and particularly of transnational social field can elucidate certain aspects of the relationship between individual and society and identification, while it challenges methodological nationalism but still takes into account social forces and institutions that have a great influence on individual ‘biography’ [16].

The issue of transnational social spaces and fields has thus become relevant also in studies of European integrations. Concerning a European public sphere, Rumford stressed out the possible existence of transnational social space as a genuinely European realm distinct from that of its constituent member states. In that regard, transnational space recognizes that the nation-state continues to exist alongside other, non-national spaces, but there are not necessarily the nation-states who are the primary actors in transnational relations

[17]. Delhey [J. Delhey, *European Social Integration: From convergence of countries to transnational relations between peoples*, 2004, <http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2004/i04-201.pdf>, accessed on 14.4.2012] has approached European Union as a social space of non-state actors of different nationality, while concentrating on the intergroup relations between the national collectivities involved in the amalgamation process. The issue of European social spaces evoked the term ‘horizontal Europeanisation’ denoting “a variety of cross-border interactions between European countries in terms of communication, the exchange of ideas and meanings, collective mobilisation across borders as well as cross border mobility and networks” [8, p. 9].

We focus on the European Union as the supranational unit representing the most suitable approximation of the wider European space. While we do not attempt to equate both phenomena, the European Union is nevertheless far from being just an economic and political entity. It is instead seen as a social space of non-state actors of different nationalities where citizens belong to at least two social spaces – their national society and the European social space [<http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2004/i04-201.pdf>]. We conceive these spaces as being composed of different social fields, while the intensity of identifications with the European space depends significantly on participation in European (transnational) social fields, which encompass a high heterogeneity of social networks and ties through countries of the European Union. We ensue from the conceptualisation of social fields and habitus as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu [18], but we predominantly draw on a further elaboration of the notion in a transnational context as suggested by Basch et al [19]. They define transnational social fields as a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships, through which ideas, practices and resources are unequally exchanged, organised and transformed. Participation in them is thus conditioned by participation in other (national) social fields that disposes them to a lifestyle or way of living associated with the particular social group from which they derive. Transnational social fields present “an unbounded terrain of interlocking egocentric networks that extend across the borders of two or more nation-states and that incorporates its participants in the day-to-day activities of social reproduction in these various locations” [14, p. 544]. The conceptualisation of transnational social fields is not much different of that proposed by Fligstein, who sees fields as local social orders or social arenas where “actors gather and frame their actions vis-a-vis one another” [11, p. 108]. As Levitt and Glick-Schiller argue “in one sense, all (social fields) are local in that near and distant connections penetrate the daily lives of individuals lived within a locale” [20, p. 10]. But, as they continue, the concept calls into question divisions of connection into local, national, transnational, and global, while within this locale, a person may participate in personal networks, or receive ideas and information that connect them to others in a nation-state, across the borders of a nation-state, or globally [20].

The concept of transnational social fields elucidates the complex interaction between individual practices and transnational, national and local contexts, while taking into account a variety of factors influencing a

transnational habitus. The latter reflects a different context of a structured framework of evaluations and expectations which lead to conscious or intuitive prioritising of certain dispositions and practices as Bourdieu proposed it [18]. In the contemporary world situation, individuals participate in many social fields, which do not always correlate with local or national boundaries. The possibility of their individual freedom and social change is thus more present, but it is still conditioned with different types of capital and other social forces. In that light, identifications with the European space are understood as a reflection of the relationship that individuals establish with themselves and with the community in which they live. The scale at which the habitus is to be found refers more to the scale of potential face-to-face encounters, where bodily disposition is important, and not so much to the original formulation of the concept which is applied more to geographical places [15; 18, p. 845]. The focus is on the idea that different aspects of identity can be related to the features of situated intersubjectivity, while intersubjective practice is experienced not just in terms of dispositions to act but also as a relation to the expectations and influence of the concrete networks of others [21]. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account not only the dispositional and positional but also the interactive dimension of social games. It then becomes obvious that reflexive accounting, conscious strategising, and rational calculation are not exceptional but routine, constitutive elements of human action [22]. The idea of intersubjective practice, which plays a crucial role in contemporary, seems to be close to the idea of a social skill proposed by Fligstein [11]. It means that actors have to motivate others to cooperate and the ability to engage others in collective action is a social skill that proves pivotal to the construction and reproduction of local social orders. Global processes enable the existence of transnational social fields, which forces us to re-examine, and re-conceptualise the relationship between social spaces, physical locales, and mind geography. The use of the concept does not predict or limit how spaces, identities, or networks of association are created or negotiated, but recognises various power dynamics and outcomes that manifest when individuals from different social and cultural environments encounter each other [23].

We assert that being European could be a part of a distinct habitus. European habitus is a transnational habitus, which reflects individuals' participation in multiple social fields (national and transnational). Transnational habitus also reflects particular types of capital, which are specific for each field. Bourdieu differentiated four types of capital, which enable the possibilities for action and substantiate the set of prepositions. First is the economic capital, which presents the most obvious form of capital. The second is the social capital, which consists of valued social relations between people. It is a quite complex and heavily used notion which has been labelled also as a 'plethora of capital' [24]. The third is the cultural capital which comprises institutionalised cultural forms, while the fourth, the symbolic capital, broadly amounts to status or prestige. The lines between them are often blurred, as the accumulation of one frequently results in the accumulation of others. Cultural capital is transmitted in

social upbringing via family and the educational system. Therefore, we combine the influence of cultural capital, with another definition of capital, a human one. The latter refers to competencies and knowledge that one poses.

Different types of capital are embedded in social fields, which consist of cognitive frames, networks and institutional rules [25]. Among these only the cognitive frames and networks are directly relevant for our analysis since it can be assumed that the general institutional rules within the EU provide an overall framework that does not differ between the individuals. Different types of transnational social, cultural and symbolic capital circulating through transnational networks, cognitive frames and European institutional rules simultaneously influence identification in transnational social fields, which are seen as social arenas where “actors gather and frame their actions vis-a-vis one another” [11, p. 108]. Practices and social positions, which spread across borders, produce conscious and non-conscious dispositions to act in specific ways in specific situations [26].

In addition, one may also consider the spiritual basis of European identifications. Robert Schuman, the founder of European integration [27], who is regarded the spiritual and political father of Europe, had it in sight in the event of establishment and integration of Europe in terms of the common spiritual foundation of the nations united in the European Union.

It might be argued that Europe will hardly survive based only on purely economic, capitalist principles and without the spiritual dimensions of individual and community. One of the challenges for a sustainable development of Europe may be the tendency towards absolute autonomy of the individual resulting in an absolute autonomous reason which may lead to self-destructive rationalism. The tendency to absolute autonomy, of course, is a phenomenon that occurred before the second half of the twentieth century. The process of radicalization of subjective autonomy began in the modern times or at the beginning of rationalism. Today, the centre of the entire comprehension and ‘interpretation’ is a person herself or himself, an autonomous individual. Everything is comprehended in the subject’s perspective. The place which belonged to God throughout the history, was taken by a human – now he or she is the one who is teaching, explaining, establishing, defining ... In this concept it is difficult to find a place for transcendence and an authentic religion. If it is, it is as of one’s own construct, i.e. in accordance with his standards (‘religious cocktails’) [28]. According to Beck, ‘God of ones own’ is a religion where human is at the same time the believer and God [28, p. 144]. ‘God’s own’ of the twenty first century is a construction of an optional puzzle of a particular individual [28, p. 134]. On the other hand, common values, ethical principles and religious tolerance represent the basic content of the spiritual capital, which guarantees the survival of Europe as known today. The principle of its sustainable development could thus lay right in the spiritual capital, constituted of common values, ethical principles and religious tolerance in terms of religious pluralism. Since common spiritual capital does not convey merely a religious affiliation but should be newly based in the light of scientific, humanistic and anthropological points of

view, it cannot be operationalised simply in terms of religious beliefs and practices. It is about the horizon of realizing freedom and responsibility [29] meaning that the spiritual dimension is in the area of ethics, morals and common values providing humanity, human dignity and justice. Based on this conceptualisation, spiritual capital – as another aspect of capital – is not operationalised directly in our empirical model but may only be understood as a latent variable influencing both cultural capital in terms of cognitive frames and social capital in terms of social networks as social relationships to other people.

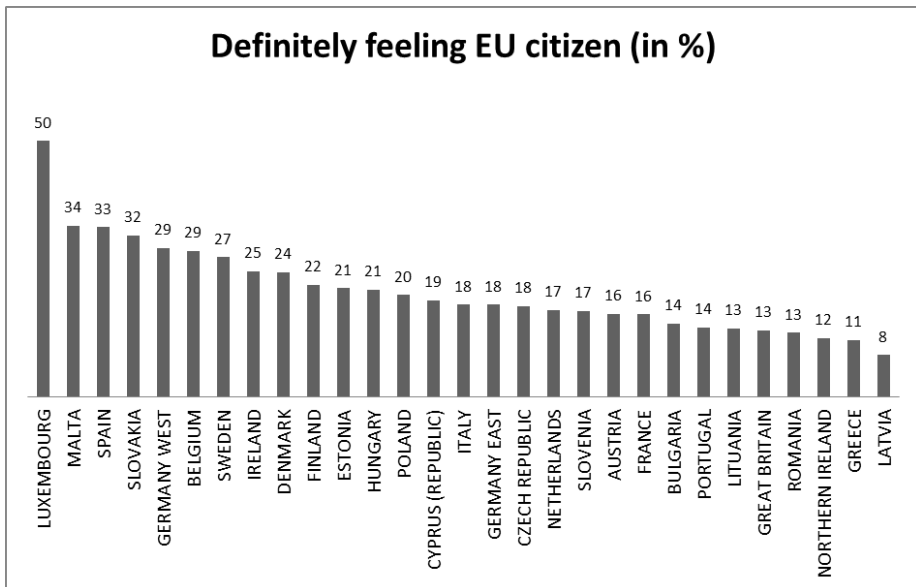
### **3. The model and the indicators**

#### ***3.1. The dependent variable - operationalizing European identifications***

European identity as being a contested and ambiguous notion is a concept, which presents quite a challenge in empirical endeavours. European identity can be approached as feelings of belonging to a certain common space based on cultural values, common history or more cosmopolitan attachments. It can either be seen as a political identity, reflecting in the civic life and public sphere. We believe that although there are certain feelings of belonging to Europe and attachments to European Union in both senses, there is no such thing as a European identity (yet). This is something that has to emerge yet, and the civic activation, emergence of European public space creating European demos seems to be crucial in that regard. Identifications with the EU emerge from the active participation of individual, which thus contribute to a more intensive social integration among the different EU nationalities. We believe that one of the key characteristics denoting those individuals are the feelings of being a European citizen. Considering citizenship as identification may have been contested until it is perceived only as a status in T.H. Marshall's sense, that is "bestowed on those who are full members of a community" [30]. As Jamieson argues, it makes a great difference, if citizenship is conceptualised not as a status but as a matter of interaction, therefore in terms of social practices of engagement with civil society over governance [31]. It is the European citizenship that affords individuals the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States and thus enable transnational transactions. The empirical research conducted by Bruter [<http://www.afsp.msh-paris.fr/activite/diversafsp/collgspegael04/bruter.pdf>] confirms that the greater involvement in European integration actually increases the likeliness of a given voter participating in elections to the European Parliament. Delhey similarly emphasises that a growing body of common legal rules are enforceable by individual EU citizens, clearly setting the EU apart from international organisations that only recognise states, not individuals, as actors [<http://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2004/i04-201.pdf>, p. 6]. While being influenced by a variety of individual factors that are the subject of our study (first hypothesis), European identifications are also far from being equally distributed among the EU member states, which we analyse in relation to the other two hypotheses (see Figure 1). Since we need a relatively



clear indicator of identification, we distinguish between those who claim they definitely feel they are European citizens and the rest (who claim they only feel this to some extent, not really, not at all, or do not know).



**Figure 1.** Definitely feeling an EU citizen by EU member states, source: Eurobarometer 73.4 (2010) database, own calculations.

### **3.2. Towards the first level independent variables**

As a part of a wider field of transnational and global studies, social relations and types of cross-border connectivity between people and social groups have become most relevant in European integration. A study conducted by Kuhn [10], which focuses on transnational connections and their impact on EU support, illustrates that the more transnational an individual, the less she or he is prone to be eurosceptical. As Favell argues, being European is as much likely to be about this as it is about shopping across borders, buying property abroad, handling a common currency, looking for work in a foreign city, taking holidays in new countries, buying cheap airline tickets, planning international rail travel, or joining cross-national associations [9]. We assume that the social networks as manifestations of social capital enabling the circulation of cultural capital can thus be inferred from the survey questions on socialising with people from another EU country.

The indicators of cognitive frames, on the other hand, can be found in a broader range of variables, representing their different aspects. General cognitive dispositions are best represented by the levels of formal education. It has been argued that education and investment in education can have a certain impact on perceiving and imagining the European space [7, p. 145]. More educated individuals are more likely to have particular cultural capital, which influences

their perception and position in national and European social fields [32]. Further, more educated people tend to occupy better positions on the social ladder, have a better occupation, a better economic situation, and better prepositions to participate in social practices at the European level.

The more specific – Europe related – aspects of cognitive frames may be approximately measured by the EU related knowledge, such as being familiar with EU citizens’ rights. Knowledge about European civil rights, political institutions and projects can influence political motivation, participation and civil competence [33] and thereby also contribute to feelings of being a European citizen, representing a specific substance of cultural capital.

**Table 1.** The operationalization of the theoretical model: independent variables.

	Individual level		The national context	
Social fields - key theoretical categories	Manifestation in the European transnational social fields	Indicators: Variables from the Eurobarometer 73.4 dataset	The structural forces of national context: the level of societal development	Indicators
Cognitive frames/ cultural capital	General cognitive dispositions	20+ years when finishing education (AGEEDUCA)	National structural context of cognitive frames	The impact of Human development index
	Cosmopolitan competences	reading books, newspapers and magazines in languages other than one's mother tongue (READ)		
	EU specific competences	being familiar with EU citizens' rights (KNOWRIGH)		
	EU related attitudes	perception of EU image (IMAGEEU)		
Networks: social capital enabling the circulation of cultural capital	Inclusion in European transnational networks	socialising with people from another EU country (SOCIALISE)	National structural context of entering European transnational networks	The impact of Human development index

Moreover, the relevant cognitive frames should also include the willingness and ability to choose a cosmopolitan outlook and practices. This is well approximated by reading books, newspapers and magazines in languages other than one’s mother tongue. This implies an open-minded world view enabling better knowledge of foreign cultures, languages and literature [34].

Transnational human capital referring to knowledge and skills that enable people to perform in a transnational environment [10] should thus play an important role in intersubjective practices influencing European identifications.

Attitudes also cannot be separated from the cognitive frames. Cognitive dispositions, in addition to affective and behavioural components, present the constitutive part of attitudes, which are very influenced by our beliefs, thoughts and ideas [35]. On the other hand, attitudes regarding European integration should be distinguished from identity, noting that appreciation of the European Union without having a European identity is certainly possible, while it is impossible not to support the EU when at the same time European identity is widespread [36]. Nevertheless, according to a study of European youth [37], spontaneous associations with European Union usually include ‘free movement of persons and goods’, ‘common currency’, and ‘absence of borders’, which are generally positive images. As Immerfall et al. argue [36], the latter does not ‘prevent the European Union from being perceived as a remote entity’, but still a positive image of the unity may play a certain role in identification processes. The independent role of a (positive) image of the EU is represented in our model by the perception of the EU’s image (see Table 1).

In addition, we also take into account the individual’s age, occupational status and gender *as controlling variables based*, although only gender turned out to be significant after testing our initial regression models when combined with the remaining variables specified above.

### ***3.3. The second level - the national context***

The structural properties are a substantive part of social forces, which influence individuals’ participation in transnational social fields. They condition their entrance in social games where interactive dimensions of transnational encounters influence on transnational (European) habitus. Individuals who participate in transnational social fields are also present in the national ones, since nation state remains a primary container of people’s lives, although its meaning has changed due to contemporary social processes. European identifications can be conceptualised in relation to the macro-structural change in the traditional system of nation-states. Multiple diversifications among European countries have so far been encountered on various structural, cultural and practical levels [8]. As Immerfall et al. argue [36], national histories are crucial in shaping patterns of discourse about European integration, while national history influences the consequences of European Union membership. Social representations of the European Union’s policies and actions are embedded in and linked to nation-specific discourses about sovereignty, society and the nation-state [38]. It has been shown that certain contextual variables, such as internationalisation, modernisation, and characteristics such as the respective country’s geography, affect people’s participation in cross-border activities [8]. Accordingly, we assume that nation states (1) offer unequal abilities for individuals to enter transnational fields, and furthermore (2) many

differences can be found among individuals participating in them according to different set of prepositions of particular national fields.

Beside the national specifics that can be considered as random influences in our regression model, we assume that variables from the national context may influence both average levels of European identification (or the intercept in terms of the first-level regression equation that corresponds to our second hypothesis) as well as the intensity of the influence of particular factors on an individual's European identification (i.e. the slopes of the first-level regression equation that correspond to our third hypothesis).

It may be argued that that the overall level of a country's development in economic and cognitive (cultural capital related) terms may be crucial as structural properties contributing to enabling or limiting individuals' probabilities of identifying with Europe. Human Development Index (HDI) may be seen as an empirical approximation in this regard. The more developed a European country – *due to its history and the current opportunities it provides to its citizens* – the more closely it is integrated to the European core [39], which may contribute to higher levels of European identification. The HDI related to economic and cultural resources may exert a great impact on social stratification and other aspects of the social structure and thus influence an individual's ability to participate in transnational social fields. Moreover, higher levels of societal development are also related to a gradual shift towards post-materialist values that may imply a comparative decrease in the significance of local and national loyalties, thus opening the way for broader, cosmopolitan and European orientations [4] (see Table 1).

However, due to the absence of a more systematic account in the previous research, one can hardly exclude the impact of some other factors at the national level. These may include:

- the duration of membership in the EU though a clear relationship between the duration of EU membership and European identification assumed earlier has not been confirmed by more recent research [40];
- a communist past, i.e. a history of relative isolation from the European core may be related to the uncritical enthusiasm about returning to the 'European home' [41];
- the level of a country's economic internationalisation as expressed in terms of the foreign direct investment to GDP ratio [39] and country's economic openness.

## **4. Results - testing the model**

### ***4.1. Individual level***

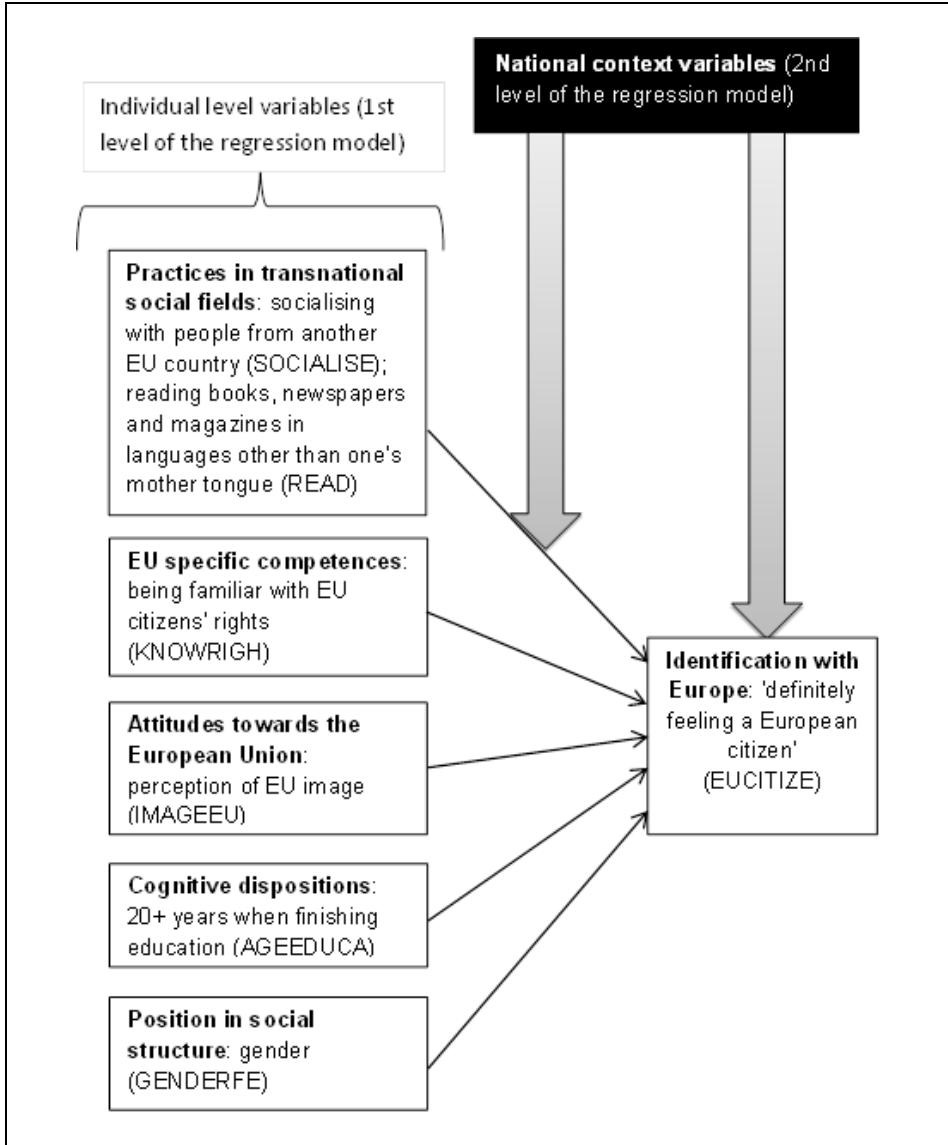
The first-level regression equation has confirmed the relationship between the independent variables and the binary dependent variable (expressed in terms of the probability of definitely considering oneself as an EU citizen). The

complete first-level regression model can thus be formulated as follows (see Figure 2 for the explanation of the symbols):

$$\text{Prob}(EUCITIZE_{ij} = 1/\beta_j) = \phi_{ij} \quad (1)$$

$$\log[\phi_{ij}/(1 - \phi_{ij})] = \eta_{ij} \quad (2)$$

$$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} * GENDERFE_{ij} + \beta_{2j} * AGEEDUCA_{ij} + \beta_{3j} * READ_{ij} + \beta_{4j} * SOCIALISE_{ij} + \beta_{5j} * KNOWRIGH_{ij} + \beta_{6j} * IMAGEEU_{ij} \quad (3)$$



**Figure 2.** A draft of the hierarchical two-level regression model of the European identification.

Regular socialising with people from another EU country (i.e. not just once or twice) as an indicator of European transnational social networks has a significant positive impact on identifications with the European space.

The same turned out to be true for the indicators of cognitive frames of the transnational social fields. General educational level, EU related specific knowledge (being familiar with EU citizens' rights) reading books, newspapers and magazines in non-native languages, which takes place several times (not just once or twice), attitudes towards the EU (EU image) all significantly contribute to higher probabilities of firm identification with the European space.

From the controlling variables only gender turned out to be significantly related to identifications with the European space in a way that is consistent with previous studies: men [42] tend to identify with Europe to a higher extent. The effects of age and occupational status turned out to be insignificant in statistical terms and were thus dropped from the initial model. It is true, on the other hand, that people with managerial and professional occupations are somewhat more likely to visit other EU countries on a frequent basis (Phi equals 0.18 at a 0.000 significance level), to know the European citizenship rights (Phi equals 0.15 at a 0.000 significance level) and to feel like European citizens to a *slightly* greater extent (Phi equals 0.08 at a 0.000 significance level). However, when the other factors of European identification included in our model are controlled for, the impact of occupational status *as such* disappears.

*This may imply that it is less important what people are in terms of their occupational status and age. Instead, what they actually do is more important, particularly in transnational social fields.* In other words, age and occupation do not seem to have a significant independent effect as such on the probability of identifying with Europe when actual practices in transnational social fields are taken into account.

#### **4.2. National contexts**

The country differences concerning European citizenship as presented in Figure 1 imply that the national context also plays a significant role in the level of identification with Europe independently of those variables operating at the individual level. However, it should also be explored whether these are only random effects of the national contexts and their specifics that cannot be systematically predicted or whether any particular variables may also contribute to national differences in terms of European identification.

When applying the exploratory analysis for the impact of HDI and the controlling variables to test their significance for inclusion in the hierarchical regression as second-level model variables, it turned out that only the HDI variable might produce statistically significant coefficients. In contrast, the t-test statistics for the duration of EU membership ( $t = 0.777$ ), communist past ( $t = -1.015$ ) and the FDI to GDP ratio ( $t = 0.706$ ) provide no evidence of any systematic impact. Only the HDI variable was thus included in our hierarchical model at the second level as influencing the first-level equation intercept,

namely contributing to higher levels of European identification even when controlling for differences at the individual level.

We have also tested whether the second-level model variable exert any systematic influence on the first-level regression model slopes, namely the impact of the HDI (and the controlling variables) to the effects of the individual level independent variables. The exploratory tests demonstrated again a significant systematic effect only in the case of HDI – influencing the intensity to which socialising with people from another EU country determines European identification. The slopes turn out to be significantly steeper in countries with a lower HDI, demonstrating greater contrasts in European identification in these countries between the people included in the European transnational networks and the rest. Again, no significant impact was confirmed for the controlling variables. Duration of EU membership, a communist past and lower FDI to GDP ratios do not influence the first level regression coefficients. Moreover, no national level variable significantly affected the slopes for the variables indicating cognitive frames at the individual level.

The final two-level hierarchical model based on only keeping the significant coefficients in the equation can thus be formulated in mixed form as follows (see Figure 2 for the explanation of the symbols):

$$\text{Prob}(EUCITIZE_{ij} = 1/\beta_j) = \phi_{ij} \tag{4}$$

$$\log[\phi_{ij}/(1 - \phi_{ij})] = \eta_{ij} \tag{5}$$

$$\eta_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * HDI_j + \gamma_{10} * GENDERFE_{ij} + \gamma_{20} * AGEEDUCA_{ij} + \gamma_{30} * READ_{ij} + \gamma_{40} * SOCIALISE_{ij} + \gamma_{41} * HDI_j * V95\_A_{ij} + \gamma_{50} * KNOWRIGH_{ij} + \gamma_{60} * IMAGEEU_{ij} + u_{0j} \tag{6}$$

**Table 2.** Final estimation of fixed effects, source: own calculations based on the Eurobarometer 73.4 (2010) database and HLM 7 statistical software.

Fixed Effect	Coefficient	Standard error	t-ratio	Approx. d.f.	p-value
For INTERCEPT 1, $\beta_0$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{00}$	-2.754738	0.118142	-23.317	25	< 0.001
HDI, $\gamma_{01}$	5.118114	2.411066	2.123	25	0.044
For GENDER (FEMALE) slope, $\beta_1$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{10}$	-0.205714	0.057287	-3.591	22292	< 0.001
For EDUCATION (20+ years old when finishing education) slope, $\beta_2$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{20}$	0.232117	0.063609	3.649	22292	< 0.001
For READING (in languages other than one's mother tongue) slope, $\beta_3$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{30}$	0.474744	0.079962	5.937	22292	< 0.001
For SOCIALISING WITH PEOPLE FROM ANOTHER EU COUNTRY slope, $\beta_4$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{40}$	0.393904	0.071756	5.489	22292	< 0.001
HDI, $\gamma_{41}$	-3.303258	1.597673	-2.068	22292	0.039
For BEING FAMILIAR WITH EU CITIZENS' RIGHTS slope, $\beta_5$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{50}$	1.139672	0.061671	18.480	22292	< 0.001
For PERCEPTION OF EU IMAGE slope, $\beta_6$					
INTERCEPT 2, $\gamma_{60}$	1.090927	0.060834	17.933	22292	< 0.001

The results of the equation on the population-average level are presented in Table 2. The reliability of the random level 1 intercept equals 0.919, also clearly confirming the assumed random effects affecting the first-level intercept,

i.e. the mean identification levels for different countries. The HDI variable was centred around its grand mean. The significant coefficients and the variance explained by the second level of the model are also presented in Figure 3.

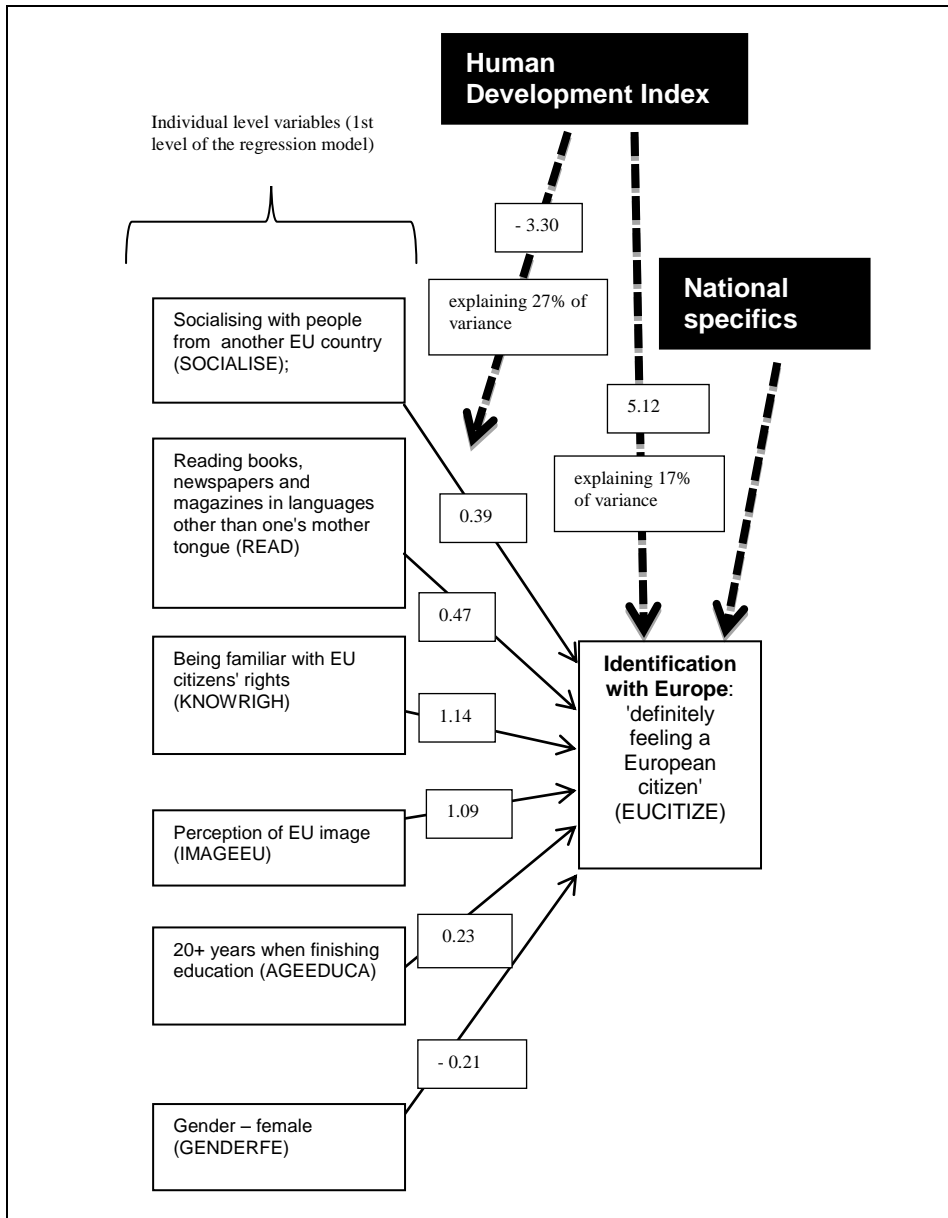


Figure 3. The final two-level hierarchical regression model of European identification.



## **5. Conclusions**

Transnational social fields encompass the networks and ties through different countries of the European Union and present a complex set of conditions that affect construction, negotiation and reproduction of identities [43]. Those who predominantly identify with Europe are not just individuals occupying a better position within national sphere. They possess certain economic and symbolic capital which exceeds national borders. Their perception and attitudes toward European Union ensue from the specific European (transnational) habitus, which reflects their participation in multiple social fields (national and transnational).

European transnational social fields may be seen as social arenas offering a basis for constructing European identifications. They enable actors to enter intersubjective social games, where social forces and individuals' considerations of their actions influence European (transnational) habitus. As Levitt and Glick-Schiller [20] argue, when conceptualising transnational social fields it is important to differentiate ways of being as opposed to ways of belonging. The former refers to actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than identities associated with their action. On the other hand, ways of belonging refer to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group. Individuals within transnational social fields can combine both ways differently in a specific context. Further, Levitt and Glick Schiller hypothesize that someone who had access to a transnational way of belonging would be likely to act on it at some point in his or her life. Social fields comprise institutions, organisations and experiences that generate categories of identities that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups. Individuals' perceptions of the unity and construction of their identities can thus gradually change in terms of being European to a significantly greater extent. Individuals do not necessarily emotionally belong to the European Union, but their regular movement in the European physical and cognitive space contributes to their attachment to the European Union. European habitus functions as a result of the dialectical relationship between individuals' actions and an intersubjective consideration of their actions [21]. The participation in social fields enables and forms specific elements of habitus, which an individual consciously chooses to have. Individuals are thus able to choose whether to be European or not, but certain conditions have to be fulfilled. Confirming the first hypothesis by the first level of our regression model, it can be argued that a complexity of conditions needs to be fulfilled in order to establish a basis for those identifications, which shows the importance of situated intersubjectivity. Transnational social capital enabling the circulation of cultural capital is important in that respect. It may be argued that people's practices within transnational social fields that are gradually becoming everyday practices offer a particularly beneficial starting point for further research into how identification with Europe and the European Union are produced and (re)produced. We cannot claim, however, that practices in transnational social fields are the only factor

contributing to the probability of identifying with Europe. Individuals' European identifications can also be significantly influenced not simply by their personal experiences but, for instance, by the variety of the media, political, economic, expert, religious and other discourses that influence people beyond their direct personal experience (in these processes national elites may play a significant role as demonstrated, for example, by Adam et al. [44]).

Our findings also show that some long established social structural aspects play an important role in identifying with Europe. This role may become particularly visible when one considers the variety of national contexts. Structural conditions, values, attitudes, competencies and practices are far from randomly distributed across the European continent. Apart from country-specific impacts, individuals' chances of developing significant European identifications are also systematically influenced in structural terms by their country's overall development indicated by the Human Development Index. As demonstrated by the confirmation of our second and third hypothesis, higher levels of human development as a contextual factor at the national level thus imply better chances of developing a European identification and smaller differences within national populations regarding this identification based on participation in transnational networks.

However, those who predominantly identify with Europe are not just individuals occupying a better position within the national sphere, but they possess certain economic and symbolic, social and cultural capital exceeding national borders. Active participation in the dynamic transnational social fields thus seems to be far more significant for the development of European identifications than fixed positions within the national (social) structure.

Similar to Beck [28], the search for Europe's perspective as well as identification with it are possible, also by a new religious consciousness and by common spiritual capital. Europe is facing challenges requiring more or less long-termed stable identification with the European space and this will not be possible only on the basis of pragmatic, especially market related assessments, but also on certain value bases among which the concept of a common spiritual capital should be highlighted.

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