Nation and Migration

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Nation and Migration: How Citizens in Europe Are Coping with Xenophobia.
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SUMMARY

Our first research question concerned testing the validity of Szűcs's theory in our times, specifically at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Our data makes it clear that the differentiation of the three regions has shortcomings and missing parts and it requires more precision. In our book we have maintained the type of logic employed by Szűcs and constructed a regional typology that pays more attention to differences in modernization. Within the Western European region, we distinguished between the core countries of the region and the countries of Scandinavia. It seemed prudent to differentiate European countries off the continental mainland, including the United Kingdom and Ireland. We treated the countries of southern Europe as a fourth region, which was something Szűcs did not take into consideration. The fifth region is the classic area of Central Europe. And finally, the Eastern pole was represented by Russia and Turkey.

The Szűcs theory is supported by the data concerning the inclusivity of the national category, which clearly shows that moving from West to east in Europe, the logic of national exclusion grows in strength. National pride as an emotional foundation for spontaneous national identity formed relatively similarly in all the examined national societies and showed high level intensity everywhere. The East-West regional differences instead appeared in the character of cognitive constructions that confirmed and explained pride. Moving eastward the weight of modernization causes justifying and explaining pride gradually decreased. The exception to this trend was Turkey, and we deal with the reasons for its exceptional status in the appropriate chapter. Ethnocentrism, which is the defining emotion for national identification, is present to varying degrees in the national societies of the study and depends on their regional situation. Ethnocentrism feeds Eastern European national identities most, although it is considerably weaker in the core countries of Europe and in southern Europe.

Our data shows that nationalism has significant potential in all the countries of the study but moving eastward from the West this potential increases. Our data on xenophobia show that between 1995 and 2013 there was an average decrease.
Within this average, Western Europe decreased from a lower initial starting point, while xenophobia in Central and Eastern Europe is relatively high, despite decreases. Research conducted in Western Europe since 2013 show that this tendency has continued, despite the migration crisis of 2015, while in Eastern Europe it rose to unprecedented heights (Örkény 2019; Messing and Ságvári 2019).

In summary, the answer to our first research question holds that by making Szűcs's regional division more precise, the divergence between given regions rooted in modernity still holds, and that based on the affective point of view of national identity, convergence is undeniable. Wherever in Europe people live, spontaneous association with the nation is a self-evident feeling. Whether this leads to the development of an inclusive, bourgeois “civic nationalism” or an exclusive ethno-nationalist national identity depends on modernization paths. The regional division described by Szűcs is as such still valid today, given that it is apparent that civic nationalism is stronger in the West, and the ethno-nationalist interpretation is stronger in the east. This dual mechanism is well illustrated in Figure 2.23.

Our second research question is closely related to the set of problems brought up by the first. Based on our results we can state that the original form of the cultural nation versus civic nation dichotomy has lost its relevance. On the other hand, we feel that among the six regions there are two (Central Europe and Eastern Europe) in which the political nation has undoubtedly been established, but where the foundation of the political nation concept is derived from the cultural nation definition expressed in an exclusive manner. The cultural nation component legitimates the political nation, which as such becomes “liquid.” The focal point of the nation state is not the legally protected citizen, but instead belongs to the national community, which is much less legally tangible. A poor compromise between political and cultural approaches to the nation is well illustrated in Hungary’s new Basic Law of 2011, which replaced the regime change constitution. Similar tendencies are seen in Poland, Ukraine and Romania. In contrast, the other four regions have seen the political nation maintain its earlier solid contours, allowing for cultural nation interpretations to enter national discourse, competing with the challenges posed by efforts to have historical or new national-ethnic cultural identities prevail.

Our third research question concerned the integration of new minorities arising from migration. We identified four strategies, each of which is empirically possible: assimilation, integration, segregation and transnational migration. The prevalence
of these depends on the given national history, modernization patterns and the cultural characteristics of minorities. As such, the appearance of the four strategies across countries was very divergent. We saw that each of these strategies is possible, but in terms of the future, it is transnational migration that appears to be the most promising, given a capability of maintaining an original identity while connecting to an overarching identity. The risk of this strategy is that it will come into conflict with the ruling majority’s national identity. Transnationalism is the polar opposite of segregation, in which neither the majority nor the minority can come out on top. Assimilation is a possible solution, but it requires significant self-sacrifice on the part of immigrants. Integration is a working consensus of coexistence, which requires continuous maintenance and mindfulness on the part of both the majority and all minority groups.

The volume’s fourth and most important research question was the state of European identity in the various regions. It appears that psychological-cultural considerations were a low priority in the gradual construction of the European Union vis-a-vis the infrastructural construction of economic, political and legal unity. The founders may have thought, paraphrasing Marx, that “European existence” would create “European consciousness.” Based on our data, it is clear that this has not been the case or has only been carried out to a very limited degree. Regarding spontaneous identification, we found that its psychological attraction is lowest in all European countries, and European self-identification is particularly weak in the United Kingdom, Russia and Turkey. But in all member states we see that compared to local, regional and national identities, European identity is always weakest. The proportion of those skeptical of the EU in 2013, with the exception of the United Kingdom, did not exceed one-quarter of the population anywhere. Measured Euroscepticism was lowest among EU core member states. This attitude was most prevalent in the societies of the recently acceded Eastern European states, where they were just a hair shy of one-quarter of respondents. This is interesting because these countries have been receiving an unprecedented level of resources from the EU through structural cohesion and agricultural funds.

The proportion of those unquestioningly supporting EU membership was visibly highest in the core countries and in the countries of northern Europe and was remarkably low in the new member states. Splitting in two positive attitudes toward the EU we see that support for decision mechanisms that encompass all EU member states was highest in the United Kingdom and Ireland, which points
to a contradictory relationship in the UK. Viewing the EU as a representation of profit resources is most common in the countries of southern and eastern Europe (35 and 34 percent), in which we can recognize a realist perspective.

The situation of European identification is not actually bad, recognizing that throughout the European Union's development the conscious cultivation of European identity has not taken place and has not become a part of the political socialization of maturing generations. We can assume that one of the reasons for this is the lack of a constructed common European narrative and symbolic space. From the start of nation building in the case of given nation states, the cultural and political elite paid attention to national symbols, celebrations, cultural and historical narratives and the organization and construction of the semantic space organized around the name of the nation. These steps have not been taken in the case of European identity. From among the several examples at hand we focus on the case of Euro banknotes that look like play money. These banknotes do not take advantage of the potential for presenting persons, stories, narratives and symbolic elements of a united Europe. This was an opportunity that was used effectively when national banknotes appeared. In light of this it is surprising that support for membership is relatively significant in the societies of the member states.

Our sixth question was a methodological dilemma. The most important element of our methodological innovation was the handling of data on not a national, but on a regional level. The regional division theoretically had the goal of catching the Szűcs type of regional differences in the act. The core of our innovation was in further refining the Szűcs typology further, and as such we managed to break down the entire sample into statistically comparable groups with similar population numbers, in which the population levels also contributed to partially evening out inequalities.

The seventh question was how the appearance of new minorities arising from twentieth century migration, which hit Europe like an avalanche, changed intergroup conflict potential in the given countries, a potential that had existed previously. We also wanted to examine how the challenge of new migration mobilized right wing radicalism and populism in both the West and the East. The new Muslim minorities arriving from outside Europe introduced new elements into Europe's usual group-focused enmities' (GFE-s) patterns. The new intergroup experience was formed by the appearance of the unsecularized group following Muslim religious-cultural patterns, a group that had not been effected by secu-
larized European Judeo-Christian traditions. In the name of fear and anxiety this experience further transformed the illusory correlation in which the majority society locates a causal relationship between terrorism and Muslim identity.

Migration pressure did not appear in a uniform manner across Europe’s eastern and western halves. In the European Union’s western, northern and southern countries, beginning in the 2010s, migration pressure increased continuously. In the Union’s Eastern European countries, the number of immigrants was consistently low. Xenophobia against immigrants, fed by affective and cognitive phases of rejecting other groups, appeared in both Western and Eastern Europe. According to our data on Western Europe, rejection of and discrimination against new immigrants was limited by the democratic civil society’s tolerance of otherness. In a paradoxical manner, in the Eastern European countries, where new minorities based on immigration did not appear, levels of xenophobia reached unprecedentedly high levels and then continued to increase. In both west and east, right-wing radicalism and populism did not hesitate to take advantage of the expanded political opportunities connected to the existence of negative and fear-inducing attitudes towards new immigrant minorities. We discovered that the use of these opportunities affects only a minority in Western European countries (on average approximately 20 percent). In contrast, in the countries of Eastern Europe (particularly Hungary and the Czech Republic), from the point of view of increasing political influence, anti-immigrant rhetoric and moral panic raising offers unparalleled opportunities for political gain.