

# Identity Dynamics in the EU Integration Process: Case Study of Estonian and Polish Student Groups

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**ABSTRACT:** In this article we empirically examine similar attitudes towards the accession to the European Union of Estonian and Polish students. This tendency is possible to detect applying the Identity Structural Analyses (ISA) method, elaborated by Prof. P. Weinreich for research of the personal structure of identity but will be also applied to get an overall understanding about the attitudes of the enlargement of the European Union.

There have been determined these basic factors which are influencing Estonian and Polish students' attitudes in the current EU accession phase. One of the common features for Polish and Estonian students is identification with people who work for European community (negotiators) and negative attitudes towards persons with eurosceptical views. One of the most important factors of the integration success of the accession countries is the youth attitude towards the European engagement, their attitude towards the European values, cultural tradition and co-operation practices.

*Key words:* transformation, EU Enlargement process, European identity, identity dynamics, post-soviet identity, Estonia, Poland.

## **Introduction**

Most theorists as Therborn (1995), Offe (1996), Münch (1996), Stråth (2000), Kohli (2000), Ifversen (2002) have clearly expressed, that European integration does not necessarily contain a shared cultural homogeneity. It is first and foremost a formation of political institutions with their normative and political identity and formation of a common market.

But in European integration we are more and more following the formation of a common identity as "umbrella". As Richard Münch says: "Der Prozess der europäischen Integration ...verlangt jetzt in zunehmendem Masse die Einbeziehung der Bürger und den Wandel ihrer Identität hin zu Europa. Das heisst, sie müssen sich darauf einstellen, sich selbst nicht nur als Deutsche, Franzosen, Belgier usw. zu verstehen, sondern auch als Europäer. Sie müssen befähigt werden, weitreichendere und vielfältigere Loyalitätsansprüche miteinander in Einklang zu bringen. Ihre nationale Identität müssen sie mit der europäischen Identität koordinieren. Ohne diesen Identitätswandel droht das europäische Projekt an der mangelnden Kooperationsbereitschaft der Bürger zu scheitern. Wie vollzieht sich ein solcher Strukturwandel der Identität? Welche Faktoren fördern ihn? Welche Faktoren wirken dagegen?" (Münch, 1998).

The national level should be remaining as a focus for the cultural identity and for the ethnic community. This level of European identity has been under the investigation of quite a large spectrum of researchers in two collections by applicant countries from Central and Eastern Europe human researchers, published in 2001 in Berlin (Tamas, Becker 2001) and Prague (Drulak 2001). The accession efforts of the Central and Eastern Europe countries cannot be understood outside the framework of identities in European politics because "... the claim to European identity of the candidate countries presents one of the few good arguments (and maybe the only good argument) for their EU membership, for from an economic and security point of view they do not have much to offer - rather it is the other way around" (Drulak 2001: 14).

As a new feature in the public opinion of the accession countries, we can notice a feeling of anxiety derived from being a small nation in the European Union. Compared to the states with stable economic and political status, the profile of national identity in accession countries is often very sensitive with regard to all kind of integration into the European Union. This factor is obviously less significant for the larger states of Eastern Europe.

On the other hand, we can also notice some fears of present EU members about the future of EU institutions and structure. As a current burning issue, there has arisen the question of immigration. The total influence of hindering factors varies for different states.

Identity evolution in CEE countries' societies has been significantly influenced by the earlier closed political regime, by the discouraging factors from memories of mentioned countries national groups from the period of their inclusion to the influence zone of former Soviet Union. The whole societies of these countries are going through the identity change by transferring from the Soviet (top-down) type of personal identity and mentality to the emerging all-European identity. In this sense it is important to underline ideas that "for European identity a key question is whether identity is always an identity "against", i.e, whether it always serves to create a difference between members and non-members, and thus a boundary between who is included and who is excluded " (Kohli, 2002: 127).

The Baltic states bordering a politically and economically unstable Russia are particularly interested in close foreign and security policy ties with the rest of Europe, since quite a number of Moscow politicians have not yet accepted that Estonia (and Latvia and Lithuania) have left their sphere of influence. General opinion is that EU will primarily increase Estonia's soft security. The stability ensuing from the cooperation within the EU reduces the chance of a political or economic crisis in Russia being transferred to Estonia. But that is not the case in Poland (a largest candidate country). We expect that the main reason for this is the different size of the population of the country, which creates different identity dimensions. There are, of course, other factors, which could determine identity factors of candidate countries.

**The aim of the current article** - to outline the complex of the peculiar characteristics of identity change in society, which are occurring during the European Union Enlargement process in two countries - in Estonia and Poland.

Accession states should not obtain the membership in European Union only, they should become socially well-developed European countries. The question of much socio-political relevance in home affairs is also about whether candidate countries rapid movement towards European Union membership contributes to the cohesion within the society or is an obstacle to its achievement with various side effects on social and individual psychological level.

The individual psychological level also reflects all social tensions and conflicts that sometimes get anchored to the EU accession issues. This tendency is possible to detect when applying the Identity Structural Analyses (ISA) method, elaborated by Prof. P. Weinreich (see Weinreich, 1989) for research of the personal structure of identity will be applied to get an overall understanding about the different aspects of the enlargement of European Union.

According to the Applicant Countries Eurobarometer survey in the 13 candidate countries in Estonia there exists statistically verifiable sceptical attitude to EU enlargement and any identity, different from their own national identity: people of Estonia are quite sceptical to image and institutions of the European Union. Citizens of Estonia still feel under-informed about the EU institutions and enlargement process, as was one of the results of AC-Eurobarometer survey in October 2001. The low level of trust in political institutions, politicians and public authorities of European Union demonstrates how much the present mode of governance and representation is under criticism in Estonia. In Estonia as a smallest candidate country one can witness public debates about potential threat to the uniqueness of the ethnic identity.

In Poland one can discover this some economic reasons for the rise of Euro-scepticism and since summer 1999 a constant drop in popular support to potential "Yes" vote in the EU accession referendum by 15%. Originating on the Polish sociologists' publications about European Union

(Hausner and Marody, 2000) and Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001 study about commodities, we could presume that Polish society is a bit more fragmented than Estonian one. On average, a citizen of Poland possesses 5,6 and citizen of Estonia 6,0 of the 14 possible commodities.

Students were specially chosen in our study for several reasons. First, they are quite a homogenous group in society, reflecting to a large extent idealistic aspirations of societies. Second, the attitudes of students are not yet so much diversified by their personal experience, which inevitably changes their coherence already in a couple of years after leaving university. From the viewpoint of interdisciplinary research methodology, changes will be analysed in the self-image of different collective (elite groups, different age and employment groups) and individual actors.

## *Conceptual background*

The formation of common European identities as a general phenomenon will be one of the biggest challenges for the EU in the future, when its structure will include almost all of Europe. Will the enlargement of the EU be accompanied by a certain feeling of identity in all member states, and if so, what will it be like, and will it be equally valid across member states and for people (demos) in these states? As Victor Perez-Diaz say (2000: 959) "For the Europeans, Europe is not an external object of knowledge. As observers, "we" are located within the field of observation and are required to deal with Europe, and the EU, in a variety of theoretical and practical ways. And first, we start by knowing Europe indirectly, through what we "really know", which, for the majority of Europeans, is usually little more than our own country".

"For most Poles", as says Ireneusz Krzeminski (2001:67) "the problem of integrating in to Europe is not the question of joining or not. There is rather a question of how to do it, and what does this decision mean for me, as a person, or for my social category, or my professional group, or my region. Undoubtedly, a very practical perspective is dominant. ... In many cases, people from some social categories, for example the Polish peasants, misunderstand the consequences of joining the EU, and they react with stereotypical anxiety. It is possible to talk about new stereotypes describing the negative consequences of joining the European Union, in terms of fears about Polish identity, the continuation of national traditions and so on. But these constructions are nothing more than the rationalization of fears and anxiety, which are typical for special categories of Poles: older, less educated, living in under-developed parts of the country."

In the current article the main question - European Identity - is defined as sameness. Our research interest of group identity of students as a social construct is defined by shared sameness of the people belonging to the same group, their common narrative and in large scale matching attitudes and value estimations. The same applies to the ethnic (cultural) and national identity (nationality, citizenship) groups.

What are the problems that will hinder or become problematic for European common identity - are they facilitating or supporting? According to the statement of Åke Daun and Sören Jansson (Daun and Jansson, 1999) - Europe is a well-known concept but the meaning of the concept is far from well defined to its own inhabitants. They believe that modern processes of political and economical integration has made Europeans more aware of their neighbours - and eager to learn more about them.

Identity evolution in applicant countries has been significantly influenced by the earlier closed political regime. It is diverse, depending on democratic development. Or more specifically, by the hindering factors due to the memories of these countries' national groups from the period of their belonging to the influence zone of the former Soviet Union. The whole societies of these countries are going through rash identity changes by transferring from the Soviet (socialist) type of person's identity to the emerging open all-European mentality and common identity.

One of the hypotheses concerns existing large fluctuations of different opinion of students group in Estonia. For cultural and language reasons, this influence was even more devastating to Russians in Estonia. This could cause some frustration in adapting to European way of life.

One of the purposes of this study was to draw attention to the differences in European integration attitudes by students groups. Attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" in the Estonian or Poland EU accession have been used for determining of subgroups for additional statistical elaboration.

One of the hypotheses was, that EU-positive orientated students subgroup (the say "Yes" to Estonia/Poland accession to EU) have statistically higher idealistic identification as other subgroups (i.e. "against EU accession" or "not decided").

### ***Method of Measurement***

Personal identity is determined in the present article in a classical way as a totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future.

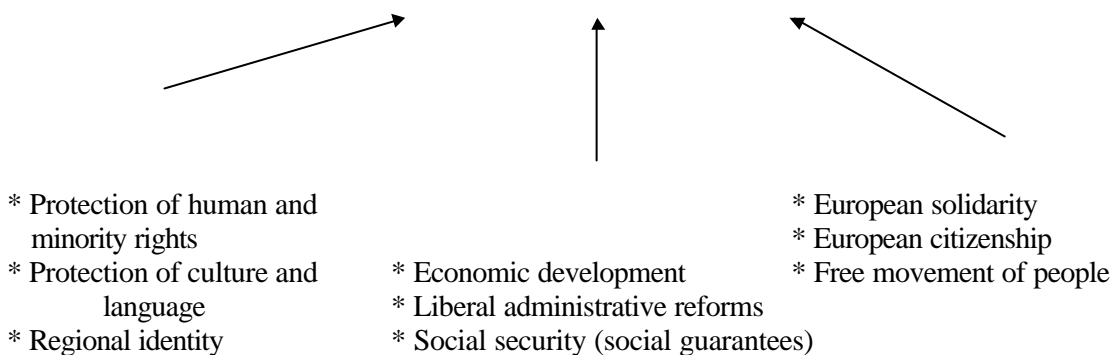
There exists Peter Weinreich Identity Structure Analysis (ISA) Test as meta-theoretical instruments for analysing personal and group identity structure (Weinreich, 1989). Last mentioned instrument has also been used in current work in elaboration of bipolar constructs in the context of research hypotheses and in adapting corresponding computer programme for the needs of current task to analyse the social cognition about European integration by students of both countries.

We share the same interest to research, why European self-image and European identity is reflected in the country's acceptance by different students groups. From the viewpoint of interdisciplinary research methodology, changes will be analysed in the self-image of different collective - students as elite groups, different age and different candidate countries - in Estonia and Poland.

Complete investigation of all possible attitudes and dispositions is technically impossible. We present the selection of the most available and important of them, which could turn out to be decisive in the context of the European Union. The following scheme is most substantially related to a common European identity.

#### **Chart 1.**

#### **EUROPEAN VALUES IN IDENTITY STRUCTURE ANALYSIS TEST**



Questionnaire of the study consisted of 13 bipolar constructs, covering 13 independent dimensions of EU attitudes (see Table I). Constructs reflected for example personal attitudes to the level of economic liberalism in the EU, free movement of people in the EU, role of the EU legislation in comparison with the national legislation.

As an example - one concrete bipolar construct of ISA instrument: Do you think that: EU is under way to a bureaucratic organisation, unable to reform oneself....or EU remains ability to develop and reform.

**Table 1. Questionnaire of the study**

1L EU laws are liberal enough in regulating market economy	1R EU laws are too tough for liberal economy
2L New member states cause extensive changes in the EU policies (especially in agriculture)	2R New member states adapt into existing system, the EU policies do not change very much as consequence
3L EU is under way to a bureaucratic organisation, unable to reform oneself	3R EU remains ability to develop and reform
4L Regional co-operation (Visegrad, Nordic, Baltic) is more important for successful accession to EU	4R Bilateral negotiations with Brussels is more essential for successful accession
5L EU is capable to guarantee peace, stable development and security	5R EU is not able to cope with conflicts and guarantee security in every member state
6L Minorities rights protection is guaranteed in the EU	6R Minorities rights protection in EU is not well enough guaranteed
7L Common law of EU is an essential guarantee for democracy in the member states	7R EU has to intervene permanently into domestic politics of its member states as existing legislation is not sufficient for guaranteeing stability
8L Free movement of employees between the member states gives better job opportunities for people	8R Common labour market causes many problems due to the migrants adaptation
9L In the EU human rights protection is guaranteed well enough	9R Human rights protection in the EU has turned into empty cliché
10L EU-accession endangers the development of Polish (Estonian) language and culture	10R EU membership promotes and encourages the development of Polish (Estonian) language and culture)
11L Primary are the liberties and welfare of EU citizens	11R Primary are the aims of the EU as supranational body
12L EU is a supranational formation that in a certain degree restricts decision-making and independence of the states themselves	12REU is a voluntary basis staying union, originating on common decision-making and rights delegated to the union
13L Partial legislation of drugs will contribute to the containment of illegal drugs use	13R Partial legislation of drugs will contribute to the spread of drugs use

Students-respondents were given the possibility to put themselves in the place (called entities by Weinreich) of the following groups or persons when trying to express his/her attitude about a particular bipolar construct: Me as I am now (current self 1), State's business circles (state is used in meaning of Estonia or Poland depending on respondents' origin), person whom I honour and admire (admired person), ethnic minorities in the state, Me in 1997 (past self), State's cultural elite, Euro-optimists in the state, Me as I would like to be (ideal self), State's Government, Me when representing the state at EU negotiations in Brussels (current self 2), Euro-sceptics in the state and Person whom I don't like at all (disliked person).

To obtain additional explanatory information about the attitudes inside the student groups, the variables like: a) country, ethnicity, gender and age, b) attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" about the state's EU accession have been used for determining of subgroups for additional statistical elaboration. Routine (personal and group) identity analysis indexes like "idealistic identification", "empathetic identification", "ego-involvement" and "contra-identifications" have been used.

## ***Participants***

For applying Peter Weinreich ISA instrument, similar groups of students have been interviewed. There exist several reasons, why students were specially chosen in our study.

First, they are quite homogenous group in society, reflecting in a large extent idealistic aspirations of societies. Students' attitudes are not yet so much diversified by their personal experience, which also inevitably diversifies their coherence already in a couple of years after leaving universities.

Second, the students is a social group, which has not much been in focus of European studies in Estonia and Poland. Although the author together with his research team analysed Estonian students' EU-attitudes with the method of focus group interviews in 1997 and the results were published in the monograph "Estonia on the Threshold of European Union". Mentioned study of 1997 revealed existing social non-adjustment of students to the speed of EU enlargement and their difficulties in absorbing the information about European Union (Kirch, Tohv, Vaarja, 1998).

In 2000 political science undergraduate students of Warsaw University (n=66) were chosen in Poland. In Estonia there were three groups investigated. From Tallinn Pedagogical University - undergraduate and postgraduate students of sociology (n=25), from Estonian Business School - students of public administration (n=35) and from Narva Russian-speaking students from 2 private universities (n=31) were questioned. Investigated student contingents had a slight variation in age. Year 1980 dominated as a birth year for the Estonian and Polish students.

## ***Results obtained: the study on individual psychological level***

What is important for the formation of EU consciousness by students in Estonia and Poland? To find the answers to questions: which groups represent an ideal in different student groups and who do Estonians, Russians and Polish students contra-identify themselves with?

a) **To find the positive reference groups among the students, we used the index "idealistic identification"** with a parameter range of 0 to 1 (see Table 2). The highest ideal rating as expected for all students groups was that indicated by the Estonians, Russians and Polish for the "Person whom I honour and admire". In absolute terms the second highest score by Estonian and Polish students was position "Me when representing the state at EU negotiations in Brussels" (by Peter Weinreich as current self 2 position), but by Russian students from Narva this position was only on 4 in score.

If we compare these two entities - "admired person" and "current self 2" - to the attitude with the rest of significant others, this kind of "personal orientation" tendency is evident. For Estonian students these positions, which are oriented to new reforms within the EU, and to the positive aspects related to the expansion to the East are the highest ideal for labour and career and life expectations (may be to short future) after university.

This clear career orientation represents Polish students group too, difference between Poles and Estonians as we see on Table 2 is nearly 0,1.

**Table 2. Idealistic Identification and Ego-Involvement among Estonian, Russian and Polish students and by groups of attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" in the EU accession**

Entity	Estonian (Tallinn) Students		Russian Students (Narva)		Polish (Warsaw) students	
	Idealistic identification	Ego-Involvement	Idealistic identification	Ego-Involvement	Idealistic identification	Ego-Involvement
admired person	0,71	3,44	0,71	3,57	0,72	3,30
yes EU integr.	0,69	3,40	0,71	3,73	0,72	3,33
not decided	0,74	3,40	0,75	3,37	0,68	2,84
against EU	0,70	3,55	0,65	3,45	0,64	4,12
Euro-optimists	0,63	4,29	0,60	4,48	0,64	4,59
yes EU integr.	0,66	4,38	0,66	4,36	0,66	4,62
not decided	0,69	4,33	0,53	4,43	0,60	4,80
against EU	0,51	4,11	0,56	4,80	0,49	3,51
Est./Pol.Government	0,68	3,42	0,54	3,76	0,63	3,60
yes EU integr.	0,73	3,36	0,62	3,86	0,63	3,59
not decided	0,69	3,52	0,55	4,12	0,66	3,62
against EU	0,60	3,40	0,38	3,15	0,56	3,68
Me when represent state at negot in Bru	0,71	3,48	0,59	3,19	0,70	3,48
yes EU integr.	0,72	3,42	0,65	3,51	0,69	3,55
not decided	0,76	3,36	0,59	2,85	0,73	2,98
against EU	0,65	3,70	0,46	2,88	0,69	3,54
Estonian (Polish) cultural elite	0,63	3,43	0,54	3,14	0,66	2,91
yes EU integr.	0,61	3,35	0,55	3,44	0,68	2,96
not decided	0,65	3,41	0,60	3,13	0,52	2,35
against EU	0,64	3,59	0,44	2,52	0,64	3,19
Estonian (Polish) Business circles	0,68	3,41	0,60	3,54	0,60	3,17
yes EU integr.	0,69	3,42	0,65	3,74	0,62	3,29
not decided	0,67	3,41	0,58	3,62	0,44	2,52
against EU	0,68	3,40	0,54	3,02	0,67	2,84

May be this is one of most Polish stereotypes - that Poles are good workers, and students will good bureaucrats in Brussel? As Zofia Sokolewicz (Sokolewicz, 1999:98) mentioned, "to the typical European, however, Poles attribute an individualist orientation, claiming that European direct their own development with care, reaching for success and self-realization. A European is hardworking, respects his work, is economical and honest. He is also, to a greater extent than a Poles, educated, well mannered, well-wishing, and most of all, sure of himself. Pole lack this self-confidence".

Estonians and Poles both have rather high index values (0.60-0.68) to the Government, cultural elite and business circles. The Estonian Russians' attitude towards Estonian Government and cultural elite (but not business circles) is a bit more hesitant.

To measure the magnitude of ego-involvement with others the "ego-involvement" index was used with a parameter range of 0 to 5. This index offers the possibility to estimate the relative impact of others in the development of one's own identity. It is difficult not to see that in Estonia and Poland students turn out to be more inclined to Euro-optimism and this result have relative high positive impact to attitudes to Government and cultural elite/business circles.

To sum up - the high absolute value of Ego-Involvement with Euro-optimists exemplifies the perception of high standards of political and cultural environment of European Union. We are justified to say that in Estonian and Polish student societies almost similar positive attitudes to the accession to the European Union prevail.

**b) who do Estonians, Russians and Polish students contra-identify themselves with (the negative reference groups among students groups) ?** As expected the highest contra-identification for a respondent should be disliked person, but in reality this did not occur so. If we look at the contra-identification indexes (Table 3) we can see that most students are contra-identifying themselves with the entity called "Euro-sceptics" (Poles 0.56, Estonians 0.49 and Russians 0.42). "Euro-sceptics" are even stronger contra-identified than a "disliked person".

Contra-identification among students with "euro-optimists" and ethnic minorities was not noticeable, but the index here crosses the critical point (0.45) by students subgroup the say "No" to Estonia/Poland accession to EU.

We can attribute some tendencies, which were found in the study, to the phenomenon of opening up the Polish and Estonian societies. The high negative attitude to the Euro-sceptics in Estonia and Poland and moderate negative attitudes by Estonians to Russian and other ethnic minorities in Estonia in some way reminds the established patterns of dissent in these societies in general. The establishing of calmer attitudes in these questions, wider spreading of cultural patterns of tolerance in these societies is a question of time. This tendency is possible to detect when applying ISA instrument.

One of the purposes of this study was to draw attention to the differences in European integration attitudes by students groups. Attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" in the Estonian or Poland EU accession have been used for determining of subgroups for additional statistical elaboration.

My hypothesis, that Euro-positive orientated students subgroup (the say "Yes" to Estonia/Poland accession to EU) have statistically higher idealistic identification as other students subgroups (i.e. "against EU accession" or "not decided") was buttressed by the fact that Estonians and Polish students have very high active position towards negotiations in Brussels. "Not decided" subgroup of Estonians and Poles is so active as "yes" subgroup.

**Table 3. Contra-Identification and Ego-Involvement among Estonian, Russian and Polish Students and by groups of attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" in the EU accession**

Entity	Estonian (Tallinn) Students		Russian (Narva) Students		Polish (Warsaw) students	
	contra identification	Ego-Involvement	contra identification	Ego-Involvement	contra identification	Ego-Involvement
Disliked person	0,40	3,07	0,35	2,41	0,38	3,30
yes EU integr.	0,34	2,68	0,38	2,36	0,37	3,52
not decided	0,37	3,36	0,35	2,44	0,19	3,07
against EU	0,52	3,30	0,31	2,57	0,38	4,01



Euro-sceptists	0,49	4,22	0,42	3,28	0,56	4,35
yes EU integr.	0,53	4,22	0,43	3,01	0,57	4,35
not decided	0,54	4,03	0,35	3,24	0,53	4,47
against EU	0,37	4,43	0,49	3,93	0,44	4,01
Euro-optimists	0,31	4,36	0,32	4,48	0,29	4,59
yes EU integr.	0,28	4,38	0,25	4,36	0,28	4,62
not decided	0,25	4,33	0,35	4,43	0,33	4,80
against EU	0,45	4,11	0,42	4,80	0,46	3,51
Ethnic minorit.	0,34	3,27	0,30	2,97	0,23	2,32
yes EU integr.	0,33	3,44	0,28	3,38	0,23	2,36
not decided	0,24	3,18	0,28	2,50	0,20	1,86
against EU	0,45	3,10	0,38	2,65	0,33	2,76

It is interesting and has to be mentioned, that on an absolute scale among Estonian EU-positive orientated students ("Yes" subgroup) the most idealistic attitude towards the Estonian Government had the public administration students from Estonian Business School. Students professional groups idealistic identification once again confirms the difference between two Estonian student groups. The index value is 0.74 with Government for EBS and significantly less (0.60) in the case of TPU students. As expected, EBS expresses solidarity with the views of Estonian business circles (0.72).

One can see the EBS students' tolerance towards ethnic minorities in Estonia (and generally) as 0.62 is the highest index value of all groups of idealistic identification with minorities. One of the main findings of the survey was that all groups who had negative feeling against government were at the same time positive towards Euro-sceptics or in opposite position as whole. When putting it in short the government is carrying always pro-EU connotation for the respondents as well in Estonia as in Poland. Also, Estonians and Polish students did show a high level of contra-identification with euro-sceptics and on the Ego-Involvement index we see this impact too.

### ***Discussion: strength of attitude to the Estonia or Poland accession to EU***

The largest differences are seen even without applying the statistical apparatus, especially in the attitude to the country's (Estonia or Poland) accession to European Union. Let us look first Estonian Russians. The support of Estonian Russian male students of to EU accession was 66% and average of Russians was 48% (the support of Russian female students was only one third).

The average support of Estonians to the EU accession was 42% - slightly below Russians, and this tendency is also confirmed by other studies. The average support of Poles to the EU accession was 83% and it is clearly higher than all correspondent Estonian numbers.

The origin of Polish students represents the groups in society, which traditionally hold higher opinion in accession to the European Union. According to Cracow sociologists' study students whose support to the European Union is high represent mostly elitist families (Gorniak, 2000). At the same time in Estonia the support has been to a certain degree less than in other CEE accession countries over several years.

To take one step further, it is difficult not to see that in Estonia and in Poland, younger people turn to be more idealistic and more inclined to the Euro-optimism. The exception was Estonian Russian female students in city of Narva, where one can notice actually a reverse correlation - Russians male students supported more accession of Estonia to the EU.

Using a scale of empathetic identification with a parameter range of 0 to 1 we were able to establish levels of sympathy among students groups towards given category of other across two different points in time ("current self 1 - me as I am now" and "past self 1 - me in 1997"). As we see (Table 4) Estonians and Poles both have high empathy to cultural elite and business circles. Estonian Russians attitude to the cultural elite is more hesitant (difference with Estonians is nearly

0.16). High absolute value of this index (0.60-0.75) exemplifies the perception of high standards of cultural environment, existence dialogue between the old and new generations of elite.

**Table 4. Empathetic Identification among Estonian, Russian and Polish Students and by groups of attitudes "yes", "no" and "not yet decided" in the EU accession**

Entity	Estonian (Tallinn) Students		Russian (Narva) Students		Polish (Warsaw) students	
	Empathetic identificat-n currentself 1	Empathetic identific. past self 1 me in 1997	Empathetic identificat-n currentself 1	Empath identific past self 1 me in 1997	Empath identific. curr. self 1	Empathetic identific. past self 1
Admired person	0,78	0,69	0,79	0,64	0,76	0,64
yes EU integr.	0,78	0,69	0,84	0,61	0,76	0,66
not decided	0,81	0,75	0,82	0,66	0,79	0,54
against EU	0,73	0,62	0,66	0,68	0,76	0,66
Euro-optimists	0,56	0,63	0,47	0,55	0,60	0,67
yes EU integr.	0,58	0,64	0,54	0,51	0,63	0,70
not decided	0,62	0,64	0,50	0,60	0,52	0,57
against EU	0,46	0,60	0,27	0,54	0,29	0,34
Est.(Pol) Gov	0,60	0,66	0,46	0,56	0,62	0,65
yes EU integr.	0,60	0,66	0,56	0,57	0,63	0,67
not decided	0,65	0,68	0,47	0,59	0,60	0,57
against EU	0,54	0,63	0,21	0,44	0,51	0,47
Me when repres at negot in Brus	0,66	0,65	0,58	0,61	0,72	0,66
yes EU integr.	0,62	0,63	0,65	0,65	0,70	0,66
not decided	0,71	0,69	0,56	0,53	0,78	0,70
against EU	0,66	0,61	0,44	0,65	0,76	0,56
Eston(Polish) cultural elite	0,67	0,64	0,49	0,46	0,66	0,63
yes EU integr.	0,66	0,60	0,55	0,46	0,68	0,66
not decided	0,66	0,69	0,58	0,49	0,54	0,41
against EU	0,68	0,64	0,23	0,42	0,71	0,56
Estonian (Pol.)business circles	0,78	0,66	0,61	0,59	0,64	0,64
yes EU integr.	0,81	0,63	0,69	0,61	0,67	0,67
not decided	0,76	0,71	0,61	0,59	0,45	0,43
against EU	0,76	0,64	0,42	0,52	0,59	0,50

At the same time the group's empathy of Estonians and Poles with cultural elites has increased during the same period (1997-2000) when comparing past self and current self from 0.64 to 0.67 (by Estonians students) and from 0,63 to 0,66 (by Poles). This is showing a clear tendency that these three groups have increased positive attitudes towards their elites.

Estonians' group sympathy with economic circles of Estonia has raised significantly, but Polish and Russian student indicators didn't not change. Attitudes of Narva Russian students are more sceptical. Reason for this scepticism could base on the fact that sc liberal model of economic development (declared by several Estonia's governments main economic strategy) is obviously less appreciated by Russian young people. As Marje Pavelson (Pavelson, 2002) argues, the socio-economic status of Russians and other non-Estonians in Estonia is largely characterised by their socialist-era employment structure and conscious promotion of the segregation process through the decades-long migration in Narva and other Estonian cities.

Empathetic identification of Russian female students with imagined Estonian Government's opinion has dropped from 0.53 (based on past self) to 0.41 (based on current self). This shows that during last 3 three years (1997-2000) these students' empathy with government viewpoints has decreased from moderate level to low level.

At the same time the group's empathy with Euro-sceptics has grown significantly during the same period when comparing past self and current self from 0.32 to 0.55. This is showing a clear tendency that this group has become disappointed in the Government policies, especially concerning the EU issues.

It should be mentioned that the index is showing reflection of their own (young women of Narva) situation (not over all Estonia). This group does not see any new opportunities to open up for themselves despite country's efforts and success in accession process towards the EU. The reason for strengthening sceptical views can be at last partly understood as a form of protest by high unemployment of this group in the area or another type of identity, based on 50 years of top-down influence of hegemonic ideology is somewhat putting breaks to a normal bottom-up democratic collective identity dynamics common in Europe.

The diminishing empathy of Estonian male respondents with the government can be seen also when comparing past and present the same way from 0.69 to 0.65 (rather high value of the index), but this change is not significant. Estonian males were the most empathetic group with government when comparing all gender groups of the three ethnic groups represented in the survey. But students in general, and Estonia's Russian students especially, have rather critical attitude to their governments.

## ***Conclusion***

Compared to the states with stable economic and political status, the profile of national identity in accession countries is often very sensitive in regard to all kind of integration into the European Union. In this respect, study of the students is important because of their crucial influence in the accession process (for example in forming of positive public opinion). This aspect is very important in final Enlargement preparations. What are the problems that will hinder or become problematic for European identity as "umbrella"?

**First.** Compared to the states with stable economic and political status, the profile of national identity in accession countries is often very sensitive with regard to all kind of integration into the European Union. As a new feature in our study we can notice a feeling of anxiety of Estonians derived from being a small nation in the European Union. This factor is obviously less significant for Poland as larger state of Eastern Europe. Decision to join with EU contains also some unpredictability on state level and unforeseen circumstances on personal level. These two aspects are more important for Estonians. The origin of Polish students represents the groups in society, which traditionally hold higher opinion in accession to the European Union. According to Cracow sociologists' study students whose support to the European Union is high represent mostly elitist families (Gorniak, 2000). At the same time in Estonia the support has been to a certain degree less than in other CEE accession countries over several years.

**Second.** One of the most important factors in the success of the accession countries is the attitude of the young to the European integration, their potential engagement in the transforming of the society and their attitude to the European values, legal tradition and co-operation practices. To take one step further, it is difficult not to see that in Estonia and in Poland, younger people turn to be more idealistic and more inclined to the Euro-optimism. Basically in Estonian and Polish students' societies there are spread almost similar attitudes to the accession to the European Union. The only exception was Estonian Russian female students in city of Narva, where one can notice actually a reverse correlation.

One of the main findings of the survey was that all groups who had negative feeling against government were at the same time positive towards Euro-sceptics or in opposite position as whole. When putting it in short the government is carrying always pro-EU connotation for the respondents as well in Estonia as in Poland. Also, Estonian and Polish students did show a high level of contra-identification with euro-sceptics.

But we can also highlight other general tendencies. In European integration we are more and more following the formation of a common identity. It can be argued generally that the pace of forming a common identity by young generation is faster in regions that have a similar cultural environment. Although, young generation is less sceptical towards the integration with EU as they are better informed and more optimistic in their attitudes in general.

We need more comparative studies of identity change for better understanding of integration process in different accession countries.

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