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INTL 550 Final Project

The 'Other' and the 'Self'?: European identity as an inclusive collective identity

Introduction

The period following the Schengen Agreement has witnessed considerable steps towards facilitating intra-EU mobility, European citizenship with the Maastricht Treaty being the most important one. Although the number of EU migrants has increased at a slower pace relative to the non-EU migrants, it is intriguing in terms of its theoretical implications for identity-building, intergroup dynamics, and post-national identity debates. The intra-EU mobility has arguably provoked a "reactive nationalism" in the Member States; some scholars debate that the EU introduced "post-national citizenship without post-national identity" (Tonkiss, 2013, p.37). Indeed, regardless of the nature of European identity, the level of European identification is still low among European citizens.

The social psychology literature predicts that collective identities bring about a propensity to view 'the Other' in negative terms and 'the self' in positive terms (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This argument is supported by previous research on strong national identity and anti-immigrant sentiments. However, in the context of the EU identity building process, it is less explored whether European identity as a collective identity is perceived as exclusive or inclusive by its members or if it fosters an ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility simultaneously.

In this paper, I question whether European identification brings inclusive and post-national conceptions of identity. Contrary to the expectations of the social psychology literature, I hypothesize that European identity does not only bring about ingroup favoritism but also more favorable attitudes towards outgroups. I take the feelings towards EU and non-EU migration as indicators of ingroup and outgroup sentiments. The empirical evidence is based on a quantitative analysis of Eurobarometer 91.5 (2019). Using logistic regression, I test the relationship between European identification with the feelings toward EU and non-EU migrants among respondents from 27 Member States (plus the United Kingdom). The findings indicate that although intra-EU migration is more favored than non-EU migration, people identifying themselves with European identity hold positive feelings towards non-EU

migrants as well. The results support the main argument in this paper that the European identity is perceived more in post-national and inclusive terms rather than exclusive terms as Social Identity Theory predicts.

Theoretical Considerations and Hypotheses

Applying the dictionary definition of identity to Europe, Rumelili (2016) defines European identity as "the sameness that makes Europe itself and the conditions that distinguish it from others (p.2)." When the vertical dimension of collective identity is taken into consideration, scholars refer to the identification with the collective identity category, on the other hand, the horizontal dimension points out to the co-identification with other individual members of the same category (Rumelili, 2016). Hence, by definition, European identity, like all other collective identities, brings about a boundary between the ingroup and the outgroup. Consequently, the exclusion of Others can be a strategy to create and sustain these boundaries.

Furthermore, according to the Social Identity Theory, social groups compare the ingroup with outgroups by looking at them mainly in negative aspects in order to strengthen their self-esteem and maintain their own positive image. Therefore, at first glance, based on the social psychology literature and the conceptualizations of European identity, it can be said that the extent to which European citizens identify with Europe has a negative relationship with their attitude towards people outside Europe while being positively correlated with their attitude towards other Europeans. This leads me to hypothesize the following:

> *Hypothesis 1: European identification is associated with positive feelings toward intra-EU migrants.*

Yet, what further complicates the attempts to draw such conclusions is the distinction between exclusive vs. inclusive conceptions of identity or between modern vs. postmodern modes of differentiation. Analyzing the interactions between the EU and Morocco, Turkey, and Central Eastern European countries, Rumelili concludes that the EU's policies do not neatly fall into either category as it simultaneously forges "partly-exclusive" and "partly-inclusive" collective identities (p.200). If this is the case at the EU level, it remains unclear whether individuals identifying themselves with Europe or the EU hold exclusive or inclusive conceptions of European identity or a combination of both. Each possibility would lead to different intergroup dynamics and different salience levels of self/Other boundary. If individuals identifying themselves explicitly with European identity conceive it

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predominantly in terms of inclusive aspects, their views about the non-Europeans should be more positive. Hence, I approach with caution to the Social Identity Theory when interpreting the implications of European identity regarding outgroup hostility. To test whether European identity is perceived mostly as an inclusive identity, I propose the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2:** *European identification is associated with positive feelings toward non-EU migrants.*

> **Hypothesis 3:** *There is no significant difference between the feelings towards EU- and non-EU migrants among people who identify with European identity.*

Data and Methodology

The data used for this study is taken from the Eurobarometer 91.5 STATA version which was imported to Python by using *pd.read_stata*.

a. Dependent Variables

To operationalize the extent to which European citizens have positive feelings toward immigrants from other Member States (*eu_migrants*) and non-EU states (*noneu_migrants*), I use the following questions from Standard Eurobarometer and re-coded the values as 0 (Negative) and 1 (Positive) for logistic regression:

> **QB3.1:** "Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from other EU Member States."
>
> **QB3.2:** "Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from outside the EU.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 1 | Very positive |
> | 2 | Fairly positive |
> | 3 | Fairly negative |
> | 4 | Very negative |
> | 5 | DK" |

b. Independent Variables

European Identity

To operationalize the respondent's level of European identification (*european_identity*), I use the following question:

QD3: "Do you see yourself as...?

    1   (NATIONALITY) only

    2   (NATIONALITY) and European

    3   European and (NATIONALITY)

    4   European only

    5   None (SPONTANEOUS)

    6   Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)

    7   DK"

Control Variables and Demographics

Based on the previous findings and competing explanations in the literature, I control for respondent's level of life satisfaction (*life_satisfaction*), perception of the national economy (*national_econ*), satisfaction with their personal job situation (*job_situation*), and level of attachment to country (*attachment_country*). As all of the answers are ordered, there was no need for one-hot encoding. However, they were ordered as positive responses were ranked to coincide with lower numerical values (such as very satisfied as 1). I chose to re-code them so that the regression results are easier to interpret.

       I also included the following demographics: social class (self-assessment), gender, age and left-right ideology placement. I used five categories of left-right placement (*rightwing*, 1 = left... 3 = centre… 5 = right), and finally re-coded gender so as males equal the numerical value 1 (*gender)*. Finally, dropping the missing data ("don't know, refusal, none" etc.), the sample size equaled 16,304 for the quantitative analyses.

c. Models

I used logistic regression from *statsmodels.api* for the Hypotheses 1 and 2. The dependent variables for these hypotheses are categorical (negative or positive). Ideally, it would require an ordinal logistic regression. There is no package for ordinal regression in Python other than *mord* (*see* https://pythonhosted.org/mord/). The *mord* package does not provide a regression output and compute statistical information other than coefficients and MSE. Hence, I chose to apply binary logistic regression for the sake of simplicity in acquiring a regression output.

       For Hypothesis 3, I used the Wilcoxon-Signed Rank test which is a nonparametric statistical hypothesis test since the variables that are compared are ordinal. Wilcoxon test can be used instead of paired t-test "for ordered categorical data where a numerical scale is

inappropriate but where it is possible to rank the observations" (Shier, 2004, p.1). The null hypothesis for the Wilcoxon test is that the median difference is equal to zero.

Findings

Hypothesis 1 and 2

Looking at the model quality for the first hypotheses 1 and 2 (Tables 1 and 2), LLR p-value are smaller than the conventional threshold 0.05.[1] Although logistic regressions do not have an R-squared to evaluate the goodness of fit as linear regressions do, pseudo R-squareds help comparing two or more models with each other. The closer the pseudo R-squared to 1, the better. Models of Hypotheses 1 and 2 have low pseudo R-squareds of around 0.06, although there are no alternative models in this project to compare each of them with.

Table 1: Logistic Regression Output (DV: Feelings towards intra-EU migrants) and Odds Ratio

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                        Logit Regression Results
==============================================================================
Dep. Variable:          eu_migrants   No. Observations:               16304
Model:                        Logit   Df Residuals:                   16295
Method:                         MLE   Df Model:                           8
Date:            Tue, 08 Jun 2021     Pseudo R-squ.:                0.06123
Time:                    23:15:53     Log-Likelihood:               -8822.7
converged:                   True     LL-Null:                      -9398.1
Covariance Type:         nonrobust    LLR p-value:                4.079e-243
==============================================================================
                       coef    std err          z      P>|z|      [0.025      0.975]
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
european_identity    0.4992      0.029     17.004      0.000       0.442       0.557
socialclass         -0.0016      0.020     -0.081      0.935      -0.041       0.038
life_satisfaction    0.0162      0.029      0.552      0.581      -0.041       0.074
national_econ        0.3265      0.026     12.580      0.000       0.276       0.377
job_situation        0.1280      0.027      4.695      0.000       0.075       0.181
attachment_country   0.0726      0.024      3.011      0.003       0.025       0.120
rightwing           -0.2057      0.016    -12.683      0.000      -0.237      -0.174
age                 -0.0138      0.001    -12.520      0.000      -0.016      -0.012
gender              -0.0454      0.037     -1.234      0.217      -0.118       0.027
==============================================================================


                              5%        95%   Odds Ratio
       european_identity   1.555237  1.744903    1.647342
       socialclass         0.959637  1.038648    0.998361
       life_satisfaction   0.959506  1.076534    1.016337
       national_econ       1.317353  1.458427    1.386096
       job_situation       1.077413  1.198925    1.136546
       attachment_country  1.025651  1.127281    1.075266
       rightwing           0.788645  0.840400    0.814112
       age                 0.984206  0.988457    0.986329
       gender              0.889140  1.027084    0.955626
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[1] LLR p-values were converted to scientific notation when the regression outputs were saved as png, in Spyder terminal I was able to see them as 0.000

The logistic regression results for Hypothesis 1 (Table 1) supports that higher levels of European identification are associated with more positive feelings toward intra-EU migrants. The coefficient for European identification is 0.4992 and statistically significant with the confidence interval not including zero. Looking at the odds ratio, European identification is again found statistically significant and positive with the %95 confidence interval not including 1. In addition to European identification, other positive statistically significant variables are one's evaluation of the national economy, job situation, attachment to their country. Finally, older ages and right-wing ideology are associated with more negative feelings towards intra-EU migrants.

The results for Hypothesis 2 (Table 2 below) suggest that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between European identification and feelings towards non-EU migrants. The coefficient for european_identity is 0.3751 and its odds ratio is 1.455 and again statistically significant, meaning that as the level of European identification increases the chances that a person holds positive feelings towards non-EU migrants increase. Thus, the second hypothesis is supported. Other positive and statistically significant coefficients belong to life satisfaction and the situation of the national economy. Negatively associated variables are attachment to one's country, leaning towards right-wing ideology, being male and having older ages.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Output (DV: Feelings towards non-EU migrants) and Odds Ratio

```
                         Logit Regression Results
==============================================================================
Dep. Variable:         noneu_migrants   No. Observations:              16304
Model:                          Logit   Df Residuals:                  16295
Method:                           MLE   Df Model:                          8
Date:                Tue, 08 Jun 2021   Pseudo R-squ.:               0.06333
Time:                        23:18:46   Log-Likelihood:               -10520.
converged:                       True   LL-Null:                      -11231.
Covariance Type:            nonrobust   LLR p-value:               7.704e-302
==============================================================================
                      coef    std err          z      P>|z|      [0.025      0.975]
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
european_identity    0.3751      0.025     14.938      0.000       0.326       0.424
socialclass          0.0202      0.018      1.118      0.264      -0.015       0.056
life_satisfaction    0.1583      0.027      5.924      0.000       0.106       0.211
national_econ        0.2896      0.023     12.396      0.000       0.244       0.335
job_situation        0.0426      0.025      1.714      0.087      -0.006       0.091
attachment_country  -0.1778      0.022     -8.167      0.000      -0.221      -0.135
rightwing           -0.3486      0.015    -23.367      0.000      -0.378      -0.319
age                 -0.0119      0.001    -12.251      0.000      -0.014      -0.010
gender              -0.1123      0.033     -3.423      0.001      -0.177      -0.048
==============================================================================
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                          5%        95%  Odds Ratio
european_identity     1.385204   1.528471    1.455076
socialclass           0.984896   1.057195    1.020405
life_satisfaction     1.111735   1.234511    1.171516
national_econ         1.276132   1.398527    1.335928
job_situation         0.993902   1.095707    1.043564
attachment_country    0.802110   0.873578    0.837082
rightwing             0.685349   0.726621    0.705683
age                   0.986247   0.990022    0.988132
gender                0.838083   0.953122    0.893754
```

Hypothesis 3

For the third hypothesis (*there is no significant difference between the feelings towards EU- and non-EU migrants among people who identify with European identity),* I dropped all data where the respondent did not identify themselves as European (Nationality only answers). For the Wilcoxon test, I compared *eu_migrants* and *noneu_migrants* variables.

The result of Wilcoxon test is as follows: **w: 681577.0 p: 0.00.** The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between median distributions of the feelings towards intra-EU and non-EU migrants of those who identify themselves as European. As p-value is lower than 0.05, I reject the null. Hence, Hypothesis 3 does not find support from the Wilcoxon test. This can be interpreted as, although European identification promotes more positive feelings towards outgroup members (*H2*), ingroup members are still viewed in more positive terms.

Conclusion

I have tried to shed light on the question of whether people with European identity conceive it in inclusive and post-national terms. To test this idea, I used EU and non-EU migration as proxies for ingroup and outgroup conceptions. Although it is quite intuitive for people with European identity to have positive feelings towards other members of their ingroup, it is not straightforward whether they harbour negative feelings towards outsiders. Using logistic regression, this paper found support to the argument that European identification is perceived in inclusive and post-national terms as it has a positive effect on the feelings towards both outgroups and ingroups. However, one caveat to this finding is that despite this inclusiveness towards outgroups, non-European migrants are still viewed less favorably compared to European migrants: while European identity is more likely to elicit more positive feelings towards Europeans than non-Europeans, this does not mean that non-Europeans are viewed negatively either.

References

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