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**Political and Economic Elites on European Integration\***

(Abstract)

*The paper investigates the explanatory power of political vs. business elite distinction – together with the East-West divide and year of accession - in elites' attitude differences concerning the EU. While distinguishing between symbolic and pragmatic aspects, it intends to focus on the issues of European identity, supranational institutions and visions concerning the aim of integration.*

*The presentation is based on the INTUNE elite research project. The fieldwork was carried out in February-May 2007 in 18 European countries. 80 MPs and 40 top business leaders were interviewed in each country according to a standardized questionnaire. The topics covered identity, scope of governance and representation.*

*According to the first results visions about the future of EU is significantly influenced by the political versus business elite distinction. The choice between competitive and regulated capitalism is greatly influenced by regional location as well. There are great differences among blocks of countries in this respect: the Visegrad elites advocate, whilst the Mediterranean elites deny competitiveness as the major aim.*

*At first glance East-European elites are less inclined to supranational attachment and most of them envisage the strengthening of competitive market positions as the major aim of the EU. A more careful analysis with regression models however clarifies that the East-West divide has to do with the pragmatic aspects of integration (i.e. with supporting further unification, EU-redistribution and single army) and less to do with identity and visions about EU-aims. Understandably economic elites, envisaged competition as the major aim of the EU in a significantly greater proportion than political elites, all over in Europe.*

*Although regional specificities of the New Member States' elites are visible, significant in-group differences can also be tested. The paper spells out the inter- and in-group differences with respect to attitudes toward the European integration and tries to understand their regularities. Estonian and Czech elites were highly sceptical about EU identity and integration, while the Polish and Hungarian elites appear most enthusiastic. However, divergences like this can be found in the Western elite group as well: e.g. between the British and French elites, to cite the extreme cases only.*

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\* Work in progress. Please don't quote without consulting the author. Previous versions have been presented in Cambridge at the Sixth Workshop on Strategic Elites and the European Union (28-29. 3. 2008) and in Krakow, at the workshop of RN Economic Sociology of the ESA (2-4. 7. 2008). Further information: [www.lgy.dr.hu](http://www.lgy.dr.hu), [www.etk.uni-corvinus.hu](http://www.etk.uni-corvinus.hu)

## *1. Introduction*

The paper investigates whether there is an East-West divide among European elites in regard to identity, visions about EU goals and supporting integration. If the divide does exist, is it greater than the one between political and economic elites, or the other one between the elites of founding and accessing countries? Are these attitudes – concerning identity, the goals and integration – consistent? What differences can be discerned among the newly integrated East European countries?

As for pro-integration attitudes, an early study by Inglehart is to be referred to in which he highlighted the importance of cognitive mobilization (Inglehart 1970). He stressed that in explaining attitudes, the cultural and social resources at individual level ought to be considered. Gabel tested the relevance of five theories: cognitive mobilization, post-materialist values, utilitarianism, partisanship and the attitude towards the given government. He has found that as regards the founding states, Inglehart's model has explanatory force, while the attitude of the populace of NMS's is more strongly influenced by utilitarianism, as well as by variables of their affinities to parties and the government (Gabel 1998).

In his carefully designed pilot research Bruter argues that it is worth differentiating the general, civic and cultural aspects of European identity, which - though interrelated – are also distinct from one another. European identity and the support of European integration are also two different things: though related to each other, the degree of correlation does not suggest a deterministic relation (Bruter 2004, 2005).

Hooghe and Marks have also investigated whether it is identity or economic rationality that influence people's attitude to integration more profoundly. They have found that identity has a more powerful explanatory force than the individual or contextual variables of economic rationality (Hooghe-Marks 2004).

In some earlier studies with my colleagues we have looked into the question which groups in the Hungarian society expected advantages / disadvantages of integration, and what social factors influenced the symbolic and pragmatic aspects of their attitude to integration. It has been found that those in a better material and cultural position expected advantages to a greater extent, but the counterpart of this connection was untrue: instead of the socially most handicapped social strata, it was the middle social layers (e.g. the entrepreneurs along the western frontier) that expected the most disadvantages (Lengyel-Blaskó 1996). The disadvantaged social groups were either just as optimistic as the average or were overrepresented among those who had no opinions. Cultural resources more powerfully influenced both the symbolic aspects (identity) and the material aspects (evaluation of EU redistribution) than the material resources (Lengyel-Göncz 2006).

The conceptual frames of this paper rely on the above works but the focus is different. The investigation shifts the focus from the population to the elites. The European integrative processes are often described as elite-controlled top-down phenomena (Haller 2007, Bruter 2005, Hooghe-Marks 2001). If it holds true, it is particularly important to examine how homogeneous the European elites' opinions are on the key factors of integration. Critical analyses often presume that unlike in the public, there is a homogeneous elite opinion and a consistent elite interest. However, the concept of the elite has remained vague in many investigations.

Speaking of European elites below, I understand two representative groups of national elites: political and economic elites. Supranational elites or other, sometimes also important segments of national elites are not included due to lack of information. The paper is based on the INTUNE elite research project. The fieldwork was carried out in February-May 2007 in 18 European countries. (The case of Serbia – not being a member state yet – is excluded

from the current analysis.) According to the design 80 MPs and 40 top business leaders were supposed to be interviewed in each country by standardized questionnaire during a face to face or CATI interview. All in all the sample consists of 1335 political and 690 economic elite members. There were deviations from the sample design in some countries, but these proved to be statistically insignificant. Unless otherwise mentioned the data are from this survey, weighting is not applied during the analysis.

The goal of this paper primarily is not to test theories but to explore the question what specific features the East European elites display concerning the evaluation of European integration. It doesn't break down identity to its constituents, but examines what individual and contextual factors influence supranational attachment. The question is not whether it is identity or economic rationality that influence the attitude to integration more strongly, but whether eastern and western elites differ on this issue; whether the elites of the founding and newly integrated member states diverge in judging identity, economic rationality and the support of integration; and whether there are considerable differences among the East European elites in this regard. To put it in more abstract terms: the aim is to see how the attitudes of the European elites concerning the EU are scattered in the dimensions of social space and time.

## *2. The dependent variables: identity, aims and support of integration*

Territorial attachments – as parts of individuals' identity – could be conceived as mutually exclusive, or alternatively, as inclusive or overlapping feelings (Anderson 1991). There are people who think that it is very important for them to belong to the country or to their town, but not at all important to belong to the EU. There are others whose territorial attachments are not excluding but coexisting. Recent literature has clarified that exclusive national identity is not necessarily the dominant type in Europe, thus coexisting territorial attachments are more frequent than excluding ones (Inglehart 1970, Bruter, 2004, 2005, Hermann-Risse-Brewer 2004, Hooghe-Marks 2004).

This is the situation in the case of the elites as well. The vast majority (86 %) of the European elites feel attached to the EU. As far as we can judge, there is a positive correlation between supranational and national (or EU and local) identities. It is not the case that strong attachment to the nation, region or locality would contradict EU-identity. National and subnational identities are positively correlated with supranational attachment. What has been pointed out as a general tendency for the population proved to be true in the case of the elites as well: national and sub national identities do not hamper, but facilitate positive feelings towards the EU. There is an especially strong correlation between the two sub national identities that can practically substitute each other. Strong attachment to the EU is overrepresented within the categories of those who are very attached to their nation, region or settlement. On the other hand, among those who are somewhat attached or not very attached to these – that is, the medium categories – attachment to the EU is significantly smaller than the average. The same goes for those who say they are not at all attached to their nation (and whose proportion is about 2 per cent).

**Pearson correlations between different levels of attachment among the EU (and within this among the East-European) elites**

	Attachment to the European Union	Attachment to the country	Attachment to the region	Attachment to the town/village
Attachment to the European Union	1	.275** (.216**)	.155** (.189**)	.108** (.171**)
Attachment to the country		1	.193** (.29**)	.309** (.402**)
Attachment to the region			1	.483** (.505**)
Attachment to the town/village				1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

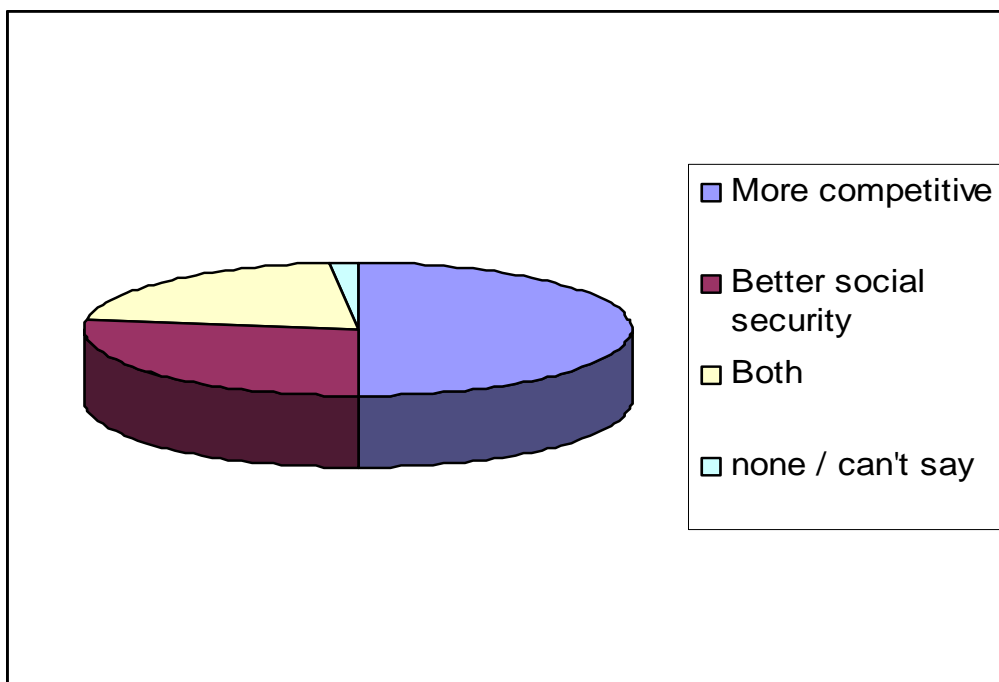
90 per cent of those who are strongly attached to their countries are to some extent also attached to the EU, whilst this proportion is below 60 per cent among those who are not attached to their country. The correlations are even stronger if we investigate them inside the Eastern block of countries, except for the connection between the EU and national identity.

**Attachment to the country and attachment to the European Union (%)**

country	EU				N
	very attached	somewhat attached	not very attached	not at all attached	
very attached	44,1	46,6	7,9	1,4	1434
somewhat attached	15,8	59,0	22,3	2,9	449
not very attached	26,0	34,2	31,5	8,2	73
not at all attached	27,6	31,0	27,6	13,8	29
Total	36,8	48,7	12,3	2,2	1985

Cramer's V= .19\*\*\*\*

As for the visions concerning the major aims, half of the European political and economic elites think that the main aim of the EU should be to make the European economy more competitive in the world markets as against providing better social security for all its citizens.



Slightly more than a quarter preferred improving social security and slightly more than one-fifth opted for both competitiveness and security. (Fieldwork experience - especially among economic elites - did show that some interviewees explained competitiveness as a precondition of better social security.)

The evaluation of unification shows that support for further unification is much higher than scepticism among European elites.

Roughly three out of five did definitely support further unification while the proportion of those who think that unification has already gone too far is one to ten.

The formulation of the question did use the issue of unification as if it were interchangeable with integration. For those who support both, the distinction is superficial, and they usually think that unification is a necessary regulatory institution and driving force of transformation. Indeed, unification is a form of integration but not the only form. There are others who think that integration is acceptable and might be useful, but unification contradicts their aims and undermines their institutions. Surveys are usually not very sensitive towards such semantic nuances, but it is worth keeping in mind that the question addressed the attitudes toward a certain form of integration. Since we deal with elites, it is a realistic supposition that they were more sensitive concerning attitudes toward supranational institutions than the interviewees of a general population survey.

On the average from 100 Euro tax income the European elites would feel fair to redistribute 17 on supranational level, whilst half of the rest on national and the other half on sub national level. A detailed analysis clarifies that interviewees most frequently would distribute 10 and 20 per cent on EU-level. Only 5 per cent is the proportion of those who would not spend a Euro on supranational level.

Thirty per cent of the European elites prefer a single European army as a solution, and roughly the same proportion opposes to any form of supranational integration of armed forces. Two out of five elite members think that a combined national and supranational solution would be useful. It means that the majority of European elites support a certain

degree of integration of forces, and within this a minority would give up the national solution. A closer look at the options of either supranational or entirely national solutions shows that the national version is supported in countries which were occupied or attacked by central powers during WW II, while the single European solution was overrepresented among countries with totalitarian historical experiences.

### Cramer's V/Phi

	Attachment to the EU	Vision: competition vs. social security	Unification	Tax redistribution	Army
Attachment to the EU		.088****	.225****	.115****	.09***
Vision			.1****	Ns	.073*
Unification				.186****	.208****
Tax redistribution					.182****
Army					

The three groups of variables – identity, vision on goals and support of supranational institutions – display unambiguous correlations. Support for unification, preference for EU taxation and a single EU army –that is the criteria of the integration of supranational institutions selected here - have internal logical connections. There is a similarly close and positive correlation between supranational identity and support for unification. The vision of a competitive EU is in loose negative correlation with symbolic supranational identity and with the consolidation of unification, and it is only loosely connected to EU taxation and an EU army.

### Preferred goal as related to extent of EU attachment: to strengthen competitiveness on world market or to provide better social security for citizens (%)

	More competitive	Better social security	Both	None/ can't say	Total
Very attached	49.2	25.5	24.1	1.2	100
Somewhat attached	48.4	28.9	21.3	1.4	100
Not very attached	57.2	24.2	15.7	2.9	100
Not at all attached	53.7	21.9	12.2	12.2	100
Together	49.9	27.0	21.4	1.7	100

It is especially noteworthy here that half of the European elite prefers market competitiveness, and they are overrepresented in the group of little symbolic attachment. A quarter of the elite would prefer greater social security, distributed more or less evenly among the identity categories. Those who emphasize both aims are slightly overrepresented among

those with strong EU attachment. In the very small minority rejecting the EU the social security and the combined version are unpopular.

### 3. The independent variables and what they explain

#### 3.1. The East-West divide and the length of EU-experience

What basically describes the East-West division of the elite is that the elites of the post-socialist countries are less attached to the EU, and they are less committed to unification and to the strengthening of the supranational institutions than the average. By contrast, the supporters of the liberal capitalist EU - preferring market competition against regulated capitalism emphasizing the social security of the citizen - are overrepresented among them. However, it must be borne in mind that half of the European elites are committed to competition and only a quarter would give priority to social security. Therefore, the EU concept as regards varieties of capitalism should be refined. If we accept that the EU is an elite project – as it is often claimed – it must be realized that the European elites are closer to a competitive EU vision. This needs to be stressed because institution-based typologies often contrast the American and European economic models claiming that the latter embodies regulated capitalism as against the liberal Anglo-Saxon model. It must be made clear that the European political and economic elites prefer the competitive model and in this respect the elites of East-European countries are more strongly committed to competition than the average.

#### Connections between attitudes and elite-divisions (Cramer's V/Phi)

	East- West	Founding- accessing	Political- economic	GDP
EU-identity	.063***	.124*****	Ns	.049*
Goal: competition	.193*****	.052*	.331*****	.187*****
UNIF2: unification should be strengthened	.213*****	.131*****	Ns	.205*****
EUREDISE2: over-average support of supranational tax-redistribution	.167*****	.096*****	Ns	.138*****
EUARMY2: single EU army vs. any other solutions	.196*****	.167*****	.105*****	.185*****

\*\*\*\*\*level of significance is .0000

\*\*\* Level of significance = .000

\*\* Level of significance = .00

\* Level of significance = .05

Ns= not significant

It is yet another question how the opinions of political and economic elites differ in this regard. Nearly three-quarters of the economic elite deems as its most important goal the strengthening of competition, as against one-third of the political elite assuming the same position. This is the strongest divide manifest in the studied dimensions.

According to table statistic, the deepest gap between Eastern and Western European member countries is in the extent of support for the studied dimensions of integration. The divergence is systematic and can be demonstrated in regard to unification and the role of

institutional actors. The East European elites support supranational unification and a common EU army to a smaller extent and they regard smaller EU redistribution desirable than their western colleagues.

Concerning goals, they support competition vs. social security: three-fifths of the eastern elites pronounced to this effect as against two-fifths of the western elites. On this issue, however, there is a wider gap between political and economic elites – the latter obviously stress the priority of competition more than politicians do. This functional difference referring to the division of labour between the elites is insignificant or weakly explanatory in all other regards.

**Preferred EU goals of the political and economic elites: to strengthen competitiveness on the world market or to provide better social security to citizens (%)**

	More competitive	Better social security	Both	None/ can't say	Total /N/ Phi= .346
Political elite	38.0	36.3	23.9	1.8	100 (1301)
Economic elite	72.5	9.5	16.4	1.6	100 (685)
Together	49.9	27.0	21.2	1.7	100 (1986)

The divide between founders and new members proved significant in the interpretation of identity. GDP indicated strong correlation in all aspects, but not as strong as the East-West divide. Consequently, the East-West differences imply more than just the differences in per capita GDP.

Along most dimensions, the East-West divide appears to have greater explanatory force than the difference between the elites of founders and new member states. The only aspect that length of EU membership has a more significant influence on is identity. The elites of the founding members are far more attached to EU than the elites of the later accessing countries: half of them expressed great attachment to EU as against a third of the elites of the later members.

*3.2. The explanatory power of the East-West division checked by logistic regression models*

In the binary logistic regression models, the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, and birthplace), the cultural indicators (level and type of education, foreign studies and career) and the social resources (foreign contacts during work, living experience abroad) were also incorporated. Political orientation on the basis of the self-reported left-right scale, as well as the interviewee's (political or economic) elite position have been included. At first two model families were built: one with the dichotomy of the East-West division as the contextual explanatory variable and the other with the accessing vs. founding member states dichotomy. In both families, per capita GDP was also used as a contextual explanatory variable. Dependent variables were the dichotomized variants of attachment, vision about the major aim of the EU, attitudes toward unification, redistribution and army. (Where the measurement level of dependent variables allowed – in the field of supporting redistribution and unification – linear regression models were ran as well).

The most important factors influencing EU identity (“very attached to the EU” answers) with similar force in a positive direction were university education, as well as older age, intensity of foreign experiences and foreign contacts during work. Thus, supranational identity is positively influenced by cultural resources and international social resources in addition to age. By contrast, being born in a large city acted against supranational identity. It



is therefore a more complex question and we cannot be satisfied with the usual explanation which associates metropolitan life with cosmopolitanism and with more intense international orientation. East European elites displayed below average attachment to supranational identity, but in the model this connection was not found significant. What appeared significant in the cross tabulation proved to have been caused by the impact of other factors, and this effect could be eliminated by the involvement of these factors.

The model with the most vigorous explanatory forces illuminates the goals of EU. Those who envisage the enhancement of market competitiveness as the main goal of EU are significantly underrepresented among leftists, while economic elite members identify with this goal many times more than the average. Elite members with managerial experience (filling leading positions earlier) and males supported more intense competition than the average, which is a more powerful effect than the East-West divide. To this significant aspect clarifying the attitude to the alternative goals of EU a single contextual variable contributed – per capita GDP – exerting a significant negative effect on the attitude to competition. The elites of more affluent countries identified with the model of regulated capitalism far more than those of poorer countries. The elites of the richer countries do not prefer competitiveness and this aspect is more important than the East-West divide as well.

The strengthening of unification is principally influenced by the East-West difference: elites of western countries regard the reinforcement of European unification as a much more significant goal than East European elites do. The explanatory force of GDP remained about the same as above, though it largely overlaps with the East-West division (therefore, the significance level of GDP is low). The elites of richer countries urge more for the strengthening of unification.

Other factors that considerably increased support for unification included leftist political affiliation and the aspects of cultural and social resources (university qualifications, foreign studies, intense working contacts abroad). The economic elites are more strongly in favour of unification than the political elites, and this effect remains significant despite several control variables.

To predict the attitude to redistribution, the linear regression model brings in the East-West divide, leftist affinities and the economic elite: members of the economic elite and leftists would like to see significantly more centralized taxes as against East Europeans as such. Logistic regression produced similar results for the East-West divide, with the only other significantly influential factor – in a negative direction – being age.

Preference for a unified EU army is far more typical of western than of eastern elites, of leftists and of economic elite members. The explanatory power of this model is similarly moderate to that of redistribution. Leftist political attitudes particularly strongly influenced preference for a supranational army against pure national or mixed alternatives.

It seems from the models that when direct effects were further refined by inclusion of variables referring to position of elite-members, their socio-demographic, cultural and social characteristics and the country's level of development the East-West divide did not show significant connection with identity and with visions about the EU goals. However as regards institution building - unification, supranational redistribution and a unified EU army -, it had a significant explanatory effect.

With other words a preliminary conclusion at this point might be that the East-West divide has no role in explaining the symbolic aspects – EU identity and goals – of integration, whereas it has considerable explanatory power for the pragmatic aspects of integration. East European elites support the strengthening of supranational institutions to a significantly lower extent than their western counterparts.

The differences between the economic and political elites also proved significant in most of these pragmatic aspects (unification and common army). However, their decisive significance was found in explaining the EU goals: this difference influenced more than any other factor what opinion the elite members expressed on competition and social security as the envisioned EU goals.

At this juncture, another questions can be raised:

-What does the length of membership explain more strongly than the East-West divide? (The explanatory factors only partly overlap, as it has been observed.)

- Do these explanations remain valid even if one of the crucial factors, that is the East-West divide is eliminated, and what factors assume importance when the correlations are tested within the East European elites?

These questions are answered in the following.

### *3.3. Models testing the effect of length of membership*

The year of accession (more precisely: the dichotomy of founders and accessing member states) explains the intensity of the EU identity slightly more powerfully than the East-West divide. This suggests that among the elites of the AMS there are more sceptical partners than the East European elites, too. Indeed, the date of accession exerted an important negative impact on EU identity: the elites of AMS's are significantly underrepresented among those who claimed to be „very attached to the EU” than the founders. The former include, for example, the British in addition to East European countries. As regards individual traits: age, the accumulation of cultural and international social resources (foreign contacts and first-hand experience abroad) all have a significant positive effect on EU identity.

As regards goals, the explanatory power of the two models testing spatial and temporal distances is equally strong, but similarly to the E-W divide, the year of accession had no role. This is the strongest explanatory model in this model-family which diagnosed very strong commitment to competition by the economic elite, the men and the elite-members with former managerial experience, while the GDP as the contextual variable had a very powerful negative effect. As against that, leftists were opposed to competition as the high-priority EU goal as strongly and significantly as the economic elite supported it.

In the model operating with the year of accession, slightly different factors made the support of unification more probably than in the one built with East-West divide. The difference between founders and later joiners did not prove significant, while the East-West divide did. In this model, cultural resources had smaller, whilst social resources had greater explanatory force: unlike in the examination of the East-West divide, university diploma and foreign studies have no explanatory effect in this case. In addition to foreign contacts, the experience of living abroad had the greatest explanatory force. Despite the differences of the involved variables, the explanatory power of the models is similar, and so is the rate of correctly classified cases. GDP has a greater explanatory force than in case of the East-West divide: richer countries urge for unification to a greater extent.

It must be contended that in the logistic regression model of redistribution the founder vs. later admitted states dichotomy has no explanatory force. Both age and higher qualifications had a negative impact on supporting EU-level redistribution. By contrast, the elites of richer countries were more intending to support EU redistribution.

As for the common EU army, the year of accession had a weaker explanatory force than the East-West divide. In the model by year of accession GDP also played a role (elites of richer countries preferred the idea of the single army more strongly); further positive impacts came from belonging to the economic elite, to the left and to younger age groups.

#### 4. Differences within Eastern Europe

In the case of symbolic aspects – identity and goals – refinement of blocks of countries considerably strengthens connections, whilst in the case of pragmatic issues – support of unification, redistribution and single army – the improvements are much more moderate and East European country differences are more relevant.

#### Blocks and countries: Cramer's V/Phi values

	East-West (incl. Medit.)	Visegrad4-rest of East-West (incl. Medit.)	Visegrad4-rest of East-West-Mediterranean	Visegrad4-Baltic-Balkan-West-Mediterranean	Seven East-European countries and the rest
European identity	.063***	.17****	.171****	.171****	.225****
Support of competition	.193****	.229****	.245****	.261****	.240****
Support of unification	.213****	.216****	.234****	.237****	.279****
Support of EU-redistr.	.167****	.167****	.173****	.174****	.177****
Support of single army	.196****	.21****	.21****	.214****	.263****

\*\*\*\*level of significance is .0000

\*\*\* level of significance = .000

As regards European identity, the Visegrad countries versus the rest of East and West have considerably more impact than the simple East-West divide, but then neither the more detailed western, nor the more elaborate eastern block increases the explanatory power. However the differences in terms of supranational identity among East European countries proved considerable as well.

It can be seen that underlying the moderate difference between the East and West European member countries in regard to supranational identity, there are very marked differences from country to country. The average „very attached to the EU” as two-thirds of the East European block reported conceals considerable fluctuation by countries. The below-average EU identity of the Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian and Lithuanian elites and the considerably above-average enthusiasm of the Polish and Hungarian elites produced the average.

### East European countries by attachment to the EU

	attachment to the EU		Total
	not very attached	very attached	
West	60,5	39,5	100,0
East	66,7	33,3	100,0
Bulgaria	83,1	16,9	100,0
Czech R	75,2	24,8	100,0
Estonia	78,9	21,1	100,0
Hungary	49,6	50,4	100,0
Lithuania	80,4	19,6	100,0
Poland	37,7	62,3	100,0
Slovakia	65,0	35,0	100,0
Total N= 1987	63,1	36,9	100,0

To this it can be added that the attachment of the majority of West European elites to the EU is around average, with two considerable deviations: 10 per cent of the British elite, while 60 per cent of the French thought they were strongly attached to the integration.

When we want to interpret these findings, the first thing to be considered is the nature of elite consensus upon which EU attachment depends. It is to be explored to what extent is EU attachment part of the elite consensus or to what extent and in what tone it is involved in elite conflicts. It appears so that in Poland, Hungary and France there is taciturn elite consensus on the evaluation of the EU in spite of the fact that elite consensus is undergoing a special crisis in all three countries. In our judgment, the Hungarian and Polish elites have arrived at a crossroad where they have to decide between consolidating and simulating democracy (as was explicated in more detail elsewhere, Ilonszki-Lengyel 2008, Wasilewski 2008). Concerning the French case, one would presume that there emerged a wide gap between the elite and public opinions, as the outcome of the referendum about the EU constitution proves. Indeed, only one-fifth of the adult population in France and below a quarter of those in Poland expressed strong attachment to the EU. The Hungarian case is different: nearly half the population is strongly attached to the EU; hence there is no significant divergence between the elite and the public in this regard. The general tendency concerning the EU identity of the elite and the public is that the elite professes a slightly but not considerably stronger attachment to EU than the public. The proportions are similar to the rates of higher qualified strata and groups of higher occupational status within the population sample.

Compared to that, it might appear a technical aspect, but it needs attention that in the methodological literature the problem of language-bound identity is raised apropos these general questions of identity (Bruter 2005). Though its effect cannot be wholly excluded, the standardized questionnaire was double-checked and no considerable problem arose.

As regards the visions of the EU aims, the inclusion of blocks sheds light on important differences, whereas the differences among East European countries prove as significant as the divergences between Western and Mediterranean countries.

<b>Visegrad and other countries by the major aim of the EU</b>			
	competition or social security should be the major aim of the EU	Total	
	social security, both, else	competition	
Visegrad4	32,7	67,3	100,0
Baltic	40,9	59,1	100,0
Balkan	63,3	36,7	100,0
West	52,9	47,1	100,0
Mediterranean	67,2	32,8	100,0
Total N= 2025	51,0	49,0	100,0

It has been found that the Visegrád and Baltic elites have adopted the liberal capitalist model more extensively than the elites of the Mediterranean and Balkan states. The divergences between these blocs are statistically far more marked than the differences between individual countries, though some specific cases of countries can also be illumined here. 70 per cent of the Polish and Slovakian elites profess as the primary goal of the EU the strengthening of competitiveness, as against less than one-third of the Bulgarian elite. The pro-competition segment of the French elite is also underrepresented, but there are even fewer in the Greek elite – 14 per cent - who support competition as the main goal of the EU. The Greek elite also expressed moderate identification with the EU. There is considerable difference between the Spanish and Portuguese elites, the former rejecting, and the latter supporting competition over-average.

Comparing these data with the opinion of the public, it must be realized that the opinion of the Visegrad and Baltic elites on competition markedly differs from the opinion of the respective population. About a third of the population prefer the competition model and two-thirds support the better social security model: the ratio is exactly the inverse of that of the elites. By contrast, the opinions of the elites and the public in the Mediterranean and Balkanian states better harmonize. In what appears a special case, the French public appears more competition-minded than the French elite.

As for the strengthening of unification, the differences between both the blocks and among the East European countries proved considerable. Three-fifths of the elite pronouncedly support unification, but this derives from the opinions of less than half of the East European elites and three-quarters of the Mediterranean elites.

**East European countries and the West by 'unif should be strengthened' (per cent)**

	Unif. should be strengthened (0-10)		Total
	-6	7-	
West	31,4	68,6	100,0
East	52,5	47,5	100,0
Bulgaria	49,6	50,4	100,0
Czech R	61,5	38,5	100,0
Estonia	80,4	19,6	100,0
Hungary	38,3	61,7	100,0
Lithuania	39,2	60,8	100,0
Poland	44,3	55,7	100,0
Slovakia	56,3	43,7	100,0
Total N= 1968	40,3	59,7	100,0

Deviations between countries demand attention since in both the Visegrad group and among the Baltic countries there is an elite that is very sceptical about unification: they are the Czech and especially the Estonian elites. (Only the British elite expresses as low support for unification as the Estonians. This suggests that the average opinion of western elites also conceals a wide scatter.) Let me note again that the question may have a methodological, inquiry-technical aspect: the synonymous use of unification and integration may not be acceptable in some cases and evident in others. It alludes to problems of interpretation in some countries – e.g. Estonia, Hungary, Bulgaria – that the „I don't know” answers had a high rate sometimes in excess of 10 per cent. In the elites, however, such problems caused by defective information are obviously out of the question.

There are significant divergences in judging EU redistribution, but the differences between blocks and among East European countries do not deviate considerably from the East-West divide.

**Out of 100 Euro of tax a citizen pays, how much should be allocated on the EU-level**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
West	17,9357	13,71093
Mediterranean	20,1829	11,05602
East	14,6250	8,90577
Bulgaria	14,5175	7,15348
Czech R	14,9749	10,07697
Estonia	12,5714	7,87254
Hungary	16,1102	9,22444
Lithuania	15,2394	11,49935
Poland	13,6870	7,76206
Slovakia	15,2783	8,17414
Total	17,0452	11,34339

The main gap in opinions about EU redistribution is between the East European and Mediterranean elites. The former would like to see redistribution far below the average, the latter far above the average. There was smaller scatter among the East European elites in this respect, while the mean of the Western around the 18 euros (close to the all-European average) shows a far greater scatter.

As regard the single European army, the differences between East European countries are noteworthy. There is below-average sympathy among East European elites and above-average sympathy among West and South European elites for a single army. There are, however, extreme differences among East European elites: as against one out of twenty Polish and Estonian elite members, two out of five of the Hungarian elite members would opt for this possibility.

**Single European Army and other solutions in blocks and countries (per cent)**

	Single European Army or keep its own national army.				Total
	National armies	European army	Both national and European	Neither nor	
West	27,8	38,1	31,0	3,1	100,0
Mediterr.	15,8	36,5	44,6	3,1	100,0
East	34,1	19,0	44,7	2,2	100,0
Bulgaria	24,1	19,0	56,0	,9	100,0
Czech R	51,2	15,7	31,4	1,7	100,0
Estonia	51,5	3,9	43,7	1,0	100,0
Hungary	18,5	42,0	36,1	3,4	100,0
Lithuania	41,5	15,3	43,2		100,0
Poland	38,3	5,8	51,7	4,2	100,0
Slovakia	15,3	29,7	50,8	4,2	100,0
Total N= 1969	27,3	29,8	40,2	2,7	100,0

The majority of the Estonian and Czech elites urge for the maintenance of national armies. Most of the Mediterranean and East European elites would prefer the mixed solution. In addition to the Hungarians, the German, Italian, Spanish and Belgian elites support the single European army at an above-average degree. The British and Danish elites joined the Czech and Estonian elites in supporting the national army alternative. Above-average rates of Polish, Bulgarian and Slovakian, as well as French, Greek and Italian elites believe in a combined solution. The idea of a single EU army is more popular among the elites than among the population.

*5. Conclusion: does the East-West divide count and/or are there significant differences among new member states of post-socialist background?*

The questions I have addressed in this paper are the following: is there a difference between East and West European elites in identity, vision on goals and the support for integration? How consistent are these attitudes, and are there notable differences among East European elites in these regards?

To sum up the answer to the first question: at first sight table statistics reveal significant differences along the East-West divide in identity, the goals and support for integration. The East European elites show less supranational identity, support the institutions of integration to a lesser degree and set competition as the main aim of the EU.

Examinations with more elaborate regression models have shown that the East-West divide only mediates the impact of other explanatory factors in certain regards. The East-West divide ceased to be influential in the symbolic, theoretical or ideological aspects – in defining the identity and the goals. Supranational identity is mostly influenced by education and social resources. There is a greater difference in professing supranational identity

between the elites of the founding states and those of the new member states, than between Eastern and Western elites. The differences between founding and accessing member countries were less important in explaining the attitudes than was the East-West divide, excepting the question of EU identity; elites of accessing member countries were more reluctant than the founders to identify with the EU even after checking this effect with cultural and social factors.

On the other side, the explanatory effect of the East-West divide retained its power in the field of pragmatic viewpoints: the East European elites remained moderate supporters of unification and supranational institutions even if this outcome was controlled with cultural, social and other differences.

As for the alternatives of competition vs. social security, the main effects were found in the dimension of the economic vs. political elites and the financial standing of the country as contextual variables: the elites of richer countries laid greater stress on better social security, hence on the model of regulated capitalism.

To answer the second question – how consistent these EU-related attitudes are – it can be concluded that views on the goals do not correlate with identity or support for integration. Thus, the choice between competitive market economy vs. regulated capitalism ensuring greater social security is not influenced by the views on identity and integration (nor is it influenced by the East-West divide or the difference between elites of founders and new members according to the models). By contrast, most dimensions of identity and the support for integration correlated even under the impact of control variables.

As regards the third question – divergences among East European states – marked differences were found between countries in EU attitudes and these proved more important than the East-West divide. Estonian and Czech elites were highly sceptical about EU identity, while the Polish and Hungarian elites appear most enthusiastic. However, there are such divergences in the Western elite group as well: e.g. between the British and French elites, to cite the extreme cases only. This picture acquires subtler shades along the individual variables, but the final conclusion is that Estonian and Czech elites are still on the sceptical side while the Hungarian elite remains on the supportive side concerning supranational institutions.

Concerning competition vs. social security as the main EU goals, the differences were not only among countries but also among blocks of countries: The Visegrad countries advocated the goal of competitiveness to an above-average degree, while the Mediterranean and Balkanian countries supported it to a below-average extent.

Let me mention finally: the starting point for the above analysis was that the weight of each elite group's opinion is identical. However, this presupposition is permanently confuted by everyday experience and it is denied by elites themselves. Therefore further efforts are needed for a reasonable solution of measuring elites' influence.



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