The Best Bachelor Theses from the Fourth Annual BA ES Bachelor Theses Conference

11 June 2018

Bachelor European Studies
Preface

The booklet in front of you brings together the four best Bachelor Theses presented during the Fourth Bachelor Theses Conference of the Bachelor in European Studies, which took place on 11 June 2018. This annual conference is organised to offer students an extra opportunity to receive feedback on their final Bachelor Papers. Not from their supervisors, but from fellow students working on related topics, approaches or methods.

Over 40 students took part in the conference this year. In workshops chaired by the academic staff they discussed papers covering a wide range of interesting European Studies topics. We would like to thank the students for their great effort. Many thanks also go to our colleagues Marloes de Hoon, Christophe Leclerc, Christine Neuhold, Ruud Hendriks, Eli Sapir and Esther Versluis, who chaired the workshops.

The three theses that we have brought together here are examples of this variety of issues addressed by our students. Two were marked with a 9 and one even with a 9½, which is a testimony of the exceptional quality of the work done.

We hope these theses also form an inspiration for our current students who still have to embark on the process of writing their thesis for the Bachelor in European Studies. We also hope that many of them will join us for the next conference in June 2019.

Patrick Bijsmans
Thesis Coordinator BA ES

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Sven Hegewald

1. Introduction

Powers for regional governments increased considerably over the last few decades (Hooghe et al., 2016). One of the consequences of this general trend is that politics in modern nation-states are more and more multi-layered and involve players from different levels with diverse interests and preferences. Put differently, in this day and age, policies are no longer solely made in Berlin and Paris, but also in Barcelona and Bremen. Particularly interesting in the context of territorially differentiated power structures are the politics of constitutional change in federations. In federal states, where authority is divided and shared across different levels of government, constitutions organize a balance of power between these levels in such a way that neither the one nor the other is subordinate (Watts, 2008, p.8, 161). However, finding this balance is a delicate task with federal and regional actors regularly contesting it by trying to either centralize or de-centralize authority (Behnke & Benz, 2009, pp.213-4).

Federal constitutional politics commonly take place in intergovernmental arenas where constitutional change is negotiated between the regions and the federal government. Although there has been growing literature on these dynamics (e.g. Benz, 2016; Benz & Broschek, 2013; Benz & Colino, 2011), the role of regional actors and their influence on constitutional change within these arenas still remains puzzling. While scholars have addressed why constitutional change happens in the first place, regions have been commonly treated as a unitary actor with homogenous preferences. This assumption blurred the view for the considerable variation that exists between regions (Watts, 2008, pp.125-30). In fact, this thesis shows that the preferences of regional actors are anything but homogenous. Thus, if one wants to understand constitutional change in its entirety, a differentiated view on how different regional actors attain their preferences is needed. In light of this, the aim of this thesis is to open the ‘black-box’ of regional influence by exposing the strategies used by individual regions to influence constitutional change.

1 Sven is currently doing the Research MSc Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam, with a specialisation in Political Science and Quantitative Methods. Arjan Schakel acted as his thesis supervisor.
German federalism is an ideal case to study these dynamics. Institutional rules give German regions, the Länder, a strong position to influence federal reform by requiring their consent with a two-thirds majority for any amendment to the German Basic Law (Scharpf, 1988, 2011). Hence, this thesis uses the case of Germany’s Second Federal Reform (SFR) from 2009 to gain understanding of the role of regional actors in constitutional politics. In this regard, it asks the following research question: ‘How can individual Länder influence constitutional change during the Second Federal Reform?’ The thesis claims that the dominant strategy for a Land to influence constitutional change towards its own preferences reflects a combination of forming blocking minorities with other actors, while trading influence on the issues less important to the Land for influence on salient issues (log-rolling).

Understanding these processes bears both societal and academic relevance. Academic relevance lies in filling a crucial gap in the scholarship on federalism by contributing new insights into federal dynamics in general and towards regional influence on constitutional change in particular. Furthermore, studying how constitutional rules come about is important as they lay down the basic norms for modern societies. Thus, to understand who influences their content also helps to grasp who determines the framework of our daily lives.

The thesis proceeds in the following way: After reviewing the academic literature on federal dynamics and constitutional change, German constitutional politics and the SFR are introduced. Then, a novel way to conceptualize regional influence is spelled out. After that, the results section is divided into three parts: First, by showing the different preferences of the Länder involved, the homogeneity assumption in the existing literature is challenged. Second, the relative influence of each actor is quantified. Third, the coalition-building and log-rolling dynamics between the Länder are analyzed, unraveling the strategies used to influence the constitutional reform. Lastly, a conclusion summarizes the thesis’ main findings while shedding light on possible generalizations beyond the case.

2. Federal Dynamics and Constitutional Change in the Academic Literature

Federal constitutions are constantly facing the dilemma to find a balance between flexibility and stability (Benz, 2016, pp.8-17). On the one hand, stability is needed to prevent power shifts between different levels of government or, in the worst case, the dissolution of a federation into its regional units (Behnke & Benz, 2009, p.214; Benz & Colino, 2011, pp.381-2; Filippov et al., 2004; Gerber & Kollman, 2004). On the other hand, flexibility is necessary if the federal order is put under pressure in such a way that its stability is threatened. For instance, in
times of changing conditions, such as financial crises (e.g. Braun & Trein, 2014), federal actors may demand “shifts in the allocation of functions from one government to another” (Livingston, 1956, p.11-2 in Lorenz, 2011, p.407). Then, federal constitutions need to be flexible enough to adapt (e.g. Benz & Colino, 2011, p.382).

To be sure, constitutions are often much harder to change than normal legislation due to higher majority requirements and the amount of veto-players involved (Behnke & Benz, 2009, p.214-5). In light of this, many studies attempted to find conditions under which constitutional change is likely to happen and when it successfully restores federal stability (e.g. Bednar, 2009; Behnke & Benz, 2009; Benz, 2016; Benz & Broschek, 2013; Benz & Colino, 2011; Simeon, 2009). Particularly pronounced conditions are the linking of negotiation with ratification and the separation of normal and constitutional policy-making (Behnke & Benz, 2009, p. 231; for overviews see Benz, 2016, pp.199-217; Benz & Broschek, 2013, p.13). Firstly, concerning the former condition, a link between negotiating and ratifying a reform may induce actors to anticipate possible vetoes in the ratification phase and thus cause them to negotiate an agreement which is more likely to pass ratification (Benz, 2016, p.40-1). Secondly, with regard to the latter condition, intermingling normal and constitutional policy-making was found to produce structures of bargaining between the actors involved. This commonly led to package deals which inadequately addressed the constitutional policy problems and hence, struggled with re-establishing federal stability (Behnke & Benz, 2009, p.214). Apart from the conditions mentioned, the literature also emphasizes other factors such as the role of ideas (e.g. Braun, 2009; Liebermann, 2002) or the influence of constitutional courts (e.g. Erk, 2011) and parties (e.g. Bolleyer et al., 2014; Petersohn et al., 2015; Toubeau & Massetti, 2013) on constitutional change. Moreover, some scholars investigated the effects of the recent financial crisis on federal reform processes (e.g. Eccleston & Krever, 2017; Trein & Ruiz-Palmero, 2015).

Yet, notwithstanding this growing body of literature, none of these studies explicitly addressed the question of how individual regions can influence constitutional change. If regions are discussed, they are commonly treated as one unit with rather homogenous preferences (for a similar argument see Bauer, 2006; Jensen, 2014). For example, Trein and Ruiz-Palmero (2015) in their study on constitutional change during the financial crisis implicitly assume that regions are united in their preferences when it comes to favoring the de-centralization of authority. Although this assumption has its perks in making comparisons between federations easier, it neglects the considerable variation that exists between regions (e.g. Tarlton, 1965; Watts, 2008, pp.125-30). Against this backdrop, heterogenous preferences are particularly evident when constitutional politics touch upon the allocation of financial resources between wealthy and poorer regions. Often, wealthy regions demand to pay less to poorer regions, while the latter insist on the
former’s solidarity (e.g. Braun et al., 2017). The thesis’ findings are in line with this observation. As will be shown in the analysis, the preferences of regional actors differ significantly and are thus much more heterogenous than the existing literature assumes.

Therefore, if one wants to understand constitutional change in federal countries in its entirety, a differentiated view on regional influence is needed. Thus, by uncovering the strategies used by individual German Länder to influence the SFR this thesis aims at discerning general patterns of regional influence which may also apply beyond the observations of this case. In this regard, it fills a crucial gap in the scholarship on federalism by contributing new insights into federal dynamics in general and towards regional influence on constitutional change in particular.

3. Constitutional Politics in German Federalism

Germany is an ideal case to research how individual regions can exert influence on constitutional change. The institutional rules and conventions that define the formal constitutional amendment process give individual German Länder a strong position to influence federal reform. First, Germany is composed of 16 Länder at the sub-governmental level and a federal government (FG) located at the tier above (Watts, 2008, p. 73). Amending the constitution cuts across these two levels of government by requiring a joint process involving the Länder and the FG (Benz, 2016, pp. 30-1). In practice, any constitutional revision needs a two-thirds majority in the lower house (Bundestag) and the upper house (Bundesrat) which represents the Länder-governments at the federal level (Burkhart, 2009, p. 346). This interlocking of FG and Länder gives German regions in general and individual regions in particular strong powers to influence constitutional amendments (Scharpf, 1988, 2011). In fact, a minority of more than one-third of the Länder can effectively block any constitutional amendment. This low threshold for possible veto-powers strengthens the chances of an individual Land’s preferences to be heard when negotiating constitutional change.\(^2\)

Second, the main arena of the negotiations during the SFR was a joint commission of Bundestag and Bundesrat and consisted of members from both chambers. The Bundesrat members were one senior politician from each of the 16 Land-governments, while the 16 Bundestag members were chosen in accordance with the relative strength of their fraction (Federal Commission, 2010, pp.23-5). Because of this, the commission reflected the same conflict lines as present in both parliamentary chambers and thus the negotiations were closely connected with the ratification (Benz, 2016, pp.80-5). In this regard, negotiators during the reform anticipated

\(^2\) Note that the votes of different Länder in the Bundesrat are distributed according to their population size (Bundesrat, 2018).
possible vetoes during the ratification phase and hence, were more willing to make compromises (Benz, 2016, pp.33-41). These institutional arrangements increased the chances of individual Länder to be influential, thus making Germany a most likely case for regional influence. The main advantage of choosing such a case is foremost that some influence can be expected which makes observing strategies that enable regions to be influential possible in the first place.

From the early 2000s onwards Germany witnessed two major reforms of its constitution in 2006 and 2009. Whereas the first federal reform mainly re-organized legislative competences, the SFR dealt with fiscal federalism (e.g. Benz, 2016, pp.78-6). In this regard, the SFR is particularly interesting as negotiations dealing with financial matters are notoriously prone to conflict between regions, thus making heterogenous preferences more likely (Braun & Trein, 2014). The two dominant issues during the SFR revolved around the design of a new budget constraint for the Länder and the elimination of their pre-existing debt. A budget constraint is meant to prevent governments from overspending limiting the amount of additional revenue from borrowing (Roddent et al., 2003). Before the SFR, a so-called ‘Golden-rule’ was in place which attempted to balance the capital investments of a region with its borrowing (Kopits, 2001). The norm stipulated that the loans taken out by the Länder have to equal the investments made (SVG, 2007, p.2). Evidently, this constraint provided a lot of leeway for public debt and was deemed insufficient to prevent their further growth (Federal Commission, 2010, p. 50; Joumard & Kongsrud 2003). Conversely, the new rules introduced with the SFR require balanced budgets for the Länder prohibiting any additional borrowing from 2020 onwards (Korioth, 2016, pp.688-91). Next to these discussions, the aggregate debt levels of Bund, Länder and municipalities amounted to 1.5 trillion Euros in 2007 (Federal Commission, 2010, p.50). In light of this, the reform commission problematized how to write off the Länder’s debt highlighting that sustainable finances were ultimately dependent on afloat government budgets (Federal Commission, 2010, pp.107-32).

4. Conceptualizing Regional Influence on Constitutional Change

Measuring and conceptualizing the influence of different actors in complex negotiations is challenging. This section develops a novel way to conceptualize regional influence on constitutional change: First, it takes the literature on decision-making in the Council of Ministers of the European Union (EU) (hereinafter, “The Council”) as a basis to explain possible strategies for regional influence. Second, influence is operationalized by using a specific strand of the ‘preference attainment’-approach. Third, a comprehensive scheme to measure the different policy preferences during the SFR is introduced.
4.1 Possible Strategies for Regional Actors to Influence Federal Constitutional Politics

The institutional conditions of federal constitutional negotiations mirror in many regards the policy-making in the Council. First, the Council is the EU’s main decision-making body where all member state governments (MS) meet to negotiate supranational policies. In this regard, it is, similarly to federal constitutional politics, also characterized by multilateral, intergovernmental negotiations (Nugent, 2010, pp.139-40). Second, constitutional amendments in federations and the decisions in the Council both require qualified majorities (Nugent, 2010, p.155). Based on these observations similar dynamics in in both the Council and federal constitutional negotiations can be expected.

Two main strategies for MS to influence decision-making in the Council have been identified. First, MS with similar positions tend to form coalitions to give importance to their preferences. In that regard, a very simple and effective strategy is the formation of a blocking minority\(^3\) which ensures that the preferences of a MS cannot be ignored (Häge, 2012, p.482). Considering the similar voting rules for council and federal negotiations it is expected that regions behave in accordance to a similar logic. Horizontally, regions could form a blocking minority with other regions to prevent a decision against their preferences in the upper house. Likewise, forming a coalition with the FG can have the same effect, if the FG possesses a two-thirds majority in the lower house and thus could also block any decision.

Second, another plausible strategy for MS is log-rolling between different issues that are simultaneously decided (e.g. Carrubba & Volden, 2001; König & Junge, 2009; Mattila & Lane, 2001, pp.46-8). Simply speaking, log-rolling presupposes that actors attribute varying levels of salience to different policy issues. It follows a *quid pro quo* logic where one actor (A) trades its consent on issue one for the consent of the other actor (B) on issue two (Brams, 1975, pp.150-1; Mattila & Lane, 2001, p.48). Concerning federal constitutional politics, a similar potential for log-rolling can be expected as constitutional reforms often involve package deals between actors (Benz, 2016, p.33). Therefore, if one issue is extremely important for a given region it may be a useful strategy to trade influence on another less important issue for influence on the salient issue.

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\(^3\) A blocking minority is a coalition of governments that is “large enough to formally block a decision” (Häge, 2012, p.482).
4.2. Operationalizing Influence using Paired Comparisons

The existing literature provides three main approaches that attempt to either measure influence via expert surveys (e.g. March, 1955), process-tracing (e.g. Michalowitz, 2007) or preference attainment (e.g. Bernhagen, 2011) The latter approach compares the preferences of different actors with the final policy outcome (FPO) and hereby gauges an actor’s influence (Klüver, 2011, p.489). Some considerable advantages come with this method. First, because it compares preferences with the fixed reference point of the FPO, the effects of informal negotiations – an inherent feature of German intergovernmental relations (Lorenz, 2011, p.411) – can be taken into account. Second, preference attainment allows a more objective measurement as it is not biased towards the subjective experiences of the individuals asked (Klüver, 2011, p.490). Considering the ambiguous evaluations of the SFR between cheerful officials and critical scholars biased results can be expected (Benz, 2016 pp.79-80). Hence, preference attainment is presumed to yield the most valid results.

In complex bargaining situations, actors may not only be able to influence the FPO, but also other actors. Because of this, Verschuren and Arts’ (2004) make a distinction between product and process influence. The former denotes the extent to which an actor is able to move the FPO towards its own preferences, whereas the latter concerns the degree to which one actor adopts the preferences of the other (p.496). In this vein, the influence of a region on constitutional reform is formally defined as the extent to which a region’s preferences are attained in a policy outcome (product influence) or are adopted by other regions or the FG in the process (process influence) (Verschuren & Arts, 2004, p.496). In other words, a Land’s influence depends on a) the degree to which it was able to move the FPO towards its preferences and/or b) in how far the preferences of that same Land were taken over by either another Land or the FG.

Product and process influence are measured by facilitating Verschuren and Arts (2004) approach of ‘paired comparisons’. First, the product influence of region \( R_A \) or the extent to which \( R_A \)’s preference was realized (\( PR_A \)) is gauged by subtracting the preferences of \( R_A \) (\( P_A \)) from the FPO. Formally speaking, this results in

\[
PR_A = |P_A - FPO|,
\]

where || stands for ‘absolute’ values. The result of this equation is then compared with the preference realization of every other actor. For a hypothetical negotiation involving two regions, e.g. \( R_A \) and \( R_B \), \( R_A \)’s \( |P_A - FPO| \) is compared with the \( |P_B - FPO| \) of \( R_B \). Based on the outcome,
RA receives a score of either 1 if its preference realization is higher than that of RB (|PA − FPO| > |PB − FPO|), 0 if it is lower (|PA − FPO| < |PB − FPO|) or a ½ if they are equally high (|PA − FPO| = |PB − FPO|) (Dür, 2008, p. 570). The same principle applies if more than two regions are involved, then, RA’s |PA − FPO| is separately compared with that of every other region. The average of these comparisons then equals the relative product influence of RA. So, if four regions where involved and RA received a 1, a ½, a 0 and a 1, its final score equals 0.625.

In contrast, for process influence the comparison is not made with regard to the FPO, but concerning the extent to which the regions or the FG move or do not move towards one another (Verschuren & Arts, 2004, p.505). Four possible scenarios of preference movement shown in table 1 below can be devised. The same principle of paired comparisons applies to compute process influence: If three regions RA, RB and RC negotiate an agreement, the process influence of RA in these negotiations equals 0.75 if RB moves more towards RA and if RA and RC meet each other half way.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Possible Preference Shifts and Process Influence5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result of comparison</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. RB moves more into the direction of RA than vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RA moves more into the direction of RB than vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RA and RB meet each other half way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. RA and RB both stick to their preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on Verschuren & Arts (2004).

However, preference attainment assumes that an actor’s influence is directly caused its actions. Yet, both product and process influence could also be ascribed to alternative causes (AC) outside the negotiations (Barry, 1980a, 1980b). To account for this, both product and process influence are weight in such a way that the score is corrected for AC that may have helped the influence of an actor.6 Additionally, preference attainment often puts strong emphasis an actor’s initial position (e.g. Dür, 2008). It assumes that the closer the FPO is to the actor’s initial position the more influence was exerted. This is problematic because first, actors may hold strategic preferences at the outset of a negotiation (e.g. Sen, 1973) and second, because two actors, A and

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4 According to these movements SG_A receives a 1 and a ½ which divided by 2 equals 0.75.
5 Note that the same principle applies for the FG.
6 For product influence: If one region (R_A) was helped more by an AC than another it receives a 1, a 0 if vice versa, a ½ if both were helped the same. If R_A receives a 1, 0, and 1 for an AC, its product influence is weight with \( W_A = 1 - \left( \frac{3}{4} \right) \approx 0.67 \). For process influence: If the movement of RA towards another was partly, fully or not related to an AC, then the other region receives a ½ , a 0 or a 1. A process influence score of 0.6 for an actor that was partly helped by an AC= ½ equals 0.6 * ½ = 0.3. For further details please see Verschuren and Arts (2004).
B, could have equal initial preferences, but may nevertheless assess the FPO differently by one voting in favor and one against. Therefore, in this thesis product and process influence, are quantified by using preferences at multiple time periods. The average across all time periods then serves as an actor’s overall score.

4.3 Measuring Policy Preferences

Various ways to measure policy preferences exist. Particularly expert surveys are a popular method. Their main drawback of biased estimates may be overcome by aggregating many different opinions of experts (e.g. Bakker et al., 2015). However, this thesis investigates one very specific policy and the observations necessary to arrive at more unbiased estimates is unlikely to be reached. Hence, qualitative document analysis is used to derive reliable policy preferences.

Three different kinds of documents were included. The main sources are minutes from the private meetings of the commission which have been made public after the negotiations were concluded (Kommissionsprotokolle). These were complemented with other documents from the commission, such as position papers (Kommissionendrucksachen). Furthermore, where information on actor preferences was lacking, documents from the regional parlaments (Landtage) were consulted using the search engine Parlamentspiegel. Finally, newspaper articles about the reform from the LexisNexis database served to close the remaining gaps.

To code the preferences on the issues of consolidation and design of the budget constraint, a two-dimensional coding scheme, shown in figure 1 below, was developed. The x-axis shows the budget constraint dimension and ranges from soft to hard. On the one hand, soft budget constraints are arrangements where “a funding source finds it impossible to keep an enterprise to a fixed budget” (Maskin, 1996, p.125). In other words, they allow regions to increasingly borrow leaving the FG unable to restrain these practices (Rodden et al., 2003, pp.7-8). Thus, the left side of the axis denotes the status quo before the constitutional reform, i.e. the ‘Golden Rule’. On the other hand, budget constraints are hard if “the entity [region] understands that it will face undesirable consequences if it spends more than it can afford” (Rodden et al., 2003, p. 4). Hence, hard budget constraints may take the form of balanced budget provisions that strictly prohibit regions to make new debts (Braun et al., 2017, p.29). Lastly, located between soft and hard, flexible budget constraints represent a middle way. For example, a balanced budget

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7 A list of the documents used is available upon request: s.hegewald@student.maastrichtuniversity.nl
8 The minutes and documents are all available online: [http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/cgi/show.php?id=1136](http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/cgi/show.php?id=1136)
9 [https://www.parlamentspiegel.de/home/erweiterte-suche.html](https://www.parlamentspiegel.de/home/erweiterte-suche.html)
10 In the Parlamentspiegel and LexisNexis the following keywords were used: ‘Föderalismus’ (Federalism), ‘Föderalismusreform’ (Federal Reform), ‘Föderalismuskommission’ (Federal Commission) for the period 01.09.2006 to 12.06.2009.
provision that allows for some additional revenue in from borrowing is regarded as flexible. The y-axis shows the consolidation dimension that ranges from self-reliant consolidation (every region is responsible on its own to consolidate) to cooperative consolidation (consolidation via a joint fund). The middle of the axis denotes additional transfers to the indebted regions (consolidation aid) which neither represent complete cooperative nor self-reliant consolidation. Rather, some regions get additional transfers enabling them to pay the interest on their existing debt without having to borrow more (Schnabel, 2017, p.141).

![Figure 1: Two-dimensional Coding Scheme for Policy Preferences during the SFR](image)

Policy preferences were measured at four crucial time periods ($T_0 - T_3$) during the negotiation and ratification phases shown in table 1 below. The four periods were chosen according to the meeting schedule of the federal commission taking the summer and winter breaks as reference points after observing that preference shifts usually occurred before these breaks.\(^{11}\) A deviation from this principle was justified for the third time period ($T_3$) when the negotiations came to a halt during the Financial Crisis in 2008 (Heinz, 2012, pp.135-6). The reform process started with the conclusion of the First Federal Reform and ended with the final decision in the Bundesrat.

\(^{11}\) For the schedule please consult Federal Commission, 2010, pp.30-4.
Table 2: Timeline SFR and Measurement Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T₀</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.09.2006</td>
<td>First Federal Reform comes into force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.12.2006</td>
<td>Establishment of the Second Federal Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.03.2007</td>
<td>1 to 4. meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.06.2007</td>
<td>Winter break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T₁</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.09.2007</td>
<td>5 to 10. meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.07.2008</td>
<td>Summer break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.10.2008</td>
<td>16. meeting (cancelled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10.2008</td>
<td>No meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.02.2009</td>
<td>17. to 19. meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.05.2009</td>
<td>Final Decision Bundestag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.06.2009</td>
<td>Final Decision Bundesrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T₂</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.12.2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.02.2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.07.2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T₃</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.02.2008</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>08.12.2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.02.2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>08.12.2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Results: Assessing Regional Influence

The following results section firstly describes the different policy preferences of the actors involved. Then, based on these preferences, the relative influence for each Land is scored. Finally, the strategies used by different Länder to influence the outcome of the SFR are analyzed.

5.1. Policy Preferences during the SFR: Who Wants What?

In contrast to the established assumption of homogenous preferences among regions, figure 2 below displays much more heterogenous preferences. Each actor’s preference is coded along the two dimensions and four time periods explained above. The arrows indicate the changes in preferences between the time periods. Note that the triangle represents the position of the FG, while the squares represent each individual Land.

At the beginning of the negotiations (T₀) shown in the top left corner of figure 2, two Länder Brandenburg (BB) and Rhineland-Palatinate (RP) advocated self-reliant consolidation and a flexible budget constraint (Brandenburg, 2007a, p.2; Der Spiegel, 2007; Die Welt 05/03/2007, p.3; Federal Commission, 2007a, p.30; Rhineland-Palatine, 2006, pp.513-6). BB’s finance minister stressed that any payments from BB towards the financially weaker Länder would be undesirable (Brandenburg, 2007a, p.2; Brandenburg, 2007b, p.3260). Furthermore, RP’s prime minister stated that he would be willing to accept a rule where some new debts would still be allowed – yet nothing stricter (Der Spiegel, 2007).

In contrast, the FG, Bavaria (BY), Baden-Württemberg (BW), Hamburg (HH), Saxony-Anhalt (SA) and North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) advocated a harder budget constraint with “very strict rules, that make it impossible to continuously over-borrow” (Federal Commission,

12 Coded data is available upon request: s.hegewald@student.maastrichtuniversity.nl
However, some leeway for new debt should remain (Baden-Württemberg, 2007, p.1153; Bavaria, 2006a; Die Welt, 13/12/2006, 18/12/2006; Federal Commission, 2007a, b; North Rhine-Westphalia, 2007, p.6894; Saxony-Anhalt, 2007, pp.1029-31). Moreover, all of them emphasized self-reliant consolidation (Bavaria, 2006b, p.6212; Bundesrat, 2006, p.399; North Rhine-Westphalia, 2007, p.6894). For instance, SA’s prime minister, stated that “Länder and municipalities have to get by with the revenue they receive” and that “the problem of pre-existing debt is not to be solved at the cost of others” (Saxony-Anhalt, 2007, p.1013).13

The hardest budget constraint was advocated by Hesse (HE), Lower-Saxony (LS), Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (MW), Saxony (SN) and Thuringia (TH). Only in very narrowly defined situations such as natural disasters should borrowing be allowed (Der Spiegel, 2006a; Die Welt, 02/01/2007; Federal Commission, 2007a, p.20; Federal Commission, 2007b, p.36-40; Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania, 2007, pp.7-8; Saxony 2007, pp.5954-5963; Thuringia, 2007). For example, MW’s finance minister stressed that shifting the burden of consolidation on future generations should not be an option: “we should not … leave our great-grandchildren the burden of our debt. Therefore, I am vouching for a strict prohibition of borrowing” (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 2007, p.8). Apart from LS, all of these Länder advocated self-reliant consolidation, whereas LS proposed the consolidation of pre-existing debt via a joint fund (Der Spiegel 2006b; Der Spiegel 2007; Die Welt, 02/01/2007; Federal Commission, 2007a, b; Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 2007; Saxony, 2007, p.5963; Thuringia, 2007, p.3).

Similar to LS, more indebted Länder, such as Berlin (BE), Bremen (HB), the Saarland (SL) and Schleswig-Holstein (SH), favored collective consolidation (Berlin 2006, p.152; Bremen, 2007a, p.2, 2007b, p.5296; Bundesrat, 2006, p.400; Die Welt, 13/12/2006; Die Welt, 28/12/2006; Die Welt, 18/01/2007; Federal Commission, 2007a, pp.8-34; Schleswig-Holstein, 2006, p.3382 and p.3416). They argued that “… every Land needs to be put into a situation where it can comply with harder budget constraints. This entails the establishment of a joint national fund servicing pre-existing debt in order to level the playing field among the Länder” (Bremen, 2007a, p.2). However, whereas HB, SH and SL were ready to accept a more flexible budget constraint, BE advocated a mere reform of the existing ‘Golden-rule’ (Berlin, 2007, p.2; Bremen, 2007b, pp.5296-5302; Die Welt, 13/12/2006; Federal Commission, 2007b).

During the negotiations (T1 and T2) shown in the top right and bottom left corner of figure 2, many Länder as well as the FG shifted their positions. Between T0 and T1, BW and RP shifted from self-reliant consolidation to cooperative consolidation by proposing their own models of joint funds. Whereas RP still advocated a flexible constraint, BW shifted to hard (Die Welt 22/05/2007, 17/07/2007; Federal Commission, 2007c, d, e).

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13 All translations are the author’s own translations.
Figure 2: Policy Preferences of Länder and FG during the SFR
Furthermore, BY hardened, while MW softened their positions on the budget constraint dimension. Between T₁ and T₂ HE shifted from self-reliant to cooperative consolidation, while BW, LS and the FG now advocated a compromise combining a hard budget constraint with consolidation aid. Apart from SA and BB all other Länder hardened their positions on the budget constraint dimension (Federal Commission, 2008a, b, c).

At the end of the negotiations (T₃), which is displayed in the bottom right corner of figure 2, most of the policy preferences of the actors converged. The outcome of the negotiations (FPO) included a hard budget constraint combined with consolidation aid for the most indebted Länder which was to be paid to equal shares by the FG and the remaining Länder (Heinz, 2012, p.133; Schnabel, 2017, p.141). Only BE, SH and MW held different preferences and abstained during ratification in the Bundesrat arguing that the consolidation aid was not high enough (BE, SH) or rejecting to pay for other Länder (MW) (Bundesrat, 2009, pp.240-52; Federal Commission, 2009a, b; Heinz, 2012, p.138-9). In sum, despite the convergence of preferences at the end of the negotiations, it became clear that regional actors differ significantly in what they want from federal constitutional change more accurately, a differentiated look on regional actors is necessary.

5.2 Scoring Regional Influence: Who Gets What?

The relative process and product influence of each actor is calculated in this section, while alternative explanations that could also account for an actor’s influence are explicitly sought for. First, the 2008 Financial Crisis was generally helpful for those actors who advocated a harder budget constraint as it made stricter deficit rules in the presence of unprecedented debt levels even more pressing (Federal Commission, 2010, p.51). Second, the Berlin Urteil of the Federal Constitutional Court in 2006, which denied Berlin further financial assistance, was frequently used as an argument against cooperative consolidation. Thus, it helped those actors that argued for self-reliant consolidation (Schnabel, 2017, p.142).

The results for product and process influence along both dimensions are displayed in table 3 below. For product influence on the budget constraint dimension HE, TH, SN and LS score highest (>0.6) as they consistently advocated a hard budget constraint congruent with the FPO. BE was the least influential actor (=0.01) as the FPO differed significantly to its preferences. The Länder in favor of flexible constraints score >0.2 but <0.3. On the consolidation dimension, BW and LS score highest at >0.6 because their proposed compromise at T₂ was adopted as the FPO. The Länder that advocated cooperative consolidation make up the next group at 0.5. Only BE and SH score lower at 0.37 as they eventually rejected the FPO.

14 Dataset is available upon request: s.hegewald@student.maastrichtuniversity.nl
The Länder and FG that opposed cooperative consolidation all score <0.2. MW is the least influential actor at 0.09 as it completely opposed to the FPO on the consolidation dimension.

The distribution of the process influence below exhibits similar patterns. For consolidation all the Länder that advocated self-reliant consolidation score <0.2. Note, that MW scores a 0, because it did not manage to move any actors towards its own preferences. The Länder that preferred cooperative consolidation all score >0.3. LS and BW again score highest (>0.8) because all actors moved towards their proposed compromise. Concerning the budget constraint, those Länder that pushed for a hard provision all score >0.15 while most Länder arguing for a more flexible regulation lay at <0.05.

Table 3: Product and Process Influence across both Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget Constraint (Product)</th>
<th>Consolidation (Product)</th>
<th>Budget Constraint (Process)</th>
<th>Consolidation (Process)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BY</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRW</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>TH</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, this section has shown that both product and process influence differ significantly among the Länder. Yet, the question of how they attain their preferences during the SFR remains. This will be answered in the next section by analyzing the strategies employed.

5.3 Coalition Building and Log-rolling during the SFR: How do Länder Get What They Want?

The dominant strategy for a Land to influence constitutional change reflects a combination of forming blocking minorities with other actors, while trading influence on less important issues for influence on salient issues (log-rolling). From the beginning of the negotiations onwards, the issues of consolidation and budget constraints have been inextricably linked with one another. ‘All is connected with all’ became a well-known saying in the
commission and characterized the negotiations as a leading maxim (e.g. Federal Commission, 2007a, c, f; 2008c, d). In this sense, it was clear from the outset, that a possible FPO had to connect both issues to find the necessary two-thirds majority among the Länder which equaled 46 out of 69 votes.

Figure 3 below shows the coalitions at the beginning of the negotiations at T₀. The size of the circle is proportional to the combined votes of Länder with equivalent preferences on both dimensions. At T₀ five Länder (BE, HB, SH, SL and LS) were united in their preference for cooperative consolidation, holding 20 votes in total. They faced a two-thirds majority of 11 Länder with 49 votes on the other end. However, crucially, both groups were divided in their preferences along the budget constraint dimension by advocating different designs. For example, BB at T₀ was united with other actors concerning their position on self-reliant consolidation, yet, divided with the same group by promoting a flexible budget constraint. This actor constellation meant that none of the coalitions, with congruent preferences on both dimensions, had the 49 votes at T₀ to come to an agreement. Thus, new coalitions had to be built.

Figure 3: Coalitions during the SFR at T₀. Note: Voting weights Bundesrat: BB = 4, BE = 4, BW = 6, BY = 6, HB = 3, HE = 5, HH = 3, LS = 6, MW = 3, NRW = 6, RP = 4, SA = 4, SH = 4, SL = 3, SN = 4, TH = 4 based on Bundesrat (2018).
Figure 4 below presents these coalition building dynamics by showing the shifts of different actors between $T_0$ and $T_1$ in the left and right panel respectively. The shifts are indicated by the arrows and the shifting *Länder* are printed in bold. With the shifts of BW and RP the actor constellation and majorities changed fundamentally. RP now formed a coalition with HB, SH and SL, giving up its position on the consolidation dimension in search for some allies on the other. Likewise, BW, built a coalition with LS now combining cooperative consolidation with a hard budget constraint. This move again highlights the interconnection between both issues. BW’s prime minister, explained the shift in position by pointing out that highly indebted *Länder* such as Berlin have no chance to consolidate their debt self-reliantly. The rationale behind a possible agreement in the commission should be to get “everyone aboard” ideally with a joint fund for cooperative consolidation, combined with a hard budget constraint (Die Welt 22/05/2007, 17/07/2007; Federal Commission, 2007c, p.146).

Now, at $T_1$, shown in the right panel of figure 4, seven *Länder* preferred cooperative consolidation and together held 30 votes, while the all the other *Länder* located at self-reliant consolidation held 39. During the SFR any group of *Länder* with 24 or more votes in the Bundesrat had the ability to block a two-thirds majority decision. Also, the FG was able to veto constitutional amendments in the Bundestag as a grand coalition held the required two-thirds majority (Heinz, 2012, p.139). Consequently, the shifts of BW and RP altered the majorities in such a way that two blocking minorities stood diametrically opposed to one another: One group of *Länder* with 30 votes was enabled to block any FPO that included self-reliant consolidation, while the other group could block a decision for cooperative consolidation holding 39 votes while knowing the FG on their side. However, the ability of the former group to block self-reliant consolidation was directly conditioned by BW’s and LS’s insistence on a hard budget constraint. Whereas, LS made explicit from the beginning of the negotiations that a fund for pre-existing debt had to be connected with strict budget rules, BW’s prime minister stated that cooperative consolidation without a prohibition of borrowing would equal “junkie politics” (Federal Commission, 2008c, p.450). Furthermore, the *Länder* advocating harder budget constraints now either possessed a blocking minority with 31 votes (BW, BY, HE, LS, SN TH) or together with the FG (HH, MW, NRW, SA) while the other *Länder* (BE, BB, HB, RP, SH, SL) were isolated. Both of these factors gave the ‘harder budget constraint’-*Länder* a very strong position. This directly impacted the influence different *Länder* were able to exert on the design of the budget constraint.
Figure 4: Coalitions and Shifts at $T_0$ and $T_1$
Figure 5 validates this finding by showing process and product influence of all Länder along the budget constraint dimension. Considering the FPO, it confirms that the isolated Länder at T₁ were the least influential group as they were unable to prevent a hard budget constraint facing two blocking minorities. All of them score <0.3. Furthermore, their process influence scores (all <0.15) show that they could not form a blocking minority against a harder budget constraint by moving other actors towards them. This meant that they had no leverage to move the FPO closer to their own preferences. Here, particularly the case of BE illustrates that isolation leads to less influence. BE (process influence =0), was unable to build any coalitions on the budget constraint dimension and hence, even less influential than the other ‘soft budget constraint’-Länder. In contrast, the Länder that were able to form blocking minorities (process influence all >0.15)¹⁵ exhibit much higher product influence (all <0.4).

To sum up, one important strategy for a Land to influence the SFR was the building of coalitions that were able to block possible FPOs contrary to the coalition’s preferences. Simply speaking, the Länder that managed to find allies either in form of the FG or other Länder managed to attain their preferences much better.

Figure 5: Länder Product and Process Influence on Budget Constraint Dimension

Despite the strong position of the Länder favoring a harder budget constraint, a package deal connecting both dimensions was still necessary to reach the required two-thirds majority as none of the existing coalitions had 46 or more votes at T₁ (see Figure 4). This problem was resolved by log-rolling between the actors.

Figure 6 below shows the coalitions and shifts between T₁ and T₂ in the first row as well as between T₂ and T₃ at the bottom row. The Länder that shifted are again printed in bold. Between T₁ and T₂, BW, LS and the FG shifted towards a compromise combining a hard budget

¹⁵ Note that SA is an outlier in this regard as their process influence is only marginally higher than that of the ‘soft/flexible’ budget constraint Länder. This finding can be explained with SA’s relatively late shift to hard.
Figure 6: Coalitions and Shifts between $T_1$, $T_2$ and $T_3$
constraint with consolidation aid. HE shifted towards cooperative consolidation, while BE, HB, HH, MW, NRW, RP, SH and SL all hardened their positions on the budget constraint dimension. The log-rolling then happened between $T_2$ and $T_3$, shown by figure 6 in the bottom row, with the movement of most Länder towards the compromise BW, LS and the FG advocated. Only BE, SH and MW still held different preferences at $T_3$. HB, RP and SL shifted to a hard budget constraint and consolidation aid, thereby trading influence on the budget constraint dimension for influence on the consolidation dimension by accepting a hard budget constraint in return for consolidation aid. In contrast, BY, HH, NRW, SN and TH accepted to grant some consolidation aid by trading it for a hard budget constraint shifting on the consolidation dimension.

Figure 7 below shows the impact these dynamics on the different influence levels of the Länder by plotting the relative product influence for both dimensions in a stacked bar chart. BY, HH, NRW, SN and TH have more influence on the budget constraint dimension, whereas the opposite is true for HB, RP and SL. For example, TH’s product influence concerning the design of the budget constraint is at 0.68 while the influence on consolidation only equals 0.13. In contrast, RP’s product influence is 0.5 for consolidation, whereas on the budget constraint dimension its influence is considerably lower (=0.29). In sum, the log-rolling between these Länder led to a situation, where their influence on the FPO more or less equaled out across the dimensions with all of them exhibiting product influence between 0.6 and 0.8. Although HB, RP and SL were less able to influence the budget constraint dimension, the log-rolling enabled them to exert more influence on consolidation. In contrast, BY, HH, NRW, SN and TH which had more influence on the budget constraint could exert less influence on the consolidation dimension.

Figure 7: Länder Product Influence on both Dimensions

However, SA and BB incurred some losses as a result of the log-rolling between the other Länder while simultaneously not successfully log-rolling themselves. Both of them gave up
influence on each of the dimensions shifting towards a hard budget constraint and consolidation aid. As a consequence, BB and SA score overall <0.6. In contrast, HE managed to benefit as it only gave up its preference for cooperative consolidation shifting towards consolidation aid which meant that it overall scored third highest with 1.18. Although SH, BE and MW were not involved in the log-rolling directly as the rejected the FPO, they benefited from the log-rolling of the others enabling them to realize some of their preferences. SH and BE thus both scored 0.37 on consolidation, whereas MW received a 0.59 at the budget constraint dimension. Lastly, BW and LS score overall highest with 1.19 and 1.27 respectively as their compromise was adopted at T₃.

To conclude, log-rolling played an important role for Länder to attain their respective preferences. Whereas some log-rolled to gain influence on one issue for influence on another issue, other Länder profited from the log-rolling of others. However, the Länder that did not successfully log-roll incurred some losses and were less able to attain their preferences.

Finally, the FG played a crucial role in facilitating this package deal. At first, the federal finance minister vehemently opposed any additional transfers from the FG to the Länder and insisted that the pre-existing debts should be serviced by the Länder themselves (Federal Commission, 2007a, b). However, the position of the FG shifted between T₁ and T₂ towards consolidation aid as vocal Länder such as BY made a commitment of the FG to prospective compensations a condition for its own commitment to the compromise (Federal Commission, 2007d, p. 186). In this sense, the FG acted as an arbiter between the different Länder facilitating the log-rolling between the actors to strike a compromise.

In conclusion, the analysis of the coalition-building and log-rolling dynamics has shown that a Land attains its preferences via the formation of blocking minorities and by trading influence across simultaneously decided issues. First, failure to find allies which enable a Land to block a FPO against its preferences result in a situation where it is relatively less able to influence the direction of constitutional change. Second, a Land can exchange influence on one dimension to be more influential on another dimension. In fact, the SFR has been only made possible, because of the log-rolling between the actors. Without a compromise neither coalition would have had the necessary two-thirds majority to change the constitution. Thus, log-rolling has been the only option to find a solution which meant that all Länder were enabled to exert some influence on one of the dimensions.
6. Conclusion

This thesis examined the strategies individual regional actors use to influence constitutional change. After showing that regional preferences are much more heterogeneous than assumed by the existing literature, it took a differentiated view on how individual Ländere can influence constitutional reform. To this end, this thesis investigated the dynamics of federal constitutional politics during the SFR drawing upon the method of ‘paired comparisons’ to operationalize the relative influence of each actor. The analysis revealed that the dominant strategy for a Land to influence constitutional change towards its own preferences, is a combination of forming blocking minorities with others, while using log-rolls to gain influence on the issues important to the Land in question. First, managing to take part in a blocking minority with other Länder or the FG gives additional importance to the preferences of a Land. For example, the Länder that advocated a hard budget constraint formed a coalition which was capable of blocking any other decision. Eventually, this led to a hard budget constraint in the FPO, rendering these Länder ultimately more influential on that dimension than the other Länder which remained isolated. Second, log-rolling is a viable strategy for a Land to gain influence on the issue it deems most important. For instance, by connecting the consolidation and budget constraint dimension, many of those Länder that incurred losses on the latter issue were able to exert influence on the former dimension. In fact, these dynamics made a package deal and an amendment of the constitution possible to begin with. Without the establishment of a connection between the issues, none of the Länder would have had enough votes to change the constitution. Here, the FG played a crucial role mediating between the different preferences of the Länder and ultimately made a compromise possible.

However, as this thesis mainly used data in form of official documents, it could only limitedly account for why the Länder and the FG changed their preferences in the first place. Thus, its findings are limited to this extent. Follow-up research could investigate this issue further by interviewing the relevant policy-makers. Yet, the findings presented here may nonetheless be applicable to other federations with similar institutional characteristics. For example, the Austrian Länder can be expected to employ similar strategies considering their identical veto powers (Benz, 2016, p.161). In contrast, the influence of the Swiss Cantons may follow different patterns as constitutional amendments in Switzerland also require a popular referendum (Watts, 2006, p.163). Nevertheless, beyond the findings of this thesis, constitutional politics in federations can be expected to stay an area where the ‘who gets what’ will remain hotly debated. Only time will tell if future cases will exhibit similar dynamics.
References


A Conflict of Interests: Determining Common Positions from Uncommon Perspectives in the Case of the EU’s Sanctions Policy during the Russia-Ukraine Crisis in 2014

Greta Koch

“… Europe has decades of experience in overcoming crises and has always emerged stronger after.”

Jean-Claude Juncker (as cited in Rusheva, 2016, p.1)

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) has recently been hit by several crises, from the Euro crisis in 2010 to the refugee crisis in 2015. While the EU has often remained unrecognised as an international actor, these recent events tested its capacity to react adequately to emerging crises (Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017). Within the realm of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), reacting in a coordinated and timely manner is difficult when twenty-eight Member States bring various interests to the negotiating table. Due to intergovernmental rules, all Member States must agree unanimously, thus decision-making processes never come about easily (Nello, 2009; De Boissieu, 2015). A major crisis that challenged the internal cohesion of the EU was the Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2014. Political tensions between Russia and Ukraine culminated in the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the war in Donbass with alleged direct involvement of Russian military (Allison, 2014; Koeth, 2016). The war has cost the lives of 10,303 people until November 2017 and is still ongoing (OHCHR, 2017). Russia’s actions constituted violations of Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and hence of multiple instances of international law (Allison, 2014). Coordinating a common response was particularly crucial as the EU needed to demonstrate that Russia’s conduct is repugnant in today’s international relations.

The twenty-eight Heads of State came together with very different priorities. While there was general agreement that Russia’s involvement in Ukraine was unacceptable, the possibility of imposing sanctions on Russia was controversial. Strong advocates for sanctions hoped to put pressure on Putin to withdraw his troops and thus minimise the security threat. Other governments were concerned about the possible negative effects of sanctions on their own economies due to

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16 Greta is currently doing her MA in European Studies at Maastricht University, with a specialisation in European Politics and International Relations. Tetiana Vasylenko acted as her thesis supervisor.
decreased trade with Russia (Dolidze, 2015; Gehring et al., 2017; Veebel & Markus, 2015; Vitkus, 2015). As the crisis progressed, the EU agreed on a three-step sanctions regime. Phase one and two consisted of diplomatic and individual restrictive measures. Hence, summits with Russia were cancelled and travel restrictions and asset freezes on responsible persons introduced after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. These measures were extensively strengthened with the introduction of phase three economic sanctions. These included general access restrictions on European markets and a trade embargo on arms (EEAS, 2015), after the war in Donbass had started and Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was downed over Ukrainian territory in July 2014 (Karolewski & Davis Cross, 2017; Kuzio, 2016). Thus, despite partial opposition, a common EU response was found. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse whether the positions of the Member States changed as the crisis progressed.

While several scholars have looked at the positions of the Member States, there is not always consensus on their opinion on sanctions. Some Member States have only scarcely been looked at in the literature. Moreover, the potential change in positions as the crisis developed has not been investigated, prompting a significant debate among scholars whether the crisis pushed the positions closer together or exposed a rift among them (Dolidze, 2015; Forsberg, 2016; Karolewski & Davis Cross, 2017; Koeth, 2016; Kuzio, 2016; Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017; Sjursen & Rosèn, 2017; Veebel & Markus, 2015; Vitkus, 2015).

This paper is trying to fill this research gap by exploring two overall problems: how difficult it is to find a common position among twenty-eight Member States and how a developing crisis affects these positions. Thus, this paper investigates the research question: how have the positions of the EU Member States towards sanctioning Russia changed as the crisis progressed? This paper compares two points in time, namely March and July 2014. The timeframe was chosen based on the introduction of the three phases of sanctions during that time, which were applied according to the severity of developments in Ukraine, illustrating the escalation of the crisis. The societal relevance of the research is twofold: highlighting the obstacles to CFSP decision-making explains why the EU is often criticised for its slow reactions to crucial issues. Thus, it is important to consider diverging positions and how they are reconciled. Secondly, investigating whether positions change in a developing crisis shows whether the EU can realign and hence react adequately when facing a crisis, despite such diverging interests. To answer this research question, Policy Frame Analysis is applied to determine the positions of all Member States at the two points in time.

This paper begins by elaborating on the intergovernmental nature of CFSP decision-making. Following, the existing literature on diverging positions on sanctioning Russia is discussed. The next chapter outlines the analytical framework of this study. In the analysis chapter, the
positions of the EU Member States are assessed, grouped according to the policy frames they represent. Furthermore, it is investigated how the positions have changed by July 2014. Lastly, the conclusion summarises the findings and their contribution.

2. The Intergovernmental Nature of CFSP

To illustrate the challenge to find common ground among EU members, one needs to comprehend why CFSP is of such delicate nature. This chapter explains how CFSP works and why this policy domain has remained intergovernmental.

While most EU policy areas developed supranationally with decision-making based on majorities, CFSP is dominated by intergovernmental procedures (Gehring et al., 2017; Koeth, 2016; Wagner, 2003). The principles and guidelines of CFSP are defined by the European Council, consisting of the heads of state of all EU Member States (De Boissieu, 2015; Nello, 2009). Based on those guidelines, the Foreign Affairs Council, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the EU, decides unanimously how the EU should proceed in external affairs (Gehring et al., 2017; Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2002; Nello, 2009). While each Member State could influence international developments unilaterally, there are “politics of scale” (Wagner, 2003, p.583), making the collectivity of Member States more influential together. No Member State has an alternatively strong venue to react to international crises (Sjursen & Rosén, 2017). Due to the high salience and delicacy of foreign policy, Member States are least willing to give up any of their sovereignty in this domain, as they wish to protect their national interest (Dawson & Witte, 2013; Gehring et al., 2017; Wagner, 2003). As Elisabeth Guigou, the former French Minister of Europe, expressed it, “one never gives up one’s sovereignty [in foreign affairs], one at most shares it, and that only where one cannot go alone anymore” (Guigou as cited in Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2002, p.268). That is why no single Member State may be overruled (Dawson & Witte, 2013; Koeth, 2016). The supranational procedures used in other policy domains could produce outcomes different from what individual Member States might agree to, which in foreign policy is inadmissible (Gehring et al., 2017).

These intergovernmental rules of CFSP pose practical problems to its efficiency. When consensus cannot be reached, the European Council is unable to give instructions and thus react to international developments (Bretherton & Vogler, 2006; Dawson & Witte, 2013). Still, consensus can be achieved through several channels. Scholars have argued that cooperation in CFSP develops through external pressure, where high issue salience makes a common response urgent (Koeth, 2016; Pinder & Shishkov, 2002). Furthermore, a policy is seen to be more successful when one Member State promotes it extensively, thus signifying leadership in the Council (Koeth,
Another key factor to overcome deadlock is socialization among the Member States. Over time, the EU Member States have developed a sense of common purpose that incentivizes consensus-building rather than pursuing national interest (Juncos & Popmorska, 2008; Sjursen & Rosén, 2017; Tonra, 2003). Thus, unanimity does not automatically entail that all Member States are unquestionably in favour. Overall, CFSP is a valuable tool for the EU to act collectively in external affairs. While it remains intergovernmental to protect national interests, this poses problems to the efficiency. Nevertheless, deadlock can be overcome through several channels.

3. Debate on Member State Positions on sanctioning Russia

This chapter investigates what has already been discussed in previous literature on the Member States’ positions towards sanctioning Russia. A popular framework that grouped the Member States according to their relationships with Russia was developed by Leonard and Popescu (2007), prior to the crisis. They divided the Member States into five groups, depending on their willingness to impede common EU positions to uphold their ties with Russia. While categorizing the EU Member States helps to grasp the bigger picture, these relationships have fundamentally changed since 2007.

Looking at the sanctions, there is consensus among scholars on which Member States are the strong supporters and opponents. The supporters (the Baltics, Poland, Sweden and the UK) push hard for sanctions on Russia despite the costs they might entail. Other advocates of sanctions that scholars can agree on are the Netherlands and Germany. While the Netherlands initially took on a neutral position, it started to push for sanctions after the downing of flight MH17. Germany had developed strong ties with Russia, but strongly condemned Russia’s actions in Ukraine and pushed for sanctions as the crisis progressed. There is also agreement among scholars that Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary and Italy constitute the strong opponents, as they have openly criticised the policy because of possible negative impacts on EU economies (Dolidze, 2015; Forsberg, 2016; Karolewski & Davis Cross, 2017; Koeth, 2016; Kuzio, 2016; Sjursen & Rosén, 2017; Veebel & Markus, 2015; Vitkus, 2015).

However, disagreement on Member State positions can also be identified. While some scholars emphasised that Austria has been openly criticising the sanctions policy due to negative economic impact (Karolewski & Davis Cross, 2017; Kuzio, 2016; Vitkus, 2015), others identified Austria as in favour of sanctions due to Russia’s illegal conduct (Sjursen & Rosén, 2017). Although one would assume that Finland was in the same security dilemma as the Baltics and supports sanctions (Vitkus, 2015), Dolidze (2015) found that the government expressed concern about their
economic impact. The same debate can be identified in the case of Slovakia and Slovenia (Dolidze, 2015; Sjursen & Rosén, 2017; Veebel & Markus, 2015; Vitkus, 2015). Moreover, Vitkus (2015) pointed out that Romania is a clear supporter of sanctions due to its difficult history with Russia, while Kuzio (2016) found that the Romanian government sympathises with Putin. France was found to be reluctant to support sanctions by some scholars because of its business interests (Kuzio, 2016; Sjursen & Rosén, 2017), while others see France as a strong supporter (Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017; Vitkus, 2015). Thus, there are several cases where the positions of the Member States on sanctioning Russia have been interpreted differently. Furthermore, the cases of Belgium, Denmark, Croatia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Spain have only scarcely been looked at.

Another clear debate can be identified on whether the Russia-Ukraine crisis led to a convergence of positions among the Member States. Sjursen and Rosén (2017), Orenstein and Kelemen (2017) and Vitkus (2015) indicated that the Member States have long been divided on how to treat Russia, but the urgency of the crisis and a strong socialisation process enabled them to align their positions. However, Koeth (2016) found that the crisis exposed a greater rift among the Member States due to concerns about the impact of sanctions on their own economies. Furthermore, Karolewski and Davis Cross (2017) stressed that a convergence of interest among twenty-eight states is unrealistic, as even actors in more monolithic systems rarely converge. Thus, they suggest that unanimity was not based on complete agreement, but achieved through other channels.

As a result, this paper will contribute to the literature by updating the five categories established by Leonard and Popescu (2007) to examine where the Member States stand after the crisis. This provides new insights into positions of Member States that are disputed and those that have not been looked at. Furthermore, it contributes to the debate on converging interests by analysing the positions of the Member States at the beginning of the crisis as well as at its peak, assessing whether the positions changed and converged as the crisis progressed.

4. Analytical Framework

This chapter provides the justification of the case selection of this research, explaining why it focuses on the Ukraine crisis, the sanctions policy and the respective timeframe. Furthermore, the Policy Frame Analysis, its operationalisation and data collection methods are explained.
4.1. Case Selection

This paper explores two overall problems: the difficulty to find common positions among EU Member States and how a developing crisis affects these positions. The Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2014 is a very suitable case to investigate both. For one, it constitutes a recent example of an international crisis for which a timely response was crucial. Developments escalated quickly, as only a few months passed between first tensions at the Euromaidan protests and the war in Donbass. With a constant rise in urgency to react, one can clearly observe how positions change in an escalating crisis. To underline differing interests and relationships with Russia, this research looks at the sanctions policy, which caused strong disagreements. Although there was general agreement that Russia had breached international law, the sanctions were contested. Especially the phase three economic sanctions were feared to have negative effects on business and thus clearly illustrate the difficulty to come to a common EU position.

Within the selected time frame, first the positions in March 2014 are assessed, which includes the annexation of Crimea and the imposition of phase one and two of the sanctions policy, consisting of asset freezes and travel bans against responsible individuals. The research then compares these positions to July 2014, after the War in Donbass had already started and the Malaysian Aircraft MH17 had been downed by a Russian missile. By that time, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a new set of heavy economic sanctions. Hence, there was more urgency to react and come to a common position than in March 2014, while the reluctance to agree to economic sanctions was higher than when imposing phases one and two. The comparison shows the impact of a developing crisis and of increasing severity of measures on differing positions, illustrating whether the EU can converge distinct positions when it is urgently needed to collectively respond.

4.2. Using Policy Frame Analysis

Policy Frame Analysis is a helpful tool to extract such distinct positions from a discourse level. A frame is defined as a “selected representation of a social phenomenon” (Radulova, 2009, p.3). Thus, politicians frame political issues in a way that suits their interests and gathers support for their position. Within these frames, they argue why their policy solution to a pressing problem is the most convincing (Radulova, 2009). This process involves making certain aspects of a problem salient to promote their own interpretation of overcoming it. Salience is here defined as “making a piece of information noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Therefore, striking keywords are considered to assess the salience that is attached to political statements.
Radulova (2009) suggests differentiating between four dimensions of a policy frame. The normative dimension judges a certain situation based on the values attached to it, for instance judging the severity of a crisis or projecting common European values. At the constitutive dimension, the issue is constituted as a public problem to gather public support, for instance, a security issue or economic risks that affect citizens. At the cognitive dimension, a frame describes the causes that led to the problem. Finally, the policy dimension offers the solution to the perceived problem. Hence, Radulova’s framework (2009) is very suitable to apply to the case of sanctions against Russia, as one can extract the positions on sanctions, the way the crisis is assessed and how perceived problems are framed. When applying the analytical framework, this paper will deconstruct the statements made by the government of each of the Member States into these four dimensions. That way, one can identify their positions towards sanctioning Russia, based on the political values they wish to project and the interests they wish to pursue. As such, it is possible to detect the motivation behind the positions which is very helpful when determining how distinct positions come together, why they changed in July and whether there is willingness to align with other EU Member States. In the end, this gives a clear picture on whether and why the twenty-eight EU Member States were in favour of sanctioning Russia.

Based on this framework, informed choices could be made on the methodology. To conduct policy frames analysis, the relevant frames are usually extracted from the existing literature. Since such an analysis is missing for this particular case, the frames were identified by applying the coding process of conventional content analysis. This includes inductive category development, where codes are not predetermined based on prior theory, but based on keywords found in the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Therefore, all sources were read through twice; once to detect what actors said on sanctioning Russia, and the second time to highlight the keywords that framed their position as particularly crucial or salient. The keywords were collected in codebooks for all Member States, but not structured in any order as part of the inductive category development to avoid bias by letting the content flow directly from the text. To put the positions together into their relevant frames, the keywords were compared across all Member States to find similarities among their positions. Similar positions then constitute a policy frame and each one was analysed based on the four dimensions provided by Radulova (2009). Applied to the case, the codes in the normative dimension determined that a government would judge the crisis based on the severity of Russia’s actions, its past relations with Russia and whether it was important to project EU unity. The constitutive dimension depended on the security threat that was perceived through Russia’s

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17 One example of the coding procedure can be found in the Annex. The complete codebook can be made available upon request.
aggression and the possible damage to EU business if sanctions backfire, thus framing a public problem. In the cognitive dimension, the causes were perceived as the imbalance of interests between Russia, Ukraine and the EU. Lastly, the policy dimension constituted whether sanctions should be applied or not. That way, five frames have been identified. This procedure was applied to sources from both time frames. When looking at July 2014, again stating the four dimensions for each frame would be repetitive, thus only the changes are assessed to clearly highlight whether the positions aligned. The framework has been visualised in Table 1.

Table 1: Policy Frames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames</th>
<th>F1 Pushing for Sanctions</th>
<th>F2 Moderate Advocates</th>
<th>F3 Neutrals that carry the EU position</th>
<th>F4 Reluctantly Agree</th>
<th>F5 Opposers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key-words</td>
<td>Clear violation, disaster, illegal, security threat, all appropriate measures</td>
<td>Unacceptable, dialogue, solidarity, negotiations, diplomatic sanctions</td>
<td>Neutral, breach of law, partnership, solidarity, European values</td>
<td>Peaceful solutions, Russia relations, risk, avoid, EU compliance</td>
<td>Inappropriate, risk, relations, economic interest, against sanctions, veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member States</td>
<td>Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, UK</td>
<td>Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Sweden</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Portugal</td>
<td>Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Malta</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative dimension</td>
<td>Harshly condemning Russia's actions</td>
<td>Harshly condemning Russia's actions; need for dialogue</td>
<td>Russia's behaviour in breach of law; dialogue, remain partners with Russia</td>
<td>Russia's behaviour in breach of law; dialogue, remain partners with Russia</td>
<td>Russia's behaviour inappropriate; dialogue, remain partners with Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutive dimension</td>
<td>Security threat</td>
<td>Solidarity with Eastern Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Defend European values</td>
<td>Risks if relations with Russia worsen</td>
<td>Risks if relations with Russia worsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive dimension</td>
<td>Imbalance of interests</td>
<td>Imbalance of interests</td>
<td>Imbalance of interests; protection of minorities</td>
<td>Appeals Russian-speaking minority</td>
<td>Appeals Russian-speaking minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy dimension</td>
<td>Pushing for sanctions</td>
<td>Sanctions to get Russia to cooperate</td>
<td>Support common EU position; concerned about phase three</td>
<td>Hope to avoid sanctions, but ensure EU compliance</td>
<td>Against sanctions, possible veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes by July 2014</td>
<td>Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, UK, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Romania</td>
<td>Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Latvia</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain</td>
<td>Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
<td>Austria, France, Hungary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own table based on Radulova (2009).
4.3. Data and Sources

The dataset consists of statements from governments of the Member States as they represent the official national position in the European Council and Council of Foreign Affairs. Their statements are taken from archives of parliamentary debates, press releases and official statements of their respective Head of State or Government or Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The selection of sources was based on a keyword search of “sanctions Russia” in the database of the official websites of the Foreign Ministry, Parliament and Government of each Member State in the timeframe. This dataset was further triangulated by using newspaper articles that directly quoted the position of a respective Member State, available in English, Dutch, German, Italian and Spanish\textsuperscript{18}, adding to the reliability of the research findings. The newspaper articles were selected based on a keyword search in Google using the name of the Member State, the timeframe and “sanctions Russia”. Only newspaper articles that added to all policy frame dimensions and included a clear policy suggestion towards sanctioning Russia were considered to have a clear overview in the analysis. Furthermore, these newspapers have also been selected in the works of previous scholars in the field, providing their reliability. Of all articles found, 88 were randomly sampled and analysed, making up half of the dataset, to uphold the internal validity of the analysis and avoid selection bias (Liamputtong, 2011). That way, a concise analysis of 192 sources was undertaken\textsuperscript{19}. Naturally, the limited language competences and availability of sources led to an unproportionable selection of sources per Member State. However, the analysis of all four policy dimensions was possible for all Member States, thus fulfilling the research goal of this paper and avoiding possible limitations to its reliability.

5. Framing EU Member State Positions on sanctioning Russia in March 2014

By applying the analytical framework and methodology to the dataset, this chapter provides the analysis of the identified policy frames. The way they frame their position on sanctioning Russia in March 2014 is assessed through the four dimensions.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} Based on the language competences of the author.
\textsuperscript{19} Additional sources and articles are available on request.
\textsuperscript{20} Due to the limited wordcount, not all details found in the analysis of positions could be mentioned. A more detailed overview over the findings in the analysis of all sources used can be made available upon request.
5.1 Frame 1: Pushing for Sanctions

The first policy frame consists of Member States strongly pushing for diplomatic sanctions in March 2014, including the Baltics, France, Poland and the UK. When judging the situation in Ukraine in the normative dimension, all countries in this frame harshly condemn Russia’s actions as clear violations of Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and its constitution (Foreign & Commonwealth Office & The Rt Hon William Hague, 2014; MFA Republic of Latvia, 2014a, 2014b; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014b; Riigikogu, 2014a). Especially the referendum in Crimea was negatively connotated, calling it a “pseudo-referendum” that constitutes a clear “manoeuvre” by Russia (Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014d, para.3). All governments in this frame support the interim government in Ukraine, while Lithuania and Poland further highlight the need to show solidarity with the European aspirations of Ukraine (Moscow Needs Our Money, 2014, March 10; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014c). Looking at their relationships with Russia, France, Poland and the UK want to maintain the good relations they have built but point out that these need to be based on trust and cooperation, indicating that the relations will deteriorate if Russia does not change course (Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014b; MFA Republic of Poland, 2014; Foreign & Commonwealth Office & The Rt Hon William Hague, 2014).

To constitute the issue as a public problem, in the constitutive dimension Russia’s strategy is framed as a security threat, calling it the “most serious crisis since the end of the Cold War” (Fabius as cited in Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014b, para.3; cf. Riigikogu, 2014b). The governments stress that Russia’s violation of borders sets a dangerous precedent, questioning the territorial integrity and leading to a loss of stability in “the whole of Europe” (Grybauskaite as cited in President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014a; cf. Foreign & Commonwealth Office & The Rt Hon William Hague, 2014; Riigikogu, 2014b). Moreover, Poland expresses concern about the security of the Baltics with Russian minorities living there. Lithuania shares that concern and calls to coordinate defence actions with NATO, constituting a strong public security problem (Moscow Needs Our Money, 2014, March 10; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014a).

When analysing the causes of the crisis in the cognitive dimension, the countries address the imbalance of interests with Ukraine aspiring to integrate into the EU, which contradicts Russia’s aim of keeping Ukraine in its orbit. They argue that these relations do not generate a choice but emphasise that Ukraine should have ties with both Russia and the EU – however, they need to communicate these interests with each other (Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014c; Żylinska, 2014, March 5). The government of Poland further argues that the crisis shows the need
for stronger integration in CFSP, as this could have facilitated signing the Association Agreement sooner, and thus might have prevented the crisis (Moscow Needs Our Money, 2014, March 10).

In the policy dimension, the countries urge to pressure Russia through diplomatic sanctions if de-escalation cannot be achieved. They stress that sanctions need to be carried by the whole EU in unison to be effective (Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014a; MFA Republic of Latvia, 2014b; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014c; Żylińska, 2014, March 5). Furthermore, they call for economic and political support for the Ukrainian government to stabilise the country and restore confidence in the government (Embassy of France in Washington D.C., 2014e; MFA Republic of Latvia, 2014a; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014b; Republic of Estonia MFA, 2014). As a result, the keywords used to frame the positions of France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the UK are similarly strongly connotated, clearly condemning Russia’s behaviour in Ukraine and wanting to put pressure to get Russia to de-escalate the situation. To point out the urgency to react in unison, the countries present the crisis as a security threat to the whole continent and underline the need to stand in solidarity with Ukraine, while partly criticising the EU’s previous approach.

5.2 Frame 2: Moderate Advocates

The second frame consists of Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden. While these countries are also supporters of sanctions, they do not frame the issue as drastically. Similar to the first frame, they condemn Russia’s behaviour based on the violation of international law, which sets a dangerous precedent that cannot remain unanswered (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014a; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, 2014a; Guvernul Romaniei MFA, 2014a; Moodley, 2014, March 12; Rutte: te vroeg voor sancties tegen Rusland, 2014, March 6). They also stress the need for the response to be strong and consistent, as this strengthens the EU’s standing in international relations. However, different from the previous frame, these countries strongly accentuate that initiating negotiations with Russia and Ukraine is their main priority to work on a diplomatic solution with all sides (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014; Embassy of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Belgium, 2014; Timmermans: EU niet verdeeld over sancties Rusland, 2014, March 4). The Foreign Minister of Germany further emphasised that working on a political solution is more effective than formulating harsh statements that prevent productive dialogue, thus also referring to statements made by EU members in the first frame (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014a). Instead, they reiterate that the confrontational logic of the Cold War is over, and cooperation must start (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014; Moodley, 2014, March 12).
In the constitutive dimension, these countries do not frame a public problem based on the security threat perceived for their own country but underline their solidarity with the Baltics and other countries in the neighbourhood of Ukraine who face a risk of regional disintegration (Charlemagne, 2014, March 3; Chiriac, 2014, March 18; Fabius und Steinmeier drohen Russland mit weiteren Sanktionen, 2014, March 11). Thus, the problem of security is still used to make the issue more urgent, but it is not as pronounced as in the first frame. When looking at the cognitive dimension, these countries also assess the imbalance of interests as a cause of the crisis and highlight that Ukraine shouldn’t have to choose between two sides, as cooperation would be advantageous for everyone (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014a; Republic of Croatia MFA, 2014a). Furthermore, they stress the need to clarify that the EU’s aspirations in the Eastern Neighbourhood, including the Association Agreement with Ukraine, are not directed against Russia but want to talk about the disadvantages Russia perceives through such EU frameworks (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014).

In the policy dimension, the governments voice their support for sanctions in solidarity with Ukraine but argue that they would prefer a diplomatic solution. However, sanctions are necessary after the annexation of Crimea as Russia refused to cooperate (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014a; Baker, 2014, March 4; Chiriac, 2014, March 18; Reinfeldt expects further sanctions for Russia, 2014, March 20; Republic of Croatia MFA, 2014a). Furthermore, they underline that in March 2014, they will not yet consider phase three sanctions, as phase two constitutes an appropriate balance between pressuring Russia and still pursuing diplomatic solutions (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014; Rutte: sancties zijn een logische vervolgstap, 2014, March 6). As a result, the second frame consists of countries that support diplomatic sanctions against Russia in March 2014 for pressuring Russia to cooperate but frame it more cautiously than countries in the previous frame. Moreover, they highlight the need for constructive dialogue. The constitutive dimension is not as drastically framed either, as they do not perceive a threat for their own citizens but rather emphasise the solidarity they want to show with the Eastern neighbourhood.

5.3 Frame 3: Neutrals that carry the EU Position

The third frame consists of countries who do not have any pressing interests to defend in the Russia-Ukraine crisis and present their position as rather neutral or merely want to support the official EU position. These include Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy and Portugal. In the normative dimension, this frame does not much differ from the previous one, judging Russia’s behaviour as an unacceptable breach of international law but stressing the priority of engaging in constructive dialogue with all sides, including Russia, to diffuse the situation (BELGA, 2014, March 24; Český rozhlas Radio Praha, 2014, March 4; Farnesina, 2014a; MFA
Denmark, 2014b; MFA Hungary, 2014a; Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014c). That way one could avoid for Russia to be internationally isolated, remaining a partner of the EU and avoid a new Cold War situation (Farnesina, 2014b; Freeman & Waterfield, 2014, March 20). Especially Austria stresses its wish to remain neutral in the conflict and instead help to build bridges between the conflicting sides (Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014c). Moreover, the Czech government emphasised that it would not cut its important economic ties with Russia over the crisis (Český rozhlas Radio Praha, 2014, March 4).

Different from the previous frames, in the constitutive dimension the countries in this group do not perceive a security threat but underline the need to defend European values in its Eastern neighbourhood (MFA Denmark, 2014c; TPN/LUSA, 2014, March 18). They reiterate the need for solidarity with Ukraine, further underlined by the Czech Republic with own historic experiences with Russian aggression, to stress the need to unite against such behaviour as a European community (Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014a; MFA Czech Republic, 2014). In the cognitive dimension, these countries reiterate the imbalance of interests as a cause of the crisis, but further highlight the need to strengthen the protection of minorities and grant more autonomy to diverse regions in Ukraine, which could prevent further conflict with the Russian-speaking minorities (Farnesina, 2014b; Kingdom of Belgium MFA 2014a; MFA Denmark, 2014a; Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014b). Portugal stressed that to avoid further escalation, positions towards Russia need to be expressed more moderately (TPN/LUSA, 2014, March 6).

In the policy dimension, these countries stress their support for a common EU position more than their actual support for sanctions. While they affirm that diplomatic sanctions are an important signal to defend European values, they argue the policy will not achieve a change in Russia’s behaviour (Český rozhlas Radio Praha, 2014, March 4; Kingdom of Belgium MFA, 2014a; MFA Denmark, 2014b; Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014c). Furthermore, they suggest that economic sanctions would increase tensions and have a negative impact on EU business (Český rozhlas Radio Praha, 2014, March 4, March 4; MFA Hungary, 2014c; Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014c; Vindobona, 2014, March 24). Thus, their support for sanctions is rather moderate compared to previous frames. Nevertheless, they voice their support for political and financial assistance for Ukraine, although being split on whether signing the Association Agreement would be fruitful (Farnesina, 2014b; MFA Hungary, 2014a; Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014b; TPN/LUSA, 2014, March 18). As a result, the countries in the third frame express their opinion towards Russia more moderately than previous frames, while justifying the need to act based on the defence of European values. In the analysis of causes of the crisis, they point to mistakes made by the Ukrainian government concerning minority rights, rather than solely
focusing on the imbalance of interests. Therefore, they support diplomatic sanctions to send a signal of solidarity, but do not see it as a means of impact and express concern about further economic measures.

5.4 Frame 4: Reluctantly Agree

The fourth frame consists of countries that are against sanctions but do not want to stand in the way of a common EU response, namely Cyprus, Finland, Greece and Malta. Again, in the normative dimension Russia’s behaviour in Ukraine is judged as a clear breach of international law and all efforts should be focused on finding a peaceful solution that satisfies all sides (EnetEnglish, 2014, March 4; Gvern ta’ Malta, 2014; MFA Finland, 2014a; Republic of Cyprus MFA, 2014a). However, especially Cyprus underlines that it does not want to endanger its traditional alliance with Russia (Evripidou, 2014, March 8; Hazou, 2014, March 21).

Different from previous frames, in the cognitive dimension, the need to act is not framed based on Russia’ behaviour but through possible risks the countries face if their relations with Russia worsen. They point out to have greater economic risks than other EU Member States if ties with Russia are cut, as well as being highly dependent on Russian gas (Greece opposes Sanctions on Russia, 2014, March 6; Malta Independent, 2014, March 26; Nalbantoglu et al., 2014, March 15). Thus, one would need to avoid a Cold War situation at all costs (Greece disagrees with imposition of sanctions on Russia, 2014, March 5). In the cognitive dimension, instead of assessing the imbalance of interests between the EU and Russia in Ukraine, the governments in this frame only reiterate the need to appease the Russian-speaking minority (EnetEnglish, 2014, March 4; Gvern ta’ Malta, 2014; Republic of Cyprus MFA, 2014a).

Thus, when it comes to the policy dimensions, due to their economic and political relations with Russia, they hope to avoid sanctions (Malta Independent, 2014, March 6; Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos warns against EU sanctions on Russia, 2014, March 5). Nevertheless, they want to ensure EU compliance and avoid blocking a unanimous EU decision (EnetEnglish, 2014, March 4; Evripidou, 2014, March 8; Hazou, 2014, March 21; Nalbantoglu et al., 2014, March 15; Republic of Cyprus MFA, 2014a). As a result, strong economic relations with Russia can already lead to an opposition to sanctions, even on a diplomatic basis, but the wish for a common EU response is still regarded as more important.
5.5 Frame 5: Opposers

This frame consists of countries that voice their opposition to sanctions and threaten to prevent a common EU decision. These include Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Already the normative dimension is framed differently from all previous groups, as they do point to the need to preserve Ukraine’s sovereignty, but instead of condemning Russia’s behaviour they merely refer to it as “inappropriate” (The Republic of Bulgaria MFA, 2014a, cf. Republic of Slovenia MFA, 2014). Furthermore, they underline the need to preserve their good relations and economic ties with Russia that would deteriorate if the EU took a tough stance (González, 2014, March 4; More timid than the Poles, 2014, March 6; PM Bratusek Attending EU Summit on Ukraine, 2014, March 6).

In the constitutive dimension, the governments frame the need to act based on risks to their security, however not caused by Russia’s behaviour, but in case EU relations with Russia deteriorate. The countries would face a disruption of gas supplies and therefore their general infrastructure, as well as migratory pressure for those countries bordering Ukraine (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014, March 5; More timid than the Poles, 2014, March 6). Like the previous frame, in the cognitive dimension they solely point to the need to strengthen the protection of minority rights in Ukraine (Leviev-Sawyer, 2014, March 5).

In the policy dimension, the governments state to be against the imposition of sanctions as their economic interests are the top priority (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2014; Hrbeková, 2014, March 21; The Republic of Bulgaria MFA, 2014b). The Bulgarian government even threatened to veto sanctions on EU level if considered to be too strong (PM Oresharski does not rule out Bulgarian veto on possible heavy EU sanctions against Russia, 2014, March 21). Therefore, the governments in this frame recognise the illegality of Russia’s actions but do not condemn them as strictly, while putting economic risks and good relations with Russia above European solidarity. Overall, the positions on sanctioning Russia in March 2014 varied greatly, depending on different variables: how strongly Russia’s behaviour was deemed unacceptable, whether the country wanted to preserve its relations with Russia, whether the Ukraine crisis posed a security threat, and how important European solidarity was valued. Thus, one needs to assess whether they aligned when facing further escalation and the possibility of imposing economic sanctions.

6. Changes by July 2014
By July 2014, the crisis had escalated into a war between Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists backed by Russia in the Donbass region. On July 17\textsuperscript{th}, the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over that territory, killing 298 people on board. This escalation caused the Member States to discuss the imposition of economic sanctions, which in March 2014 many already seemed opposed to. This chapter outlines whether their positions changed.

First, it needs to be noted that all EU Member States framed the MH17 incident as a serious tragedy that needs to be investigated in order to determine the responsible parties. However, the positions on sanctions still varied. While Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and UK continued to call for strong sanctions as part of the first frame, they were joined by Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands and Romania. They condemned the shootdown of MH17 in the strongest terms, being “shocked, bewildered and angry” (Rutte as cited in Government of the Netherlands, 2014). All of them emphasised that the incident illustrated that political steps had failed. Instead, strong economic sanctions that clearly impact Russia would be necessary to end its aggression in Ukraine (AFP/The Local, 2014, July 29; Borger et al., 2014, July 29; Farnesina, 2014c; Guvernul Romaniei MFA, 2014b; Kingdom of Belgium MFA 2014b; Malta Independent, 2014, July 22; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014e; Riigikogu, 2014c). Especially Poland, Lithuania and Estonia reiterated that the tragedy confirmed the security threat. Previous EU responses were considered insufficient, making the imposition of economic measures urgent (MFA Poland, 2014b; President of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014d; Riigikogu, 2014c). When looking at reasons why governments changed their position towards sanctions, the case for the Netherlands is obvious, as the MH17 crash led to the death of 193 Dutch citizens, which needed a strong political response (Government of the Netherlands, 2014). Italy suggested strengthened measures partly because Foreign Minister Mogherini aspired to become High Representative of the EU and needed to contradict accusations of being closely associated with Putin (Ucraina, Mogherini: “Estendere sanzioni alla Russia”, 2014, July 24). However, most governments in this frame underlined that it was the drastic MH17 incident that changed their sentiment (AFP/The Local, 2014, July 29; MH17 plane crash: EU to widen Russia sanctions, 2014, July 22; Ponta: we can afford an increase in sanctions for Russia, 2014, July 25).

The second frame in July 2014 still consists of Croatia, Germany, Ireland and Sweden while being joined by Latvia. These countries also underline that the incident requires a stronger EU response, increasing the economic costs for Russia’s behaviour. However, they reiterate that the crisis needs to be solved through dialogue, thus taking a more moderate position than the previous frame (Auswärtiges Amt, 2014b; Die Bundesregierung, 2014; EU sanctions against Russia were inevitable – Latvian President, 2014, July 2014; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of
Ireland, 2014c; Republic of Croatia MFA, 2014b; Sweden pushes for tougher sanctions, 2014, July 17). Latvia’s change to a more moderate position is linked to economic concerns in the country, as economic sanctions would have a stronger impact on trade with Russia than the ones discussed in March. Nevertheless, the government acknowledges that any further escalation would have a much more negative impact than imposing sanctions (MFA Republic of Latvia, 2014c).

The neutral position in July 2014 is taken up by the Czech Republic, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain, thus joined by previously critical Member States. They emphasise that the EU needs to remain consistent in its attitude and thus support the EU position on economic sanctions, although preferring a minimised impact on EU business in return (Government of the Czech Republic, 2014; Jokelainen et al., 2014, July 29). Moreover, they emphasise that a peaceful solution needs to be found by means of negotiations with Russia (EFE, 2014, July 18; MFA Finland, 2014b). When looking at reasons for the change in positions, the governments stress that the MH17 incident was a “game changer” that necessitated for the EU to take stronger action (Stubb as cited in YLE, 2014, July 29; cf. Spain calls for answers on Malaysian jet crash, 2014, July 18).

In July 2014, the fourth frame still consists of Cyprus and Greece, though now joined by the previous strong opposers Bulgaria, Slovakia and Slovenia. They agree that the MH17 incident illustrates the necessity to bring the Ukrainian conflict to an end without delay, by continuing negotiations and implementing a durable ceasefire (Businesses worried about Russia Sanctions, 2014, July 29; Hellenic Republic MFA, 2014a; Republic of Cyprus MFA, 2014b; The Sofia Globe, 2014, July 18). Although these countries do not consider a third stage of sanctions necessary as it might have a negative impact on the EU, they still want to support a common EU position (Kiska: sanctions against Russia are sufficient, 2014, July 18; Outgoing Bulgarian Foreign Minister Slams New Sanctions against Russia, 2014, July 30; Terenzani, 2014, July 21; The Republic of Bulgaria MFA, 2014b). Thus, facing the MH17 tragedy, even the previously strong opposers to sanctions show support. However, they have some reservations to ensure a minimalised impact on EU business (Businesses worried about Russia Sanctions, 2014, July 29; Hellenic Republic MFA, 2014b; Republic of Cyprus MFA, 2014c).

Lastly, the opposition frame is represented by Austria, France and Hungary. They argue that sanctions would not solve any of the current problems but instead hurt the entire EU economy (Die Furcht vor dem Boomerang Effekt, 2014, July 25; Prime Minister’s Office of Hungary, 2014). Instead, the importance of economic relations and continued dialogue with Russia is highlighted (Republik Österreich Parlament, 2014d). All three opposing countries base their position on economic interests. For one, Austria had just signed a deal to construct the South Stream pipeline. France changed its position most drastically, as in March it was one of the countries strongly
pushing for sanctions against Russia. However, France was worried about the weapons embargo as part of phase three, due to its contract with Russia to sell two warships and feared to lose millions if it was cancelled (RFI, 2014, July 22).

Overall, in July 2014, most of the countries changed their positions in favour of sanctions, while only very few developed a stronger opposition towards the policy. Since unanimity was achieved, this result is not surprising. However, looking at the arguments of the Member States, this shows that an escalating crisis and dramatic events like the downing of MH17 lead to a stronger alliance among the Member States to agree to a common response. Despite previously mentioned reservation towards sanctions based on economic interests, in the end it seemed more important to find a common response to Russia’s unacceptable behaviour. As a result, these findings illustrate how difficult it is to come to a common position but show that finding a common European response is often a priority in times of crisis.

7. Conclusion

While the EU has often been criticised for its crisis management, this capacity was tested during the Russia-Ukraine crisis in 2014. The EU needed to demonstrate that Russia’s conduct in Ukraine was unacceptable. The rapid escalation of the crisis needed a quick response, testing the EU’s ability to align distinct positions. Therefore, the research question investigated was how the positions of the EU Member States towards sanctioning Russia changed as the crisis progressed. This paper looked at the positions of all twenty-eight Member States, once in March and once in July 2014.

The Policy Frame Analysis revealed that the position of Member States depended on several variables. In the normative dimension, the Member States judged Russia’s conduct differently, as the strong condemnation in the first group was increasingly toned down with each frame. Furthermore, the more moderately the situation was judged, the more the need for constructive dialogue was pronounced. Often, moderate expressions were based on economic ties with Russia that Member States did not want to endanger through a tough stance, especially in frames four and five. In the constitutive dimension, strong supporters of sanctions stressed a security threat to their own borders through the crisis, constituting a strong public problem. Countries in frame two and three were not concerned for their own security but wanted to express their solidarity with Eastern neighbours. The sceptical countries saw risks in the possibility of deteriorating their relations with Russia through the crisis, as many of them depend on Russian trade and gas supply. In the cognitive dimension, the first few frames see the cause of the crisis in
the imbalance of interests between Russia and the EU over Ukraine which needs to be reconciled, while the latter frames indicate that strengthening the rights of the Russian-speaking minority would have prevented the crisis. Therefore, the support for sanctions was decreasing, and concerns over economic interests increasing with each frame. However, especially in the moderate or less determined positions, the need for a common response projecting European values was often underlined.

In July 2014, the crisis had escalated into a war and Member States’ citizens had died in the MH17 shoot down over Ukrainian territory. By that time, many positions of the Member States had changed. This was due to two main reasons. The countries that changed positions in favour of sanctions argued that the development of the crisis showed that previous EU responses had been insufficient. Thus, the MH17 incident convinced many Member States to act more strongly, including countries that had been opposers of sanctions. On the other hand, some Member States moderated their position due to economic interests, especially when specific deals with Russia were in danger. However, most Member States had changed their position in favour of a stronger common EU response, deferring their economic interests. Thus, answering the research question, the analysis shows that the escalation of the crisis changed the positions leading to a stronger alignment towards sanctioning Russia among the Member States, putting a common EU response above economic interest when facing a crisis.

Naturally, the scope of this research has limitations, since only a specific crisis in a very specific time frame has been observed. However, both the case and the timeframe were very suitable to assess the effect of an emerging crisis on Member State positions. Until now, no other crisis escalated that drastically in such a short time. Nevertheless, this leaves room for further research on whether the Member States still align their positions further on, as well as for applying the research to a different case to externally validate the findings.

This research contributed to the overall understanding of CFSP decision-making by illustrating the difficulty of intergovernmental structures, but furthermore highlighted that the positions do indeed align when facing a crisis. While filling the academic gap of assessing the impact of an escalating crisis on positions, the findings suggest that reaching unanimity is largely based on the socialisation process among Member States. Many countries underlined the importance of an EU position in defence of its common values. Moreover, the impact of issue salience on decision-making was highlighted, as the MH17 incident led many Member States to change their position, convincing them that a stronger reaction was needed. So, coming back to Juncker’s quote (Rusheva, 2016), the EU Member States can indeed overcome crises together and emerge stronger after.
Annex

Table 2: Example: Coding Belgium March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position and explanation</th>
<th>Codes/keywords</th>
<th>Examples from the text</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condemns Russian intervention</td>
<td>- Territorial integrity&lt;br&gt;- Violation&lt;br&gt;- Sovereignty&lt;br&gt;- Condemn&lt;br&gt;- Russian intervention&lt;br&gt;- Aggression&lt;br&gt;- Return of Russian troops&lt;br&gt;- Export&lt;br&gt;- Misdemeanors&lt;br&gt;- European values&lt;br&gt;- Free elections&lt;br&gt;- Democratic elections&lt;br&gt;- Solidarity&lt;br&gt;- Consent&lt;br&gt;- Reason&lt;br&gt;- International law</td>
<td>“Belgian strongly condemns Russia’s intervention and requires the return of Russian troops to their barracks.” (Embassy of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Belgium, 2014) “Gleichzeitig wiederholte Dr. Rupo die Forderung der Europäischen Union, die russischen Truppen zurück in ihre Kasernen zu rufen.” (BELGA/5d, 2014, March 6) “The ministers from the Benelux countries came to reinforce the message of the EU. Like every sovereign people, the Ukrainians should have the right to decide for themselves about their future.” (Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, 2014a) “Diplomats also emphasized the protection of minorities and the need for greater autonomy.” (Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, 2014a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic sanctions</td>
<td>- Sanctions&lt;br&gt;- Visa&lt;br&gt;- Freezing accounts&lt;br&gt;- Dependence&lt;br&gt;- Russian gas&lt;br&gt;- Consumption&lt;br&gt;- Effect</td>
<td>“...the Belgian Prime Minister believes that the main argument against the introduction of such sanctions is Europe’s dependence on Russian gas, which is 8% of the total gas consumption of Belgium.” (Embassy of Ukraine in the Kingdom of Belgium, 2014) “Sanktionen treten zur Debatte - manacht geht es abseits eine diplomatische Lösung zu finden.” (BELGA/5d, 2014, March 6) “Belgie wil dat de sancties Rusland puin doen, maar niet aan de Europese burger en ondernemingen”, steelt Dr. Rupo.” (BELGA, 2014, March 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue and De-escalation</td>
<td>- Dialogue&lt;br&gt;- De-escalation&lt;br&gt;- Peaceful&lt;br&gt;- Settlement&lt;br&gt;- Solution</td>
<td>“...promote a constructive dialogue with all the parties in order to reach a peaceful solution.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2014) “Volgens hem moeten de sancties kloven, maar moet men in de eerste plaats de dialoog met Moskou hervatten ‘zodat het neger niet zo gebeurt’” (BELGA, 2014, March 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for EU position</td>
<td>- Support&lt;br&gt;- EU&lt;br&gt;- Summit&lt;br&gt;- Condemnations</td>
<td>“The Minister reiterates his full support for the conclusions of the European Council of 6 March.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own table based on conventional content analysis

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Explaining Public Support for the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Case Study of the Czech Republic and Hungary

Lisa Quernes

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the European Union (EU) has faced a growing public discontent while its democratic legitimacy has increasingly been called into question. Public support from its citizens has declined from a peak of seventy percent in 1991 to a historic low of forty-eight percent in 1996, remaining at about fifty percent until today, 2018. The extent of positive attitudes towards the Union varies across its member states, among old and new ones (TNS, 2012a). A political system can, however, only function if the people governed by it support it and believe in the political system’s legitimacy (Zelditch & Walker, 2003). Such legitimacy beliefs are considered particularly important in the ten Central and Eastern European (CEE) accession states of 2004 (Copsey, 2013, p. 107). On the one hand, the countries relied on their citizens’ public support to accomplish the economic and political transformation process to become a member state in the first place. On the other hand, after the accession, the EU relied on its new citizens’ support for its continued well-functioning and a smooth integration process (Copsey, 2013). However, it became clear that the extent of public support varied across the new accession states, which is apparent until today (Havlík, Hloušek, & Kaniok, 2017).

To understand why some CEE member states’ citizens are more supportive of the EU than others, it is crucial to investigate possible factors that influence individuals when formulating public attitudes towards the EU (Hobolt & De Vries, 2016). Studies analysing support for the EU in CEE countries after their accession mostly focus on EU support on a political party level (e.g. Kaniok & Havlík, 2016; Szczepiak & Taggart, 2008; Zuba, 2009). Less studies, however, analyse public and individual level support for the EU in specific CEE member states (e.g. Guerra, 2013; Závecz, 2011). These studies identify explanatory factors accounting for citizens’ EU support. These factors range from utilitarian considerations to value and identity-based motivations. However, these studies also indicate that the relative explanatory power of economic, identity related, or national considerations on public support vary from country to country. Thus, as supported by Hobolt and

21 Lisa is currently doing her MA in Political Science at the University of Heideberg in Germany. Christine Arnold acted as her thesis supervisor.
De Vries (2016), it is crucial to conduct specific country and comparative case studies instead of generalizing explanations for the CEE member states. Only this allows to draw conclusions about which different explanatory factors account most for individual level public support in CEE countries nowadays, when the EU’s legitimacy seems increasingly questioned.

To narrow this research gap the thesis conducts a comparative case study and investigates the research question: Which are the key explanatory factors for public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary? The two country cases display a pronounced difference in their level of public EU support (TNS, 2017f) despite their similarities of, for instance, being former satellite states of the Soviet Union or their common membership in the Visegrád Group. The Czech Republic has often been described as the least EU supportive of the CEE accession countries (Linden & Pohlman, 2003; Marek & Baun, 2010), while Hungary’s public held more positive attitudes towards the EU (TNS, 2017f). The thesis uses the definition of ‘diffuse support’ by Easton (1975). He describes it as a person’s general and durable support for a political system which persists even if being dissatisfied with specific policy outputs or the performance of individual political actors in the short run (p. 444).

To address the research question, this thesis tests hypotheses generated from three established scholarly approaches to explain individuals’ attitudes toward the EU. These approaches, which are the utilitarian, the identity and the national cue-taking approaches, suggest explanatory factors for public EU support. Whether these factors constitute a basis for public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary is estimated through a multivariate linear regression analysis in SPSS. The data are retrieved from the Eurobarometer (EB) survey of May 2017 (TNS, 2017f). The empirical findings of this thesis suggest that support is based on a different combination of factors in each country case. Thereby, the identity and national cue-taking approaches account for public support in both CEE member states, confirming expectations from academic literature.

This research is of societal relevance as it enhances the understanding of which different considerations influence citizens when formulating their general attitude towards the EU in two CEE member states, nowadays. This, in turn might increase comprehension for citizens’ varying attitudes towards the EU. On this basis, possible country specific measures can be initiated. This may increase the level of public support in newer EU member states, crucial for the future development and well-functioning of the Union and its continued legitimacy. Scientific relevance, on the other hand, stems from narrowing the identified gap in research about specific country and comparative studies which qualitatively analyse explanations for individuals’ EU support in CEE member states. This may serve as basis for more quantitative research investigating the importance of specific factors explaining citizens’ EU attitudes.
The thesis begins with an empirical background of public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Chapter three offers an overview of the existing literature on explanatory factors for public EU support. Subsequently, the thesis develops its analytical framework and generates hypotheses based on the three prominent explanatory approaches for public EU support. After an outline of the methodology and data used, chapter six presents the results of the analysis. Finally, the thesis discusses its findings and draws an overall conclusion.

2. Public EU Support in Comparison

The aim of the thesis is to explore key factors which account for public support in EU member states, in particular, in two of the new CEE member states, the Czech Republic and Hungary. A detailed case justification is given in section 5.1. Before investigating factors based on which citizens formulate their EU support, this chapter gives an empirical background of public EU support in the two country cases.

EB survey data from October 2004 until May 2017 reveal that since their accession, Hungary and the Czech Republic display distinct levels of positive attitudes towards the EU (Marek & Baun, 2010; Závecz, 2011). Illustrating, for instance, the trend of the perceived image of the EU in the two countries between 2004 and 2017, Figure 1 shows that Hungary had a more positive attitude towards the EU right after the accession in 2004, while relatively more Czechs were positive about the EU between 2006 and 2009. Since autumn 2009, however, this trend has changed as relatively more Hungarians than Czechs perceived the EU as positive. After an increase of positive attitudes in both countries between 2012 and 2014, support for the EU declined. Since 2015, though, the trend has stabilized, as the proportion of Czech respondents having a positive image of the EU ranges between 20 to 30 percent and the proportion of Hungarian respondents between 30 to 40 percent.
Investigating most recent EB data from May 2017, this difference is still apparent (TSN, 2017f). Figure 2 illustrates the results of Czech and Hungarian respondents’ answers to five EB survey questions which indicate attitudes towards the EU. It reveals that about 50 percent more Hungarian respondents than Czech respondents have a positive image of the EU. The percentages of respondents trusting the EU amount to 48.4 percent of Hungarians and 31.5 percent for Czechs. 36.1 percent of Czech respondents and 58.2 percent of Hungarian respondents trust the European Parliament (EP). Comparable results are found for trust in the European Commission where 57.1 percent of Hungarians and 33.2 percent of Czech respondents tend to trust this institution. Answering the question of whether more decisions should be taken at the EU level, half of the Hungarian and 36.4 percent of Czech respondents are in favour of this statement (TSN, 2017f).

Source: Own graph based on EB autumn (AU) 2004 until spring (SP) 2017 (TNS, 2012a-2018).

22 The exact wording of the questions is presented in Table 2.
3. The Debate on Explaining Public EU Support in CEE

This chapter outlines the academic debate on explanations for public support for the EU. It takes reference to the discussion about whether those factors found to be influential in old member states and CEE countries prior to their accession can be assumed to explain public support in the new CEE member states. Thereby, this research is situated in the academic field of research on public EU support, illustrating the gap the thesis helps to narrow.

The debate on explanations for public EU support can be divided into three established strands of argumentation. Earliest studies analysing public support for the EU base their explanations on utilitarian, mainly economic considerations. Scholars assume that citizens evaluate the EU based on their rational calculation of personal and community economic costs and benefits of holding EU membership (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998; Gabel & Palmer, 1995). Consequently, it has been argued that citizens who perceive EU
membership as beneficial for their private household and national economic situation support the EU (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Gabel, 1998). Since the early 2000s, academics examine the impact of persons’ national identities and attitudes towards other cultures on their public attitudes towards the EU. These scholars argue that utilitarian cost-benefit factors alone cannot explain EU citizens’ public support for the Union (Haesly, 2001; Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004, 2005; McLaren, 2006). A third group of scholars argues that public support for the EU is based on citizens’ use of national proxies like, for instance, the performance of their national government (Anderson, 1998; Rohrschneider, 2002; Rohrschneider & Loveless, 2010; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000). While these explanatory approaches do not exclude each other, the respective scholars found their considered factors to account best for individual level EU support, thus arguing for their cause.

These studies have, however, derived their explanations only from Western EU member states, like Germany, France, Spain or Great Britain. Nevertheless, some studies have tested the explanations for EU support in CEE countries, yet, only prior to their EU accession (Cichowski, 2000; Christin, 2005; Fölsz & Tóka, 2006; Fowler, 2004; Szczersiak & Taggart, 2004). Cichowski (2000) shows that economic cost-benefit factors are considered particularly important by CEE country citizens when formulating their attitude towards the EU. Scholars who conduct their research on CEE countries following their accession, however, point out that factors which explained public attitudes towards the EU in these countries, and factors which explain best public support in older member states might not have the same explanatory power for public support in CEE countries following their accession (Linden & Pohlman, 2010; Marek & Baun, 2010; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2006; Závecz, 2011; Zuba, 2009). Thus, Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2006) stipulate that economic explanations under the utilitarian approach seem less important than social identity factors and the use of national cues when explaining public EU support in CEE member states following their accession.

This theoretical argument has been empirically tested by scholars analysing EU support in specific CEE member state contexts (e.g. Kaniok & Havlík, 2016; Szczersiak & Taggart, 2008; Zuba, 2009). Yet, they mainly focus on party level and elite support for the EU, leaving aside individual level or public support. Studies dedicated to citizens’ public support in CEE member states (Guerra, 2013; Havlík, Hlousek, & Kaniok, 2017; Závecz, 2011) find varying outcomes about which factors explain support best. Following, depending on the country under investigation, utilitarian, identity and national cue-taking factors weigh differently important in explaining public EU support. Thus, it is misleading to draw generalized conclusions about explanations for public support when seeking to understand what explains support in the CEE region. Rather, as suggested by Hobolt and De Vries (2016), it is necessary to conduct country specific and comparative studies.
to explain what exactly accounts most for public support in specific CEE member states nowadays. Therefore, this thesis narrows this research gap by investigating and comparing the explanatory power of the competing factors in the specific country cases of the Czech Republic and Hungary based on most recent data of May 2017. This may help to understand what public support is based on in these two CEE member states.


After having outlined the academic debate on explanations for public EU support and having highlighted the existing gap in research, chapter four develops the analytical framework. Hypotheses are generated based on the three prominent scholarly approaches to explain support, the utilitarian, the identity and the national cue-taking approaches.

Based on the utilitarian approach, the thesis analyses the impact of economic considerations on the Czech and Hungarian public support for the EU. Scholars argue that citizens base their support for the EU on rational economic cost-benefit calculations of their country’s EU membership (Anderson & Reichert, 1995; Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Gabel, 1998; Gabel & Palmer, 1995). Yet, there is only mixed empirical evidence that citizens living in net beneficiary member states are generally more supportive of the EU, as assumed by Carrubba (1997). Rather, one should investigate individuals’ perceived economic well-being. Individuals who perceive that EU membership benefits them personally and who evaluate their personal economic situation positively are more likely to support the EU, compared to those individuals who evaluate their personal economic well-being as unsatisfying (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993). Cichowski (2000) tests the relation between this factor and attitudes towards the EU in CEE countries prior to their accession. He shows that individuals who evaluate their household financial status positively, show more support for their membership in the EU. However, Thomassen (2009) argues that the opposite can be true. When the national economic and private economic situations are perceived positively, people might tend to assess the EU as an ‘unnecessary interference’ but turn to the EU for help when the economic situation is perceived negatively (pp. 144-145). Due to these contradicting views it is crucial to examine whether the utilitarian approach bears explanatory power for public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary nowadays, and which of the two expectations holds in each country case. Thus, the hypotheses below and their null hypotheses are tested.

**H1**: The more positive one’s perception of the national economic circumstances, the higher one’s public EU support.
**H2:** The more positive one’s perception of the financial household situation, the higher one’s public EU support.

Based on the identity approach, this thesis analyses the impact of holding an exclusive national identity and the fear of losing one’s cultural identity on public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Scholars argue that conceptions of group membership and national identity are considered decisive factors which shape citizens’ attitudes towards the EU (Haesly, 2001; Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004, 2005; McLaren, 2006). Thereby, they base their reasoning on social identity theory. This theory assumes that humans have an ‘innate ethnocentric tendency’, which leads a citizen to favour one’s own group over others. Based on this assumption, Carey (2002) finds a significant negative effect of strong national attachment and pride on citizens’ support for the EU. However, this conclusion is challenged by other scholars who find a positive relation between attachment to one’s national identity and public EU support (Boomgaard, Schuck, Elenbass, & De Vrees, 2011; Haesly, 2001). To overcome these opposing explanations, scholars later develop a more refined framework for analysing the effect of national identity on public EU support (Kaufman, 2006; Arikan, 2012; Toshkov, Kortenska, Dimitrova, & Fagan, 2014). This framework includes the effects of perceived cultural threats by the EU, fears to lose one’s cultural identity and the effect of holding an exclusive national identity on public EU support. Thereby, Hooghe and Marks (2008) specify, opposed to Carey (2002), that a strong national identity alone cannot account for lower levels of public support. Rather, the level of public support is determined by the extent to which a person conceives her national identity exclusive of other territorial identities. Further, McLaren (2002, 2006) and Karp and Bowler (2006) find that perceptions of losing one’s cultural and ethnic identity in the process of EU integration have a negative impact on EU support.

These factors seem to bear promising results for explaining public support in the two country cases as scholars suggest that social identity factors might have a consistently stronger effect on EU support in CEE members states than economic consideration (Rohrsneider & Whitefield, 2006; Elgün & Tilman, 2007). Beaudonnet and Di Mauro (2012) provide an empirical basis for this claim. Conducting a factor analysis to explore measurable variables that describe the latent variable ‘diffuse support’, they find that the variable national identity does not constitute a component of diffuse support in the cases Hungary and the Czech Republic (whereas in most other member states identity constitutes a component of diffuse support). Rather, as they conclude, the variable national identity might constitute a key explanatory factor for public EU support in
the two country cases (p. 16). These results and the theoretical expectations suggest testing the hypotheses below.

**H3**: Individuals holding an exclusive national identity show less support for the EU than individuals with a national and European nested identity.

**H4**: Individuals perceiving that the EU means a loss of cultural identity show less support than individuals who do not share this perception.

Based on the national cue-taking approach, the thesis analyses the impact of satisfaction with one’s national democracy and one’s trust in the national government on public EU support in Hungary and the Czech Republic. This approach, as suggested by Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2006), is expected to have strong explanatory power for public EU support in CEE countries and merits further research. Thereby, it is argued that attitudes towards domestic political performances and satisfaction with the national democratic institutions serve as proxy for formulating attitudes towards the EU (Anderson, 1998; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000; Rohrschneider, 2002; Rohrschneider & Loveless, 2010). Arnold, Sapir and Zapryanova (2012) provide empirical evidence for a positive relationship between individuals’ trust in national institutions and positive attitudes towards the EU. Yet, scholars (Tanasoiu & Colonescu, 2008; Verder, 1996; Schopflin, 2000) argue that in younger and emerging democracies, individuals tend to rely upon external rather than national actors if national politics are perceived as deficient. Thus, attitudes towards national institutions and support for the EU are negatively related. Cichowski (2000), on the other side, finds a positive relationship between individuals’ trust in the national government and their support for the EU in CEE countries during the 1990s. To find out whether these findings are valid in the Czech Republic and Hungary nowadays, the thesis tests the hypotheses below.

**H5**: The higher the satisfaction with one’s national democracy, the higher one’s public EU support.

**H6**: The higher one’s trust in the national government, the higher one’s public EU support.

Lastly, the thesis controls for the effect of standard socio-demographics on public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary. The characteristics taken into account are age, gender, political positioning on a left-right scale and the frequency of political discussions about the EU.
Hooghe and Vachudova (2009) find that in post-soviet CEE countries with extensive welfare systems, citizens identifying themselves on the left political spectrum are less likely to show public EU support than people positioning themselves on the right. Based on theory of cognitive mobilization (Inglehart, 1970), it is expected that the degree of interest in EU politics influences the level of public EU support.

5. Methodology and Data

This chapter explains the choice of cases and data used in this thesis. It presents the operationalisation of the dependent and independent variables and, subsequently, presents the methods used to analyse the data.

5.1 Case Selection

The thesis investigates based on which different key factors EU citizens from CEE formulate their attitude towards the EU. For this purpose, it conducts a comparative case study based on a most similar systems design (MSSD). It implies to choose two country cases which are similar in as many aspects as possible but reveal a difference in the outcome variable. This allows to keep as many plausible extraneous variables as possible constant and minimizes the pool of possible explanatory factors. It needs to be acknowledged, though, that it is hardly possible to identify two comparable country cases that match on all relevant control variables (Anckar, 2008). Nevertheless, two cases that seem similar in as many background aspects as possible are chosen. The Czech Republic and Hungary are two of the ten CEE states which acceded the EU in 2004. They are similar in that they share a past as socialist satellite states of the Soviet Union and experienced the economic and political transformation processes until becoming a member of the EU. Since 1991, the two countries, together with Poland and Slovakia, form the Visegrád Group, which is often considered a ‘front-runner’ in the post-communist transformation and EU accession processes (Dangerfield, 2008; Copsey, 2013).

However, this does not indicate that their citizens, like often assumed, hold similar views about the EU. The Czech Republic was one of the least supportive of the CEE 2004 accession states (Linden & Pohlman, 2003; Kaniok & Havlík, 2016), while Hungary has been more enthusiastic about joining the EU than any other CEE country (Fowler, 2004). Therefore, comparison of these two cases allows for an investigation of those factors that best explain public support in a less supportive and in a more supportive country. Moreover, the difference in support
for the EU between Hungary and Czech Republic is larger than that between the Visegrád Group member Slovakia or other CEE member states. Poland, on the other hand, cannot be assumed to be most similar to Hungary or the Czech Republic in character due to both its size and its strategic position for the CEE member states within the EU (Riishøj, 2007). Slovakia and Poland, therefore, are not considered suitable for the comparison. Considering the above, Hungary and the Czech Republic, thus, seem to be the best-suited countries situated in the same region for an MSSD.

5.2 Operationalising Public EU Support

The thesis uses EB data from May 2017 (TSN, 2017f). 2017 was chosen as it represents similar levels of EU support as during the two previous years, where EU support has stabilized ranging between 20 and 30 percent in the Czech Republic and between 30 and 40 percent in Hungary (see Figure 1). Thus, 2017 is not an outlier with extensive in- or decreases of public support in the country cases. Although the EB is an acknowledged source for cross-national comparisons, as it contains identical questions and answer categories across cases, it has its limitations. The exclusion of questions from prior EB surveys constitutes one limitation which makes it impossible to use the same variables as in previous studies to operationalise public EU support (cf. Gabel & Palmer, 1995; Marsh, 1999; Norris, 1999; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2000).

Beaudonnet and Di Mauro (2012) formulate an empirical definition of Easton’s (1975) ‘diffuse support’ based on the results of an explanatory factor analysis including variables of the EB survey of spring 2009. A factor analysis helps to identify clusters of observable variables which are linearly related to an otherwise unobservable, latent variable (Field, 2009). The latent variable in this study is diffuse support. Based on Beaudonnet and Di Mauro’s (2012) factor analysis, diffused support is operationalised through the EB questions whether membership is a good or bad thing, whether the respective country benefitted from its EU membership, questions about the perceived image of the EU, trust in the EU and, lastly, about trust in the European Commission. Beaudonnet and Di Mauro (2012) claim that this empirical definition of diffuse support for the EU can be used to compare individual attitudes across countries (p. 20).

However, this operationalisation of EU support cannot be replicated using recent EB surveys as the questions on whether EU membership is good or bad and about the benefit of EU membership have been omitted, since May 2011. To maintain an operationalisation of public EU support that does not solely include questions on trust in EU institutions but represents a more comprehensive range of attitudes, I conducted a principal component analysis in SPSS. This is an approach to factor analysis (Field, 2009) which allows for investigation of alternative observable variables available in the recent EB survey which describe the latent variable diffuse support. Table
1 reports the results of the analysis. It identifies a cluster of six observable variables linearly related to public EU support. These are ‘image of EU’, ‘trust in EU’, ‘trust in European Commission’, ‘trust in EP’, ‘preferred level of decision making’ and ‘EU going into right direction’.

Table 1: Summary of Principal Component Analysis for Public EU Support (n=1627).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loadings Public EU Support</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU going into right direction</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of EU</td>
<td>.719</td>
<td>.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in EU</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in European Parliament</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in European Commission</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Decision Making</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of variance</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s α</td>
<td></td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, based on EB 87.3 (TNS, 2017f).

The factor loadings indicate the variables’ simple correlation with the factor public support, while the communality is the proportion of the variables’ variance explained by their common factor (Field, 2009). Based on these values, it is decided which variables can eventually be considered suitable to operationalise public support. As suggested by Field (2009), variables with factor loadings below 0.5 should be omitted as the correlation with the factor is too weak (p. 644). This is the case with the variable ‘EU going into right direction’ which, furthermore, has a communality of only 0.123 (12.3 percent) with public support which is comparably low. Thus, the thesis omits the variable ‘EU going into right direction’ and, in contrast to Beaudonnet and Di Mauro (2012), does not include it as component of diffuse support. Based on the analysis, all other variables can be included. This is confirmed by Bartlett’s test of sphericity, which tests whether the correlations between the variables are significantly strong enough to be considered components of public support. With a significance of p<.001 this is given. The Cronbach’s α indicates the reliability of the items composing public EU support whereby values above 0.7 indicate high reliability (Field, 2009), which is also given in the case at hand. Therefore, all variables, except ‘EU going into right direction’ are considered suitable for the operationalisation of public EU support.

Based on the principal component analysis, I compute a new composite dependent variable ‘public EU support’ in SPSS. It includes the five EB survey variables ‘trust in EU’, ‘trust in Commission’, ‘trust in EP’, the ‘image of EU’ and ‘preferred level of decision-making’. Table 2
gives an overview of the operationalisation of public EU support and the exact wording of the respective EB questions (TSN, 2017f). The variables were recoded into binary variables with the answer categories 1 (very negative/no trust) and 2 (very positive, trust). Initially, the computed variable had values from 5 to 10 which were overall not informative. Thus, the variable has been rescaled to have a continuous scale ranging from 0 to 1, whereby 0 indicates no support and 1 high support. Based on this scale, Hungarian respondents reveal a mean value of 0.52 and the Czech respondents a lower mean value of 0.32. The average of all EU member states’ public support is 0.52. To further validate the newly computed dependent variable, the mean values have been calculated for Luxemburg and the United Kingdom. The former is one of the countries sharing most positive EU attitudes, whereas the latter decided to leave the EU. Consequently, public support in Luxemburg has a mean of 0.63, arguably higher than support in both the Czech Republic and Hungary. The mean value in the UK is 0.35, showing a similarly low level of support as the Czech case. Thus, these results validate the newly computed variable as the mean values of the public EU support variable reflect these countries’ generally perceived attitude towards the EU, also compared to the overall EU average.
Table 2: Operationalisation of Dependent Variable Public EU Support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in EU</td>
<td>QA8a_9 Please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust the European Union.</td>
<td>I (tend not to trust) 2 (Tend to trust)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in European Commission</td>
<td>QA14_2 Please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust the European Commission.</td>
<td>I (tend not to trust) 2 (Tend to trust)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in European Parliament</td>
<td>QA14_1 Please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust the European Parliament.</td>
<td>I (tend not to trust) 2 (Tend to trust)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of EU</td>
<td>QA9 In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?</td>
<td>I (fairly negative, very negative, neutral) 2 (fairly positive, very positive)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Level of Decision Making</td>
<td>QA18a_6 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: More decisions should be taken at EU level.</td>
<td>I (totally disagree, tend to disagree) 2 (tend to agree, totally agree)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own research based on EB 87.2 (TNS, 2017f).

5.3 Operationalising the Explanatory Variables

The independent variables derived from the three established scholarly approaches for explaining public EU support are operationalised through questions of the EB survey 87.3 (TNS, 2017f). Table 3 displays the variable names, the exact wording of the survey questions, the coding, and the level of measurement. Items covered under H1 and H2 based on the utilitarian approach are operationalised into the interval variable ‘situation national economy’ and the interval level variable ‘situation financial household’. Items covered under H3 and H4, based on the identity approach, are operationalised into the binary variables ‘national identity’ and ‘loss cultural identity’. Items based on the cue-taking approach under H5 and H6 are operationalised into the interval variable ‘satisfaction national democracy’, and the binary variable ‘trust national government’. Controlling for potential influence of socio-demographic factors, the thesis analyses the impact of gender, operationalised into the dummy variable ‘gender’, age, operationalised into the interval variable ‘age’, the self-positioning on a political left-right scale operationalised into ‘left-right
positioning’, and the extend of interest in the EU, operationalised into the interval variable ‘political discussion EU’. These variables were recoded so that low values indicate more negative attitudes and high values indicate more positive attitudes towards the EU. Further, the answer categories ‘don’t know’ and ‘refuse’ were excluded, categorized as missing values. The variables ‘national identity’ and ‘EU meaning loss of cultural identity’ were recoded into binary variables. This allows to include all variables as binary and interval variables into a multivariate linear regression analysis using ordinary least squares (OLS). The variables are tested for multicollinearity by investigating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values gained from the regression analysis.

**Table 3: Operationalisation of the Independent Variables.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation National Economy</td>
<td>QA1a_1 How would you judge the current situation of the (NATIONALITY) economy?</td>
<td>1 (very bad) 2 (rather bad) 3 (rather good) 4 (very good)</td>
<td>interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Financial Household</td>
<td>QA1a_4 How would you judge the financial situation of your household?</td>
<td>1 (very bad) 2 (rather bad) 3 (rather good) 4 (very good)</td>
<td>interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>QD3 Do you see yourself as …?</td>
<td>0 (national only) 1 (national and European, European and national, European only)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss Cultural Identity</td>
<td>QA10.12 What does the EU mean to you personally?</td>
<td>0 (loss of cultural identity) 1 (not mentioned)</td>
<td>binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction National Democracy</td>
<td>QA17a On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (YOUR COUNTRY)?</td>
<td>1 (not at all) 2 (not very satisfied) 3 (fairly satisfied) 4 (very satisfied)</td>
<td>interval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To estimate the influence of the factors on public support, I conduct a multivariate linear regression analysis. In this, a model can be created that incorporates multiple explanatory variables. The regression equation is a linear function of the independent variables, where \( b \) is the coefficient, plus a stochastic error term \( \varepsilon \):

\[
Public_{EU\ Support_i} = b_0 + b_1 \text{Situation\ National\ Economy}_{i1} + \ b_2 \text{Situation\ Financial\ Household}_{i2} + b_3 \text{National\ Identity}_{i3} + b_4 \text{Loss\ Cultural\ Identity}_{i4} + b_5 \text{Satisfaction\ National\ Democracy}_{i5} + b_6 \text{Trust\ National\ Government}_{i6} + b_7 \text{Political\ Discussion\ EU}_{i7} + b_8 \text{Left\ Right\ Positioning}_{i8} + b_9 \text{Age}_{i9} + b_{10} \text{Gender}_{i10} + \varepsilon_i
\]

As all hypotheses to be tested are directional, the multivariate linear regression analyses include a one-tailed test of significance. The multivariate linear regression analyses are conducted separately for both country cases based on the datasets with only Czech respondents and a dataset with only Hungarian respondents. This allows to compare which explanatory factors yield statistically significant results in each case and to assess the relative explanatory power of each independent variable for each country sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust National Government</th>
<th>QA8a_7</th>
<th>0 (tend not to trust) 1 (tend to trust)</th>
<th>binary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Discussion EU</th>
<th>D71a2</th>
<th>1 (never) 2 (occasionally) 3 (frequently)</th>
<th>interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left-Right Positioning</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>1 – 10 (left – right)</th>
<th>interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>D11</th>
<th>15 (15 years) 98 (98 years) 99 (99 years and older)</th>
<th>interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>D10</th>
<th>0 (Man) 1 (Woman)</th>
<th>binary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Own research based on EB 87.3 (TNS, 2017f).
6. Analysis and Results

After having outlined the analytical framework and giving an overview of the methodology and data used, this chapter turns to the analysis. It reports the results of the multivariate linear regression analyses, run respectively for Hungary and the Czech Republic. To avoid the problem of multicollinearity, where two or more explanatory variables are highly correlated and interchangeable not adding to the variance explained of the outcome, it is necessary to test for such multicollinearity among the independent variables (Field, 2009). Therefore, the VIF and tolerance statistics are investigated. The VIF indicates the strength of the linear relationships between the independent variables. If it has a value higher than 10 and the tolerance has values below 0.1, multicollinearity is likely to occur (Field, 2009). The results from the collinearity diagnostics for the Czech and Hungarian cases, displayed in Table 4, indicate no problem of multicollinearity as all VIF values are below 10 and all tolerance values are well above 0.1. Hence, all explanatory variables considered for the analysis can be included in the analysis.

Table 4: Collinearity Statistics of Independent Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>VIF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation National Economy</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>1.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Financial Household</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>1.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>1.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss Cultural Identity</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>1.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction National Democracy</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>1.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust National Government</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>1.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discussion EU</td>
<td>.880</td>
<td>1.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-Right Positioning</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>1.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>1.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>1.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: dependent variable: public EU support.

Tables 5 and 6 report the results of the model estimating the effects of the explanatory variables on public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary. The multivariate linear regression analysis yields the results for the statistical significance and the standardized beta
coefficients of the explanatory variables. Statistically significant outcomes (i.e., \( p \leq 0.05 \)) are marked with an asterisk. The results of the analysis based on the Czech sample are reported in Table 5. Both utilitarian variables, ‘situation national economy’ and ‘situation financial household’, are not statistically significant. The explanatory variable ‘national identity’ derived from the identity approach is not statistically significant either. It, thus, does not contribute to the explanation of public EU support. The variable ‘loss cultural identity’ derived from the identity approach, on the other hand, makes a statistically significant contribution to the model. The standardized beta coefficient \( \beta = 0.157 \) indicates a weak positive relationship with the dependent variable public EU support. Both variables derived from the national cue-taking approach are statistically significant. ‘Satisfaction national democracy’ has a standardised beta-coefficient of \( \beta = 0.368 \), while ‘trust national government’ has a standardised beta-coefficient of \( \beta = 0.212 \). The beta-values indicate that both explanatory variables are positively related with public EU support. The control variables ‘political discussion EU’, ‘left-right placement’, ‘age’ and ‘gender’ are not statistically significant, as their significance values are bigger than 0.05. Thus, there is no causal relationship with public EU support. In total, the model explains about a quarter of the initial variance as is shown by the \( R^2 = 0.265 \).

Table 5: Multivariate linear regression model for public EU support in the Czech Republic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S.E. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.199</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilitarian Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation National Economy</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Financial Household</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss Cultural Identity</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Cue-Taking Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction National Democracy</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust National Government</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discussion EU</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-Right Positioning</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: dependent variable: public EU support; \( R^2 = 0.265 \); \( * p \leq 0.05 \).
The multivariate regression analysis for Hungary yields the results as displayed in Table 6. Other than for the Czech sample, one of the utilitarian variables, ‘situation financial household’ has a statistically significant and positive effect on public EU support with a standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = .152$. The variable ‘situation national economy’ is, like for the Czech sample, not statistically significant. The first explanatory variable derived from the identity approach, ‘national identity’, is not statistically significant either, whereas the second variable ‘loss cultural identity’ has a statistically significant and positive relation to public EU support. The standardized beta coefficient is $\beta = .169$. Under the national cue-taking approach the variable ‘satisfaction national democracy’ is not statistically significant. The variable ‘trust national government’ has a statistically significant and positive effect on public EU support with $\beta = .119$. Regarding the control variables, unlike the Czech sample, the variable ‘left-right positioning’ is statistically significant and has a standardized beta-coefficient of $\beta = -.183$, indicating a negative relationship with public EU support in Hungary. In this case, the model explains about twelve percent of the initial variance as shown by an $R^2 = .122$.

Table 6: Multivariate linear regression model for public EU support in Hungary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S.E. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilitarian Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation National Economy</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation Financial Household</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Identity</td>
<td>.237</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss Cultural Identity</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Cue-Taking Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction National Democracy</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust National Government</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Discussion EU</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-Right Positioning</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: dependent variable: public EU support; $R^2 = .122$; *p ≤ .05.
The analyses showed that in the Czech case only three explanatory variables have a statistically significant relation with the output variable public EU support. These belong to the identity and national cue-taking approaches. In the Hungarian case, four explanatory variables are statistically significant. The variables belonged to the utilitarian, the identity and the national cue-taking approaches as well as to the control variables. The interpretation of these results and test of the hypotheses follows in the next chapter.

7. Assessment of the Results

This chapter discusses and compares the results from the multivariate linear regression analyses for the cases Hungary and the Czech Republic. It tests whether the hypotheses generated from the three approaches explaining public EU support can be confirmed or rejected. The results serve as basis to assess the relative explanatory power of the independent variables for Czechs’ and Hungarians’ EU support.

The first two hypotheses were generated from the utilitarian approach explaining public EU support based on economic considerations. H1 hypothesizes that the more positive a person perceives one’s national economic circumstances, the higher one’s public support for the EU. Seen that the factor ‘situation national economy’ does neither have a statistically significant effect on public EU support in the Czech nor in the Hungarian sample, hypothesis H1 is rejected for both country cases. Hypothesis H2 states that the more positive one perceives one’s financial household situation, the higher one’s public EU support. Based on the results from the multivariate linear regression analysis, this hypothesis is rejected in the Czech case. Consequently, the Czech respondents do not base their support for the EU on either of the two utilitarian variables. For the Hungarian respondents, however, H2 is confirmed. Following, the perceived financial household situation is a utilitarian factor which predicts public support for the EU in Hungary. This confirms the findings by Cichowski’s (2000) who conducted a study on CEE countries still prior to their accession. He expected that “attitudes regarding economic well-being may become a basis for individual attitudes about European integration” (p. 1257). Yet, it cannot be confirmed that these utilitarian considerations account for public EU support in the Czech Republic.

The thesis generated H3 and H4 from the identity approach which explains public EU support based on social identity theory. H3 states that individuals holding an exclusive national identity show less support for the EU than individuals with national and European nested identities. Based on the results of the multivariate linear regression analyses, this hypothesis is rejected for both country cases. Whether one holds a national identity exclusively or feels European
in addition is not a statistically significant predictor for Czechs or Hungarians EU support. H4 hypothesises that individuals who think that the EU means a loss of cultural identity show less support for the EU than individuals who do not share this perception. This hypothesis is confirmed for both the Czech and Hungarian cases. This indicates that, indeed, people who think that the EU means a loss of one’s cultural identity show less support than people not holding this view. Regarding the academic debate on explanations based on the identity approach, these results show that McLaren’s (2002) and Karp and Bowler’s (2006) findings in Western European member states, that the perceived cultural threat is a principal factor in forming attitudes towards the EU, also apply to the two younger CEE member states Czech Republic and Hungary. Yet, the expectations that the identity approach has the most promising effect on public EU support in the young CEE member states, as argued by Beaudonnet and Di Mauro (2012), cannot be confirmed by this thesis’ findings.

The last two hypotheses, H5 and H6, stem from the national cue-taking approach which argues that national proxies are used as basis for formulating attitudes towards the EU. H5 states that the higher the satisfaction with one’s national democracy, the higher one’s public EU support. This hypothesis is confirmed for the Czech sample as the factor ‘satisfaction national democracy’ has a positive and statistically significant relation with public EU support. In the case of Hungarian respondents, H5 does not hold as there is no statistically significant effect of the factor and public EU support. Under hypothesis H6 the thesis expected that the higher the trust in the national government (being the major actor at the EU level, in the Council and European Council), the higher one’s public support for the EU. This hypothesis holds in both the Czech and Hungarian cases as the variable ‘trust national government’ has a statistically significant and positive relationship. In the case of the Czech sample, the two factors under the national cue-taking approach reveal the relatively highest statistically significant β-values. This indicates that the cue-taking approach contributes most to the regression model, thus, explaining public EU support in the Czech sample best. In the light of the academic debate, the Czech results confirm Rohrschneider and Whitefield’s (2006) expectation that the cue-taking approach bears strong explanatory power in CEE member states. Moreover, the results for both the Hungarian and Czech samples are in line with Cichowski’s (2000) findings for the CEE countries prior to their accession, reflecting that trust in one’s national institutions increases trust in the EU. It contradicts other scholars’ suggestion (e.g. Tanasoiu & Colonescu, 2008) that trust in national institutions lowers support for the EU due to its perceived deficiency.

The results of the analysis of the socio-demographic control variables show that, unlike the Czech case, the political left-right self-positioning has a statistically significant effect on public EU
support in the Hungarian case. Consequently, Hungarians positioning themselves more on the political right show less support for the EU than people on the political left. This result does not confirm Hooghe and Vachudova’s (2009) finding that in post-soviet CEE countries, citizens identifying themselves as leftists are less likely to show public EU support than people positioning themselves on the right. Moreover, for the cases at hand, the results do not support cognitive mobilization theory (Inglehart, 1970), which states that more interest and knowledge in EU politics lead to higher public support for the Union.

Table 7: Overview of Results for the Hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilitarian Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1 – Situation National Economy</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 – Situation Financial Household</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 – National Identity</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4 – Loss Cultural Identity</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Cue-Taking Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5 – Satisfaction National Democracy</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6 – Trust National Government</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own research.

Table 7 gives an overview of which hypotheses are confirmed or rejected in each country case. The discussion of the results and rejection or confirmation of the hypotheses allow to assess the relative impact of each explanatory approach on Hungarians’ and Czechs’ public EU support. The factors with the strongest effect on the Czechs’ public EU support in relation to the other factors are the factors under the national-cue taking approach. The identity approach can partially explain public EU support with the factor of cultural threats and the implied fear of losing one’s cultural identity. The utilitarian approach does not predict Czechs’ support for the EU. As estimated in the model, not thinking that the EU means a cultural threat, being satisfied with one’s national democracy and holding trust in one’s national government are key factors which explain public EU support in the Czech Republic. In the case of Hungary, the results do not clearly indicate which approach accounts the most for public EU support. As estimated with the model, one factor under each approach influences Hungarians’ support. Consequently, the personal financial situation, the perception of losing one’s cultural identity, trust in the national government and the
political left-right positioning predict Hungary’s public EU support. In both cases, the national cue-taking and identity approaches add to the explanation for public EU support, while the utilitarian approach only accounts for support in Hungary.

8. Conclusion

Public support for the EU by its citizens is crucial to ensure the Union’s well-functioning and to increase its democratic legitimacy. This has been considered particularly important in the new CEE member states, acceding the EU in 2004. Citizens' attitudes towards the EU, however, vary across the member states. This difference in individual level support and the fact that explanations for public EU support differ among country cases, was motivation to investigate the key explanatory factors for public EU support in two of the CEE member states, the Czech Republic and Hungary. These country cases were found particularly suitable for the analysis based on an MSSD because their publics’, despite the countries’ similarities, do not equally support the EU. The thesis limited itself to Easton’s (1975) definition of ‘diffuse support’, not considering citizens’ attitudes towards specific EU policies. In this, it investigated citizens’ general and durable support for the EU as political system. Based on this definition and a principal component analysis, the thesis computed and validated a new composite dependent variable, public EU support.

To investigate the key explanatory factors for public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary, the thesis generated hypotheses from three prominent scholarly approaches to explain individuals’ EU support. The hypotheses were tested by conducting a multivariate linear regression analysis using SPSS. The analysis included variables from the EB survey of May 2017 which allowed for the cross-national comparison of the explanatory factors’ significance. Based on the utilitarian approach, the thesis tested the influence of the perceived national and private economic and financial situation on citizens’ EU support. Furthermore, the influence of holding an exclusive national identity and fearing to lose one’s cultural identity on individuals’ public EU support was investigated. Lastly, the thesis analysed whether national cues, namely satisfaction with one’s national democracy and one’s trust in the national government, influence Czech and Hungarian public EU support. In addition, it controlled for the influence of the socio-demographic variables age, gender, political interest in the EU and political self-positioning on a left-right scale.

The findings reveal that the extend of support of Hungarians are predicted by the factors financial household situation under the utilitarian approach, the fear of losing one’s cultural identity based on the identity approach, trust in the national government under the national cue-taking approach as well as their political left-right positioning. In the case of Czech respondents, public
support is not predicted by any utilitarian factor but by the fear of losing one’s cultural identity and both factors under the national cue-taking approach. Unlike the Hungarian case, no sociodemographic control variables were significant. This difference in results of the sociodemographics hints to the limitation of MSSD when comparing countries as it is hardly possible to keep all relevant background characteristics constant in both cases. Furthermore, the thesis acknowledges that the multivariate linear regression model, as stipulated by $R^2$, explains only 12 percent of the initial variance in public EU support in the Hungarian case and about 26 percent of the initial variance in the Czech case. This suggests that factors other than considered in this research might account for the variance in the countries’ public EU support. This leaves room for extended research into other possible explanatory factors.

Nonetheless, the thesis can draw conclusions based on its analyses which focused on explanatory factors widely used to investigate individuals’ EU support. Comparing the results of both countries, the Hungarian public bases its support on a wider range of considerations than the Czech public, which predominantly considers national proxies next to one’s cultural identity, when attitudes towards the EU. This suggests that if people in the Czech Republic are dissatisfied with the current national situation they might blame the EU, showing lower levels of support. In Hungary, national proxies are accompanied by considerations related to the private financial situation and one’s cultural identity. While being positive about these aspects, citizens’ EU support might still be upheld even though they are dissatisfied with their national government. Thus, the factors based on the national cue-taking and the identity approaches are considered key in explaining public EU support in both countries, while the utilitarian approach as well as the political left-right positioning only account for variance in support in the Hungarian case. This underlines scholars’ preliminary expectations that identity-related considerations and national cues might be more influential than utilitarian considerations when explaining public support for the EU in the CEE member states following their accession.

This research provides answer to its initial question of which explanator factors are key for public EU support in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Based on the findings, further research can be conducted by, for instance, quantitatively investigating the significance of the identified key explanatory factors for public EU support in the two country cases. In times when the EU’s legitimacy seems increasingly questioned and only half of its citizens reveal to support the EU, it is important to understand the underlying reasons for this phenomenon. Only then, ground for comprehension of citizens’ attitudes towards the EU can be found and country specific initiatives to strengthen public EU support can be introduced.
References


