

WOJCIECH RAFAŁOWSKI
University of Warsaw

The Quality of Government and National Identification

Abstract: This article studies the relationship between various dimensions of the legitimization of a political system and national identification. The analysis presented here assumes that the emotional attitudes that link people to their place of residence are conditional. The way the state performs its functions should determine how, and to what extent, such attitudes prevail. The hypothesis suggests that a positive evaluation of government policy enhances identification with the state.

An empirical study using data from fourteen post-communist countries provides the basis for accepting a considerable part of the hypothesis. People's evaluation of social policy, of democracy as a system, and their confidence in public institutions, are of central importance for identification. A separate analysis for Poland shows how perceptions of citizens' equality before the law have a significant impact on national identification.

Keywords: national identification, legitimization, public policy, quality of government, evaluation of government, public goods.

Introduction

The legitimization of political power has been one of the central questions addressed by sociology since its very beginnings. Countless works and analyses have been dedicated to the question of why people accept, or at least tolerate, governments (see: [Weber 2013](#); [Lipset 1994](#); [Evans & Whitefield 1995](#); [Habermas 1987](#); [Domański 2005](#); [Domański & Słomczyński 2010](#)).

The very notion of legitimization is a broad one and could refer to opinions on the legality of a political system or of particular authorities. In this article it will be impossible to refer to all the dimensions of the phenomenon, especially since the objective of the present analysis is relatively limited, that is, verification of a hypothesis concerning the impact of people's evaluation of the effects of government on national identification. As a result, legitimization has been narrowly defined as an attitude expressing a particular extent of acceptance of economic and social policy, the government, and democracy as a whole ([Domański 2005: 5](#)).

The idea that the duration of a political system depends on the economic success of the country where the system operates is one of the most significant in regards to the foundations of legitimacy. It concerns both democracy (see: [Przeworski et al. 2000](#)) and authoritarian regimes ([Huntington 1991](#)). An alteration in power in democracy (see also: [Marsh & Mikhaylov 2012](#); [Nezi 2012](#)), as well as a change at the helm of countries with other political systems ([Linz & Stepan 1996](#)), is made as a consequence of the authorities' failure

to satisfy various material needs of the inhabitants. Blame for this situation usually falls on the people performing leading public functions, as well as on the political system itself. The reaction of people to a crisis will be dissatisfaction and withdrawal of support for the authorities, and may turn into a negative attitude towards the state itself.

A person's relationship to their country of residence is also a phenomenon of a multidimensional character. Its formal manifestation is citizenship, i.e., the legally defined attribution of a human being to a political structure, and the resulting set of rights and obligations. Belonging to the political nation is inextricably linked with the above-mentioned relationship. Residing on the territory of a given country has yet another facet, i.e., it is independent of the formal or emotional connotations related to citizenship. Irrespective of whether or not people hold citizenship and consider themselves members of the nation, they are subjected to the country's laws and customs, and live in the social environment of a particular culture. It is place of residence, not formal citizenship, that determines the material conditions in which we live. Nevertheless, for most people, place of residence, formal and legal nationality, and national identity are related to the same entity. Identification with the state as a habitat, a political structure, and a nation are so inextricably linked that indeed it is difficult to think and talk about them as separate phenomena (see also: [Raciborski 2011a: 157–196](#)).

Countless academic works have been devoted to the question of national identity. There are both theoretical dissertations (see: [Boksański 2005](#); [Brubaker 1996](#); [Malešević 2006](#); [Calhoun 2007](#); [Kłoskowska 2012](#)) and those regarding the formation ([Kunovich 2006](#); [Orlow 2006](#); [Örkény 2006](#); [Hroch 2008](#); [Rusciano 2003](#)) and maintenance of national identity ([Lainer-Vos 2012](#); [Billig 1995](#)). The challenges that national identity is currently facing have also been studied ([Abela 2006](#)), as well as the consequences of national identity for other attitudes and political behaviors ([Johnston et al. 2010](#); [Shulman 2005](#); [Bonaiuto, Breakwell, Cano 1996](#)), and even for the effectiveness of government on the macro level ([Ahlerup, Hansson 2011](#)). Analyses of factors at the base of nationalism have been conducted from a psychological perspective ([Blank 2003](#), [Rothì et al. 2005](#)).

National identity can be defined as “The subjective feelings and valuations of any population which possesses common experiences and one or more shared cultural characteristics (usually customs, language or religion)” ([Smith 1991: 179](#)). National identity refers to perceived distinctiveness, the possibility of distinguishing oneself or a group from others. Identities produce “societal boundaries allowing individual members as well as groups and collectivities, in actual or desired, existing or imaginary communities, to make sense of ‘us’ versus ‘them’” ([Moore & Kimmerling 1995: 387](#)). National identification implies the existence of a subjective bond between an individual and the nation—the imagined community (see also: [Abdelal et al. 2006: 696](#)).

This bond also extends to a nation state. It has a variety of functions that make the ties with a political structure go beyond the emotional attitude to the homeland as a country of origin. It is also related to a person's everyday life. The state builds a relationship with its citizens by providing public goods (e.g., roads or protection of the air from pollution) and services, such as public education or healthcare. Through economic policy, the authorities attempt to ensure that citizens will be able to engage in gainful activity, either as entrepreneurs or employees.

People who are not citizens of a given country, or do not consider themselves members of the nation, may also identify with a country due to these state functions. Immigrants who link their future with the country where they have settled may feel a bond of this kind. Therefore, they should not be excluded from any empirical research undertaken to explore this question. Moreover, there are academic works devoted exclusively to this category of people (see also: [van Ecke 2007](#); [Ferenczi, Marshall 2013](#); [Tudor 2014](#)). These analyses, however, focus on people's relationship with their country of origin, not their current place of residence, so they do not contribute significantly to the question of the impact of government policies on national identification.

The phenomenon of migration itself provides an important inspiration in examining the relationship between the effects of government and national identification. For many people, it is poor living conditions that leads to a weakened relationship with the place of birth and constitutes the primary and strongest motivation for changing their place of residence. This is therefore a radical cutting of ties with the state due to its failure to meet expectations regarding the provision of suitable living conditions. The attitudes of immigrants themselves once they have settled in their country of destination could also constitute an interesting research area. The bond they develop with their new country of residence will be, at least initially, free of the component of identity with the nation as a collectivity and will be based primarily on the usefulness of the new location. At the same time, however, moving out of a country does not mean the end of the emotional attachment, which is often sustained through travels and is nurtured by preserving the traditions of the country of origin.

Studying the causal relationship between two different attitudes—in this case identification and support for government policy—involves the question of the endogeneity of one factor with regard to the other. Is it really the quality of life resulting from the functioning of the state that influences identification (national or with the state)? Or would a stronger identification perhaps give people a better opinion of government policy? A solution to this kind of question could come through theoretical analyses and thought experiments on the one hand, and through empirical research on the other. The former will translate into searching for logically justified causal relationships. The latter can be pursued either by studying phenomena that reveal changes in people's opinions on the effects of government work and the consequences for identification, or through attempts to find examples of situations where the weakening of identification led to the deterioration of living conditions.

There are strong arguments to support the thesis that in the case of the dependency studied here it is the impact of people's opinion of the government on identification that should be dominant. It has repeatedly been observed in history how an economic crisis produced a loss of legitimacy for the authorities of a country and an escalation of economic migration, denoting a radical cutting of ties with the country of origin. However, it is hard to find examples of the opposite sequence of events. It is, though, essential to mention that once a broader approach has been adopted, i.e., a study of relationships between political power and nationalism, doubts as to the direction of dependencies become very real. The above argument does not deny the importance of research on the role of national and state identities as a factor in support of the political system (see: [Kelman 1969](#)).

National Identification and Its Possible Determinants

The definition of national identification that has been presented in the introductory part of this article proves the multidimensional character of the phenomenon. It is, however, too broad to be justly applied in an empirical study based on survey data. I therefore chose to define national identification as the emotional attitude of individuals toward the nation-state in which they live. The simplicity of this definition allows us to treat it as an attribute of members of the titular nation of a given country, national minorities, and recent immigrants.

Application of a broader perspective would require three aspects of the attitudes under scrutiny to be taken into account: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The affective component is the core of national identification and this is the one on which I intend to concentrate. Research into the behavioral manifestations of identification and loyalty to the state could bring interesting results, but this article lacks the space for a systematic examination of that facet, which would go far beyond statements from survey respondents. Empirical data regarding the behavioral aspect is scarce and difficult to obtain.

Manifestations of identification understood in this way include emphasizing the superiority of a person's own country over other nations, a belief in the special, positive characteristics of its inhabitants, and pride in successes attributed to the state or its representatives in the international arena, including in sports competitions. A sense of responsibility for the country and willingness to act for its good or to defend its good name are situated on the border of such emotional and behavioral components.

The indicators of national identification used in this article include statements related to just this kind of attitudes. They refer both to the nation and the state—two notions that are indeed difficult to distinguish. This analysis, however, focuses on the emotional bond with the modern nation-state. The index construction will be discussed in detail later in the text. At this point, my intention is to present average values to account for the intensity of the phenomenon in different countries (table 1).

The differences between countries are significant. The average value for respondents from 14 countries amounts to 11.37. The lowest average values were recorded in Slovenia (8.47), and the highest in Moldova (13.45). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows that the greater part of the variation of the studied variable should be assigned to the inter-personal level, not the inter-national one. The *intra*-group variance is more than 14 times higher than the *inter*-group variance. Sources of the increased diversification of the phenomenon under scrutiny should be sought primarily among factors at the individual level.¹

The search for variables that influence identification should start with consideration of what characteristics a nation should have for the residents to identify with it. A factor that is significant in shaping identification but that was eliminated from the analysis at the outset due to being unquantifiable is the modern education system, which plays a fundamental part

¹ A corresponding comparison of average levels of national identification was made using a measure of similar design for the 39 countries included in the 3 waves of the ISSP study (1995, 2003 and 2013; [ISSP Research Group 1998; 2012; 2015](#)). In spite of the fact that these countries belong to six different continents and various cultural circles, the average level of national identification for all the countries, defined with the help of the synthetic index on a scale of 0 to 20, amounted to 12.34 with a standard deviation of 1.19 and values ranging from 9.66 to 14.57. With such a low diversification of the variable, it is impossible to prove any impact of macro-level variables on national identification using quantitative methods.

Table 1
Average Values of the National Identification Index

| Country | The average of the national identification index (scale 0–20) | Standard error | Lower limit of the 95% confidence intervals | Upper limit of the 95% confidence intervals |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|
| Bulgaria | 12.02 | 0.110 | 11.81 | 12.24 |
| Croatia | 10.55 | 0.118 | 10.31 | 10.78 |
| Czech Republic | 10.84 | 0.113 | 10.62 | 11.06 |
| Estonia | 11.68 | 0.115 | 11.46 | 11.91 |
| Hungary | 10.30 | 0.125 | 10.06 | 10.55 |
| Latvia | 11.78 | 0.135 | 11.52 | 12.05 |
| Lithuania | 10.75 | 0.109 | 10.54 | 10.96 |
| Moldova | 13.45 | 0.108 | 13.24 | 13.66 |
| Poland | 11.72 | 0.120 | 11.49 | 11.96 |
| Romania | 12.13 | 0.109 | 11.91 | 12.34 |
| Serbia | 12.30 | 0.130 | 12.05 | 12.55 |
| Slovakia | 10.65 | 0.127 | 10.40 | 10.90 |
| Slovenia | 8.47 | 0.098 | 8.28 | 8.66 |
| Ukraine | 12.07 | 0.120 | 11.84 | 12.31 |

Source: Own calculations based on the PGPE data.

in both the spread of national awareness and in preparing citizens for their future roles. It is hard to find an internationally comparable indicator of the extent to which school imprints the state-nation identification.

In spite of the growing significance of transnational organizations, it is the policy pursued by nation-states that is crucial in sustaining economic development and meeting the needs of citizens. The state authorities have countless instruments for influencing the economic situation, for which they are accountable (Parker-Stephen 2013; Duch & Stevenson 2013). In public perception it is usually the government that is to blame when the situation deteriorates. The upturn is then taken advantage of by politicians, who need to win public support.

National identification should be dependent on the effectiveness of policies pursued by the authorities and on the residents' evaluation of those policies. The bottom line here will be the effects of actions taken in the economic arena that translate into the financial situation of the respondents. Income, though, is not the only component of quality of life. The functioning of the public administration (including minimizing corruption), the effectiveness and fairness of mechanisms protecting civil rights and freedom (the judicial system), and the availability and quality of vitally important public goods and services such as education or healthcare, also matter.

The preliminary analysis of the variance of the variable under consideration shows that it is essential to single out the factors that determine how people residing in a given country differ from each other in regards to their attachment to the state. At the individual level, it is the respondents' evaluations of the aforementioned aspects of the functioning of the state that constitute the basic variables representing a subjectively perceived quality of life.

The survey responses to the question about support for the current prime minister and his or her ministers constitute the simplest measure of evaluation of the government. How-

ever, the content of the answers is affected not only by the quality of life and services provided by the state but also by the current dynamics of the political scene, including scandals and public relations blunders, whether major or not. The propaganda efficiency of the opposition and the attitudes of the mass media are of considerable significance. As much as support for the government is an important aspect of the legitimization of power and has far-reaching implications for the current political situation, it is not, in the approach adopted here, what should influence the sense of identification. Moreover, survey support for the government is, by nature, an unreliable indicator. It is commercial public opinion research centers that are commissioned by the media to monitor this kind of support. Furthermore, such surveys do not include the majority of indicators essential for an in-depth analysis.

Every now and then, questions about support for the government are asked in international comparative surveys, but these results may be susceptible to the above-mentioned disruption and turmoil on the political scene. This extends the range of measurement errors that are difficult to control, while the number of countries usually included in this kind of research is not sufficient to cancel them out.

For the present analysis, the endorsement of a particular team of politicians managing the affairs of state is not important. What is significant is the extent to which the respondents believe that various matters subject to control by the public authorities are well managed.

Therefore, it is evaluation of the policies adopted in various domains that are essential to citizens' standard of living (e.g., education, healthcare, welfare, infrastructure, or environmental protection) that will be a good indicator of part of the question of legitimization. The existence of a correlation between legitimization measured in this way and national identification is further supported by the fact that the high quality of public services available encourages people to use them. The state and its institutions are thus very much present in the residents' lives and should contribute to a higher level of identification.

An additional hypothesis that is worth testing is whether all domains of public policy are equally important for identification. Perhaps this dependency concerns only the areas that are the most significant for the citizens' quality of life. On the other hand, the dependency in question could exist at the level of specific fields but not for the aggregated evaluation. The dynamic aspect should also be taken into account, i.e., a comparison between the quality and accessibility of public services at present and in the past.

The second aspect of this study concerns opinions on the functioning of the political system. The hypothesis is that a better assessment of democracy should lead to a more positive national identification. This correlation, however, may be conditional. Significant individual differences in attachment to democracy are visible, especially in countries that have recently abandoned authoritarian governments (these provide empirical material for the hypotheses). It is conceivable that the dependency will be present only among those who feel a stronger attachment to democracy.

The enactment of law is another significant dimension of the functioning of a nation. The equal treatment of citizens by the judiciary plays a pivotal role here. For the existence of a consolidated democracy it is necessary to eliminate what Holmes (2003) defined as the "dual state," where the rules are stable only for a small elite, while the rest of the inhabitants are victims of the arbitrariness of those in power. It should be expected that the feeling that citizens are subject to the same rules will favor a strong national identification.

The phenomenon of corruption is entwined with the fairness and predictability of the public authorities. The occurrence of situations where an official's personal benefit outweighs his or her execution of legally stipulated tasks diminishes citizens' identification with the nation in which they live. Instead, the country appears to be a private business for politicians and their subordinate officials. Conventionally, two types of corruption are distinguished: so-called grand corruption, which involves power relations and business, and petty corruption, which is the kind encountered by individuals in their ordinary experience of dealing with officialdom. Although it is the incidents of grand corruption that are most important for the level of support for the government, opinions as to the quality of the state's management and its policies in various domains are primarily affected by the everyday experience.

Perceptions of grand corruption are largely dependent on the media and the publicity of different issues, so indicators of its level are likely to fluctuate, like ratings of the government. Additionally, it is often the case that the perception of corruption will grow when the government takes action to combat corruption, which translates into a decrease in the intensity of the phenomenon but also contributes to greater visibility of the problem in the media (see also: [Sajo 2003](#)). Above all, this analysis aims to capture the effects of government policy on the living conditions of the nation's residents. Therefore, indicators of "petty corruption" were taken into consideration.

Confidence in public institutions was also taken into account in this study. Because it is situated between the phenomena of legitimization and identification, this attitude assumes the role of a control variable.

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the effects of government action determine the quality of life of the nation's residents. People, however, do not necessarily have to associate one with the other, i.e., they may negatively evaluate the government and its actions, the quality of public services, and the enactment of law, but at the same time feel satisfied with their standard of living and identify with their country of residence. For this reason, the general level of life satisfaction was also placed among the control variables, as was an evaluation of how the respondent's financial situation had changed in the last 12 months.

Empirical Data

The data used to test the hypotheses came from a comparative survey conducted at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014² in 14 countries of Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Hungary) as part of a project called "Public Goods through Private Eyes," funded by the European Research Council and conducted in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Warsaw ([Letki 2015](#)). It is the only survey where indicators allowing the respondents' identification with the state to be measured were used along with indicators of the respondents' evaluation of government policy in various domains.

² The study in Poland was the only one carried out earlier, i.e., spring and summer 2013. Due to the political crisis in Ukraine and the seizure of Crimea by the Russian army, research in this country was stopped during the period of escalated social disturbance and was later continued till the end of September 2014.

One obvious limitation of the survey was its geographic coverage and the relative lack of cultural diversity among the countries in question. However, it must be emphasized that this data is very up-to-date and has so far been only limitedly analyzed.

In the study of determinants at the individual level, national identification is represented by the synthetic index. It was structured through respondents' answers to a set of questions. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements:

- a) Generally speaking, Poland is a better country than most other countries.
- b) When someone criticizes Poland, it feels like a personal insult to me.
- c) I feel responsible for the future of Poland.
- d) The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Polish people.
- e) When someone praises Poland's achievements, it feels like a personal compliment to me.³

The codes of answers were combined and converted linearly, so that 0 means a total disagreement with each of the presented statements and 20 an absolute agreement with all the claims.

The respondents' evaluation of their government was investigated with the help of questions in which the respondents were asked to assess the actions of the state in the following domains: the public education system, public healthcare, social benefits (e.g., unemployment benefits, pensions, and annuities), the police, the judiciary, the army and defense system, infrastructure, and environmental protection. In each of the areas the respondents were asked to give points ranging from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest). The synthetic index, which is the total of the answers to these questions, places values from 0 to 80.

Independently, the respondents were also asked to compare the functioning of some elements of the current political system with communism. Here, the evaluation concerned the provision of equal opportunities for all, a decent standard of living, an adequate quality of public services (especially healthcare and education), and access to these services. These responses were also combined into the synthetic index that assumes values from 0 to 16.

Satisfaction with the functioning of democracy and attachment to it were measured with the respective questions, "How satisfied, on the whole, are you with the way democracy works in Poland?" and, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government?'"

In order to measure corruption in everyday life, a question was posed about the extent to which the respondent agrees with the following statements: "In the current situation giving bribes cannot be avoided"; "Without a bribe you will not get what you need"; and "To get what you need you have to know the right people." The following statements were used to assess the respondent's evaluation of law enactment: "Law in Poland benefits influential people but not ordinary citizens";⁴ "One can be sure that people who break the law in Poland will be punished"; "The rights of citizens of our country are well protected

³ In all the cited statements, the terms "Poland" and "Polish" were substituted for the names of countries and nationalities with respect to the place of the study.

⁴ Answer-coding for this statement has been reversed.

by law”; and “In this country law is applied to everyone equally.” In both cases the answers were combined into synthetic indexes with respective scales from 0 to 12 and from 0 to 16.

The model also included attitudes related to the respondent’s perceived attachment to an ethnic group, the number of years of being a resident of a given area, general life satisfaction, a change in the respondent’s economic situation, and the level of institutional trust (the index was composed of answers to questions about confidence in the parliament, the government, the local authorities, the tax office, the social security agency, the police forces, the judiciary, healthcare establishments, and public educational establishments, varying from 0 to 90).

The typical socio-demographic variables were also used: gender, age, level of education (expressed in a set of dummy variables by assigning a respondent to a category according to the ISCED 1997), the natural logarithm of income in euros (see also: [Domański 2005: 18–19](#)), and level of religiousness expressed through a variable for the declaration of participation in religious services at least once a week.

The analyses were performed using the standard linear regression model. In order to account for the structure of the dataset, dummy variables representing the examined countries were included in the models. The differentiation in the dependent variable between countries was thus controlled, and interpretation of regression coefficients as average values for all the countries was made possible. Clustering within the countries was used for the calculation of standard errors.

Factors that Account for Identification at the Individual Level

The answers to research questions were obtained through two regression analyses. In the first, the major independent variable that was tested is the index of evaluations of government actions, including evaluations of eight domains of public policy (the education system, healthcare, social benefits, the police forces, the judiciary, the defense system, infrastructure, and environmental protection). In the second set of regressions, the evaluation of each of these areas is included separately, which allows us to distinguish between areas where the evaluation is important for the level of identification and where there is no significant impact. The analyses were carried out with a sample of respondents from 14 countries studied in the PGPE project, and separately for respondents from Poland with the aim to gain a detailed insight into their attitudes specifically. However, a significant disclaimer should be made in relation to the latter analysis. Combined with the occurrence of missing data and the large number of variables included in the regression model the standard listwise deletion procedure resulted in a sharp decrease in sample size. Therefore, the results for Poland should be interpreted with caution.

[Table 2](#) summarizes the results of the first analysis. Both unstandardized coefficients (B) and standardized betas (β) were included along with robust standard errors. The control variable representing “gender” was omitted (no statistically significant impact on any of the models); the table is not inclusive of the dummy variables indicating the respondent’s country of residence.

Table 2

Determinants of National Identification at the Micro Level—Aggregated Evaluation of Government Policy Index

| Dependent variable: national identification index | 14 PGPE countries | | Poland | |
|---|---------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | B (standard error) | beta | B (standard error) | beta |
| independent variables (scale range in parentheses) | | | | |
| Evaluation of government policy index (0–80) | 0.0117** (0.00539) | 0.0379 | 0.0551** (0.0215) | 0.145 |
| Evaluation of democracy (0–3) | 0.376 (0.305) | 0.0694 | 0.556 (0.686) | 0.0983 |
| Attachment to democracy (0–4) | 0.0701 (0.202) | 0.0177 | 0.134 (0.364) | 0.0346 |
| Evaluation of democracy × Attachment to democracy | 0.170* (0.0948) | 0.108 | 0.107 (0.247) | 0.0732 |
| Corruption (0–12) | 0.0882 (0.0538) | 0.0590 | 0.115 (0.0754) | 0.0785 |
| Evaluation of the law operation (0–16) | 0.0809 (0.0642) | 0.0609 | 0.132* (0.0746) | 0.102 |
| Evaluation of the present system compared with the post-communist system (0–16) | 0.00675 (0.0254) | 0.00696 | –0.00872 (0.0520) | –0.00877 |
| Institutional trust (0–90) | 0.0361*** (0.00633) | 0.149 | 0.0272* (0.0159) | 0.105 |
| Affinity with an ethnic group (reverse scaling: 4–1) | –0.913*** (0.220) | –0.156 | –1.796*** (0.260) | –0.341 |
| Number of years of living within an area | 0.0132** (0.00443) | 0.0618 | 0.0300** (0.0123) | 0.128 |
| Life satisfaction (0–10) | 0.204*** (0.0442) | 0.109 | –0.0343 (0.0954) | –0.0188 |
| Evaluation of a change in the material standing (reverse scaling: 4–1) | 0.0816 (0.0769) | 0.0169 | –0.142 (0.228) | –0.0306 |
| Age in years | 0.0366*** (0.00508) | 0.135 | 0.0418*** (0.0151) | 0.146 |
| Education level ISCED1 (0–1) | –0.0875 (0.840) | –0.00368 | — | |
| Education level ISCED2 (0–1) | –0.760 (0.655) | –0.0697 | 1.614 (2.188) | 0.185 |
| Education level ISCED3 (0–1) | –0.804 (0.620) | –0.0909 | 1.295 (2.193) | 0.149 |
| Education level ISCED4 (0–1) | –1.036 (0.661) | –0.0657 | 1.315 (2.712) | 0.0371 |
| Education level ISCED5 (0–1) | –0.868 (0.666) | –0.0591 | –3.872 (4.286) | –0.046 |
| Education level ISCED6 (0–1) | –1.888** (0.766) | –0.0967 | –0.0199 (2.340) | –0.00114 |
| Education level ISCED7 (0–1) | –1.435* (0.776) | –0.111 | 1.659 (2.245) | 0.148 |
| Education level ISCED8 (0–1) | –0.700 (1.453) | –0.00918 | 0.726 (2.746) | 0.0200 |
| Logarithm of income in euro | –0.140 (0.193) | –0.0295 | –0.238 (0.349) | –0.0352 |
| Unemployed (0–1) | –0.578** (0.247) | –0.0411 | –0.00818 (0.762) | –0.000517 |
| Religiousness (0–1) | 0.315** (0.123) | 0.0256 | 0.118 (0.397) | 0.0140 |
| Constant | 7.483*** (1.136) | | 6.280 (3.829) | |
| Number of observations | 7204 | | 330 | |
| R-squared | 0.229 | | 0.409 | |

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The most important results achieved through the first series of models include confirmation of the hypothesis about the positive impact of opinions of government policy on national identification both for the full sample and for the data from Poland. A unit change in the value of this variable causes an increase in the identification index by 0.0117 and 0.0551 respectively ($p < 0.05$).

The impact of opinions of democracy is moderated by the attachment to democracy. When the attachment is at the lowest level (0), the tested dependency is statistically insignificant. In a situation when the variable representing the attachment to democracy has the maximum value (4), the unstandardized conditional regression coefficient estimated for opinions of democracy amounts to: 1.056 for the combined samples from 14 countries and 0.984 for Poland. The coefficients are statistically significant (at $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.1$ respectively,) and they indicate a steeper increase in the predicted level of identification along with a higher opinion of democracy among those who feel a stronger attachment to the system.

Contrary to the tested hypotheses, opinions about the level of corruption with which the respondents have to deal in their daily lives, as well as opinions about the current political system compared to communism, do not affect the level of identification with the state. The positive impact of opinions on the enactment of laws was recorded only for respondents from Poland ($p < 0.1$.)

Institutional trust has a significant effect on national identification—the correlation is positive. An increase in this variable by a unit results in a rise in the expected level of the dependent variable by 0.0361 for the sample from 14 countries and 0.0272 for Poland ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.1$ respectively.) In this case it is difficult to consider this result as one of the utmost theoretical importance, for it is hard to circumstantiate that confidence in state institutions and identification with the state are separate phenomena.

The positive impact of life satisfaction on identification with the country of residence has been recorded for the combined samples of respondents from 14 countries. A unit change in the satisfaction variable results in an increase in identification by 0.204 ($p < 0.01$). However, neither changes in income or people's opinions of changes in the economic situation influence national identification. Education level also has no real impact. The model reveals significant and negative coefficients for the highest categories of education (ISCED6 and ISCED7),⁵ which indicates a lower average level of identification for people who belong to these groups than for the reference category ISCED0 that denotes uncompleted primary school. The occurrence of statistically significant coefficients is dependent on a set of control variables. Coefficients ought to be interpreted as the difference between the expected level of identification for a given category and the base category ISCED0 that was omitted from the table. What this means is that the switch from category ISCED0 to category ISCED6 indicates a decrease in the predicted level of identification by 1.888 ($p < 0.05$). The lack of statistically significant coefficients for categories ISCED1–ISCED6, which are less remote from each other, means that the impact of education on identification is relatively weak. Nevertheless, the fact that the most educated people feel the least attached to their country should not be disregarded.

A sharp dependency is related to the fact of remaining unemployed. Unemployment results in a decrease in the identification index level by -0.578 compared with that of employed persons. This result is consistent with previous considerations regarding the connection between migrations indicating cutting ties with the homeland and economic factors. The age of the respondent positively influences the level of identification, i.e., there is an

⁵ Both signify people with a higher level of education.

increase in the predicted value of the dependent variable by approximately 0.04 each year. The dependencies described regarding education and unemployed status are not present among the respondents from Poland. The fact that they were not detected could result from the insufficient sample size.

On the other hand, the tested model confirmed the statistically significant impact of the control variables, i.e., a sense of connection to the ethnic group (the strongest single predictor according to the beta coefficients), and how many years the respondent had lived in the neighborhood. It should be emphasized that the influence of the latter variable and the age of the respondent are independent of each other.

The second stage of the analysis involved the elaboration of opinions on government policy. Table 3 shows the results obtained through models of a structure corresponding to that of table 2. Here, however, the aggregated index was replaced by separate opinions of each of the government policy domains (listed in the questionnaire). This representation of coefficients does not include variables other than the above-mentioned opinions of the listed domains of government policy.

Table 3

Determinants of National Identification at the Micro Level—Evaluation of Particular Aspects of Government Policy

| Dependent variable: national identification index | 14 PGPE countries | | Poland | |
|---|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | B (standard error) | beta | B (standard error) | beta |
| independent variables (scale range in parentheses) | | | | |
| Evaluation of the public education system (0–10) | 0.0240 (0.0345) | 0.0124 | 0.0933 (0.106) | 0.0478 |
| Evaluation of the public healthcare system (0–10) | –0.0779 (0.0601) | –0.0407 | –0.403*** (0.125) | –0.206 |
| Evaluation of the social benefits (0–10) | 0.136*** (0.0313) | 0.0674 | 0.215* (0.129) | 0.101 |
| Evaluation of the police forces (0–10) | 0.0608 (0.0944) | 0.0329 | 0.513*** (0.138) | 0.240 |
| Evaluation of the judiciary (0–10) | –0.143** (0.0566) | –0.0811 | –0.288** (0.119) | –0.143 |
| Evaluation of the army and defense system (0–10) | 0.0983 (0.0970) | 0.0530 | 0.0122 (0.120) | 0.00597 |
| Evaluation of public infrastructure (0–10) | 0.0805* (0.0449) | 0.0446 | 0.212 (0.129) | 0.0981 |
| Evaluation of environmental protection (0–10) | –0.0774 (0.0983) | –0.0422 | 0.115 (0.139) | 0.0509 |
| Number of observations | 7,204 | | 330 | |
| R-squared | 0.235 | | 0.455 | |

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Among all eight areas of state responsibility, opinions on only three have a statistically significant impact on national identification for the combined sample of the 14 Eastern European countries surveyed. These include: the opinion of social benefits (e.g., pensions or unemployment benefits), infrastructure, and the judicial system. A unit higher opinion of public benefits changes the identification index by 0.136 ($p < 0.01$). (This is also the predictor with the highest beta value among the policy domain variables.) There is a corresponding increase for infrastructure: a change by 0.0805 ($p < 0.1$). There is also a negative impact, one related to the evaluation of the judiciary—an increase in the evaluation of this

category by a unit results in a decrease in the predicted value of the identification index by 0.143 ($p < 0.05$). The impact of the evaluation of the other public policies is insignificant, or perhaps it is too weak to cross the threshold of statistical significance. In the case of many domains the latter explanation is more likely, because the effects of the aggregated evaluation of all the areas are statistically significant (table 2).

The results from Poland also point to the positive impact of the opinion of social benefits on identification. The opinion of the police forces is essential as well. Regarding the opinion of healthcare and the judiciary, correlations are observed that are paradoxical and difficult to explain. High marks in relation to these two areas of state actions result in the weakening of identification with the state. There is a possible explanation of this dependency. Namely, if healthcare and courts really are malfunctioning, people who evaluate these domains positively are those who rarely use them. This, in turn, means that they are not very attached to the nation, which leads to the detection of a spurious correlation. Unfortunately, the available data does not allow for verification of this hypothesis.

Conclusion

In this article, an attempt has been made to answer the question about whether and to what extent the manner of exercising power and the efficiency of providing citizens with adequate living conditions influences national identification. Comparison of the average intensity of identification in different countries has made it possible to conclude that there is moderate diversity at the macro level. Identification with the state appears to be a universal phenomenon. Much the same intensity of the phenomenon in different countries shows that modern states are similarly effective in imprinting the state-national consciousness on their citizens. Such attitudes are the foundation of the existence of *demos* and patriotism. They are also essential for recognition of a supra-local community on the one hand, and use of the category of common good on the other.

The residents of the surveyed countries are characterized by a significant diversification in the intensity of identification at the individual level. The microanalysis enabled the recognition of a number of variables that explain this diversity. One of the most important conclusions is confirmation of the hypothesis that the quality of policy pursued by the state authorities *does* have an impact on national identification. There is a positive correlation on the level of the aggregated index between national identification and opinions of the policies adopted in different domains. When opinions of each area of state activity are taken into consideration separately, the impact of a positive opinion of the state's protective functions related to the payment of benefits, pensions, and annuities, and of the condition of the country's infrastructure, are strongest. The parallel analysis for Poland confirmed the significance of social welfare.

A paradoxical dependency was found with regard to the judicial system. A positive opinion of this domain lowers the level of identification with the state. This result is difficult to explain but cannot be ignored, because its occurrence has been confirmed in many versions of the statistical model, and all of them were checked. Thanks to a detailed testing process, which involves dividing the sample into 14 national samples, it turned out

that this correlation exists only among respondents from Poland and Romania. In the other countries, the correlation is statistically insignificant. What this perhaps suggests is that the explanation of the paradoxical dependency results from an unusual combination of attitudes in these countries. A thorough check of the results obtained at the level of national samples was also conducted for opinions of other domains of state policy. In the case of several other variables and countries, correlations have been detected that are inconsistent with the main hypothesis. Namely, a negative evaluation of policies in a given area influenced an increase in the predicted value of national identification. These statistical correlations are not arranged in any systematic pattern.

For the combined samples of the 14 surveyed countries, it has been proven that the impact of opinions on the functioning of democracy *is* significant. As expected, the strength of this correlation is moderated by the respondent's attachment to this political system: the deeper it is, the stronger the positive dependency of both variables.

Contrary to expectations, factors associated with justice, fairness, and law and order were not detected to have an impact. Opinions on either the manifestations of corruption in everyday life or the equality of citizens before the law have no influence on identification with the state. However, institutional trust has a positive impact.

When it comes to other attitudes and dispositions, a positive impact has been observed with regard to overall life satisfaction, age, and length of residence in a given place, as well as the declared strength of attachment to the place of residence. The dependency related to unemployment also seems to be consistent with the hypotheses. The unemployed are characterized by a lower level of identification with the state. Neither income nor opinions of changes in the economic situation matters. There is also no clear correlation regarding the level of education, although some results suggest that higher education could aid a decrease in the intensity of identification. The assumption that state and national identifications are bonded has also obtained empirical confirmation. Comparison of the state's social policy in the periods before the fall of communism and currently has not produced direct results.

The research findings confirm the importance of state policy for the loyalty of the state's residents. Even though such dependencies were not found in all policy domains, they were distinguished in regard to key quality of life issues: social welfare, infrastructure (the state being responsible for its construction and maintenance), the quality of the democratic system, and the labor market.

All this points to the undiminished validity of the debate about the role of the welfare state institution in the structures of a modern state. Not only do the citizens expect the involvement of the state in the attainment of various social objectives (Raciborski 2011b), but also the quality of the fulfillment of these aims influences the citizens' attitudes towards the nation. The emotional bond with the state is, to some extent, a reflection of how the state attends to those in need. Attachment to the homeland and patriotism are not merely a product of civic education or, in an alternative approach, propaganda. Perhaps it would be adequate to conceptualize this correlation as an exchange of loyalty for public services?

Nevertheless, residents' attachment to the state does not result solely from the quality of the goods received, as may have been suggested in the previous paragraph. The evaluation of the functioning of democracy is also of considerable significance. The respondents' answers in this area can be interpreted as an outlook on both the operation of democratic

procedures and the effectiveness of the rules of social life in the light of challenges posed by the reality. It cannot be assumed *a priori* that respondents will equate democracy solely with a political system in which the authorities are elected through regular election processes involving free political competition. In countries that have recently rejected communist authoritarianism, the advent of democracy can be equated with the development of a free market economy. The potential validity of this reasoning is also confirmed by the findings presented in this article, for neither a sense of equality before the law nor the question of whether everyday social relationships are free of corruption influences national identification. These elements of social reality are entwined with democracy as a political system, and only to a limited extent with the market economy. This suggests that democracy, in the opinions of the respondents, denotes the totality of the prevailing political, social, and economic relations. This, in turn, reiterates the importance of state-provided living conditions for national identification.

The question of the impact of unemployment on national identification is the last of the determinants that needs attention. This variable determines the position of an individual in the social structure quite fundamentally. Long-term unemployment results in alienation and a far-reaching uncertainty in regard to a person's own economic situation. It should be emphasized here that national identification is not affected by the level of income. Education, which provides adaptability to changing market conditions, and unemployment, which produces uncertainty and separation from regular social relations, *are* significant. This finding may provide inspiration for an in-depth analysis of the life orientations not only of the unemployed but also of those whose employment situation is unstable. There is, however, no space or empirical basis for a thorough examination of this question here.

Depending on the context, further analyses should be performed with the aim of explaining the diversification of mechanisms which influence national identification. Although particular nations do not differ in *average* intensity of identification, the catalogue of variables affecting individual attitudes does not seem to be universal across countries.

Acknowledgments

The empirical analyses presented in this paper were made possible by funding from the project "The Contemporary State: Styles of Governance," supervised by Jacek Raci-borski. The project was funded by the National Science Center on the basis of decision no. DEC-2012/07/B/HS6/02270. The author of this article wishes to thank Natalia Letki for her permission to use data collected on the basis of ERC Starting Grant "Public Goods through Private Eyes: Exploring Citizens' Attitudes towards Public Goods and the State in Central-Eastern Europe," no. 240830, before the embargo expiry date.

References

- Abdelal, R., Herrera, J. M., Johnston, A. I., McDermott, R. 2006. Identity as a Variable, *Perspective on Politics* 4(4): 695–711.
- Abela, A. M. 2006. Shaping a National Identity. Malta in the European Union, *International Journal of Sociology* 35(4): 10–27.

- Ahlerup, P., Hansson, G. 2011. Nationalism and government effectiveness, *Journal of Comparative Economics* 39(3): 431–451.
- Arts, W., Halman, L. 2006. National Identity in Europe Today, *International Journal of Sociology* 35(4): 69–93. doi:10.2753/IJS0020-7659350404.
- Benoit, K. 2002. The Endogeneity Problem in Electoral Studies: A Critical Re-examination of Duverger's Mechanical Effect, *Electoral Studies* 21: 35–46.
- Billig, M. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE.
- Blank, T. 2003. Determinants of National Identity in East and West Germany: An Empirical Comparison of Theories on the Significance of Authoritarianism, Anomie, and General Self-Esteem, *Political Psychology* 24(2). Special Issue: National Identity in Europe, pp. 259–288.
- Bokszanski, Z. 2005. *Tożsamości zbiorowe*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Bonaiuto, M., Breakwell, G. M., Cano, I. 1996. Identity Processes and Environmental Threat: the Effects of Nationalism and Local Identity upon Perception of Beach Pollution, *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 6: 157–175.
- Brubaker, R. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Calhoun, C. 2007. *Nacjonalizm*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne.
- Domański, H. 2005. Legitymizacja systemu politycznego w dwudziestu jeden krajach, *Studia Socjologiczne* 2(177): 5–39.
- Domański, H., Słomczyński, K. M. 2010. Pozycja społeczna a poparcie dla systemu politycznoekonomicznego: kontekst europejski, in: A. Rychard, H. Domański (eds.), *Legitymizacja w Polsce. Nieustający kryzys w zmieniających się warunkach?* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, pp. 61–87.
- Duch, R., Stevenson, R. 2013. Voter Perceptions of Agenda Power and Attribution of Responsibility for Economic Performance, *Electoral Studies* 32(3): 512–516.
- Evans, G., Whitefield, S. 1995. The Politics and Economics of Democratic Commitment Support for Democracy in Transition Societies, *British Journal of Political Science* 25(4): 485–514.
- Ferenczi, N., Marshall, T. C. 2013. Exploring Attachment to the “Homeland” and Its Association with Heritage Culture Identification. *PLoS ONE* 8(1): e53872. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0053872.
- Habermas, J. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. II. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Holmes, S. 2003. Lineages of the Rule of Law, in: J. M. Maravall, A. Przeworski (eds.), *Democracy and the Rule of Law*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, pp. 19–61.
- Hroch, M. 2008. *Male narody Europy*. Wrocław: Ossolineum.
- Huntington, S. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- ISSP Research Group. 1998. International Social Survey Programme: National Identity I—ISSP 1995. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA2880 Data file Version 1.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.2880.
- ISSP Research Group. 2012. International Social Survey Programme: National Identity II—ISSP 2003. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA3910 Data file Version 2.1.0, doi:10.4232/1.11449.
- ISSP Research Group. 2015. International Social Survey Programme: National Identity III—ISSP 2013. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5950 Data file Version 2.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.12312
- Kelman, H. C. 1969. Patterns of Personal Involvement in the National System: A Social-Psychological Analysis of Political Legitimacy, in: J. N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory*. Princeton: Free Press.
- Kłoskowska, A. 2012. *Kultury narodowe u korzeni*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kula, G. 2013. Mierniki syntetyczne — metody, problem, przykłady, in: J. Wilkin (ed.), *Jakość rządzenia w Polsce*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, pp. 298–314.
- Kunovich, R. M. 2006. An Exploration of the Salience of Christianity for National Identity in Europe, *Sociological Perspectives* 49(4): 435–460.
- Lainer-Vos, D. 2012. Manufacturing National Attachments: Gift-giving, Market Exchange and the Construction of Irish and Zionist Diaspora Bonds, *Theory and Society* 41: 73–106.
- Letki, N. 2015. *Public Goods through Private Eyes Dataset*. Warsaw: University of Warsaw.
- Letki, N., Evans, G. 2005. Endogenizing Social Trust: Democratization in East-Central Europe, *British Journal of Political Science* 35: 515–529.
- Linz, J. J., Stepan, A. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipset, S. M. 1994. *Homo politicus*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Malešević, S. 2006. *Identity as Ideology. Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Marsh, M., Mikhaylov, S. 2012. Economic Voting in a Crisis: The Irish Election of 2011, *Electoral Studies* 31(3): 478–84.
- Moore, D., Kimmerling, B. 1995. Individual Strategies of Adopting Collective Identities: The Israeli Case, *International Sociology* 10(4): 387–408.
- Nezi, R. 2012. Economic Voting under the Economic Crisis: Evidence from Greece, *Electoral Studies* 31(3): 498–505.
- Örkény, A. 2006. Hungarian National Identity. Old and New Challenges, *International Journal of Sociology* 35(4): 28–48.
- Orlow, D. 2006. The GDR's Failed Search for a National Identity, 1945–1989. *German Studies Review* 29(3): 537–558.
- Parker-Stephen, E. 2013. Clarity of Responsibility and Economic Evaluations, *Electoral Studies* 32(3): 506–511.
- Przeworski, A., Alvarez, M., Cheibub, J. O., Limongi, F. 2000. *Democracy and Development. Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World 1950–1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Raciborski, J. 2011a. *Obywatelstwo w perspektywie socjologicznej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Raciborski, J. 2011b. The State and the People: Relations Old and New, *Polish Sociological Review* 173: 3–20
- Rothi, D. M., Lyons, E., Chrysochoou, X. 2005. National Attachment and Patriotism in a European Nation: A British Study, *Political Psychology* 26(1): 135–155.
- Rusciano, F. L. 2003. The Construction of National Identity: A 23-Nation Study, *Political Research Quarterly* 56(3): 361–366.
- Sajó, A. 2003. From Corruption to Extortion: Conceptualization of Post-Communist Corruption, *Crime, Law & Social Change* 40: 171–194.
- Shulman, S. 2005. National Identity and Public Support for Political and Economic Reform in Ukraine, *Slavic Review* 64(1): 59–87.
- Smith, A. D. 1991. *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Tudor, E. 2014. Romanian Migrants between Origin and Destination: attachment to Romania and Views on Return, in: A. Croitoru, D. Sandu, E. Tudor (eds.), *Romanians' Social Transnationalism in the Making*. (EU-CROSS Working Paper 8), pp. 45–61. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-395278>. Accessed 18.08.2015.
- Van Eecke, Y. 2007. *Attachment and Immigrants: Emotional Security Among Dutch and Belgian Immigrants in California, U.S.A.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Weber, M. [1922] 2013. *Economy and Society*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Biographical Note: Wojciech Rafałowski (Ph.D.) Assistant Professor at the Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw. His research interests include political competition in post-communist countries, i.e. parties, electoral systems and contextual factor moderating the relations within the political arena. Until 2014 he was a Research Assistant for an ERC-funded project “Public Goods through Private Eyes.”

E-mail: rafalowskiw@is.uw.edu.pl