



## The Socio-Political Identity of Eu Countries: A Systematization of Security Theories

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### ABSTRACT

The article examines the development and specificity of the perception of European identity through the prism of security theories. It demonstrates how the European identity is created by the method "from the opposite", that is, on the basis of the production and exclusion of "foreign" identities. It examines how the perception of threats to European identity is related to their vision of Europe, formulated in various directions, for example, cultural heritage, socio-economic order and supranational governance versus intergovernmentalism. It is argued that the politico-social identification of security is a powerful factor contributing to the regular maintenance of a strategy to combat threats to the identity of a cohesive Europe. It is concluded that the experience of constructing a European identity is vulnerable, since the lack of a clear strategy for foreign and security policy, with the creation of an image of an external "other" or "foreign", will entail a search for "unrecognized identities" within the EU, which is fraught with confrontation between the association and nations.

### Keywords:

European identity, security, theory, Europeanness, politicization, construct.

The relevance of studying the problems of identity through the categories of security can be determined by several factors. First of all, security is one of the most used concepts in the modern discourse of international relations, in scientific works, in bilateral and multilateral agreements. However, in most cases, this concept is used in the context of the fight against existing or potential threats and without a deep understanding of what security is and where it is appropriate to distinguish between security, defense, security policy, etc.

Due to such uncertainty, the concept of security is universalized, acquires different meanings in a conflict that cannot be resolved in the process of political discourse. Security implies a strategy of struggle against the dangerous in relation to "one's own" - "universal", which is why now the security strategy is becoming a powerful means of identifying one or another identity, which is the

definition of the struggle against "others" and "strangers", which is vividly demonstrated by the example of the European Union, where security and identity play an important role in the context of bringing together different nations, cultures and interests.

The novelty of the study is due to the fact that in the modern world, especially in the light of migration flows, the strengthening of nationalist movements, permanent wars and challenges facing the EU, the problem of identity becomes extremely relevant. The EU, which unites different nations and cultures, faces challenges of maintaining its common identity and fair representation of its interests. The study of the problem of identity in the EU from the point of view of security theories represents an innovative approach of the author of the article. There is great potential in the study of the problem of identity in the European Union from the point of view of

security theories. Security theories provide a broad analytical toolkit for studying security issues in a variety of contexts. The application of these theories to the problem of identity in the European Union provides a deep understanding of the relationship between identity and security. Understanding the problem of identity and its relationship to security is of practical importance for the development of policies, strategies and measures to ensure stability and security. The results of the study can be used in the formation of effective mechanisms for managing and resolving conflicts.

#### Rationale for European identity

Attitudes towards European integration are mainly determined by a composite set of perceptions and attitudes towards identity, which have received the name "Europeanness" in the scientific literature [1]. In various forms, this concept is the main phenomenon, which is considered as a multidimensional concept with emotive, cognitive-evaluative and projective-conative dimensions. This is a generally recognized theoretical tool in the science of behavior, dating back to the theory of social action by M. Weber [16]. Other authors have used it to conceptualize European identity by distinguishing between feeling, thinking and acting. The emotional (feeling) dimension refers to the positive or negative feelings of attachment to the unification and integration of Europe. The cognitive-evaluative (thinking) dimension refers to the assessment and degree of approval of the current state of European integration and the goals of unification. The projective-conative (acting) dimension refers to the approval or disapproval of the prospects for higher levels of European unification and integration within the EU institutional environment. Based on this construct, it would be more plausible to argue that Europeanization is more of a project than a process.

Often people classify themselves and others into identity groups, sorting the world along national and transnational lines. To explain how these identities influence political attitudes, it is useful to identify two dimensions: the commitment to

"Europeanness" and its content. Loyalty refers to how strongly people identify with their group. Some feel a stronger connection to Europe than others - for example, even when the United Kingdom was a member of the EU, few Britons considered themselves European compared to their continental counterparts.

When considering the content of European identity, two common themes emerge, representing the two sides of what it means to be "united in diversity". Some believe that Europeans should remain united. Unity norms describe Europe as a transnational family - an extended kinship network with a common origin and religious traditions [2, p. 36]. Commitment to unity obliges Europeans to care for their figurative "brothers and sisters", and not for fellow EU citizens who are considered to be deprived of the necessary historical or cultural ties. Others believe that European identity implies equality. This understanding emphasizes respect for EU laws, common European norms and democratic participation. In other words, in order to fit in with the group, one must treat all compatriots fairly and as equals. Through this commitment to fairness and reciprocity, "Europeanness" implies trust in each other, sharing a security commonality.

The above dimensions of "Europeanness" are rooted in deeper mental layers of the formation of attitudes, in connection with which the assessments of European integration and approaches to it follow from the ideas about the sameness of the European population, which are the result of cognitive representations of history. Accordingly, attachment to Europe is seen as an identification based on a sense of belonging. The willingness to transfer control over important areas of politics and security to a supranational European level is based on a "progressive" perception of the fate and future destiny of a united Europe.

One of the approaches was presented by J. Galtung, according to which the reference object of security should be a person and it should be about human security, where the state should be only a means, not an end in itself [7, p. 147].

Typically, this approach leads to a concept of security that points to the individual and the global level. If we move away from the "middle level" - the state, then we can advance simultaneously on two levels: individual security is the security of an individual, and the security of all people is the security of all mankind (humanity is meant as "people", not "citizens" specific states), which is global security. But there are at least three problems with this seemingly simple departure from the state-centric concept of security.

First, this approach usually loses touch with the security establishment. It is difficult to understand how real collectives of the state and the nation can be reconstructed from individual security and thus gain control over, for example, the interaction between states. Postmodernists tend to argue that the security of the state cannot be achieved by adding the security of a large number of people, which is the classic problem of methodological collectivism and individualism.

Secondly, it is not clear what is meant by individual and international/global security. The concept of security, traditionally known from the term "security policy", does not have a basic meaning independent of the referent object (the state). According to the representative of the post-structuralist trend in the study of security and society, R. Walker: our political concepts were shaped by the modern context of the nation-state and it is naive to believe that the concept of national security (that is, state security) should be understood by separating the state and comprehending it without measuring its security, and then attaching this state to the equally context-independent concept of security. In fact, both concepts are already present in each other, and if this is denied, then both the state and security must be reified and naturalized so that they can be considered as necessary, ahistorical permanent entities.

Thirdly, the individualization of security usually also contributes to a very wide expansion of what is directly related to it. The dubious effect of this "alternative" concept of security is that even wider areas are "securitized", such as environmental security,

immigrants as a security issue, and so on. Considering, for example, the environment or immigrants as security issues, these issues are conceptualized in a special way with connotations derived from "security": a threat to be protected against, the role of the state, a problem "from outside", etc. Thus, we can talk about the presence of both analytical and political justification for the intermediate concept of security - between its narrow understanding (security is always state and only military) and broad (everything that worries people).

With such a neo-conventional analysis of security, which adheres to the traditional essence of the concept of security (existential threats, survival), but is non-dogmatic both in relation to sectors (not only military) and reference objects (not only states), a more differentiated picture of the primary units of the international system is obtained. The example of the EU demonstrates that not only the nation-state is able to establish itself as a unit that requires "survival of identity" when the state and nations coexist, but do not always move in the same fairway. European identity through the lens of security

The debate about the identity of the EU in the field of international security and whether it differs in any way from other, more traditional international actors can be projected around four central concepts: pacifist, interventionist, liberal and realist.

To reflect the presumably special international identity of the EU, the representative of the pacifist current of security studies, J. Manners, introduced the term "Normative Power Europe" (NPE), which implies the intention of the EU as a foreign policy actor to develop, gradually implement and disseminate, standardize norms (rules) and European values in international relations using non-coercive (without coercion) methods [11, p. 236].

NPE relies on the strength of material capabilities such as economic and military power. From the point of view of this concept, compared with the traditional means of power politics, the influence of ideas can be less direct. However, when the power of ideas is

applied effectively, that is, in accordance with the procedural principles of legitimacy, coherence and coherence, it can be a key force in ensuring the security and strengthening of the identity of Europe, because it harmonizes the interests of other forces through internal persuasion, rather than external pressure. In addition, NPE refers to the promotion of certain ideas. Normative power lies in the promotion and protection of universal values as integral elements of European identity. From this point of view, the normative power of Europe, formed and put forward by the respective political elites, when refined and placed in a broader context, helps to reveal the nuances of European identity [13, p. 1080].

The original understanding of the NPE is extremely difficult to reconcile with the use of the concept of security in accordance with the realist understanding in the context of the use of military force. As S. Smith notes: "by resorting to the allegedly superior hand of military force, the EU discredits and refuses the most powerful tool of soft power that it had" [15, p. 69]. The key issue is the militarization (and even securitization) of the security of the EU identity, that is, the displacement of other instruments by military force. Deviating from the traditional pacifist understanding of the NPE, some scholars have argued that military force can be an important tool for effectively spreading the universal values of "Euro-ness" that underpin the NPE around the world [14, p. 243]. Proponents of this interventionist concept of the EU's international identity rely on such normative principles as human security responsibility and "responsibility to protect, offering a justification for any military intervention, if the situation threatens the identity of Europe and does not meet universal standards of cohesion and unity [10, p. 511]. Thus, interventionists expect the EU's military operations to transform its ability to secure an international identity from the use of normative power by default ("soft power" and support for the European family) to selective normative power (the ability to use military force to protect European identity around the world).

From the point of view of realism, which traditionally insists that states are the main international actors, and refuses to attribute actorship to international organizations, the EU can be seen as an international actor that adheres to the same logic of action as states [9, p. 220]. From a realistic point of view, EU foreign policy has always been driven by self-interest, but overridden by practical constraints and the failure of collective action. In this sense, only by traditional means of ensuring security (military) can the EU position itself as a more serious realistic power and pursue the goals of maintaining the security of its international identity. In this concept, ensuring security based on the maintenance of common European values that form the basis of identity is, at best, of secondary importance [8, p. 41].

Also in discussions about the international identity of the EU there is a fourth position, entitled "Liberal Power Europe" (LPE). Like the NPE, the LPE insists that the specifics of the EU prevent it from acting as a realistic power. However, the external interaction of a liberal power, which differs both from interaction based on values and from considerations of identity security, reflects its internal configuration as a single market, focusing on economic considerations as a justification for the use of force [4, p. 684]. Thus, in contrast to the interventionist NPE, instead of prioritizing the protection of the internal factors of European identity, the LPE concept justifies the use of force to secure the outer contour of European identity (the protection of European values outside the borders of the EU). As can be judged from the foregoing, the theoretical framework discussed here is mainly an examination of Europe's normative power to secure its own identity in terms of the areas of defense and military security. It seems appropriate to link the justification for the security of European identity with political and ideological orientations and the perception of threats to a cohesive Europe, where threats are defined in terms of functionalist logic, assuming the homeostatic nature of social systems.

Every identity, whether individual, social, or political, presents a fundamental and disturbing paradox: an identity asserts itself in relation to a set of differences and operates under pressure to correct, regulate, or eliminate some of those differences. The "non-demos" theory, suggesting the absence of any truly European community, emphasizes the absence of a pan-European character and supports the position that the current European project is based on territorial ties between countries and narrow social circles of elites [6, p. 19]. From this position, due to the lack of a common will and identity of a single people, the cohesion of the European project is still highly dependent on the elites. In this regard, theorists of social psychology and political science, such as R. Wodak, suggested that the figure of the "enemy" and maintaining the idea of the presence of a constant threat is fundamental in order to serve as a unifying force in establishing the national identity of Europe [17, p. 99]. From a post-structuralist point of view regarding the construction of European identity, the researcher T. Diez developed a three-stage typology of "otherness", in terms of presenting the "other" as an existential threat to Europe (securitization): the presentation of the "other" as something lower; the presentation of the "other" as violating the universal principles of a united Europe and the presentation of the "other" as alien to the European family [5, p. 616]. From the point of view of this theoretical framework, it can be argued that the core values, principles and norms of the EU that feed the identity lie at the center of displaying the threat of otherness throughout the entire period of building and developing European integration.

In the field of international relations and national security studies, it is generally recognized that the self-assertion of the nation and the democratic nature of the political regime depend on the public recognition of "otherness" and on the unifying spirit that arises from the regular challenge of otherness as a threat to security. Representatives of social constructivism focus their attention on the normative power of Europe and its ability to

form ideas about the so-called. "normal world with universal values" [11, p. 248]. In this vein, a common European policy is assessed as a means of combating nation-states against external threats, thereby strengthening rather than weakening the nation-state in order to preserve its self-determination and sovereignty. European studies also show that perceived threats not only motivate the security behavior of the EU as a multinational actor (eg border controls, restrictions on the freedoms and rights of immigrants, etc.), but also contribute to support for a common policy at the EU level.

In particular, the Lisbon Treaty proclaims that the EU is based on the values of freedom, democracy, equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of minorities, and notes that these values are the common values of the EU states. At the same time, if you look at the original wording: "these values are common to member states in a community based on pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women", it becomes obvious that the values are interpreted as common in inseparable combination with the understanding of society (European nation) as such. Accordingly, the Lisbon Treaty is the document that is designed to construct a European political identity, to solidarize the states on the basis of the values accepted by all of them. However, at the same time, with an emphasis on the universality of democracy, freedom or equality, there is an assignment of secondary status to those who do not accept these values as universal. Accordingly, those who do not fit into the concept of universal "Europeanness" become secondary, "other" in relation to this concept. In this vein, the basis of identity security is, therefore, the concept of protection from non-universal values, the concept of confrontation between good and evil, friend and foe, friend and foe. Acting on the principle of "no freedom to the enemies of freedom", such security can be seen as a militant democracy that denies mutual tolerance, establishing a boundary between different worldviews [19].

While drawing a line on democratic values is considered the practice of "enemies of democracy", in democracy itself, where citizens seem to have equal rights and freedoms, there are similar boundaries of tolerance. Thus, militancy and militarization, which in themselves pose a threat to security, become the semantic, normative and empirical content of the EU security policy. It is the intensive development of the EU security policy that is an example of how a European identity is formed by means of creating the image of an "alien". The use of the image of "foreign" in the discourse of security indicates the embodiment of a "peaceful war", which is being waged mainly without the direct use of military means to fight against the same enemy, this phenomenon has been called ultrapolitics [18, p. 187]. The understanding of security by the researchers of the Copenhagen School is very close to ultrapolitics. For them, security is always a continuation of politics using excessive means, a kind of extreme version of politicization that lies outside the political rules of the game [3, p. 23]. At the same time, the Copenhagen School recognizes the existence of public safety. This means that security, politically repressive, implies the end of political communication with the recognition and understanding of the values of the "other" and the beginning of the construction of identity using extreme methods of defense against a certain "enemy". In addition, security policy can be a very effective strategy for creating a European identity. After all, since the opposition of good and evil produces an understanding of the virtues for each individual and at the same time is always based on certain stereotypes, the stereotype forms the basis that constructs individual identity. Thus, we can say that the concept of European identity security is based on the construction of a constant threat and the presence of a permanent danger, and the danger, in turn, is based on the opposition of identities. Such a manipulation between the sides of good and evil contributes to the formation of a European identity, as an identity against someone "other". In other words, the construction of the identity "we" (Europeans) is the basis for the

construction of the denied identity "strangers" (non-Europeans). The appeal to fear and the need for permanent protection entails the legitimacy of extreme means, including militarization in support of identity, which is gradually beginning to be perceived as the standard of EU defense policy.

We can say that the European Union is a normative force that intends to bring it closer to a full-fledged actor in the field of security. However, the EU normative documents appeal to democratic values, and the trends in the development of the security sphere contradict them. Security policy can be considered a modern strategy for the formation of European identity, but the other side of the coin is the feasibility of security strategy as a new control strategy, which is systematically and systematically implements the European and national bureaucracy by searching for new threats, their artificial exaggeration and visualization in the form of an "enemy".

Therefore, from the point of view of the author of the article, there are three main alternatives to the further development of security policy in the field of strengthening identity in the European Union:

- 1) The EU fully recognizes other identities, even if they include all kinds of "others";
- 2) The EU develops a security policy based on denied identities and a single priority European security identity respectively, which tends to militarize;
- 3) A conflict arises between people who are able to articulate the meaning of participation, attraction, communication - a kind of civic force, and people who seek control; at the same time, the emergence of such a civil force is possible only under the condition of the feasibility of the European community in the sense of "societas" (union for a common goal).

Thus, the article demonstrates that the security of European identity is an extreme version of politicization. However, the possibility of re-politicization does not seem to be purely theoretical, which is facilitated by several factors. First, the boundary between identities is always very fragile: clear good and clear evil (fixed identities "us" - "strangers") are artificially constructed. Secondly, the

boundary between politics and security is extremely fuzzy: security is a component of political discourse in terms of peace, war, foreign policy, risks and threats. Accordingly, there are always political discussions beyond the fuzzy boundary, that is, if the political ends where communication ends, then it can be assumed that politicization will take place when security is introduced into the discursive field during the interaction of different actors, including representatives of identities who are not perceived, with their political convictions, ethnic and racial origin, religious views, but outside the "universal" values of Europe. Such an experience of constructing a European identity is seen as vulnerable, since the lack of a clear strategy for foreign and security policy, with the creation of an image of an external "other" or "foreign", entails the search for "unrecognized identities" already within a multinational association, resulting in a confrontation between the state and the nation.

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