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Societal Malaise and Ethnocentrism in the European Union: Monitoring Societal Change by Focusing on EU Citizens' Perceptions of Crisis

Wolfgang Aschauer *

Abstract: *»Gesellschaftliches Unbehagen und Ethnozentrismus. Eine empirische Analyse der subjektiven Stimmungslage des sozialen Wandels in der EU«.* During the last years a vague sense of discomfort with current societal developments is spreading all over Europe and is particularly affecting lower social classes of society. It seems necessary to theoretically derive new concepts of quality of society and to take these crises perceptions of EU-citizens more adequately into account. In this article a new multidimensional concept of societal wellbeing is proposed to understand and evaluate new cleavages in societal embeddedness, social recognition and social belonging. It is hypothesized that those restrictions concerning quality of life are also mainly responsible for the rise in ethnocentrism and radicalization in many European societies. A macro-micro-macro explanation of causes, characteristics and consequences of societal malaise is developed as a theoretical framework and also addressed empirically. As a first step, a cluster analysis of indicators of societal developments is used to justify the conceptualization of a highly diverse Europe. The empirical approach on the micro-level is based on two survey waves of the European Social Survey (2006 and 2012). After testing the cross-national equivalence of the new concept of societal wellbeing, which is based on 14 indicators, the evolution of certain crises feelings in society is documented for several European regions in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Finally, separate multiple OLS-regressions within those regions were conducted to derive crucial factors which are responsible to explain ethnocentrism. It is notable that feelings of societal malaise exert a high influence on perceptions of an ethnic threat – especially in Western Europe. These value polarizations between social groups have to be considered as a future threat of social cohesion.

Keywords: Societal wellbeing, ethnocentrism, European developments, crises perceptions, malaise, European Social Survey, cross-national equivalence.

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1. Introduction: The Necessity of Considering Societal Malaise and its Consequences

Eight years after the financial collapse, which began in the United States, Europe is still in a state of crisis; we can even observe an accumulation of current challenges for the EU. All the critical events of recent years – the European debt crisis, the conflict in Ukraine, and the current refugee crisis – have led to the emergence of new divisions across Europe that threaten solidarity between EU member states and social cohesion within European countries. Such a breakdown in solidarity paralyzes the European Union's ability to act in unity to meet global challenges. The extent of the refugee crisis took the European Union somewhat by surprise in 2015 and the crisis management strategies for combatting the tremendous challenges and consequences of present refugee flows seem to have little prospect of success. As a result, pessimism regarding the future of the European Union is on the rise almost everywhere in Europe.

National governments find themselves in a dilemma where they must reestablish order (partly through the reinstatement of borders) at the national level, while at the same time they must negotiate general agreements to reach Europe-wide solutions. The European method of dealing with the crises is now strictly dedicated, on the one hand, to securing the external boundaries of Europe in order to maintain, on the other hand, the four central European freedoms within. This two-step procedure (increasing the pressure for Europe-wide solutions that recognize national demarcations in order to restore a functioning Schengen Area as soon as possible) reflects the new strategy of the European Union to establish a "fortress Europe" (see Albrecht 2002). This concept of an externalization society (see Lessenich 2015) means defending our own liberties and life chances in a post-growth economic society by excluding and depriving needy people inside and outside of our borders. This new doctrine in a period of economic stagnation is becoming more and more socially acceptable. It is notable that the new politics of exclusion gradually undermine democratic and legal achievements and the central European value of solidarity, which is clearly described in the European constitution (see European Commission 2004).

The refugee crisis' impact on Europe can thus be seen as the main driving force behind strained solidarity between and within the member states of the European Union, an attendant gradual exhaustion of democracy (see Klein and Heitmeyer 2011), and political and institutional alienation. New enemies to Europe are regularly identified by its citizens and populist politicians, who move the societal climate in certain directions. They accuse clearly defined actors, such as elites, banks or refugees, of being solely responsible for the current societal malaise. This scapegoating strategy reflects citizens' need to search for easy solutions to complex societal problems. In particular, European bureaucrats and the political establishment in Western countries are blamed for precarious societal

conditions, which leads to the impression that Western democracies are facing a systemic political crisis (see Crouch 2008; Blühdorn 2013).

Rapid societal changes, clearly visible as a consequence of the refugee crisis, economic stagnation (in the aftermath of the economic crisis), Euroscepticism and a lack of political trust, and the widespread insecurities of citizens (expressed in fears of societal decline) all lead in the same direction. These factors diminish solidarity and facilitate radicalization. As Zygmunt Bauman clearly states, "Postmodernity is a chance of modernity. Tolerance is a chance of postmodernity. Solidarity is a chance of tolerance" (Bauman 1995, 313). In his recent work, Bauman (2012) identifies the contemporary period in the development of Western societies as an "interregnum." The key promises of modernity turned out to be empty (Lyotard 1987; Habermas 1994) and many authors claim that widespread transformations in the economic, political, and cultural sphere have led to the impression that we are stuck on a treadmill (see Rosa 2013). Consequently, belief in progress fades away, capacity for tolerance diminishes, and solidarity is put under strain, becoming a "volatile tie" (Hondrich and Koch-Arzberger 1992, 24) between our highly individualized societies. There is the danger that vulnerable groups – as the victims of globalization – may influence politicians to turn the clock back to a period of national homogeneity and erode the principles of European collaboration.

It is the aim of this article to view fears of societal decline, political alienation, and exclusionary attitudes as symptoms of one central development: a rise in societal malaise. The central concept of restrictions in societal well-being is introduced in order to explain new divisions in societal cohesion, social recognition, and social belonging in contemporary Europe. The term malaise is derived from medical science and describes general feelings of discomfort or a lack of well-being (see National Institute of Health 2016). But in recent years the term has also been used in a different sense to refer to societies that are "afflicted with a deep cultural malaise" (see Online Oxford Dictionary 2014). This second connotation of societal malaise encompasses latent feelings that a society is not in good health. Certain uses of the term describe visions of decline, feelings of anomie, and a lack of political and personal trust (see Elchardus and de Keere 2012, 103 et seq.).

A theoretical model, which connects the causes of limitations in societal well-being (societal conditions in Europe at the macro-level), restrictions in living conditions and the characteristics of societal malaise (at the micro-level), and the potential consequences of societal malaise (such as ethnocentrism and radicalization) serves as the starting point of this article and presents a macro-micro-macro explanation scheme (see Coleman 1991; Esser 1993) for potential future developments in Europe (see Section 2). This theoretical approach highlights societal developments in Europe, which increase divisions between certain regions of the European Union and threaten social cohesion within EU member states. In terms of the characteristics of societal malaise, it is crucial to

theoretically define certain dimensions of perceptions of crisis that have a damaging impact on views of social integration and societal functioning. The widening of value polarizations and the rise of the political right and left is the logical consequence of these precarious living conditions. The current trajectory of the European Union toward increasing transnational exchange is widely seen as a barrier to maintaining cultural homogeneity, protecting national interests, and guaranteeing social order. It is particularly right-wing populists who benefit by utilizing a "hard" Eurosceptic view (see Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008) to justify their anti-immigrant positions. In psychological literature, Jost et al. (2003) provide a comprehensive cognition framework to explain differences in ideological outlook. People tend to embrace right-wing ideology because "it serves to reduce fear, anxiety, and uncertainty; to avoid change, disruption, and ambiguity; and to explain, order, and justify inequality among groups" (Jost et al. 2003, 340). We can therefore assert the presence of a rise in ethnocentrism in Europe, which can be described as a resistance to cultural diversity and an acceptance of inequality. It is assumed that this ethnocentric attitude is mainly found within societal groups who feel left behind in society and who are characterized by a lack of social integration or hold widespread views of a societal malaise.

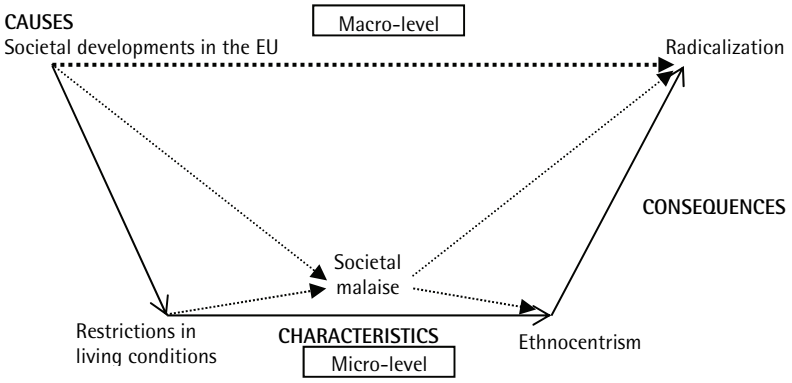
All three levels of explanation are also addressed empirically. A cluster analysis of crucial macro-indicators of societal developments is used to justify the conceptualization of European divisions, which lead to breaks in solidarity within the constellation of a highly diverse Europe (see Boatca 2010). The multifaceted dimensions of societal well-being at the micro-level are then quantified using public opinion data from the European Social Survey (2006 and 2012). This multidimensional approach should allow the monitoring of societal change in the aftermath of the economic crisis in various regions of the European Union. The third objective of the empirical study is to provide a differentiated measurement of restrictions in living conditions to describe – together with the dimensions of societal malaise – certain driving forces of xenophobia. It is assumed that it is still possible to explain exclusionary attitudes using socio-structural divisions and value polarizations, particularly in Western Europe.

2. A Macro-Micro-Macro Explanation Scheme for Contemporary Societal Challenges

The theoretical approach, which is adopted in this article, systematizes and links approaches at the macro- and micro-level and can thus be illustrated using a bathtub model (see Coleman 1991). The guiding logic of this classical sociological explanation scheme holds that social phenomena have to be explained

with reference to the micro-level because they are always influenced by individual actions.

Figure 1: The Macro-Micro-Macro Explanation Scheme for Ethnocentrism



Note: Based on Coleman's 1991 Bathtub Model.

In this theoretical approach, contemporary societal developments (principally summarized using the three **I**s of political **i**mpositions, economic **i**nequalities, and cultural **i**nsecurities) are seen as major factors that influence objective living conditions and societal well-being at the micro-level. At the individual level, it can be measured when current restrictions in living conditions, combined with perceptions of crisis (which are conceptualized using the three **D**s of fears of societal **d**ecline, political **d**isenchantment, and social **d**istrust) exert an influence on ethnocentrism (the dependent variable). A higher degree of ethnocentrism within a society may thus be strongly connected to the rise of right-wing populism and radical tendencies in Europe, threatening social cohesion not only within certain countries but also between EU member states. The theoretical model explains potential future developments within Europe, but the empirical analysis sticks predominantly to the micro-level. The hypothesis is that societal malaise is the dominant explanatory factor for the degree of ethnocentrism and radicalization in many European societies.

3. The Influence of Societal Developments in Europe on the Current Malaise

3.1 Political Impositions in the EU

When we review the political transformations in the European Union, the political architects of European integration find themselves in a dilemma. On the one

hand, further European integration and common agreements are clearly required, since complex European challenges, such as the refugee crisis, can only be solved through joint efforts. On the other hand, the implementation of a European crisis intervention policy is often prevented by national interests and blocked by large parts of the population. Thus national governments – backed by significant parts of society – follow the "not in my backyard" strategy and favor independent approaches instead of European collaboration. As a result, EU bureaucrats are widely perceived as inefficient in providing sustainable solutions.

In addition, optimistic advocates of a united Europe (see Münch 2008) have also expressed concern about further European integration. In a recent contribution, Münch (2014) clearly states that the spill-over process from an economic to a legal then to a political union require a transformation of democracy in order to gain public support. The EU is mainly suffering from a large deficit of input legitimacy and is offering less output legitimacy due to the ongoing states of crisis of the past few years (see Münch 2014, 62 et seq.). Thus, during the last decade, the general "success story" of European unification has clearly shown signs of rupture. In particular, the Eastern enlargement of the EU and the deeper integration that followed to cope with the needs of a Union of 28 members have encountered resistance from national governments and citizens. The *finalité* of European integration remains unclear and European solidarity is perhaps more contested than ever before.

Contrary to neofunctionalist approaches, several authors (see Bach 2008; Haller 2009) consistently conclude that European elites have constructed a multi-level democracy that is not approved by European citizens. Haller (2009) highlights four developments that impede strong social integration in Europe: there is no common European language; the EU has no clear authority; there is no coherent European identity; and specific social structures in several European regions result in groups of countries that are internally homogenous but highly diverse in comparison to one another (see Haller 2009, 287 et seq.). In connection with these factors, the positive image of the European Union has changed dramatically in recent years. In particular, the victims of societal transformations see the opaque apparatus of the European Union as a sovereign association (see Lepsius 2006), which threatens prosperity and economic growth in certain countries or even destroys the life chances of some citizens. From the periphery of Europe, the EU's center in Brussels is often perceived as a parallel universe, which is removed from the experiences of the people but nevertheless massively influences their way of living. As a result, Euroscepticism is on the rise in many European countries as the aims of political institutions and the perceptions of citizens drift further and further apart (see Immerfall 2000). Regarding the nature of Euroscepticism, it is important to differentiate between hard and soft forms of EU critique (see Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008). Whereas hard Euroscepticism principally opposes the EU itself and European integration, soft forms of EU critique reflect a high level of dis-

satisfaction with EU policies, as well as a desire to improve the democratic deficit of the European Union. Empirical analysis clearly indicates that those who are better educated perceive a higher level of political efficacy and are more positive about European integration (see McLaren 2007). Since the beginning of the financial crisis, Euroscepticism has become increasingly embedded within European member states. It has reached the mainstream of society, putting high pressure on European elites in terms of how they determine the future direction of the EU (see Brack and Startin 2015).

3.2 Economic Inequalities between and within EU Member States

Despite the central aim of the EU's policy of cohesion to reduce regional discrepancies, inequalities between European member states have also started to rise again, particularly after the Eastern European enlargement in 2004 (see Fredriksen 2012, 18). The financial crises and their aftermath have dramatically increased the divergence between Northern and Central European states and peripheral Southern and Eastern European countries. The south of Europe was particularly hit by the crisis and seems unable to cope with high public debt (see European Commission 2013, 17). According to Bach (2008), political efforts to establish the European monetary union are a crucial factor in the increasing regional disparities within the Eurozone. Political actions were subordinated to economic rules, while citizens became more and more exposed to market dynamics.

In one of his recent publications, Ulrich Beck (2012) highlights three demarcation lines for inequality within the European Union. The first division is between groups of countries with the common currency and powerful European nations that choose to follow an independent development path. A clear example is the United Kingdom, which tries to push its interests but remains largely involved in common European decisions. Gaps between the wealthy countries of the north and the countries of the south challenge the European Union's status as a functioning community of states. These new outsiders within the European project join the long-standing outsiders in Eastern Europe. Several new EU member states are still perceived as insufficiently economically mature to fulfill the economic standards needed to join the monetary union or insufficiently politically mature to meet the standards of established Western democracies.

In line with Kreckel (2004), a center-periphery model is best suited to provide a framework for economic discrepancies between EU member states. The current European Union is a united territory characterized by concentration of power in the center and fragmentation of influence at the periphery (see Kreckel 2004, 42). Rising social inequalities reflect one general division, which widens the gaps between countries as well as within them. Comparisons over time, using the GINI index as one classical measurement of income inequality, confirm that inequalities have grown in most of the European Union member states

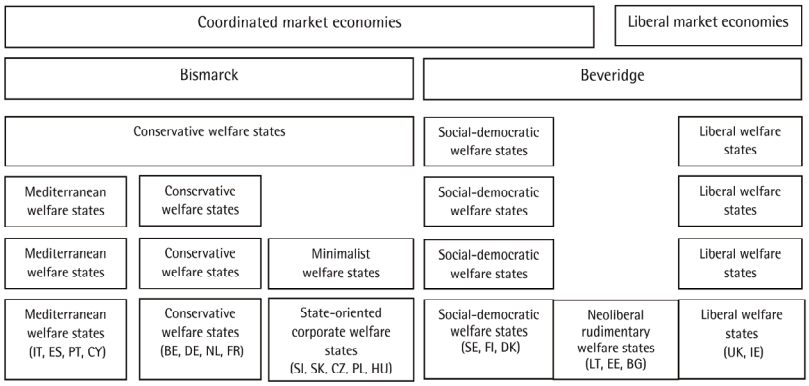
over the last three decades (see Fredriksen 2012). This is mainly caused by rapid income growth among the top 10% of earners, while the poorest 10% of the population are losing more and more ground. As such, privatization, deregulation, and technological progress have mainly profited the wealthy. Citizens in the top social strata perceive new opportunities to develop their skills and may interpret trends of flexibilization (see Sennett 1998; Bröckling 2007) as presenting new possibilities, while the lower classes, who are often considered the losers of modernization, endure precarious work and unemployment (see Spier 2010).

The economic tensions Europe is facing today have increasingly created the impression among the public that decades of social progress have come to an end and maximum levels of wealth have been reached. Growing inequality, which is in turn related to neoliberal policies that facilitate the process, therefore leads to strong fears of social decline that is increasingly affecting the squeezed middle classes in European societies. Reviewing the history of capitalism during the previous decades, Streeck (2013) proposes that the capitalist class itself has triggered the current renaissance in market dominance. They succeeded in reestablishing neoliberalism in the 1980s, which has led to a gradual erosion of the modern comforts of the welfare state (see Streeck 2013, 44). But it is notable that welfare regimes are historically grounded and seem to be somewhat resistant to significant cutbacks (see Schmidt 2010, 63). Research on the welfare state reveals notable discrepancies within Europe and strengthens the impression that Europe is a diverse family of countries. The most important work in this regard is the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990). His three worlds of welfare help to distinguish at least three types of regime within Western Europe. Liberal welfare states such as the United Kingdom or Ireland emphasize the role of the free market, while conservative welfare states (such as Germany, Austria, and France) are based more on the Bismarck model, where social security is linked to social status and employment relationships. The original aim of Beveridge to guarantee a universal security system for the whole population is more closely fulfilled in the social-democratic welfare regimes of Scandinavia. In those states, a high level of decommodification has led to the protection of a higher number of citizens from labor-market risks (see Schmidt 2010, 99 et seq.).

Following Esping-Andersen, many researchers have tried to extend his typology to accommodate more substantial distinctions between European regions. A fourth type of welfare regime has been suggested for Southern European states, which have been classified as rudimentary (Leibfried 1992), catholic (Begg 1994), post-authoritarian (Lessenich 1995) or familialistic (Ferrera 1996). Social benefits are strongly interwoven with labor-market participation, which leads to a lack of social security for labor-market outsiders (see Buchholz and Blossfeld 2009). Precarious groups in Southern European societies thus remain largely dependent on traditional forms of support, such as the church or the family, which strengthens the role of conservative family constellations, such as the male breadwinner model (see Keune 2009, 62). To establish a finely

tuned and comprehensive typology of European states it is necessary to include recent contributions on the role of the welfare state in Eastern Europe. Kollmorgen (2009) clearly states that Esping-Andersen's typology is not able to integrate Eastern Europe. He instead opts for a further distinction of three additional welfare types, arguing that the Baltic states demonstrate similarities to liberal welfare regimes, while the Visegrad countries, together with Slovenia, are best classified as minimalistic welfare states in line with the Bismarck model. The last group of countries is represented by the economic latecomers Bulgaria and Romania. The strong role of state actors and institutions are still evident in these countries and social security benefits only exist in a rudimentary sense (see Kollmorgen 2009, 84). These insights in contemporary welfare-state research justify a theoretically driven distinction between six European regions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: A Typology of Six European Regions Based on the Varieties of Capitalism Approach and Welfare-State Research



Note: Modified and extended according to Schröder (2013, 59).

The typology of six European regions combines research on different capitalist systems (see Hall and Soskice 2001; Hall and Thelen 2009) with current developments in welfare-state research (see Schröder 2013) and includes the post-socialist welfare states studied by Kollmorgen (2009). It covers the 21 European Union member countries that took part in the European Social Survey in 2012. This theory-driven typology will also be used for cross-country comparisons at the macro- and micro-level (see Section 5).

3.3 Cultural Heterogeneity between and Diversity within EU Member States

The classification of six highly diverse European regions can be made more clear-cut when cultural patterns and differences, still prevalent in European societies, are included. Schröder (2013) highlights that variation in capitalist

systems and welfare structures go hand in hand with certain cultural characteristics of the nation states. The prevailing ethic of Calvinism is – in his view – mainly responsible for the implementation of liberal forms of capitalism in Anglo-Saxon countries. Catholicism in Continental and Southern Europe has favored the development of social hierarchies and influenced the formation of conservative welfare states together with coordinated market economies. In contrast, the Lutheran influence in Protestantism strengthens the support for national solidarity, which has enabled the establishment of social-democratic welfare regimes (see Schröder 2013, 157). Even in Eastern Europe, the different features of the countries' welfare states are based on cultural and religious foundations. In the Central Eastern European states, Catholicism has maintained its influence, whereas the Baltic States were more strongly affected by Protestantism. The peripheral countries in South Eastern Europe form a third region, where the Christian Orthodox Church has prevailed, leading to a cultural proximity to the Soviet Union (see Kollmorgen 2009, 83 et seq.).

It is notable, therefore, that not only institutional structures but also cultural specificities have emerged due to historically grounded lines of division and center-periphery relations (see particularly Rokkan, ed. by Flora, 2000). The sense of a boundary between Christianity and Islam is deeply grounded in history and has long served to define European identity (see Belafi 2007). The tensions of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the frontiers between the Roman Catholic sphere of influence and the Christian Orthodox zone have created significant cultural divisions in Europe that still exist today. Boatca (2010) suggests abandoning the idea of a united Europe to alternatively propose an idea of a plural Europe that has followed divergent paths to modernity (see Eisenstadt 2001). She states that Europe is still labelled a "moral," geographical space, a morality which underlines European politics and intercultural understanding. Orientalism (see Said 1995) is largely responsible for significant divisions between the West and the Islamic world and is also important for explaining the European strategy to unify Eastern and Western Europe. The East could be understood as a Christian region and was soon constructed as Western Europe's Other and an incomplete part of the continent (see Todorova 1997, 18). Simultaneously, Southern Europe was gradually excluded from the European center due to the weakening of the Spanish empire, its Moorish heritage, and proximity to Northern Africa. According to Boatca (2010), it is still possible to observe a prevailing view of Western Europe as heroic and superior (perceived as the center of progress and modernization), alongside a decadent and nostalgic Southern Europe (characterized by loss of power), and an epigonic East (with strong ambitions to catch up with Western European standards of living).

These historical roots of cultural heterogeneity still influence contemporary European discourse and impede the construction of a united Europe. It is obvious that political measures are always driven by economic prosperity and the

public mood. In times of economic prosperity, public resistance toward European integration will remain relatively silent, while in periods of economic stagnation and rising social inequality, criticism of the political establishment will gain ground. As long as the peripheral regions share the opinion that membership of the European Union is an economic and political path to progress, and as long as the prosperous countries do not view their European neighbors as useless deadweights, there is still hope for establishing European unity in diversity (see Haller 2009, 289).

At the present moment, we are not only witnessing a breakdown in solidarity between the member states of the EU, we are also confronted with the challenge of cultural diversity within the nation states and widespread impressions of Muslims as posing a threat to European culture. As a result, the Islamic population in particular is experiencing prejudice, due to perceptions that they are a backward culture, incompatible with the West. Islamophobia is on the rise, especially in the aftermath of various terrorist attacks within Europe and the refugee crisis; as such, Muslims are "no longer the enemy 'other' but are viewed much more contemporarily, the enemy 'within'" (Allen 2007, 152). Due to key cultural clashes (such as the incidents of sexual harassment in Cologne), European states have predominantly decided to abandon the concept of multiculturalism and instead to introduce strict rules on integration, which often require the assimilation of immigrants (see Aschauer 2011). Civil and human rights are rapidly reframed in order to reestablish social order and introduce new security measures. Language examinations, knowledge tests, and behavioral guidelines are on the agenda everywhere with the aim of enforcing a strong commitment to Western society. Due to these high requirements and the illusion of equality of opportunity (see Bourdieu and Passeron 1971), integration often fails and creates a new underclass of Muslim immigrants among whom poor educational performance, underprivileged positions in the labor market, and unemployment are widespread realities. All these developments, which have predominantly structural causes, are interpreted through a cultural lens, leading to a new form of cultural racism (see Hall 1989). It would be impossible to solve the integration challenge by simply intensifying the requirements for refugees since they must overcome a great number of internal and external disadvantages when they start their lives from scratch in Europe.

4. The Impact of Social Developments in Europe on Societal Well-Being

Interestingly, although social integration was always a popular topic in sociological theory, one that was addressed by various founding fathers of the discipline (see in particular Durkheim [1897] 1983; Parsons [1973] 2003), an empirically wide-ranging examination of subjective feelings in relation to societal

progress is largely lacking. However, many sociologists have contributed extensively to the theoretical foundation of the concept of societal integration. While some theorists (see Glatzer 2008) favor a broad conception of quality of life that encompasses objective living conditions (such as labor market integration, political participation, and social inclusion) and the subjective level, other authors refer more specifically to high levels of discontent (see Ehrenberg 2004) and rising feelings of uncertainty (see Castel 2000, 2009) in Western states. It is thus important to also foreground the concept of societal well-being empirically, since subjective perceptions of crisis in society are often neglected in cross-national research.

To clarify the influence of societal conditions on societal well-being, it is useful to refer to the dichotomy of system integration and social integration as developed by Lockwood (1971), and further elaborated by Habermas (1981) and Giddens (1990). System integration refers to the economic and political order (the integration of societal systems), while social integration refers to the individuals' potential for integration. Nations may be considered integrated if both processes mutually enforce one another (see Heitmeyer 2008, 11 et seq.). According to the last section, gaps between system and social integration within the EU arise as a result of the rapid imposition of political models without the involvement of citizens (see Fligstein 2008; Haller 2009), increasing inequalities within (see OECD 2011) and regional disparities between EU member states (see Vobruba 2007), and the impact of cultural diversity in triggering widespread insecurities (see Bauman 2008). Some authors, such as Castel (2000), insist that strategies to cope with these insecurities depend primarily on the life situation of an individual and on socio-structural characteristics. Others authors (see Ehrenberg 2004; Rosa 2005) claim that widespread transformations in the economic, political, and cultural sphere have resulted in a serious overstress syndrome and have led to the general malaise of late modernity (see Ehrenberg 2010).

The approach of the Bielefeld research group in Germany, led by Heitmeyer (see 1997a, b), aims to systematize contemporary restrictions in objective living conditions and subjective perceptions of crisis and provides a sophisticated model to frame processes of social destabilization. According to Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000), the majority populations are also confronted with disintegration, which has led to states of crisis for Western societies. Economic difficulties within nation states (such as rises in unemployment or high poverty rates) can be seen as indicators of a crisis in social structure. On an individual level, these crisis states are accompanied by expressions of fears of social decline together with feelings of relative deprivation. The crisis of regulation refers to the political level. Political alienation is manifested in low voter turnout and reduced political engagement. On a subjective level, these processes go hand in hand with low levels of political trust and clear signs of dissatisfaction with societal developments. Insecurities, resulting from global or individual threats,

can influence the social climate. In times when flexibility and competition are crucial trends, social relationships become fragile and may result in a lack of solidarity (see Heitmeyer and Endrikat 2008). These findings correspond to prominent theories of individualization (see Beck 1986; Giddens 1990), where the question of how the flexibility of individuals leads to new forms of social embeddedness is still unresolved. Theories of social recognition (see Honneth 2010), social capital (see Putnam 2000), and the erosion of community values (see Etzioni 1995) are well-known theoretical approaches that address the challenge of reintegration in contemporary societies.

Societal malaise should be described using three key perceptions of crisis, which are interconnected with economic, political, and cultural conditions in Europe: EU citizens express *fear of societal decline*, show increasing levels of *political disenchantment*, and react with *social distrust* to the challenges of cultural diversity.

4.1 Fear of Societal Decline

Within the European Union, social mobility is predominantly guaranteed through the meritocratic principle. The current conditions of the global market economy indicate that individual efforts to enhance one's social status may not always be effective. Precarious groups at the bottom of society compete for scarce resources and experience the bitter reality that structural causes often counteract attempts at social advancement. The societal malaise manifests itself not only at the margins of society, where the potential of the precariat (Standing 2011) is widely neglected. The middle classes also face constraints in societal well-being, and are beginning to view the upper classes critically. Fearing a loss of social prestige, they try to secure their wealth by excluding certain groups. The middle classes are often still able to achieve stable positions in the labor market, but they are increasingly confronted with their own vulnerability due to signs of economic stagnation (see Castel 2000). Consequently, although stratification research presently mainly deals with precarization (see Castel and Dörre 2009), it also focuses more closely on the vulnerable middle classes (see Burzan and Berger 2010), and is beginning to analyze subjective fears of social decline (see Kraemer 2010). It is notable that middle-class insecurities are often not connected with real experiences of social decline but based on individual or historical comparisons. People feel underprivileged in comparison to other groups or a previous point in time. Citizens in Western Europe often assess the "golden age" of the second half of the 20th century as an era of peacebuilding, economic growth, political stability, and European integration. Current middle-class fears can best be attributed to changes in expectations for the future, as EU citizens seem to realize that European stability is illusory. Alongside the prosperous regions in the West, there are several trouble spots (such as in the Middle East); new conflicts (such as in Ukraine) weaken the European position

in global power relations, and new borders between the West and radical Islam (combined with the terrorist threat posed by the Islamic State) threaten social cohesion between Christians and Muslims. Fears of societal decline are reflected in high levels of pessimism for the future. It is important to distinguish expressions of fear among the middle classes from the perceptions of social groups who are clearly underprivileged. In many Southern European states we can observe a worsening of the lives of the poor, where restrictions in objective living conditions are clearly apparent. There is a big social question posed by a young and lost generation who are experiencing shortcomings in education and limited chances in the labor market. They try to survive with occasional jobs or are confronted with unemployment and material deprivation. These marginal groups in Europe are becoming more and more visible in certain regions and urban districts, which are largely characterized by a lack of prospects. People at the lower bottom in contemporary society all suffer from neglect and are ideal breeding grounds for radicalization.

4.2 Political Disenchantment

At the beginning of the 21st century, the predicted intrusion of the economic sphere into society (Bourdieu 1998) has become a reality in many world regions of capitalism. Even system theory is more and more committed to analyzing the dominance of the economic system (see Schimank 2013). Political efforts to combat the economization of the social have subsided in many societies, which has led to an extension of capitalist power (see Dörre 2009). These processes have favored significant shifts in political decision-making processes as the political establishment becomes increasingly infiltrated by global market dominance (see Crouch 2008). National governments in the European Union have to overcome particular discrepancies since they are forced to execute supranational decisions but are solely legitimized by their national citizens. Ineffective solutions at the European level create the strong impression that there is a crisis of legitimacy in EU politics, indeed that the EU is the new "sick man of Europe" (see Pew Global Attitudes Project 2013). As a result, national politicians profit from the backlash against national regulations, and are put under pressure to propose short-term solutions to reestablish institutional trust and fulfill the need for social order. One sociological theory that is suited to explaining political disenchantment is the anomie concept (originally developed by Durkheim 1983 [1897]). In Durkheim's model, citizens witness significant disruptions to social order (due, for example, to unforeseen high refugee streams), which leaves them feeling like uninvolved bystanders in a nation state with porous borders. Anomie in contemporary society thus reflects not only the violation of societal norms but, most significantly, a relative lack of certainty in expectations within a highly differentiated society (see Bohle et al. 1997, 48 et seq.). While people with a higher social status remain active in civil society,

disadvantaged groups tend to react with increasing apathy. The concept of societal malaise can be seen as a broad framework for the current societal situation, encompassing feelings of political alienation and a lack of political efficacy at various levels. Enraged citizens (see Kurbjuweit 2010) at the bottom of society share the deeply felt opinion that the complex conditions of an internationally connected world obstruct the possibility of (progressive) social change. It is notable that protest groups (such as Pegida in Germany) resolve to build a firewall against "otherness" without presenting constructive solutions. They unleash their anger in a defensive way, fueled by powerlessness and a sense of exclusion (see Blühdorn 2013, 169). There has been a widespread failure to address these far-reaching forms of institutional alienation and to judge them as temporary phenomena. The representation crisis of democracy (see Linden and Thaa 2011) has already reached a deep level, signaling a post-democratic turn in Western societies (see Blühdorn 2013).

4.3 Social Distrust

One clear symptom of a developing crisis of cohesion is the rise in social distrust in many European societies. Diminishments in social capital and forms of social exclusion are well-known research areas in the field of social cohesion, which were prominently addressed by advocates of communitarianism (see Taylor 1995; Walzer 1993; Putnam 2000). Individual strategies that undermine solidarity result from subordination under the normative goal of achievement, since in highly individualized societies (see Münch 2010) all responsibility for decision-making is assigned to the individual. People experience a lack of freedom (as a paradoxical consequence of high levels of autonomy) as they are forced to make decisions and incur debts, but often have no real opportunities for advancement within society. In many European societies, the pressure to achieve social mobility is growing and the impulse of competition may win out over that of solidarity. The egocentric attitude that exists under the shadow of neoliberalism is furthered by new processes of cultural uprooting due to institutional alienation and rapid societal change. It is not only economic conditions but also political disruptions to order in particular that provoke individual reactions that go hand in hand with widespread feelings of distrust. The issue of immigration is mainly responsible for the sharp polarization of values in society. Specific groups in society may respect or even appreciate cultural heterogeneity, while those in denial of late modern transformations may shift their values in a defensive direction. The rejection of cultural diversity results in an increased commitment to one´s own nation and a renaissance of social values that aim to preserve order by opting for strong leadership and denying egalitarianism and a commitment to tolerance. People tend to simplify the complexity of social relations by enhancing the status of the majority ingroup and devaluing the status of marginal outgroups.

All these dynamics of societal malaise increase the danger of an erosion of solidarity. We particularly witness a rise in ethnocentrism at the bottom of society due to the fact that disadvantaged groups choose to defend their precarious wealth by bullying the more underprivileged. Particular groups come into the fore, who are judged as "significant others" (Triandafyllidou 1998, 593) and perceived as a threat to achievements in Western society, such as equality and wealth. Disputes in relation to cultural diversity are expressive of significant identity conflicts in contemporary society, which have the potential to initiate a new "age of irreconcilability" (Dubiel 1997, 429). That which is foreign is perceived as a powerful invader in our ancestral territories, which can no longer be protected from the side effects of globalization. The rise in xenophobia is thus a direct consequence of rapid societal transformations in Europe.

5. Is a Key Consequence of Social Malaise a Rise in Ethnocentrism?

In Europe, individual, sociodemographic, and structural predictors, as well as significant attitudes, for explaining and measuring ethnocentrism are the focus of important national (see Allbus 1996, 2006 in Germany) and cross-national research tools (see ESS 2002, 2014) and have thus been extensively empirically documented (for a recent review see Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). Several empirical analyses highlight structural as well as cultural explanations for ethnocentrism but the influence of current societal developments is often only taken into account through rather imprecise contextual factors (see Billiet, Meulemann and De Witte 2014). Following the famous conceptualization of Allport (1954), who defined prejudice as an antipathy based upon inflexible generalization, the concept of ethnocentrism is usually seen as an attitude accompanied by negative feelings and beliefs held in relation toward different ethnic groups. People try to enhance their own social status by devaluating certain marginal outgroups in society (see especially social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner 1979). Such unilateral worldviews may relieve the individual´s sense of disempowerment, but they can have severe consequences for social cohesion.

Evidence regarding socio-structural and sociodemographic causes of prejudice is quite consistent and often replicated in research. The educational level is generally identified as one key determinant of prejudice (Hello et al. 2002; Coenders and Scheepers 2003) but only a few studies address the question of what causal mechanism is responsible for this repeatedly confirmed relationship. In a new study Meeussen, de Vroome, and Hooghe (2013) discovered that cognitive skills seem to play a role in coping with social complexity and feeling more secure in different social settings. Higher socioeconomic status is also often found to be negatively correlated with prejudice (see Semyonov et al.

2004). Another consistent finding is that people who live in urban areas exhibit lower levels of prejudice (see Scheepers et al. 2002).

Duckitt (1992) tries to give a chronological overview of the key theories that explain ethnic prejudice. Early approaches were focused on the personality of the individual. Authoritarian personality theory (see Adorno et al. 1950) argued from the beginning that family dynamics (parental demands for obedience and placing a high value on authority and discipline) are directly responsible for ethnic prejudice, specifically anti-Semitism. Criticism now challenges the psychological reductionism of this theory and its neglect of sociocultural influences. As Oesterreich (1996) puts it, a modern understanding of authoritarianism should view these tendencies as a pursuit of security and should give the societal dimension of authoritarian attitudes more weight. Social dominance theory (see Sidanius and Pratto 1999) addresses ethnocentrism more directly and highlights the competitive element between ingroups and outgroups. Power orientation is a key factor that leads to strong identification with the majority. Pettigrew (1998) was one of the first to state that regional and national differences in the extent of prejudice expressed cannot be fully explained by psychological characteristics. In his later works, he elaborated the contact theory, which was originally developed by Allport (1954). In a recent meta-analysis (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) it was confirmed that intergroup contact is a reliable factor in the reduction of prejudice. But Pettigrew (1998) defined several preconditions for this reduction, such as equality of status, both groups sharing common goals, and the support of intergroup contact by opinion leaders. Recent studies (see Semyonov and Glikman 2009) even suggest that there is a nonlinear relationship between these elements, asserting that anti-minority attitudes are lowest in mixed neighborhoods and highest in solely European neighborhoods (see Semyonov and Glikman 2009, 701).

Until the 1960s, other theoretical models, originally developed in social psychology, focused on the effect of values on prejudice. The Schwartz (1992) value model plays a central role in current cross-national research. While values of self-transcendence, such as universalism, correspond to positive attitudes toward immigrants, traditional values exert a negative influence (see Sagiv and Schwartz 1995). This is not surprising, as these values relate to authoritarianism. Davidov et al. (2008) confirmed that these value dimensions have a stable influence on ethnocentrism in 19 European states (based on the first wave of the ESS 2002), which was also robust after controlling for several other influencing factors.

In terms of sociological approaches on prejudice, ethnic competition theory has grown rapidly in popularity in the past two decades (see Quillian 1995; Scheepers et al. 2002; Kunovich 2004; Semyonov et al. 2006). In an influential article, Quillian (1995) tried to confirm his group-threat thesis, which states that the increasing size of the minority population and deteriorating economic conditions contribute to increased feelings of threat and ethnic prejudice. In

general, immigrant size is widely used as a contextual predictor and the group-threat theory has often been confirmed in analyses of the United States (see Taylor 1998). However, the results in Europe are more mixed. While Scheepers et al. (2002) confirmed that the size of the immigrant population has a positive effect on ethnocentrism, Semyonov et al. (2004) found that this factor has no effect on negative attitudes toward immigrants in Germany. Additionally, in his longitudinal study (Semyonov et al. 2006), he suggests that there was a larger effect of group size on prejudice in the 1990s but not in the year 2000.

Until now the size of the immigrant population and economic conditions are the most commonly used group-level indicators to explain ethnic prejudice but the results are often controversial. This could be also due to imprecise contextual indicators that are only used at the national level.

Several studies consistently conclude that economic competition between groups might play a smaller role than often assumed and that the threat of cultural diversity (see Raijman et al. 2008) and distance (see Schneider 2008) are stronger explanatory factors for ethnic prejudice in Europe (see Sniderman et al. 2004). Examples of new approaches include the studies of political climate and anti-foreigner sentiment in Europe between 1988 and 2000 (see Semyonov et al. 2006), the role of the media in influencing ethnic prejudice and right-wing voting behavior (see Boomgarden and Vliegenthart 2007), and public views concerning the impact of immigrants on crime (see Ceobanu 2011).

Cross-national research demonstrates that the aforementioned conditions considerably influence negative attitudes toward immigrants in Western European states, whereas in the new EU member states only weak explanations are found (see Zick, Pettigrew, and Wagner 2008; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Hjerm 2001). According to Kunovich (2004), poorer economic conditions in Eastern Europe may affect both lower and higher classes of society, and therefore the differentiation of prejudice tends to be weaker. Nyiri (2003) warns against viewing Eastern Europe as a homogenously xenophobic region and instead highlights that differences between Eastern European countries are as significant as those between Eastern and Western European states. Economic and cultural explanations are only weak predictors of prejudice in Eastern Europe and therefore the focus should be directed more toward the role of politics and public discourse (see Nyiri 2003, 30 et seq.).

This short overview of the most important findings demonstrates that explanations of ethnic prejudice have a long tradition in empirical research. Sophisticated analysis of disintegration processes and societal malaise should integrate new perspectives and aim to take the shifting perspectives of contemporary societal transformations in Europe more adequately into account. Until now there have been only a few studies that focus on the evolution of xenophobic attitudes. Meulemann, Davidov, and Billiet (2009) measured the attitudinal change toward immigration between the first three waves of the European social survey (2002-2006). They concluded that there is no uniform

rise in ethnic prejudice but rather a slight tendency toward more openness in relation to immigration, at least in countries with insignificant immigration flows and low unemployment rates. Differences between European countries have even increased in recent years, which indicate that there is a need to explore the different societal conditions more closely.

6. Research Questions and Sample Characteristics

The main empirical aims of this article are, first, to empirically confirm a highly diverse picture of European societies (by implementing a cluster analysis), to test a multidimensional conception of societal malaise (using structural equation modelling), to monitor societal change in Europe (by making mean comparisons), and to operationalize a broad concept of social integration (based on restrictions in objective living conditions and subjective perceptions of crisis) to advance a sophisticated measurement for actual causes of ethnocentrism, which is implemented by several sequential regression models in separate European regions. In general, the empirical study should provide a first explorative test of the theoretical approach, which was presented in the previous sections. The whole operationalization process is thus theoretically driven and leads to four guiding research questions:

- First research question: "Is it justified to distinguish between six European regions based on statistical data for contemporary economic, political, and cultural developments?" This refers solely to the macro-level. It is intended to operationalize political impositions, economic inequalities, and cultural differences based on comparable data from official statistics (mainly from Eurostat) and to evaluate the relevance of the typology that was developed in Section 3 (see Figure 2).
- Second research question: "Is it possible to develop a cross-culturally valid measurement of societal well-being vs. malaise based on European survey data?" This moves to the micro-level and deals primarily with methodological requirements for establishing a new understanding of societal malaise. A big challenge for future cross-national research is finding equivalent indicators of societal well-being, which can be used for cross-national comparisons. Implementing structural equation modelling and using MGCFA (Multi Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis) is a common method of testing for the cross-national invariance of the concept (see in detail in Bachleitner, Weichbold, Aschauer and Pausch 2014).
- Third research question: "Has there been an increase in societal perceptions of crisis based on the new measurement in recent years in Europe and what differences occur between European countries?" This gives initial insights into the quality of the concept for monitoring societal well-being in Europe from a spatiotemporal perspective. Mean comparisons are used to provide a

first overview of which EU countries have experienced a sharp increase in societal malaise in recent years or which nations continuously suffer from restrictions in societal well-being.

- Final research question: "Which predictors of social integration (objective living conditions and subjective feelings) are able to explain ethnocentrism and the differences that occur between major European regions?" This requires the most complex methodological procedures. It was decided to abstain from a multilevel analysis in order to maintain the perspective of a highly diverse European Union and to put a higher emphasis on specific regional dynamics. A comprehensive list of relevant explanatory factors was considered so that a sequential multiple regression design could be implemented. All the models were controlled for methodical bias (such as multicollinearity and missing values) to provide empirically sound evidence about the dynamics of societal malaise and ethnocentrism in different European regions.

While the empirical test of the first research question is based on macro-indicators (mainly derived from databases of official statistics), the empirical analysis concerning the micro-level is based on survey data. Two waves of the European Social Survey, currently considered the leading cross-national survey in Europe, were used in this study to measure the political and social attitudes of citizens. The European Social Survey started as a biannual survey in 2002, and the data from the seventh wave was released in October 2015. To analyze the effects of the financial crisis and its aftermath in Europe, the third wave in 2006 has been compared with the sixth wave in 2012.

The European Social Survey has several advantages compared to other survey instruments. The data quality fulfils the highest standards in survey research, which is demonstrated by their extensive efforts of documentation, a high number of participating European countries (from 22 countries in the first wave up to 30 countries in the fourth wave), large probability samples for each country (the minimum sample size is 1500), equal survey modes (in the form of face-to-face interviews), and a high target response rate (70%) (see Lynn et al. 2007). Table 1 gives an overview of the sample sizes, fieldwork periods, and response rates for all countries that were included in the analysis. The list of countries follows the typology of six European regions, which was theoretically elaborated in Section 3.2. The table illustrates that despite the survey's high-quality criteria, comparable fieldwork periods could not be achieved in all countries (see Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Spain, Lithuania, and Bulgaria in 2012, for example). Additionally, the target response rate of 70% is only rarely fulfilled. Although the ESS is considered to be the gold standard in cross-national research, the results should still be treated with caution since complete representativeness and comparability is very hard to achieve in cross-national survey data (see Bachleitner et al. 2014).

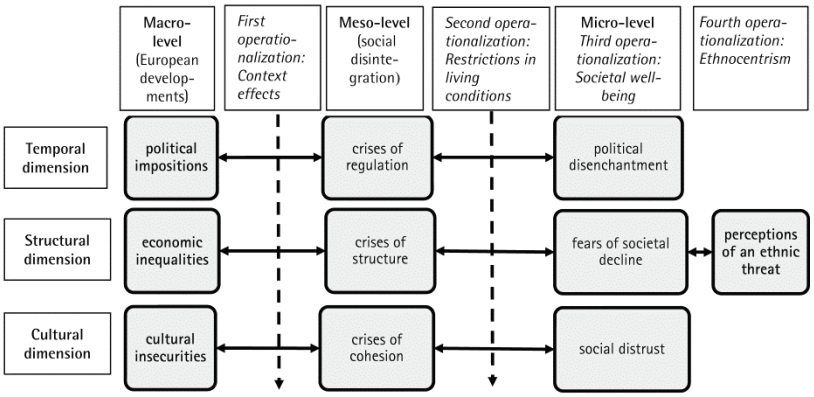
Table 1: Overview of Sample Used to Analyze Attitudes of the EU Citizens

Typology of European regions	EU members	Overview of the sample: 2006			Overview of the sample: 2012		
		n	Fieldwork period (Target: 1.9.2006-31.12.2006)	Response rate (Target: 70%)	n	Fieldwork period (Target: 1.9.2012-31.12.2012)	Response rate (Target: 70%)
Social-democratic welfare states	Sweden	1927	21.09.06-03.02.07	65.9	1847	**01.10.12-05.05.13**	52.4
	Denmark	1505	**19.09.06-02.05.07**	50.8	1650	**10.01.13-24.04.13**	49.1
	Finland	1896	18.09.06-20.12.06	64.4	2197	03.09.12-02.02.13	67.3
Conservative welfare states	Nether-lands	1889	16.09.06-18.03.07	59.8	1845	28.08.12-30.03.13	55.1
	Belgium	1798	23.10.06-19.02.07	61.0	1869	10.09.12-24.12.12	58.7
	Austria	2405	**18.07.07-05.11.07**	64.0			
	Germany	2916	01.09.06-15.01.07	54.5	2958	06.09.12-22.01.13	33.8
	France	1986	**19.09.06-07.04.07**	46.0	1968	**08.02.13-30.06.13**	52.1
Liberal welfare states	United Kingdom	2394	05.09.06-14.01.07	54.6	2286	01.09.12-07.02.13	53.1
	Ireland	1800	**14.09.06-31.08.07**	56.8	2628	15.10.12-09.02.13	67.9
Mediterranean welfare states	Italy				960	**01.06.13-20.12.13**	36.0
	Spain	1876	25.10.06-04.03.07	65.9	1889	**23.01.13-14.05.13**	70.3
	Portugal	2222	12.10.06-28.02.07	72.8	2151	24.10.12-20.03.13	77.1
	Cyprus	995	02.10.06-10.12.06	67.3	1116	01.10.12-31.12.12	76.8
State-oriented corporate welfare states	Slovenia	1476	18.10.06-04.12.06	65.1	1257	01.10.12-31.12.12	57.7
	Slovakia	1766	01.12.06-28.02.07	73.2	1847	24.10.12-06.03.13	74.1
	Czech Republic				2009	09.01.13-11.03.13	68.4
	Hungary	1518	21.11.06-28.01.07	66.1	2014	10.11.12-17.02.13	64.5
	Poland	1721	02.10.06-13.12.06	70.2	1898	19.09.12-08.01.13	74.9
Neoliberal rudimentary welfare states	Estonia	1517	**25.10.06-21.05.07**	65.0	2380	01.09.12-28.01.13	67.8
	Lithuania				2109	**21.05.13-25.08.13**	49.6
	Bulgaria	1400	20.11.06-10.01.07	64.8	2260	**09.02.13-30.04.13**	74.7
Total sample (unweighted)		35007			41138		

7. Operationalization Strategy for Cross-National Comparisons

As mentioned before, the whole operationalization process is theoretically driven and leads on to a comprehensive evaluation of the theoretical model. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 3, which gives an overview of all the dimensions of analysis, as well as the forms of measurement. Political impositions, economic inequalities, and cultural insecurities are all measured on the macro-level (using context indicators) and generally reflect the temporal, structural, and cultural processes of change which are the central consequences of societal malaise. Apart from these macro-developments, the meso-level (the living conditions of citizens within EU member states) has to be taken into consideration. Different varieties of capitalism (see Hall and Soskice 2001), welfare-state arrangements (see Esping-Andersen 1999), historical conditions (see Boatca 2010), as well as political and media discourses function in an interface and influence the extent of perceptions of crisis in certain countries. The operationalization of citizens' lack of resources is mainly based on the concept of social disintegration developed by Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000). The authors propose three crisis states that are highly relevant for European citizens: the crisis of regulation may be reflected by a decline in voter turnout and political participation; the crisis of social structure manifests itself in rising social inequalities; and the crises of cohesion may reflect difficulties in guaranteeing social inclusion. These objective processes go hand in hand with various perceptions of crisis and form the core concept of societal malaise. It is important to operationalize feelings of discontent through a multidimensional perspective and to include a sophisticated measurement of ethnocentrism as the study's main dependent variable.

Figure 3: Overview of Explanation Model and Operationalization Strategy



7.1 Operationalization of Macro-Indicators

In the first step, it is necessary to define the key societal conditions that are able to indicate political impositions, economic inequalities, and cultural insecurities. Table 2 gives an overview of the statistical indicators (based on the year 2012) that were used for a cluster analysis of 21 European Union member states.[1]

The GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), the GDP annual growth rate, the GINI index, the annual unemployment rate, and the extent of poverty and social exclusion were selected to show the economic context in the European Union. All measures were derived from Eurostat and reflect key indicators of economic development. Current political conditions are represented through a general measurement of public debt (percentage of GDP) and expenditures on social protection (based on PPS per capita).

All other indicators are based on alternative sources in order to provide deeper insight into the state of democracy in various EU countries. The Index of Democracy (KID) by Lauth and Kauff (2012) combines data from Freedom House, the Polity Project, and selected governance indicators of the World Bank (rule of law and political stability) in order to overcome the shortcomings of single measures. This index is generally closely related to the Corruption Perceptions Index,[2] which measures the extent of corruption from a worldwide perspective. It was decided to additionally add a measurement for integration policy. The Migrant Integration Policy Index is based on the prominent MIPEX study,[3] which aims to give a general picture of migrants' opportunities for participation in society. The index value is based on 167 diverse indicators, which measure integration policies, contextual factors, and integration outcomes.

The last three macro-indicators deal with cultural diversity between and within the countries of the European Union. Cultural heterogeneity within EU member states is measured according to the proportion of citizens with immigrant backgrounds (based on Eurostat). The other two indicators highlight the cultural characteristics of European societies by analyzing their value priorities. Schwartz's value concept (1992) reflects an empirically sound model for basic values and is well-suited to cross-national research. Schwartz proposes 10 individual values that are positioned in a circular arrangement. These values form two higher-order bipolar dimensions that present a spectrum with successive closely related values: the dimension of openness to change (individualistic efforts and action) vs. traditionalism (preservation of the existing order), and the dimension of self-enhancement (pursuit of one's own success and dominance) vs. self-transcendence (acceptance of others as equals). The two bipolar

[1] Austria, Greece, Croatia, Latvia, Luxemburg, Malta, and Romania were not included in the analysis as these states did not participate in the sixth wave of the European Social Survey.

[2] <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/results>.

[3] <http://www.mipex.eu>.

dimensions were constructed using ESS data and the national values were computed according to Schwartz's guidelines (2009).

Table 2: Operationalization of Macro-Indicators

Levels of Analysis	Indicators	Data Source
Economic sphere	GDP per Capita in PPS	Eurostat: Code tec00114
	GDP Growth Rate (compared to previous year)	Eurostat: Code nama_gdp_k
	GINI Index	Eurostat: Code ilc_di12
	Unemployment Rate	Eurostat: Code une_rt_a
	Poverty and Social Exclusion	Eurostat: Code t2020_50
Political sphere	Public Debt	Eurostat: Code tsdde410
	Expenditure on Social Protection	Eurostat: Code tps00100
	Quality of Democracy (KID)	University of Würzburg
	Corruption Perceptions Index	Transparency International
	Integration Policy	MIPEX Study <www.mipex.eu>
Cultural sphere	Proportion of People with Migration Background	Eurostat: Code migr_pop3ctb
	Traditionalism vs. Openness to Change	ESS Computation based on Schwartz (1992)
	Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence	ESS Computation based on Schwartz (1992)

These contextual indicators of societal conditions were used in a cluster analysis to support the theory-driven typology of heterogeneous European regions. Three indicators (the unemployment rate, expenditures on social benefits, and the Corruption Perceptions Index) are marked in bold as they were not also considered in the cluster analysis. This is due to high intercorrelations with other indicators: GDP is strongly related to social expenditures ($\rho = 0.93$); both measures of quality of democracy appear interchangeable ($\rho = 0.73$); and unemployment is strongly connected to poverty and social exclusion ($\rho = 0.76$).[4]

7.2 Operationalization of Restrictions in Living Conditions

The selection of indicators to measure individual capacities to achieve social integration takes into account several control variables. Besides age and gender, as well as marital status, the number of children in a given household, domicile, migration and religious background were also used to show the potential sociodemographic impact factors on ethnocentrism. To differentiate clearly between social groups and to highlight contemporary living conditions, the study used Anhut and Heitmeyer's (2000) concept of integration.

[4] Using highly correlated indicators is not recommended in cluster analysis since this can have a large effect on measures of distance, which are crucial in the formation of homogenous groups of countries.

- The structural sphere refers to *individual-functional system integration* and covers the resources needed for advancement in society (access to jobs, education, and income). Several grades of employment relationships were used to assess the structural position of citizens. Apart from the employment status of citizens, education, income, and social status (based on the ISEI measurement by Ganzeboom and Treiman 2003) were included as objective and comparable measurements of structural positions in society. These indicators were supplemented by two subjective measurements that address feelings of belonging to the top or bottom social strata and impressions of whether it is easy or difficult to manage with one's household income.
- The *communicative-interactive social integration* measure refers to the political sphere and institutional participation. This level is only roughly measured using three indicators. The first variable deals with trade union membership. Two indices indicate the extent of conventional and unconventional political participation in society (Uehlinger 1988).
- The *cultural-expressive social integration* measure is operationalized using indicators of formal and informal social engagement (see Putnam 2000). One variable refers to involvement in voluntary organizations, while the other measure indicates levels of social contact and social inclusion (friendships, intimate relationships, and social activities). Schwartz's (1992) bipolar value dimensions of were also included at the individual level, as it has frequently been found that values exert an influence on ethnocentrism (see Davidov et al. 2008).

All ordinal variables measuring restrictions in living conditions were dichotomized to guarantee unbiased use in sequential multiple regression models.

Table 3: Overview of Operationalization of Restrictions in Living Conditions

Level of Analysis	Objective Predictors	Subjective Predictors	Indicators
Control variables (7 indicators)	Socio-demographic factors		-Age (ESS Code agea) -Gender (ESS Code gndr) -Marital status (ESS Code maritalb) -Children in household (ESS Code chldhhe) -Domicile (ESS Code domicil) -Migration background, part of ethnic minority (ESS Codes: brncntr & blgetmg) -Religious background (ESS Code: rlgdgr)
Structural sphere (6 indicators)	Employment status		-Full time job with unlimited contract -Self-employed (ESS Codes: emplrel & emplno) -Part-time (<=30h) (ESS Codes: mnactiv & wkhct) -Temporary contract (ESS Codes: mnactiv & wrkctra) -Unemployment (ESS Code: mnactic) -Permanently sick or disabled (ESS Code: mnactic) -In education (ESS Code: mnactic) -Housework (ESS Code: mnactic) -Retired (ESS Code: mnactic)

Table 3 continued...			
	Education (ISCED)		-Low education level (ISCED 0-2) -Middle education level (ISCED 3-4) -High education level (ISCED 5-7) (ESS Code: eisced)
	Income social status (ISEI)		-Income in deciles (ESS Code: hinctnta) -ISEI for ISCO 08 <http://www.harryganzeboom.nl>
		Subjective status Managing with income	-Subjective Top-Bottom Scale (ESS Code: plinsoc) -Managing with income (ESS Code: hincfel)
Political sphere (3 indicators)	Trade unions		-Membership (ESS Code: mbtru)
	Conventional political participation		-Contacted a politician (ESS Code: contplp) -Worked in political party (ESS Code: wrkprty) -Index of participation (0 = no, 1= at least one activity)
	Unconventional political participation		-Took part in demonstration (ESS Code: pbldmn) -Signed a petition (ESS Code: sgnptit) -Boycotted products (ESS Code: bctprd) -Index of participation (0 = no, 1= at least one activity)
Cultural sphere (4 indicators)	Formal social capital		-Involved in work for voluntary organization (ESS Code: wkvlorg)
	Social inclusion		-Meeting with relatives and friends (ESS Code: sclmeet) -Number of people with whom individual can discuss intimate matters (ESS Code: inprdsc) -Taking part in social activities (ESS Code: sclact) -Index of social inclusion (linear transformation, 1-7)
		Value orientations	-Traditionalism vs. Openness to change -Self-enhancement vs. Self-transcendence

7.3 Operationalization of Societal Malaise and Ethnocentrism

All those indicators that refer to the objective level are enhanced by a multifaceted measurement of perceptions of crisis. Societal malaise vs. societal well-being is conceptualized as a second-order factor constituted by various feelings of unease toward society. All measurements belonging to societal well-being are again framed by the concept of structural, regulative, and cohesive crisis states based on Anhut and Heitmeyer's approach (2000). Table 4 provides a list of all indicators that are used to measure social integration at the subjective level in European societies. In total, 14 indicators belonging to different subordinate factors are included in the measurement.

- Political *disenchantment* is composed of two first-order factors contributing to societal malaise. Political trust represents a classical measurement where similar items are used in several cross-national surveys (such as the European Values Study and the World Values Survey). A central measurement to

capture regulative crisis states in society is dissatisfaction with societal developments.

- Structural crisis states are measured by fears of societal *decline*. The first two items refer to future pessimism while the other three predominantly deal with individual feelings of recognition in society.
- A cohesion crisis is operationalized using the concept of social *distrust*, which is measured through three classical items. Mutual trust between individuals is seen as a key influencing factor in the avoidance of insecurities (Kollock 1994).

Table 4: Operationalization of Societal Perceptions of Crisis and Ethnocentrism with ESS Indicators

Crisis Level	Dimensions	Indicators
Crisis of regulation (disenchantment)	Dissatisfaction vs. satisfaction with societal developments	-Trust in parliament (ESS Code: TRSTPRL) -Trust in politicians (ESS Code: TRSTPLT) -Trust in political parties (ESS Code: TRSTPRT) (11-point scale from 0 = no trust to 10 = complete trust)
	Political distrust vs. political trust	-Satisfaction with economy (ESS Code: STFECO) -Satisfaction with national government (ESS Code: STFGOV) -Satisfaction with the way democracy works (ESS Code: STFDEM) (11-point scale from 0 = dissatisfaction to 10 = satisfaction)
Crisis of structure (decline)	Fear of societal decline vs. feelings of societal progress	-Difficult to be hopeful for the future (ESS Code: NHPFTR) -Situation of people in country is getting worse (ESS Code: LFWRS) (5-point scale from 0 = disagree to 10 = agree)
	Lack of recognition vs. acknowledgment of own talents	-Free to decide how to live my life (ESS Code: DCLVLF) -Feel accomplishment in what I do (ESS Code: ACCDNG) -What I do is valuable and worthwhile (ESS Code: DNGVAL) (5-point scale from 0 = disagree to 10 = agree)
Crises of cohesion (distrust)	Social distrust vs. social trust	-Most people can be trust-ed (ESS Code: PPLTRST) -Most people try to be fair (ESS Code: PPLFAIR) -Most of the time people try to be helpful (ESS Code: PPLHLP) (11-point scale from 0 = no trust to 10 = complete trust)
	Perceptions of an ethnic threat vs. approval of multicultural society	-Immigration bad or good for country's economy (ESS Code: IMBGECO) -Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants (ESS Code: IMUECLT) -Immigrants make country worse or better place to live (ESS Code: IMWBCNT) (11-point scale from von 0 = left pole to 10 = right pole)

To answer the last research question and to explore the influence of the various indicators on ethnocentrism, the dependent variable "ethnic prejudice" is also included in the table. All three items form a short one-dimensional scale that points to either perceptions of an ethnic threat or approval of cultural diversity.

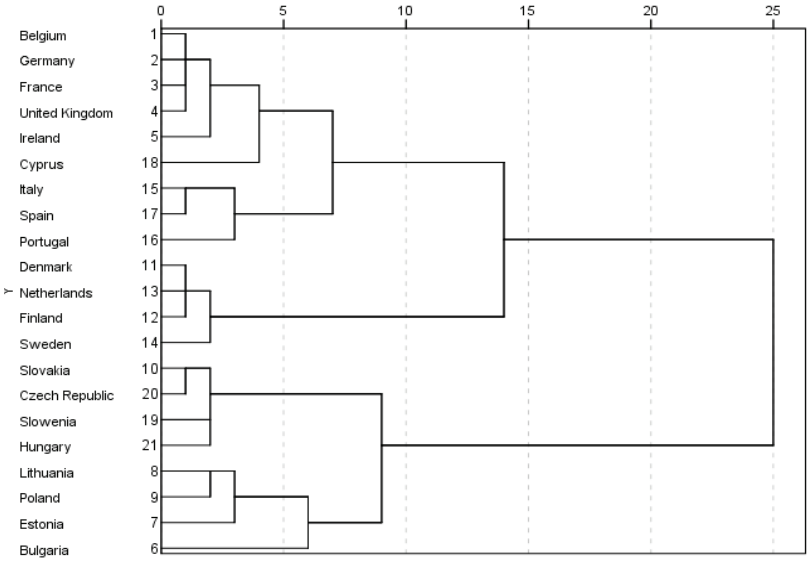
8. Empirical Results

8.1 Is it Justified to Identify Six European Regions Based on Statistical Data Related to Contemporary Economic, Political, and Cultural Developments?

Table 2 illustrated that 10 out of 13 indicators, which describe the economic, political, and cultural conditions of European Union member states, could be included in a cluster analysis in order to test the theory-driven identification of six European regions. In an ideal case, a cluster analysis allows the grouping of countries within homogenous regions based on similar empirical characteristics. Nevertheless, the results of a cluster analysis are always dependent on the researcher's decisions, so it is necessary to give sound reasons for all steps taken in the analysis. Due to substantial correlations between the variables, it was decided to exclude three indicators (the CPI, the unemployment rate, and social expenditures: see Table 2). The different scaling of the indicators and the small sample size (21 countries) requires a z-standardization of the indicators and a selection of the mode of a hierarchical cluster analysis. The quadratic Euclidian distance is taken as an ideal distance measure and the linkage method of Ward is generally interpreted as the most empirically sound method to gather particular clusters (Wiedenbeck and Züll 2010, 532). The decision reached on the adequate number of clusters is based on a visual interpretation of the dendrogram (see Figure 4). This graph standardizes the distances between the countries on a scale from 0 to 25 and thus illustrates which countries form homogenous groups. If the threshold of a normed distance of 5 is used, it appears to be a realistic measurement for distinguishing six European regions. The first group of countries consists of Belgium, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom; Ireland and Cyprus can also be included in the first cluster. The second class of countries is represented by the Mediterranean region (Italy, Spain, and to some extent Portugal). It is also possible to group the Scandinavian countries together (along with the Netherlands). When Eastern Europe is taken into account, notable similarities can be identified between the EU member states of Central Eastern Europe (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Slovakia). Poland forms a fifth cluster, together with the Baltic States, while Bulgaria must still be regarded as an outlier. The societal conditions of Bulgar-

ia differ clearly from other European states, which indicate Bulgaria's rather isolated position as a latecomer to the European Union.[5]

Figure 4: Dendrogram of the Cluster Analysis (Quadratic Euclidean Distance with Ward's Linkage)



Fromm (2012) recommends justifying the typology of countries and securing the homogeneity of the cluster through an observation of the distribution of clusters compared to the total sample. Following Fromm's recommendation, Table 5 details the mean values and gives clear insights into the economic, political, and cultural circumstances in the European Union. The highest GDP can be observed in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, closely followed by Western European countries. Southern European countries occupy the third position, although most of the countries are still exposed to economic decline in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Therefore, lower levels of economic wealth in Eastern Europe have to be put into the perspective of higher economic growth rates during recent years. Only Bulgaria still has a very low economic performance and clearly lags far behind compared to the other states.

[5] It is notable that also broader classifications of Europe seem plausible. A threshold of 10 allows the separation of the prosperous European region of Scandinavia and the Netherlands from the slightly lower standards of living in Continental and Southern Europe. Eastern European countries are still situated in the peripheral zone of the European community of states. A threshold of 15 allows a clear distinction between Western Europe and Eastern Europe.

Table 5: Mean Values of Indicators in Relation to Clusters of European Regions

	Scandinavia and the Netherlands (DK, SE, FI, NL)	Western Europe and Cyprus (FR, DE, BE, UK, IE, CY)	Southern Europe (IT, PT, ES)	Central Eastern Europe (SI, SK, CZ, HU)	Poland and the Baltic States (PL, EE, LT)	Bulgaria (BG)	Total
GDP per Capita in PPS	123,50	112,67	90,67	77,00	70,00	47,00	95,57
GDP Growth Rate (previous year)	-,42	-,22	-2,40	-,85	3,40	,60	-,13
GINI Index	26,05	29,85	33,80	25,20	31,80	33,60	29,26
Poverty and Social Exclusion	16,70	23,58	27,80	21,98	27,53	49,30	24,36
Public Debt	52,15	94,30	112,37	58,28	35,30	18,40	69,95
Quality of Democracy (KID)	9,70	8,90	8,27	8,73	8,80	7,30	8,84
Integration Policy	69,50	54,50	70,00	46,75	44,33	45,00	56,19
Migration Background	10,18	14,98	10,20	5,48	7,53	1,20	9,85
Traditionalism vs. Openness to Change	,09	-,25	-,56	-,49	-,59	-1,00	-,36
Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence	1,60	1,43	1,30	,78	,86	,79	1,21

The indicators of social inequality, and poverty and social exclusion largely confirm the notion of precarious economic states, particularly in Southern Europe and some Eastern European states (principally in Bulgaria). Wider gaps between the rich and the poor are more effectively absorbed in Scandinavia and in Central Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the quality of democracy is clearly higher in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. In particular, Southern Europe is more exposed to political instability and a higher level of corruption, which leads to the lowest mean value in comparison with all the other groups of countries (except Bulgaria). These lower levels of democracy in Southern Europe are connected with extraordinarily high rates of public debt. This clearly indicates that Southern Europe has lost ground compared to the other European regions in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Public debt is also significantly higher in Western Europe and equally high in Scandinavia in comparison with the Eastern European clusters. Additionally, notable discrepancies are found with regard to integration policy. While political measures

seem to increase the amount of change immigrants experience, particularly in Scandinavia and Southern Europe, there is a lot of room for improvement in integration outcomes in Continental and Eastern Europe. The hesitation to provide equal opportunities for immigrants could be due to high rates of cultural diversity, particularly in Western Europe. While some Eastern European states (especially Poland or Bulgaria) can still be characterized as rather homogenous societies, the whole Western hemisphere of the European Union in particular is more and more exposed to immigration and cultural diversity. This long history of multiculturalism may also have left an imprint on cultural values. According to the Schwartz value model, it can be clearly observed that Scandinavian countries (together with the Netherlands) are the leading countries in terms of progressive values and stand out for their clear orientation toward tolerance and equality. The value priorities seem to be somewhat similar in Western Europe, while people in Southern Europe express a higher orientation toward conservative values. A sharp decrease in values of self-transcendence can be observed in Eastern Europe. People there tend more often to possess a materialist orientation (opting more strongly for achievement and power) and to refrain from values of equality and tolerance.

The main aim of the cluster analysis was to empirically confirm the theory-driven establishment of six diverse European regions. The first research question can largely be answered positively, since all the proposed regions of Europe were widely confirmed by the cluster analysis. When we compare the theoretical model with the empirical results, only a few small deviations appear. The Netherlands seem to exhibit large economic, political, and cultural similarities to Scandinavia. It is also not possible to distinguish between a cluster of conservative Western welfare states and liberal welfare countries. This is perhaps due to economic and political similarities between Continental Europe and the United Kingdom. The most important deviation is reflected in the position of Cyprus, which was classified together with Western European states in the cluster analysis. This is due to large discrepancies between Cyprus and Southern Europe with regard to various selected indicators. Cyprus has a larger proportion of people with immigrant backgrounds and its integration policy is far more critical compared to other Southern European states.

In Eastern Europe the distinction between certain groups of countries converges largely with Kollmorgen's model (2009). The Visegrad states – together with Slovenia – form a homogenous group of countries, although Poland seems to have more similarities to the Baltic states. Apart from those groups of countries that were classified as neoliberal by Kollmorgen, Bulgaria occupies an isolated position. This confirms his argument for grouping Bulgaria together with other South-Eastern European states as a rudimentary welfare state where state actors and institutions still play a dominant role (see Kollmorgen 2009, 84).

The cluster analysis clearly supports the center-periphery perspective on structures in Europe (see Vobruba 2007) and strengthens the view on the exist-

ence of highly diverse regions, not only with regard to welfare-state systems but also concerning democratic achievements and cultural characteristics. Due to small deviations between the proposed categories and the cluster results, the decision has been reached to maintain the theory-driven model (see Figure 2) for further analyses.

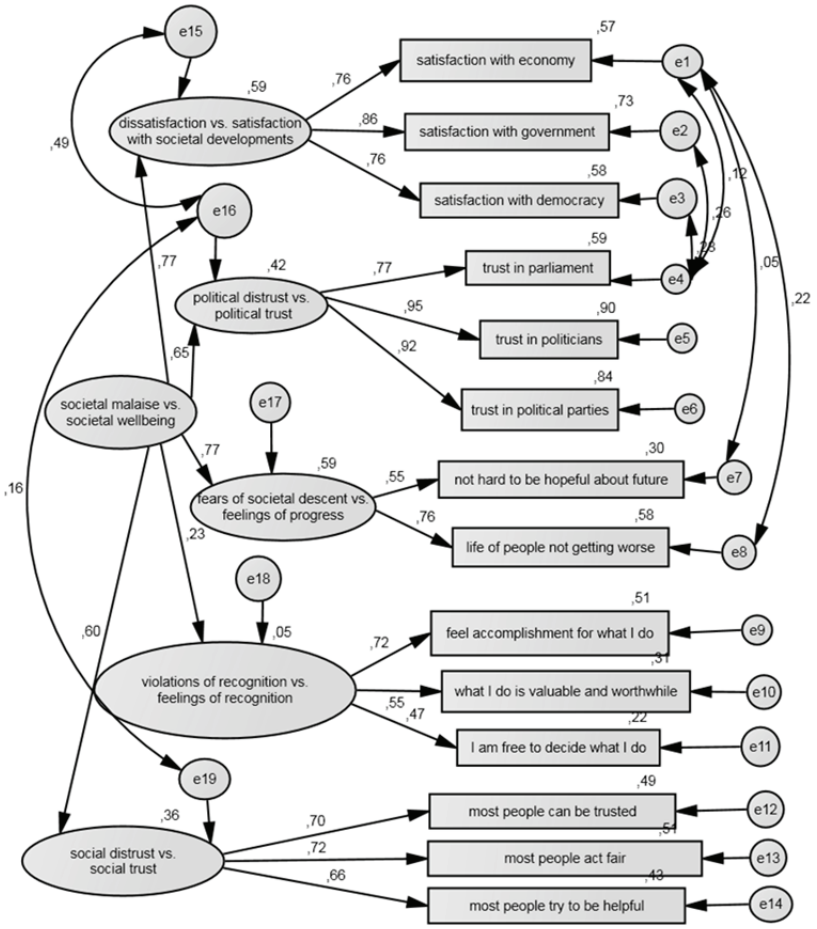
8.2 Is it Possible to Develop a Valid Cross-Cultural Measurement of Societal Well-Being vs. Societal Malaise Based on European Survey Data?

The following empirical analysis evaluates the empirical model for societal well-being. The multidimensional measurement can be seen as second-order model, since it is composed of five first-order factors (political trust, satisfaction with society, future optimism, feelings of recognition, and social trust) that all contribute to societal well-being. A factor analysis that confirms this structure of relations, based on the total individual sample, is illustrated in Figure 5. If one evaluates the general fit measures shown at the bottom of the figure, the coefficient Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.035) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.986) are well below or above the necessary criteria (RMSEA<0.05 and CFI >0.90 respectively) (see Hu and Bentler 1999). The chi² remains too high to achieve an adequate model fit, but this indicator is sensitive to large sample sizes and is therefore hardly used in cross-national survey research (see Cheung and Rensvold 2002).

The results of the first-order factors measuring structural, regulative, and cohesive crisis states lead to high-factor loadings and to a clear empirical distinction between the different levels.[6] All loadings of the indicators are above 0.5 (except one item loading of feelings of recognition), which demonstrates a high-quality measurement of the latent variables. Also, the correlations with the higher-order factor of societal malaise vs. social well-being are generally substantial. Impressions of societal functioning are closely related to those of satisfaction with society, future optimism, and political and social trust. There is only one weaker correlation between feelings of recognition and societal well-being. This is plausible, since recognition corresponds more directly to the individual level.

[6] Otherwise, some high-error correlations between the factors appear. From a theoretical standpoint, it can be argued that trust (on the personal and political level) correlates with a general satisfaction with societal developments.

Figure 5: Factor Analysis Confirming Concept of Societal Well-Being



Standardized estimates chi-square=3036,817 df=65 rel.chi-square = 46,720
p-value=,000 Cfi=,986 rmsea=,035 pclose=1,000

Note: Based on total EU sample, 2012.

Besides evaluating the empirical quality of the model, it is additionally important to test for cross-national equivalence. The same model of societal well-being should converge in every nation state. This precondition allows a comparison of means over time and across nations. The cultural invariance test is often done using the method of Multi-Group Confirmatory Analysis (MGCFA). According to Chen, Sousa, and West (2005) measurement invari-

ance should be tested at different levels. The first step of invariance testing is configural equivalence. This means that the same items should belong to the construct in every single country, but the factor loadings can differ. The second level of equivalence is achieved if the loadings of each item on the underlying first-order factors can be considered equal. In second-order models it is necessary to test for the factor loadings on the higher-order factors as well. Therefore, full metric invariance can only be reached if all first- and second-order factors constrained as equal lead to a sufficient model fit of the data. If this stage of metric equivalence is achieved, relations between the construct and other variables can be tested, and it is therefore allowed to use the operationalization of societal well-being for regression analysis. However, the latent means of the underlying concepts can only be compared if scalar equivalence is fulfilled. To test for scalar invariance, the intercepts of the items and factors are constrained as equal. Recent methodological articles (see Davidov et al. 2014) clearly demonstrate that full scalar invariance is barely fulfilled in cross-national research. Thus several authors suggest testing for partial scalar invariance. They claim that releasing the equality constraints on a small number of indicators does not necessarily degrade the quality of mean comparisons between countries (see Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998; Davidov 2010).

Table 6: Evaluation of Cross-National Equivalence (Fit Indices Based on MGCFA)

Sample	Equivalence test	Chi² based models				Global fit indices		
		Chi²	df	Chi² / df	Sig.	RMSEA	pclose	CFI
21 EU countries 2012 (Model 5: release of intercept invariance concerning items 1,3,4,6,8,9,11,12, 14)	Configural invariance (Model 1)	5821,4	1344	4,33	<0,001	0,009	1,000	0,980
	Metric invariance (Model 2, first-order factor loadings)	7288,3	1524	4,78	<0,001	0,010	1,000	0,974
	Metric invariance (Model 3: first- and second-order factor loadings)	**8055,6**	**1604**	**5,02**	**<0,001**	**0,010**	**1,000**	**0,971**
	Full scalar invariance (Model 4)	41791,1	1884	22,2	<0,001	0,023	1,000	0,819
	Partial scalar invariance (Model 5)	24371,7	1704	14,30	<0,001	0,018	1,000	0,897

To assess and evaluate the different stages of equivalence, various quality of fit measures are used in literature.[7] To assess the fit of the five models, the changes in the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were analyzed. According to Cheung and Rensfold (2002), a difference larger than 0.1 in the CFI value indicates a substantial change in model fit. Applying that rule, metric invariance concerning at least the first- and second order factors could be achieved in a cross-national comparison of 21 countries. This confirms that the factor loadings between factors and items are similar across different nations (see Vandenberg and Lance 2000). But there is a clear decrease of the CFI value in model 4 and model 5. It was neither possible to reach full scalar equivalence nor partial scalar invariance, which is a necessary precondition for comparing the means between countries. But it was possible to establish partial scalar invariance within at least most of the European regions and also over time (between the two survey waves) in most of the countries (see Aschauer 2016 for further computations).

8.3 Is There an Increase of Societal Perceptions of Crisis Based on the New Measurement during Recent Years in Europe and What Differences Occur between European Countries?

The third part of the empirical analysis provides a descriptive insight into contemporary trends of societal well-being in European countries. All 14 indicators measuring societal functioning were aggregated within two indices. The first mean value is computed based on political distrust, political dissatisfaction, and fears of societal decline to analyze the rise of societal perceptions of crisis during recent years. The second index value refers to trust in social relations. It combines the items of social trust with individual feelings of recognition. This procedure for monitoring societal change based on the attitudes of citizens should draw attention to important societal developments in Europe. It is assumed that many states are currently confronted with a deep crisis in political trust. Several authors additionally fear that this representation crisis in democracy (see Linden and Thaa 2011) may affect trust in social relations and proceed to a crisis of cohesion (see Heitmeyer 2010). Figures 6 to 9 permit initial hypotheses on the evolution of societal malaise from 2006 till 2012. Both country-wide indices are illustrated by their scale means (based on the combination of items that belong to the relevant first-order factors).[8]

[7] The chi-squared difference test is often used and should lead to insignificant changes between the models. On the other hand, the chi² test is sensitive to large sample sizes and is not recommended for ESS data.

[8] Most of the indicators were evaluated by the citizens on an 11-point scale (from 0 to 10). All items that employ a different scale were adapted to those scales through linear transformation. The values in the figure can thus be seen as average values for societal well-being at a specific time point. Country means below five (the middle of the scale) indicate societal per-

The figure on the upper left shows the continuous rise of a societal malaise even in Western and Northern Europe. There are only four countries left in the year 2012 with a level of trust and satisfaction above the scale mean of 5. These countries are Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands. While societal well-being appears to be increasing in Sweden, there is a slight downward trend in Finland. Also in Denmark and the Netherlands, the most recent data from 2012 shows a decrease in societal functioning compared to the year 2006. The other Western European countries clearly rank behind in this respect and achieve a mean value between 3.5 and 4.5 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Trust in Society: 2006 and 2012 (Northern and Western Europe)

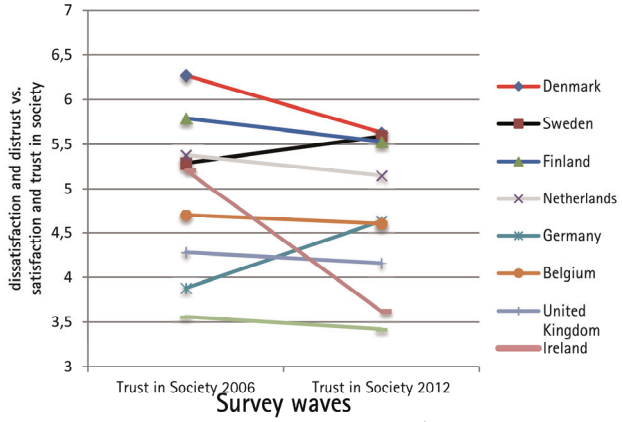
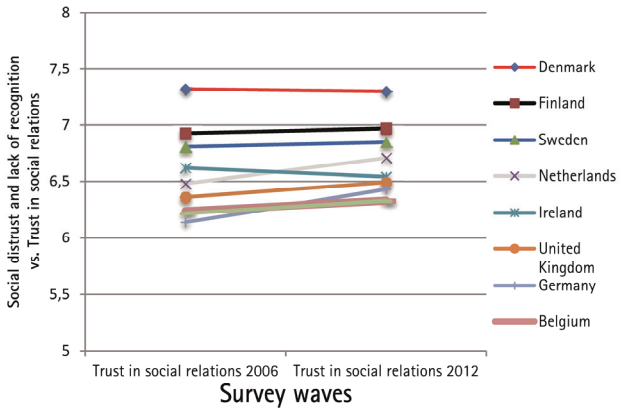


Figure 7: Trust in Social Relations: 2006 and 2012 (Northern and Western Europe)



ceptions of crisis (as people tend to voice feelings of dissatisfaction or distrust in social relations) while mean values above five reflect the relatively positive judgements of citizens.

Figure 8: Trust in Society: 2006 and 2012 (Eastern and Southern Europe)

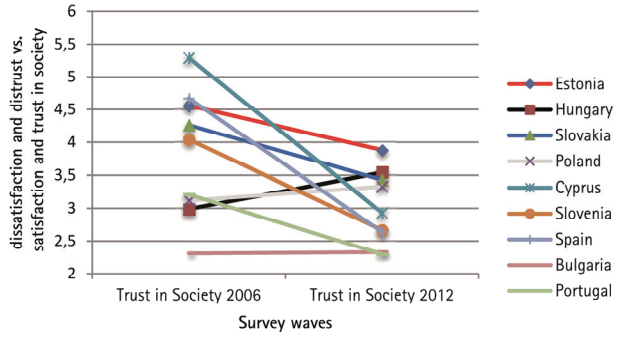
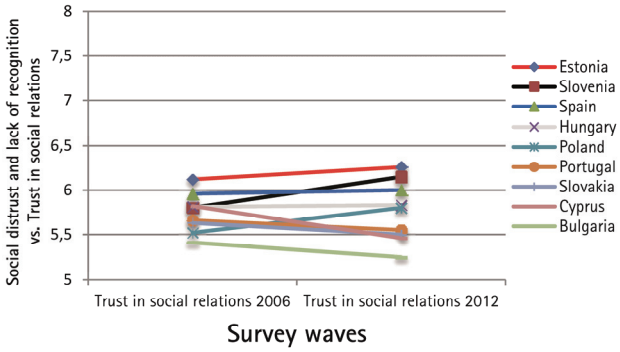


Figure 9: Trust in Social Relations: 2006 and 2012 (Southern and Eastern Europe)



Belgium and Germany occupy roughly the same position, although both states were confronted with different developments. Belgium faced an increase in societal malaise during recent years, while Germany was able to enhance the societal well-being of its citizens. The level of perceptions of crisis seems to be growing slightly in the United Kingdom and in France as well. The sharp decrease of societal well-being in Ireland is a clear example of how economic difficulties can cause dramatic changes in citizen's attitudes and how social integration is threatened by economic downturns. On the other hand, Figure 7 clearly demonstrates that – at least in the year 2012 – there is no evident crisis of cohesion in Northern and Western European states. People express a high amount of social trust and normally feel appreciated within society. Thus social trust and recognition is still widely guaranteed in Western Europe as all countries achieve a scale mean far above the threshold of 5. It is notable, however, that feelings of recognition and social trust have changed slightly in Ireland, the only country in Western Europe that was dramatically affected by the economic crisis in the year 2009.

If Eastern and Southern Europe are taken into consideration, sharp declines of trust in society (see Figure 8) can be observed. In particular, the economic difficulties of Cyprus, Spain, and Portugal are clearly reflected in the data on societal well-being. Portugal and Bulgaria have sustained low levels of societal satisfaction over the last few years, while Spain and Cyprus experienced a rapid rise in societal perceptions of crisis due to the European debt crisis. Also in Eastern Europe, the global financial crisis had significant negative impacts on societal well-being in most of its constituent countries. There are only two notable exceptions: Poland and Hungary can mainly be characterized by positive developments, and particularly Hungary seemed to recover in 2012 from high-level perceptions of crisis in 2006. The financial crisis has exerted a strong negative effect on societal functioning in Slovenia and the Czech Republic. It is striking that many countries only achieve a scale mean between 2 and 3, reflecting high levels of general dissatisfaction with societal developments.

This crisis of institutional trust is again not connected with a crisis of trust in social relations (see Figure 9). Although most of the Southern and Eastern European states rank behind Northern and Western European countries, the amount of social trust and feelings of recognition is still within a mean range of 5 to 6.5, indicating a functioning level of cohesion. Societal well-being seems to be threatened at the institutional level but not at the level of social relations. It is clearly apparent that those countries that have suffered most from the economic crisis are also often affected by a decrease in social trust. This problematic constellation of societal malaise is still observable in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Portugal.

8.4 Which Predictors of Social Integration (Objective Living Conditions and Subjective Feelings) are Able to Explain Ethnocentrism and What Differences Occur between Major European Regions?

The last part of the empirical analysis turns back to the micro-level and tries to explore the link between restrictions in contemporary living conditions and societal perceptions of crisis and ethnocentrism. Due to the heterogeneous constellations in Europe, it is imperative to take cross-national differences sufficiently into account. To achieve a comprehensive view of European societies it was decided to compute separate sequential multiple regressions for all six European regions that were theoretically extrapolated in the article (see Figure 2). All models are computed based on regional samples of social-democratic welfare states (SE, FI, DK), conservative welfare states (BE, DE, NL, FR), liberal welfare states (GB, IE), Mediterranean welfare states (IT, ES, PT, CY), state-oriented corporate welfare states (SI, SK, CZ, PL, HU), and neoliberal-rudimentary welfare states (EE, LT, BG). To control for additional country effects, the first regression model only includes each individual country (as dummy variables) within the regions. The second model deals with

country effects and sociodemographic predictors. The third model integrates the political and cultural explanations, and the fourth model additionally considers structural parameters. Model 5 adds the five first-order factors of societal malaise to the explanation of ethnocentrism. Model 6 additionally uses the income categories and the ISEI values, and simultaneously controls for missing values. All regressions were computed based on the listwise procedure, which is still seen as a robust method to control for artefacts in regression analysis (see Allison 2002, 7).[9] Only the final models are illustrated in Table 7.[10]

If we look at the r^2 values of the first models, country effects appear in continental Western Europe, where Germany is more tolerant toward immigrants and Belgium is more critical toward cultural diversity in comparison to the Netherlands (reference country). Large country differences are visible in Central Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean countries. People in Spain, Italy, and Portugal are much more in favor of cultural diversity in comparison to Cyprus and particularly Polish citizens, who largely share positive attitudes toward immigrants in comparison to the other countries. The inclusion of societal perceptions of crisis markedly increases the effect sizes in Western Europe, while they only weakly contribute to the explanation of ethnocentrism in Eastern Europe.

It is possible to explain about one third of the variance in ethnocentrism by all predictors, but the effect sizes are again considerably lower in Eastern Europe.

The impact of sociodemographic indicators on ethnocentrism is rather weak in all countries, especially if all other explanatory factors are included in the models. Age exerts only a small influence, with elderly people being more critical toward immigrants in Bulgaria and the Baltic states. Domicile has marked impact on ethnocentrism in Western Europe, where people in large cities are more tolerant in comparison to citizens who live in the countryside. It is obvious that people with a migration background largely share positive opinions about ethnic diversity with people who migrate to Europe.

[9] In many regions the sample size of the regression analysis dropped considerably when income and status was taken into account. Model 6 was only considered if the deviations between Model 5 and 6 were negligible.

[10] Due to the high number of missing values with regard to income and ISEI, it was decided to disregard those explanatory factors in the Eastern European countries and to illustrate model 5.

Table 7 Results of the OLS Regressions in Relation to Ethnocentrism

Levels of analysis	Predictors	Indicators	Dependent variable: Perception of ethnic threat vs. approval of cultural diversity					
			Social-democratic (DK, SE, FI) n = 4520 Model 6	Conservative (NL, BE, DE, FR) n = 6767 Model 6	Liberal (GB, IE) n = 3068 Model 6	Mediterranean CY, IT, ES, PT) n = 3016 Model 6	Corporate (CZ, SK, HU, PL, SI) n = 7016 Model 5	Neoliberal-rudimentary (EE, LT, BG) n = 5489 Model 5
Effect size (korr r^2)	Model 1 (Countries)		0,9%	5,1%	0,9%	15,7%	11,1%	0,1%
	Model 2 (Countries and socio-demographic predictors)		4,3%	9,2%	6,9%	20,5%	12,6%	3,5%
	Model 3 (+ political-cultural level)		10,1%	15,5%	11,3%	23,6%	15,5%	4,9%
	Model 4 (+ structural level)		16,3%	21,3%	20,6%	27,3%	17,1%	5,5%
	Model 5 (+perceptions of crisis)		27,7%	35,0%	31,7%	34,2%	22,8%	9,5%
	Model 6 (+ income, ISEI)		28,8%	35,6%	32,5%	38,2%	25,3%	9,7%
Countries	Reference country		Denmark	Netherlands	United Kingdom	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Estonia
	Country 1		0,13 (0,50)*** (Sweden)	-0,06 (-0,30)*** (Belgium)	0,21 (0,98)*** (Ireland)	0,29 (2,02)*** (Italy)		
	Country 2		0,09 (0,33)*** (Finland)	0,07 (0,28)*** (Germany)		0,40 (1,93)*** (Spain)	0,11 (0,56)*** (Hungary)	0,21 (0,92)*** (Bulgaria)
	Country 3					0,32 (1,78)*** (Portugal)	0,40 (2,02)*** (Poland)	
	Country 4						0,13 (0,81)*** (Slovenia)	

Table 7 continued...

Socio-demographic level	Gender				-0,05 (-0,24)***			
	Age							-0,12 (-0,01)***
	Domicile (Ref. countryside)	Urban	0,04 (0,17)**	0,08 (0,36)***	0,10 (0,53)***			
		Middle-size cities						0,05 (0,23)**
	Marital status (Ref. married)	Divorced						
		Widowed						
		Single						
	Children in household						0,04 (0,17)**	
	Migration background		0,07 (0,52)***	0,10 (0,58)***	0,11 (0,74)***	0,17 (1,35)***	0,04 (0,41)***	0,08 (0,44)***
	Religiosity							0,07 (0,06)***
Political-cultural level	Membership of trade union			0,03 (0,16)**				
	Conv. political engagement							0,04 (0,26)**
	Unconv. political engagement		0,06 (0,24)***	0,07 (0,29)***		0,07 (0,36)***		
	Civic engagement						0,04 (0,21)***	
	Social Inclusion Index						0,03 (0,05)**	
	Value dimension: openness to change		0,14 (0,23)***	0,12 (0,23)***	0,11 (0,23)***	0,07 (0,16)***	0,10 (0,18)***	0,10 (0,16)***
	Value dimension: self-transcendence		0,17 (0,29)***	0,14 (0,26)***	0,10 (0,23)***	0,11 (0,22)***	0,07 (0,15)***	0,06 (0,11)**
Structural level	Education (Ref. ISCED 5-6)	Low (0-2)	-0,14 (-0,64)***	-0,08 (-0,38)***	-0,21 (-1,08)***	-0,09 (-0,42)**	-0,11 (-0,58)***	-0,08 (-0,44)***
		Middle (3-4)	-0,10 (-0,38)***	-0,07 (-0,27)***	-0,18 (-0,85)***		-0,07 (-0,29)***	-0,05 (-0,19)**
	Employment relationship (Ref. retired)	Full-time						
		Part-time work						
		Temporary contract						

Table 7 continued...

		Solo-/self-employed						
		Education	0,05 (0,36)**		0,06 (0,69)**		0,05 (0,38)**	
		Housework						
		Unemployed						
		Disabled						
	Subjective social class assignment							
	Managing with household income							
	ISEI		0,09 (0,01)***	0,11 (0,01)***	0,07 (0,01)**	0,06 (0,01)**		
	Income deciles							
Key features of societal malaise	Dissatisfaction vs. satisfaction with societal developments		0,13 (0,15)***	0,22 (0,24)***	0,14 (0,16)***	0,08 (0,10)***	0,11 (0,11)***	0,13 (0,14)***
	Political distrust vs. political trust		0,17 (0,17)***	0,11 (0,11)***	0,09 (0,10)***			
	Fears of societal decline vs. feelings of progress		0,08 (0,08)***	0,08 (0,08)***	0,14 (0,15)***	0,04 (0,06)**	0,08 (0,08)***	
	Violations of recognition vs. feelings of recognition							
	Social distrust vs. social trust		0,12 (0,15)***	0,14 (0,17)***	0,17 (0,23)***	0,22 (0,28)***	0,16 (0,17)***	0,12 (0,13)***

Notes: ESS data 2012 (weighted by design weight); only highly significant predictors are illustrated – p<0,01**, p<0,001*** – as well as standardized and unstandardized coefficients.

In terms of the political and cultural level, the impact of value orientation is also confirmed in this study. This effect on ethnic prejudice can be viewed as stable across all regions. People who favor openness to change and who give higher priority to equality and tolerance (instead of self-enhancement) demonstrate more positive opinions in relation to cultural diversity. Citizens who respond to societal challenges through unconventional political engagement also tend to favor cultural diversity. The educational gap within anti-immigrant sentiment is still clearly observable in Western Europe, but the effect sizes are smaller in Southern and Eastern Europe. Interestingly, the lowest effect of education on these sentiments was observed in the Mediterranean countries. Also the effect of social status (based on the ISEI measurement) is widely confirmed in all regions where this variable was considered.

It is striking, however, that all dimensions of societal malaise clearly exert the strongest influence on ethnocentrism and seem to be predominantly relevant for explaining perceptions of ethnic threat. Social trust is a particularly stable predictor in all analyzed countries of the European Union. It is especially the case in Western Europe that dissatisfaction with societal developments and political distrust is additionally related to ethnocentrism. While feelings of recognition are not connected with ethnic prejudice, fears of societal decline are especially relevant in the liberal welfare states but exert only a low influence in other European regions.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

The main aim of this article was to present a theory-driven model of societal malaise and to introduce a new phenomenon of significant divisions in societal trust and societal belonging as a prominent feature of contemporary crisis states in Europe. Another important task was to empirically evaluate new divisions that have arisen within and between European Union member states and to apply a comprehensive empirical perspective to crucial societal developments in Europe, restrictions in contemporary living conditions, subjective expressions of societal well-being, and potential societal consequences of those rapid processes of social change. The current social turbulence in Europe can be roughly characterized by social inequalities, political impositions, and cultural insecurities. It has to be stated that the economic divisions between European states and rising social inequalities within EU member states have led to a negative image of the European integration process and to public impressions of a renewed colonialization of the continent's lifeworlds by neoliberalism (see Habermas 1973). It is assumed that at least the victims of these societal transformations experience severe deficits in recognition (see Honneth 1992) and that the middle classes also react with fears of societal decline (see Kraemer 2010). The futility of politics to combat these economic impacts has been in-

terpreted on a general level as a growing helplessness and increasing powerlessness, which strongly creates the impression that political impositions are negatively affecting Europe. EU citizens thus express high levels of political disenchantment and raise deep concerns about future societal developments.

During recent years, there has been a shift away from GDP so as to assess social progress according to quality of life by not only including classical subjective measures, such as happiness and life satisfaction, but also indicators of societal well-being (see Glatzer 2008; Harrison, Jowell and Sibley 2011). In the sociology of Europe, there are also demands to look more closely at the micro-level and highlight future challenges of social integration (see Bach 2008; Vobruba 2009). Consequently, it is one of the principal future challenges in comparative research to take European citizens' subjective perceptions of crisis more adequately into account, to monitor societal well-being over time, and to search for comparable and equivalent indicators of this concept. The multidimensional model of societal well-being is a first major step in this direction. The results of the cross-national invariance test in this study seem promising, as at least metric invariance (meaning the acceptance of a model with equal factor loadings across several European countries) could be achieved. The heterogeneous results of the mean comparisons suggest that there is no unidirectional path toward perceptions of crisis in Europe and that the nation-state still plays a crucial role in mitigating the effects of crises on citizens. The theory-driven system of differentiating European welfare statues was largely confirmed by the cluster analysis. It is based on the varieties of capitalism approach (see Hall and Soskice 2001), combines welfare-state research (see particularly Schröder 2013), and tries to integrate the new post-socialist types of regime in Eastern Europe (see Kollmorgen 2009). The empirical cluster analysis, which was conducted to confirm impressions of the existence of highly diverse European regions, even extends those views. It was clearly visible that welfare-state regimes (see Esping-Andersen 1999) and historical conditions (see Boatca 2010) influence the formation of basic cultural values and indicate a high level of cultural diversity within Europe that cannot be easily be dismissed through reference to the spill-over effects of European integration (see original findings of Haas 1958). It is notable that Eastern European countries still express a high degree of materialist values and perform lower in self-transcendence, which confirms the initial idea of an epigonic East trying to catch up with the economic wealth of Western Europe (see Boatca 2010). Within the reality of large divisions within Europe, Euroscepticism is moving into mainstream discourse (see Brack and Startin 2015) and increasingly divided societies should be seen as a real challenge to enhancing and guaranteeing European solidarity.

It was possible to empirically confirm the evolution of a societal malaise in European countries that ran in parallel to the economic crisis. The descriptive results based on mean comparisons demonstrate that societal causes (such as

political transformations, economic inequalities, and broad insecurities) have the potential to gradually erode societal functioning. Although societal disturbances may not be clearly visible yet, there is danger in underestimating societal changes in countries trying to overcome certain crisis states (see Streeck 2013, 14). In particular, trust in society is disappearing in many countries, and we are already witnessing a gathering crisis of institutional trust, particularly in Southern Europe and in some Eastern European countries. A promising sign from the temporal comparison is that there appeared to be no cross-over effects on trust in social relations until 2012. On the other hand, it has to be assumed that the impacts of the refugee crisis in particular have further intensified the extent of the societal malaise. This new unsolved challenge for Europe may particularly affect levels of social trust and cohesion in society. Thus it has to be feared that societal dissatisfaction is growing larger, transgressing borders, and manifesting itself in intercultural distrust and radicalization.

The last research question addresses the challenge of ethnocentrism, which is a clear consequence of impressions of a societal malaise. A sophisticated regression analysis, which takes into account the diverse dynamics within European regions, aimed to directly link social destabilization with ethnocentrism. A comprehensive list of predictors included country effects, sociodemographic characteristics, restrictions in living conditions (objective level), and specific feelings of discontent (subjective level). It was possible to confirm various findings concerning ethnocentrism in cross-national research and to provide new evidence in relation to societal perceptions of crisis. The positive age effect on ethnocentrism (see Chandler and Tsai 2001) seems less significant and could only be found in the Baltic States and Bulgaria. It is notable that low levels of education mixed with feelings of malaise exert a high influence on perceptions of an ethnic threat in particular in Western Europe, while in the Eastern European countries the explanatory power of these factors is considerably lower (see also Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Hjerm 2001). The dimensions of societal well-being that were included in the models clearly confirm that the diverse attitudes of citizens (primarily in Western European states) lead, to a certain extent, to a polarization of values where societal threats (such as cultural diversity) are major sources of dissent. The widening gaps between social groups in European societies have to be considered as a future threat to social integration. It can also be predicted that these gaps may grow even wider in Eastern Europe as the new European Union member states become more and more involved in the European challenges of cultural diversity. The rise in hate crimes and arson attacks against facilities for asylum seekers clearly indicate these new tendencies of a barbarous civicness (see Bauman 2008). Defensive solutions have the potential to gradually erode fundamental European values and democratic achievements. It is, therefore, more important than ever to monitor processes of social change and comprehend the general pessimistic

mood in European society, which should neither be neglected in research nor underestimated in political conceptions of a united Europe.

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