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# IN WHOSE INTEREST? THE ROLE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY CONCEPTIONS IN SHAPING PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON THE EU FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS IN BRITISH AND POLISH POPULAR PRESS

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*As consequences of the right of free movement of persons have become more visible, it has become apparent that outcomes of allowing such movement have not been completely in line with its perceived effects in public discourses of both the west and the east of the European Union (EU). Taking issue with transactionalist appeals for supranational affection, this contribution takes news narrative as a conduit through which a 'pulse' of public discourse can be taken regarding issues relating to free movement. It makes use of low-quality press in the public spheres of two states - the UK and Poland - which have opposite relations to the single market. In the former, said right was positioned as a means of eroding the perceived national situation by forcing extension of solidarity ties to unequal, non-members of national identity. In the latter, free movement was framed as failing to fulfill claims of equality with the West. Thus, the identity-based interests of the two states mirrored each other. National identity filters perception of interests in free movement. It may stand to interfere with the creation of an affective identification with Europe.*

**KEYWORDS** Europeanization; EU free movement; Identity conception; Interest perception; News framing.

## Introduction

The 2004 EU expansion saw large numbers of individuals move westward from the Central Eastern European (CEE) Member States. Numerous empirical studies show that the actual long-term economic consequences of this migration have not been negative; the exodus of workers to western countries has not posed a threat to CEE labor demographics (Kaczmarczyk 2010; Glagoczi and Leschke 2015); EU migration has not put undue pressure on employment markets in destination countries (Kahanec et al. 2009; Barrell et al. 2010) or excessively strained their social services systems (Giulietti et al. 2011; Kahanec 2013). However, these economic realities have not been reflected in some public discourses about single market migration. Instead, implementation of the free movement of persons in the EU has become increasingly politicized, "with a substantial gap between the European Commission and economic opinion on the one hand and popular opinion on the other" (Dobson & Sennikova 2007, 135). As these disparities become increasingly pronounced, the question is raised: In spite of interest-based theories of EU market integration, what is contributing to negative public perceptions of the EU's free movement of persons?

This article takes the position that conflicting identity-based claims regarding recognition of equality interfere with perceptions of interest in a common right of free movement. Therefore, it argues that this right has not led to the accordance of European solidarity ties. It takes prominent, low-quality press as a means through which identity-related discourse can be accessed in the public spheres of two EU members - UK and Poland - whose labor markets have directly opposite relationships to the free movement of persons. It finds that, in this press

narrative, the right to move freely to another Member State is framed as conflicting with the perceived interests accorded by national identity. Also, the claims made regarding free movement's negative character mirror each other. They conflict in the migrant receiving and migrant sending states. This may suggest that national identities have continued to result in the perception of integration's net benefits as being accorded to non-members of the 'in' group.

The remainder of this article is divided into six main sections. The first takes stock of debates regarding models of European identity formation in context of the EU's market-making endeavors and public contestations of the process. In doing so, it argues that a greater focus on identity, as opposed to interests, is needed to explain public perceptions. The next section relates identity and solidarity ties to interest perception within the public sphere. Thirdly, the role of the media within public debate is highlighted. Operationalization of the study is discussed. Sections four and five elaborate the results for the case study countries. Finally, possible implications are discussed.

### **The Clash of National Identities with the Free Movement's Imposed Equality**

The disjuncture between economic consequence and public opinion carries with it implications for the integration process. The supranationalization of access to employment and social services clashes increasingly with solidarity-oriented claims within national publics. This situation reflects the resilience of national affection. In so doing, it challenges more transactional or utilitarian theories of integration, which argue that support for European integration flows from mutually beneficial interactions or common interest (Gabel 1998; McLaren 2006; Kuhn and Recchi 2013; Kuhn 2015). Such interest-based support is important; free movement of persons is connected with supranational market liberalization. This process requires breaking down some barriers of the nation-state by the EU institutions (Rosamond 2012). Regardless of actual economic benefits, interest-based theories do not negate that the EU serves as an authority over a single market of multiple Member States, which remains "composed of economic nationalists" (Pickel 2003). Justifications of national interest may play a role in accentuating the clash between national discourse and cross-border movement, but resistance to EU free movement cannot be considered only in terms of clashing bilateral national interests. The EU institutions add a layer of governance. Therefore, it is relatively more illuminating to understand the clash as resulting from conflicting discourses regarding normative scope(s) of economic patriotism: "genuine EP requires, as a precondition an affective bond between governments and subject populations... expressed in legitimacy terms, not only (or indeed necessarily) through institutions of representative democracy... and (maybe) the achievement of 'solidaristic' institutions of welfare" (Clift and Woll 2012, 335). Therefore, the EU's market-making rationale cannot be thought of as representing claims for affective identification with Europe only through appeals to a mere 'normative goodness' of neoliberal market integration, or the nominal label of market-based citizenship (Bellamy 2008). Instead, its appeal for identification with a supranational patriotic unit is based on an assertion of common national interests in according solidarity ties to all members of the single market.

However, such a rationale of interests in movement has not constituted a relevant or legitimate claim in segments of public discourse. It has failed to resonate with increasingly recalcitrant segments of national populations (Sides and Citrin, 2007; Hurrelmann, Gora, and Wagner 2015). This may especially be the case as discourses prioritize national affection in terms of boundary demarcation over EU claims regarding interests in mobility.

Appeals for identification with Europe can be characterized as targeting interests as a basis for affection with the single market. Yet, I argue that such an approach does not take sufficient stock of the sources of citizens' interest perceptions. If perceived interests are both co-constituted with identity, and related to the extension of solidarity ties, then what may actually be in (or at least not against) the interest of a certain national group may not be perceived as such when filtered through national identity (Kholi 2000). Identity conceptions have many different layers but the national level remains where identity encompasses interrelated components of interests which "signify bonds of solidarity between" members (Smith 1991, 15). Despite the market-making attempts of the EU institutions, the identity-level on which the populaces accord solidarity ties continues to be that of the nation-state. This results in a 'post-functionalist' situation in which "the jurisdictional shape of Europe has been transformed, but the way in which citizens conceive their identities has not" (Hooghe and Marks 2009, 12).

Further, the single market of the EU allows for solidarity in equality of opportunity, as opposed to equality in material terms. However, the manner in which the acceptability of such an arrangement is viewed in terms of perceived interests, based in national identity, may differ across Member States with differing relationships to the single market (Streek 2000). Without consensus across the EU, the mutual trust necessary for EU-wide solidarity cannot exist without mutual recognition of what is meant, or desired, by economic equality (Nicolaidis 2007). Further examination of identity-based conceptions is needed in order to illuminate how interests are perceived in public debates.

### **Arranging Identity Conception, Solidarity Ties and Interests in the Public Sphere**

Engenderment of an EU-wide market solidarity can be thought of as a primarily interest-driven phenomena. According to it, solidarity becomes extant at a European level of identity based on mutually beneficial interactions. Yet, to focus analysis in this manner does not address possible sources of how citizens perceive of these interactions: "perceived instrumental interests can only explain variation [in outcomes] *in conjunction* with the other factors" which includes citizens' already existing identity concepts (Marcussen, et al. 1999, 629). Thus, the co-constitutive nature of national identities and interests requires the "assumption of mutually constitutive social action as a significant factor towards the construction of identity, and therefore interest" in order to better clarify that it is the perceptual filter of identity through which interests are perceived (Christiansen, Jorgensen, and Wiener 1999, 535). With specific regard to integration processes, each concept informs the other directionally, often in a mutually self-reinforcing way. Issues that are perceived to violate identity-based interest are taken up in discourse and thus (re)internalized upon a given national, collective identity. Identity and, therefore, interests have the potential to remain rather sticky in the face of structural change (Marcussen et al. 1999).

Solidarity has been posited as an outgrowth of interest. However, the opposite may be the case. Solidarity ties can be understood as running as an intermediary from the construction of citizens' affective national identities toward their perception of socio-economic interests. These perceived interests are then adjudicated within the national public sphere. In other words, taking a stance regarding the existence of a collective interest first requires an implicit agreement about *who* constitutes the collective. It has been argued that the increased cross-pollination of European issues within national spheres may serve to foster the beginnings of identification with Europe (Risse 2010). However, greater visibility of issues related to Europe, within national public

spheres, is insufficient to the provision of a unified discursive space, in which the affective Europeanization of identities could be constituted. Forces of regional integration can alter national identities by making them relatively more European in a strictly cultural sense. However, this does not proffer any shared communicative spaces where identity-based ties between national groups could be created (Van Ham 2001). The above obviates an important implication: Solidaristic allegiance remains an especially immutable aspect of identity, which directly effects how citizens perceive of their social interest (Medrano 2010). Therefore, a conception of differing identities better acknowledges that interests may be filtered in light of perceived consequences that conflict with state-based social solidarity barriers. As will be argued, according to this framework, free movement of persons is framed most prominently in non-elite, rightwing discourse, not as a solidarity creating mutual right, but instead as only instrumental to identity-filtered interests of (or, indeed, against) members of the 'nation'.

### **Positioning the News Media within the Public Sphere & Methodology of the Study**

Discourse within public spheres has traditionally been viewed as an aspect of civil society. Yet, this does not address the prospect that the public sphere has the power to not only "form culture" but also to forge "social relationships [such that it] could constitute a form of social solidarity" (Calhoun 2005, 265). Taking the national public sphere as a space for the creation and reinforcement of identity allows for a window through which discourse within Europe's publics can influence, and be influenced by, solidarity accordance. Within the boundaries of said realm, discourse attains the power to "perpetuate, reproduce or justify a certain social status quo (and national identities related to it)" (De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak 1999, 157). In order to understand why national identities fail to accord solidarity to other members of the single market, it is necessary to examine the manner in which issues related to free movement are addressed within the public discourses of its Member States.

The news media provide a conduit through which the 'pulse' of public discourses can be taken. The media shapes and packages information within the public sphere. In this manner, it maintains "a large and sometimes determinate influence in shaping citizens opinions" (Chambers 2009, 341). At the same, time it is influenced by those opinions. News outlets remain embedded within national spheres of debate themselves (Heikkila and Kunelius 2014). Further, through reporting certain events in discourse, news outlets frame a given debate by defining a situation, its relevant issues and the terms of debate. They do so through selecting or presenting stories, such as they are perceived to constitute import in terms of national perceived interests. This is done in order to make content salient to perceived audiences (Pan and Kosicki 1993; Tankard 2001). As such, rather than shaping or following public opinion per se, media outlets are positioned to reproduce national interest perceptions in public debates. This function serves to reinforce national identity conception, through providing a selective accounting of reality, as opposed to an accurate reflection of it (McNair 2009).

Moreover, even if a main source of affective support for integration is developed through the opportunity to "positively interact on a regular basis with people from other European countries with whom one [already] has a basis for solidarity...those who have this opportunity tend to be the most privileged strata of society" (Fligstein 2009, 133) Therefore, they are in the minority. Many previous studies have made more intensive use of quality press or television outlets. They seem to take them as more authoritative sources regarding informed discussion of integration (For instance: Medrano 2003; Koopmans 2004; Drewski 2015).

However, such a focus provides an incomplete picture regarding role of identity in filtering interests regarding intra-EU migration. It discounts how more exclusive facets of national identity distort interest more so in non-elite discourses (Boykoff 2008). As such, high circulation, lower-quality press provides a means by which a timbre of popular discourse regarding EU migration can be taken. It focuses on discourse framing directed to those who are less likely to make substantive use of free movement. Qualitative content analysis was selected as a method in which the role of national identity in according (or withholding) perceptions of interest in integration could be backed out amid a variety of situational topics (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Schuck and De Vreese, 2006). Articles were flagged for further reading and possible inclusion in the corpus by title. If it turned out that an article actually focused on apparent consequences of EU migration, then a 'yes or no' determination was made regarding whether it related to the free movement of persons negatively or positively. This increased prospects for inter-coder reliability (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). However, the author qualitatively determined whether and how a news item framed the character of free movement threateningly in terms of national interest perception. Opinion pieces and quotations from actors were not differentiated from reportage. Press outlets would have had to select and publish them in the first place (Lawrence 2006). This type of content analysis allowed for greater flexibility in defining how identity framed interest perception across disparate news events and different languages, rather than more linguistic or discursive analytic approaches (Chong and Druckman 2007; Van Dijk 2009; Carta and Wodak 2015; Crespy 2015).

In what follows, popular, non-elite press discourse is analyzed in UK and Poland - two prominent EU countries with directly opposite positionings to the single market for persons. Poles are the largest group of EU migrants in the UK. UK is one of the largest destinations for Polish migrants. In contravention of interest-based integration theories, both countries have experienced intensifying euroskepticism in recent years, while the receiving-sending relationship between the two countries has been relatively entrenched, with no controls on market access since 2004 (Okólski and Salt 2014). Articles were taken from 2013, the year leading up to the end of the 2007 expansion members' adjustment period. Said event stood to affect citizens of both examined countries in, at least nominally, the same way. Each of the relevant press outlets selected in Poland and UK was a center-to-rightwing, populist style tabloid or free publication. Center-to-right populist discourses place priorities of the 'nation' over social class (Ucen, 2007). These types of publications had the two highest circulation numbers out of all papers in their respective countries. They also had a significant online presence. They are as follows: The Sun and the Daily Mail in UK; Fakt and Metro in Poland.<sup>1</sup> It may seem unsurprising that these types of press outlets remain generally nationalist in their tenor. The results show that the interest-related claims present within the analyzed non-elite press discourse find their justification in national identity. They also mirror each other opposingly. In either case, the filter of national identity prevents public discourse from taking up actual beneficial aspects of trans-border mobility.

### **Free Movement in the UK: Identity & EU Migrants as Threatening Un-equals.**

In Britain, EU free movement was framed overall as a problem for Britons. It related negatively to the character of free movement of persons in 83.6% of the corpus of 67 articles. Most of the negatively framed articles focused on here concerned the sheer number of EU migrants that have, or were expected to come to the UK, as opposed to specific consequences of

their doing so (26 articles, 83.0% negative).<sup>2</sup> Often, these articles related specifically to the 2007 expansion states becoming full EU members at the end of 2013. Other reports related to East European migrants becoming progressively more different or 'inferior' as the EU integration process continued (27 articles, 84.5% negative). EU movers were framed as 'others,' self-evidently unworthy of the accordance of affective solidarity ties in terms of market access.

More specifically, articles which referred to estimates of the amount of EU migrants in, or coming to, the UK suggested that their doing so, as a result of the right of free movement, put strain on the proper functioning of the country. For instance:

Less than a year from now, Britain will be obliged by the EU to throw open its borders to any Bulgarians and Romanians who wish to live and work here. Yet, shockingly, the Coalition is refusing to reveal official estimates of how many of the 30 million inhabitants of those countries will exercise their new right of entry when transitional controls expire. True, we can all understand ministers' wariness of civil servants' projections, after their fantastic underestimate of the number of Poles who would arrive (they guessed 13,000 – in fact hundreds of thousands have come since 2004). But with time for preparations fast running out, public services urgently need guidance on numbers. If the Mail's suspicion is right, this country simply cannot absorb another influx from Eastern Europe. Instead of hushing up the figures, Mr. Cameron should put regaining control of our borders right at the top of his list of demands from the EU (Daily Mail 14 Jan).

In these cases, the sheer number of non-British citizens who would be coming to the UK, as a result of EU membership, is problematic. The numbers are portrayed as shockingly large. However, these articles give no justification beyond 'suspicion' that they are actually significant, or beyond the capacity of Britain to absorb. Instead, it is simply the fact that these new arrivals must be forcibly considered as equal to Brits in terms of the ability to come to and remain in the UK, that is threatening; they are non-members of British society in terms of their identity.

It is interesting to note that articles which referred to seemingly large figures related to migration from Eastern Europe to Britain, sometimes brought to bear examples of economic and governmental disparity in the EU as evidence for the claim that CEE citizens were 'too different'. This implied that they should not be treated as equal in terms of opportunity with Britons. As we will see, this was thematically similar to the Polish articles concerned with economic inequality in the EU. But, the implied solution in the British papers was disintegration from the EU, specifically by resisting the right of free movement of persons:

The two countries [Romania and Bulgaria] joined the EU in 2007 and under Brussels rules, restrictions curbing their citizens' right to take jobs here must be lifted at the beginning of next year. There are no official estimates of how many may come, but plausible projections suggest it might be as many as 50,000 a year... UKIP's immigration spokesman, Gerard Batten, said of the Afis poll: 'Given the political unrest that is taking place in Bulgaria right now, I will only expect this figure to rise. The situation is compounded by an extremely high level of corruption in this EU member state. We can clearly see the UK will be a magnet for those who want to work because of the wage differential' (Daily Mail 30 Jul).

Mrs. May added: 'That not only puts pressure on communities in countries like Britain, it robs poorer EU member states of their most talented people. So in the future, we must put in place new arrangements to slow full access to each other's labour markets until we can be sure it will not lead to mass migration. 'This could, for example, be achieved by requiring new member states to reach a certain level of income or economic output per head before full free movement is allowed. (Daily Mail 29 Nov).

Again, beyond seemingly large numbers of 'others' possibly coming to UK, little evidence is given that said 'pressure' is actually in existence. Articles only mentioned 'plausible projections' of raw numbers of 'poorer' people that are expected to migrate. EU migrants are painted as economically 'inferior' to the British. The filter of identity-based solidarity ties implies the right to stand on the same economic footing with the British violates the general national interest. Any concrete costs or benefits go unreported.

It is significant to draw attention to the suggestion in news narrative that EU immigrants should not be considered economic equals in terms of equal opportunity with the British, until their countries' levels of economic development resemble that of the UK's. This is similar in thematic nature to the Polish claims of a right to economic equality. However, as will be shown, the British discourse on the issue directly opposes the Polish claims: Economic equality was normatively presented as a *precondition* for full membership rights. As such, it is a justification for regarding the presence, or anticipated presence, of 'inferior' EU migrants in the country as constituting a newsworthy violation of interest, based off of a difference in identity. The resulting portrayal of reality gives little investigation into migration's actual benefits or consequences.

Finally, regarding the second main negative frame, a British contention existed that, while inferior to Brits, EU migrants may not see each other as in the same category. These categories were delimited into 'us' and 'them' divisions along lines of arrival time, beyond the fact that none of the migrants was British. For instance: "Governments seem reluctant to be tough on immigration in case it offends people but I bet they'd find most recent immigrants themselves are in favour of tough restrictions. They would be affected in terms of jobs, housing and services by new arrivals" (The Sun 6 Feb). Yet, little concrete evidence is given that this is the case. In another instance, immigrants are written of as animals, with migrants from more recent expansions being compared to predators:

In the past ten years, official figures suggest five million [immigrants] have arrived...And now we receive news that 50,000 Romanians and Bulgarians have their suitcases packed and will arrive here on January 1... Well, unlike most economists or politicians, I believe the answer to all of this can be found in my garden... what if I keep on allowing more and more animals to live there? What if I decide that instead of two horses in the paddock, there should be a million? What if I took pity on a family of honey badgers? How would that go down with the rabbits? ...It'd be, quite literally, a zoo out there — and I would no longer have the space or the cash to accommodate all of my new pets. So then they'd all start fighting and eating each other and pretty soon all I'd have left would be the honey badgers (The Sun 21 Dec).

Thus, the insinuation that huge numbers of economic inferiors could arrive in UK was portrayed in narrative as normatively wrong. This was not because actual consequences of free movement were discussed substantively. Relative to the esteem in which British identity holds itself, the status of EU migrants as an 'out' group was enough for free movement to be framed as self-evidently constituting a threat to perceived interests. Thus, said right stood to clash with British identity-based interests: It was seen to force the destruction of orderly, British society through forcing the recognition of an 'other' -- who remains unworthy of solidarity accordance -- as an equal in opportunity. These two main frames stood in opposition to Polish framing.

### **Free Movement in Poland: Identity & Perception of 'Unequal' Rights in the Union**

The corpus contained 43 articles from the Polish papers. Sixty-four percent of them related negatively to the character of free movement of persons.<sup>3</sup> In these articles, free movement's accentuation of inequality was discussed as having implications only for Poland. Migration was seen to occur between nation-states as opposed to occurring within 'Europe'. This seemed to indicate that any benefits in market-based opportunity were not treated as a key part of popular press discourse.

Articles that were related negatively to EU migration often focused on certain consequences of moving to the Western EU for Poles.<sup>3</sup> These framed the continued economic inequality of Poland, vis a vis citizens from older EU members, as a value-violating crisis (21 articles, 68.7% negative). Stories focused on de-contextualized instances of the exploitation of Polish EU emigrants. Western Member States, mostly Germany and the UK, were written of as having unfounded or hypocritical ideas regarding Polish citizens (13 articles, 78.8% negative). Across these frames, Western European countries were framed as viewing Poles as unworthy of equal employment and benefits rights. However, in the Polish low-quality press, this inequality was problematic not only in terms of the right of equal access. Additionally, it was framed as violating what Polish identity seems to perceive as an unfulfilled function of EU membership: providing for material equality.

When inequality was reported in the sense of unfounded Western ideas, it was framed as the responsibility of Poles to not abet the West's view of Poland as nothing but a source of cheap labor. For instance, an article urges younger Poles not to take un-paid internships, often in Western Europe, in order to resist exploitive 'European' employers. It frames integration as resulting in a situation where these businesses have figured out that "they can treat the Polish job market as a reservoir of cheap labor for Europe" which forces Poland to build an economy "based on poverty" (Metro 11 Jun). Highlighting a similar example, a Fakt article uses the economic inequality frame in this way. It draws attention to the high-income and working hours gap between the Queen's dishwasher and most Polish dishwashers in the UK: "Many of them... worked or work at the sinks of pubs there. That means longer that 40 hours and with earnings of at most, for example, 200 Pounds weekly" (8 Jan). Although the article does concede that a Pole could get this job, this would not change the central problem that most Poles in the Western Europe earn little money in menial vocations. Thus, free movement is perceived to not be in the Polish interest.

However, in terms of substantive benefit, what is rarely mentioned is that the right of free movement gave Poles the equal opportunity to move to other Member States more easily in the first place. The above was true of both 'positive' and 'negative' articles. This facet of Polish public discourse in popular news begins to reveal an aspect of why Polish national identity may filter out perceptions of beneficial aspects of the free movement of persons. Poland has been a net emigration country for so long that economic migration appears to have become part of the national identity (Maybin, Piekut, and Valentine 2016). The EU, or its right of free movement, may not be perceived even as merely facilitating what is viewed largely as migration between states. This leads to a non-fact based implication that emigration would occur with or without the EU. As such, interest in migration does not constitute a relevant argument for European solidarity in a single market, when viewed through the filter of national identity. Again, in both Poland and the UK, economic inequality was focused on as a signifier of difference between identities. But, it is salient to note that the implied stances in terms of resultant perceived interests are opposite. In the UK, the right of access to the single market goes too far already. In

Poland it is not sufficient - or especially relevant - in light of the continued status of Poles as materially unequal.

Other stories related to the worsening of the unequal status of Poles abroad because of hypocritical or threatening views of Poles by Western members. The resulting attempts of Western Member States' leaders – especially those of the UK - to curtail benefits to non-citizens of that state, were usually positioned as undermining any benefits of free movement accorded to members of the national 'in' group. In these instances, EU integration was implied to exacerbate a situation which may adversely affect emigrant Poles. The examined Polish articles framed the EU institutions as failing to automatically protect Polish interests, when confronted with the conflicting designs of powerful Western members, rather than as arbitrating between them.

In one particularly sharp flashpoint, articles covered Prime Minister Cameron's announcement that the UK would cut unemployment benefits for non-UK citizens who had only worked in the UK for a shorter time. This development was portrayed as a result of EU immigration. It was a newsworthy event caused by Britain's adverse treatment specifically of Poles -- not EU citizens in a single market. Thus, press discourse took on an 'us' versus 'them' character, implying that Poles are self-evidently deserving of access to benefits. The rights of movement accorded to them by integration are not mentioned. As one article claims, the UK is taking these measures despite the fact that Poles as immigrants *must* be net contributors to the government's coffers:

Poles are the largest group of immigrants from the EU on the Islands -- around 580 thousand in England and Wales. There are only more British and Hindus. So far, it's our countrymen who have also been touched on most strongly by the anti-immigration campaign of the British tabloids. The Sunday Telegraph, The Sun or The Daily Mail have long shown that immigrants drain the budget and take work away from the British. The media don't call attention to the official reports on this subject. The University College of London calculated that thanks to immigrants, British business gained 22 milliard Pounds in the last decade. Foreigners pay in the form of taxes around 34 percent more than the government spends on them: for example welfare, medical care, education. By comparison, the British pay about 11 percent less than they receive, and therefore make use of social care more often (Metro Nov 27).

The majority of the article draws attention to Cameron's unfair and unequal actions. It concludes with a statement that the EU commissioners for Employment and Justice merely 'appealed to' or 'warned' Britain. It also details Cameron's announcement of changes to welfare law as curtailing benefits to Poles, when they make use of them, with little regard for the British side of the story, or impact on other nationalities:

It also brings to its stated goal of cutting off their [immigrants'] social benefits, and even deportation for sleeping on the street or begging. These changes will hit Poles hard. That's because they enjoy high benefits for children, and therefore are willing to have them and unfortunately they also often -- especially in times of crisis -- lose their job and land on the street.

It is obvious that curtailment of these benefits is not in the Polish interest in absolute terms. However, what is significant is that any discourse of supranational affectation through fair opportunity of access is supplanted. An identity-based demand for absolute equality, in which something could always be 'more' in the interest of the nation, is apparent. It is implied that the normatively positive outcome would have been for the EU to uphold Polish interest by somehow reasonably moving to stop the UK. This identity-based discourse views it as automatically problematic that no adequate solution is in evidence: Brussels is only talking. Britain is doing.

Positive rights of movement that resulted from the single market were largely not mentioned here or in other stories, as running counter to this. Solidarity cannot be engendered if Polish identity filters perception of the right to move to another member state as an insufficient or irrelevant benefit, in which any further unequal treatment of its countrymen abroad is viewed in discourse as automatically unfair.

Of course, it could be argued that the Polish press's negative framing, regarding Western perceptions, is due to the fact the resulting events violate Polish interests in integration. As such, this could point to an incipient European identity within the Polish discourse as evidenced by calls against erosion of those interests. However, this is not the case. In another aspect of this frame, Polish reportage viewed of Romanians and Bulgarians as falling into a separate grouping of 'others,' rather than as fellow Europeans. Many articles on the subject of UK benefit curtailment claim that the British government has not taken action because of Poles. Instead, it is self-evidently because of the coming threat of Romanian and Bulgarian immigration. Thus, press narrative implies that the changes 'wrongfully' affect Poles because of the opening of the EU's labor market to the 'unequal' citizens of the 2007 expansion states:

The changes have to be targeted at Romanians and Bulgarians for whom the EU job market will become open from January 2014. According to estimates, in the course of the next five years even 250 thousand citizens of these countries will come to Great Britain. Today the largest group of immigrants on the Islands are Poles - there are around 580 thousand of us there (Metro 9 Dec).

More directly, the full rights of the 2007 expansion countries were reported in relation to what was framed as the EU's daring the UK to leave:

And if the UK wants to disconnect from the European Union, it must say so directly, demands the EU... There may be a lot of Poles at the moment. But that's not at all the only problem of the British government. Already in January 2014, two much more serious ones will approach: Romanians and Bulgarians who have the right to gain employment on the islands (Fakt 29 Nov).

From the above, it becomes clear that the UK's move toward limiting EU migrants' access to benefits is framed negatively. Yet this is not because, Polish identity normatively views Romanians and Bulgarians as economic equals worthy of solidarity in opportunity. As with the UK articles, little substantive evidence was given that the opening of the single market to Romanians and Bulgarians would negatively affect the economic prospects of other nationals. Such would be the case if interests were primary. They are framed as a threat to Polish prospects for employment and equal treatment in the UK, simply for their negative differentiation from the national 'in' group. Therefore, the economic equality claim of Polish identity cannot flow from a normative idea that that all EU citizens should have the same economic rights accorded to them by EU-wide solidarity. It is antecedently through this identity-based 'Polish us' versus 'not Polish them' that solidarity is not extended to the 'out' group. When discussed through the lens of identity, free movement carries with it the threat that its dubious advantages, accorded to Poles, specifically, may be yanked away at any time by other national governments. Acceptance of actual wins and losses, as a result of competition with other EU citizens in a single market, would be necessary for accordance of supranational patriotic affection. However, this remains problematic in terms of national identity-based perception.

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

Interest-based theories of European identity formation predicted that affective identification with Europe would arise on the basis benefit or interest. In this contribution, I have argued that identity conceptions may filter perceptions of interest, so as to forestall this. These conceptions are both reflected in, and reinforced by, news discourse in national public spheres. Indeed, content analysis of high-circulation, low-quality press indicated as follows: In both a migrant sending and a receiving country, perceived national interest causes discourse to frame free movement of persons in a negative manner, despite economic evidence. Further, aspects which would be considered as positive developments for the relevant national group in the one country reflect directly what may be considered to be problematic by the other's discourse. The lack of substantive discussion of costs or benefits in free movement as an EU right suggests that national identities may continue to impede affective identification with Europe. This occurs through their ability to accord solidarity ties and filter interest perception, regarding what information is relevant. These findings beg the question of how much actual consequences of integration matter, in terms of identity's role in framing public discourse. Even in an instance where a certain aspect of (dis)integration is not beneficial, it may still interpreted as problematic, through the lens of identity. However, this has been a study targeted to non-elite public discourse in only two Member States. Further research is needed, using different media sources and other countries, in order to provide a better picture of whether the findings hinted at here are representative. Yet, they do suggest that national identity conceptions, as experienced in public discourse through the conduit of news, negatively frame perceptions of interest in integration. In this light, it may be difficult for interests to result in positive identification with 'Europe'. Even in cases where mutual benefit may be apparent, it is misinterpreted or ignored when filtered through national identity conceptions.

## Notes

1. The functional equivalence of sources was determined with an eye to readership figures and editorial style. However, it was also necessary to account for differences in journalistic culture between the two countries. Thus, in the Polish case, while it may have made sense to collect articles from Super Express, the country's other more sensationalized tabloid, it was ultimately concluded that Metro served better due to its higher readership and an increased permissiveness of outright opinionated reporting in Poland (Dobek-Ostrowska 2012).
2. A much smaller negative frame focused on de-contextualized instances of EU migrants taking jobs. It was used in nine articles. This frame was also slightly less negatively related to free movement, although, 81% of articles still related negatively. Overall, the few stories that related positively to free movement did so often because the UK was portrayed as retaining some control over its borders, or being accorded a 'special' status.
3. The articles that related positively to free movement of persons mostly framed it in terms of minor convenience: Vacation travel within the Schengen Zone or 'vacation jobs' in the West.

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