

Kuhn, Theresa:

***EXPERIENCING EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION. TRANSNATIONAL
LIVES AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY.***

Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015.
208 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2017-1-77

Against the backdrop of multiple current European crises, the first monograph of Theresa Kuhn sheds light on mechanisms underlying the transnational identity formation among European citizens. Using data from, at the time, all 27 countries of the EU, the author aims to answer a question as to why do we not observe more public support for European integration and a stronger collective identity in Europe in the face of increased transnational interactions and networks across Europe. The research interest of Theresa Kuhn, currently an Assistant Professor in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, lies in political sociology, cleavages, collective identities and globalisation. In the book, she elaborates on her doctoral research at the European University Institute in Florence, where she studied the impact of individual transnational networks and interactions on political support for European integration.

Regarding theoretical background, Kuhn adopts a transnationalist perspective based on the transactionalist theory as developed by Karl Deutsch. While establishing a theoretical link between individual transnationalism on the one hand and European identity and support for European integration on the other, the author engages in a very well-informed theoretical debate vis-à-vis the ideas of the most prominent scholars of European integration. Developing her own theoretical model, Kuhn

conceptualizes transnationalism as a two-fold concept consisting of macro-level transnationalism, or transnationalism from above, on the one hand, and the individual transnationalism, or transnationalism from below, on the other. Based on a thorough argumentation, the author produces 7 hypotheses to be tested empirically, using the data from 27 member states of the EU. To this end, she uses quantitative method of statistical analysis of the Eurobarometer survey data.

The main value of the book lies in the comprehensive approach that Kuhn adopted. It is the first systematic analysis of the scale and distribution of transnational interactions across 27 member states of the European Union and their direct link to citizens' orientation towards European integration. The content of the book is divided into eight chapters. First, the introduction engages readers with the puzzle that Kuhn aims to resolve. The following two chapters are dedicated to the development of the theoretical framework, the conceptualization of terms, the operationalization of variables (Chapter 2) and the formation of a set of hypotheses (Chapter 3). Chapters 4 to 7 present the results of the empirical analysis itself. The analysis the author lays out in these chapters is amply supported by a vast number of tables and figures; Kuhn however ensures that the data are presented in a clear and comprehensive way. From the beginning, the author manages to find the right way to inform readers about the research results, while at the same time allowing them to follow Kuhn's line of argumentation and see how the supporting evidence unfolds.

The findings confirm the main hypothesis that people who regularly interact across borders in the EU are indeed more likely to support EU membership and to identify themselves as European. What I do find somewhat problematic, however, is that for the purpose of analysing the two dependent variables of

the book – EU membership support and European identification, the data from two different Eurobarometer survey waves are used. The data for the analysis of the former come from Eurobarometer 65.1 that was conducted in the EU-25 member states in 2006, whereas the data for the latter come from Eurobarometer 67.1 conducted in the EU-27 member states in 2007. The use of two different sets of data collected at different times and with different populations makes reaching conclusions about the relationship between the two less convincing.

Furthermore, Kuhn discovers that the number of people who actually have the opportunity to engage in transnational interactions is rather small and these transactions are socially stratified. Only a highly skilled and young minority of European citizens can regularly interact across borders. Besides, according to the author, transnational interactions of a group of citizens might create negative externalities among the ones who are not transnationally active themselves as they 'might feel overwhelmed and marginalized by the transnationalization of their environment' (p. 146). In addition to this, interacting across borders is not necessarily enough to develop a European mind-set. The nature of interactions is decisive in generating EU support – interactions that are sociable trigger more support than the purely instrumental ones. In light of this, I really appreciate the author's idea to also distinguish between binational and truly trans-European interactions, as not all transnational interactions in Europe are truly European, nor are they perceived as such. Kuhn's findings suggest that interactions of citizens living in border regions with a neighbouring country are indeed perceived as binational rather than European.

Theresa Kuhn's book is very informative and concise at the same time. However, there is one chapter (Chapter 5) that would, in my view, benefit from additional analysis. Kuhn dedi-

cates this chapter to the process of empirical identification of who transnational individuals are; in this context it is an attempt to identify the countries that transnationally active people come from. The author concludes that the richer European states have a more transnational population. Data presented in the book support this claim; however, I do not find the analysis of this specific aspect to be completely exhaustive. To answer the question about what country-level factors could determine individual transnationalism, Kuhn only examines four factors: a country's economic situation, EU membership duration, macro-level transnationalism, as well as its size. Nonetheless, I would argue that there are more country-specific factors that can be directly related to the level of individual transnationalism of citizens of a particular country, those being the quality of education in a country, the language proficiency of its citizens, the existence of seats of international institutions in the country. Moreover, the respective countries' economic wealth having a significant impact of individual transnationalism is, in fact, not very indicative about the actual causes of this phenomenon, as it might be a variable consisting of a number of various other factors.

Contrary to this minor suggestion, the author presents very valuable and sound conclusions about the nature of transnationalism among European citizens. Kuhn is very well aware of the direction of potential causal mechanisms and speaks, very carefully, mostly about correlations. In the case of discussing causality between individual transnationalism and orientations towards European integration, the author admits that this causal mechanism can still work in a reversed way, and tries to exclude all other possibilities through a proper analysis. As a result, she is able to make a conclusion about at least one part of the mechanism investigated, working in a causal way from individual transnationalism to EU support.

The sixth hypothesis tested in the book predicts that the more transnational a country, the stronger the link between individual transnationalism and EU support. The confirmation of this hypothesis has, in fact, significant implications for the dynamics of the process of formation of European identity in relation to globalization. Not only does it mean that in highly globalized countries highly transnational individuals are more supportive of European integration, but it also means that in these countries people that are not transnationally active oppose European integration even more strongly than in countries that are less globalized. In other words, Kuhn concludes that people who never or rarely interact across borders but who live in a highly globalized country represent the most eurosceptical members of European society. Kuhn therefore presents evidence supporting a claim that increased euroscepticism is inherent to the transnationalization of the European society. Considering the current state of Europe, it indeed seems to be the case that globalization induces economic risks and threatens the cultural homogeneity of national societies. According to the author, it also makes people's lives less predictable and less stable. Rendering everyone more transnational, globalization creates tensions between pro- and anti-European-minded groups of people. In the wake of this, the losers of globalization are more prone to reify their national identities and turn against the process that undermines the integrity of a national society.

Based on these findings, Kuhn concludes her book by wrapping up the implications for other researchers and policy makers. She suggests that European policy makers should target the group of people who are the least supportive of European integration process through right policies. In line with what is being presented, the author notes that programmes such as Erasmus target highly educated people who are, in general, already very pro-European and therefore do not generate additional EU support. It is difficult to disagree with the conclusion that, in order to avoid further polarizations in society, there is a need to promote transnational interactions and opportunities among those members of society that can be considered as the 'losers' of the integration process.

To this end, we still need to find out more about the mechanisms that promote and the ones that hinder creation of European collective identity, as well as about where the limits of European collective identity formation lie. *Experiencing European Integration. Transnational Lives and European Identity* provides a valuable basis for the next steps forward. I would therefore strongly recommend this book to scholars interested in the formation of collective identities, the phenomenon of globalization and its effects, and to those who seek to understand the current wave of euroscepticism and negative attitudes towards European integration in Europe.

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