

SOCIAL NETWORKS, PUBLIC OPINION, AND FOREIGN POLICY

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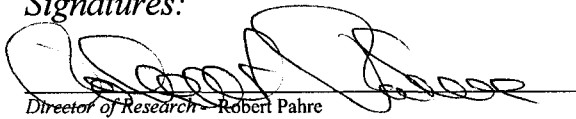
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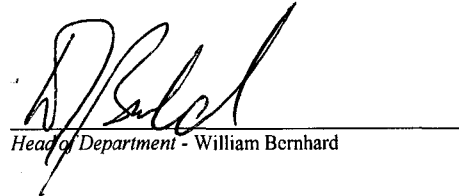
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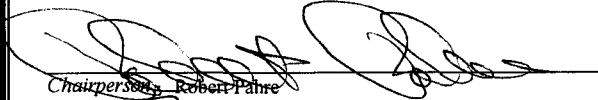
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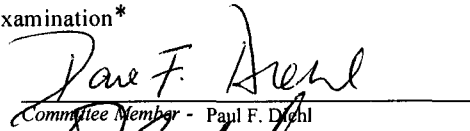
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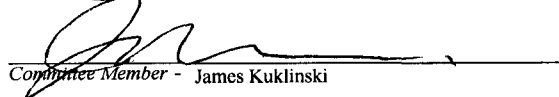
  
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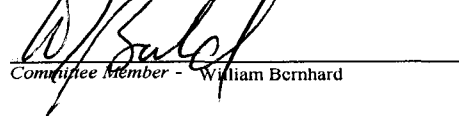
  
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To my parents, Jolanta and Zbigniew, and to my brother Adam, with appreciation and love

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Why Focus on Social Interactions and Public Opinion?**

At the beginning of Christianity, the disciple Paul was credited with saving and transforming what was then a small sect into an ever-expanding religion. While St. Paul's personal and poignant story of conversion could have inspired a growing following, it was ultimately the apostle's extensive network connections that allowed him to reach people in different parts of the world ensuring a quick and effective diffusion of his message (Laszlo-Barabasi 2003).

Today, network connections continue to play a vital role in human lives. From facilitating a search for employment in urban Africa to disseminating information about elections in a small town in California, social networks are an intrinsic part of our lives, often dictating the emergence of norms that shape social and political attitudes. In their simplest form, social networks represent immediate relationships with friends and family. They also include more distant, yet local bonds formed among inhabitants of villages, towns, and leaders of their communities.

Given the growing role of social networks in human relations, the project studies the impact of social interactions on shaping public attitudes on foreign policy by focusing on dynamics through which interpersonal relations give meaning to policies. Although individuals have relied on their families, friends, and neighbors for social and material benefits for decades (Wellman and Wortley 1990), the increasingly globalized world is



likely to make individual connectedness even more relevant for making business decisions as well as understanding political developments and their implications on individuals' daily lives.

Why focus on public opinion on foreign policy? Understanding the formation of public opinion merits attention especially now, in a world with increasingly important structures of global governance. Organizations, such as UN or NAFTA, have been criticized, at times, for lacking accountability and democratic processes. The most advanced of these IOs, the EU, has responded to this 'democratic deficit' by adding direct elections to an increasingly-powerful Parliament, and by relying on referenda on major decisions such as accession, treaty revisions, and constitutions. As a result of such developments, understanding international organizations will increasingly require that we understand public opinion about them.

Proponents of the functionalist theory posit a gradual process in which the public transfers support and loyalty to IOs based on their performance (for example, Weber 2004). Yet this school of thought ignores the origins of such process, failing to explain why the public initially agrees to grant more powers to organizations. By focusing on the process through which the public forms support for the country's membership in an IO, such the EU, the study fills this gap as it shows how social interactions can explain initial support for an organization and offers implications for understanding change in levels of support.

The standard approach to studying public opinion about the EU and support for other foreign policies usually involves focusing on citizens' material interests (for example, Gabel 1998, Wittkopf 1990). Yet aside from works discussing political campaigns in the context of the EU (Kriesi 2007), most studies provide little insights about ways in which

interpersonal discussions about IOs mold views on greater levels of international integration. Whether taking place at a coffee shop, the dinner table, or the water cooler, referenda debates constitute public discussions. Over 50 percent of Poles surveyed in this project in 2003 have discussed their country's membership in the EU with one person and 12 percent with two (Chapter 6). In France, 33 percent of interviewees have obtained information about the organization from discussions with family and friends (Eurobarometer, spring 2005). Although political conversations on foreign policy are common across countries, with some areas exhibiting greater level of debates than others, they are not part of existing explanations for attitude formation. By examining the process through which social interactions mold views on foreign policy and testing the "networks" impact on a national sample of Polish population, I fill the missing gap in the public opinion-foreign policy literature.

### **Causal Mechanisms Linking Social Interactions to Attitude Formation**

One of the main theoretical contributions of the project is the exploration of the process through which attitudes on foreign policy emerge. Studies connecting socio-economic factors to specific views on a policy fail to explain the manner in which individuals absorb, dissect, and make sense of information they are exposed to. Too often, study of public opinion is static in nature as it rarely conceptualizes attitude formation as an evolving process. Since literature on this subject treats individuals as atomic actors, it lacks the context in which attitude formation takes place. Yet in today's globalized world, individuals rarely live in isolation. As members of groups and communities, individuals begin to see the world through the lens of group interests, which are either collectively formed or defined by respected opinion leaders. By stripping down the process through

which attitudes are formed, we are better equipped to not only understand initial emergence of views, but also changes that may follow. After all, once the public grants increasing powers to an IO, it does not always sustain the loyalty. Recent rejection of European constitution by the French is an example of such phenomenon. Thus, by studying the process of attitude formation I contribute to existing theories by examining the causal mechanisms connecting specific factors, in this case social interactions, to attitudes on foreign policy and expand the theory's explanatory power to understand stability and fluctuation of such attitudes.

I investigate the process linking social interactions to formation of public opinion by tracing the emergence of Euroskeptical views in three Polish villages located in a predominantly pro-EU region (Chapter four). Since the area exhibits little variation in its demographic characteristics, yet the subjects of interest boasted the only majority anti-EU vote in the 2003 accession referendum, the phenomenon cannot be explained by current theories. Existing approaches, which would predict similar voting outcome across the area, are not well-equipped to address the emergence of different attitudes on a policy in regions with similar socio-economic backgrounds. Instead, I show how a networks-based approach can explain the puzzling behavior by taking into account the social contexts in which public debates about the EU occur.

In addressing the rise of Euroskepticism in villages, the in-depth case study illuminates the process through which opposition to the EU emerged and persisted for over three years. I show that both network leaders and network connections are vital in understanding the rise and diffusion of such opposition. In doing so, I integrate studies on opinion leaders (for example, Putnam 1966) with research on social networks

(for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995) to arrive at a comprehensive causal story that demonstrates how focusing on the two is necessary to understand the origins and diffusion of specific attitudes on a policy. For example, credible opinion leaders may encourage debates and critical analysis of a policy while arguing in favor of a specific stand. Yet it is ultimately individual connections that enable the opinions to diffuse from those who are in direct contact with the local leader to others whose contact with such figure might be limited. Since individuals in tight networks are linked together through common activities, it is easy for initial views to disseminate to a wider community, as the case demonstrates.

The casual story examines in greater detail the nature of social interactions governing village relations, with particular emphasis on the mechanisms through which local leadership started an initial Euroskeptical cascade. By analyzing the content of argumentation and observing group discussions about the EU, I demonstrate that attitude formation often resembles a dynamic process during which individuals *learn* from the leader about the policy's impact on their lives. This type of learning, I argue, has a strong implication for developing deeply rooted beliefs about an issue and thus in maintaining stable attitudes. By concentrating on the specific mechanisms through which attitude persuasion occurred, I can study both the emergence and stability of public opinion.

### **Examining the “Network Effect” on a Large Scale**

To what extent can a social-interactions approach explain public support for EU membership in the larger, national context? Following an in-depth exploration of ways in which social interactions shape Euroskeptical attitudes in three villages, I examine the networks' explanatory power on a national sample of Polish citizens. Departing from previous works on public opinion and foreign policy, which almost exclusively concentrate

on the US and Western Europe, I test the project's argument through the use of data on public opinion, social interactions, and foreign policy collected in Poland in 2006.

In addition to assessing the significance of networks in attitude formation, I employ large-N analysis to demonstrate that change in the impact depends on whether social persuasion reinforces or contradicts the broader, national consensus. I argue that when local norms clash with national ideas on the policy, individuals will be more likely to adhere to local beliefs, although the process of influence will be more difficult than in instances when local norms complement the national ones. By accounting for both the local and national dynamics, my theoretical argument considers how individuals make sense of the world when embedded in their immediate communities while also belonging to a broader nation.

With the exception of Schoppa (1993) who studied the acceptance of decentralization policies in Japan and Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) who examined minority networks in the U.S., most scholars have not attempted to delineate ways in which perceptions of national consensus may affect attitude formation or test the logic on a large sample. This project bridges the gap between the local and the national by showing that when individuals are embedded in social interactions, they are likely to adopt the local norms, even when such views contradict perceptions of national consensus. Findings demonstrate, for example, that Euroskeptic networks' effect is weaker, albeit still statistically significant, than that of the pro-EU ones, supporting the argument outlined here.

I continue to explore the local-national linkage while building the theory of networks and public opinion formation by examining how the networks' impact varies depending on the type of policy at stake. Not all policies generate the same level of interest,

and not all will be subject to intense public discussions. A policy, which is likely to affect majority of the population, such as joining the European Union, may inspire greater demand for argumentation, critical analysis, and specialized information than a policy with low stakes. Prior to the 2003 referendum, for example, Polish business owners not only visited numerous administrative buildings hoping to understand how their business practices might be altered after joining the EU, but they also participated in lengthy discussions with local priests about the supranational organization (Bockowska, Leszczyńska, Szymańska-Borginon, and Wysocka 2003). As the policy's potential to leave a mark on the large segment of the population increases, the need to understand the policy will grow, and with it, extensive discussions about what it means to win and lose from the initiative. Not surprisingly, in such contexts some groups may also exert extra pressure on its members to adopt specific views on a policy. When the stakes associated with a policy are small or affect only a small segment of the population, however, the need to critically examine the policy should diminish, and with it, the network's impact to shape attitudes.

Analysis in chapter six tests the logic of this argument by comparing the networks' persuasive power in the context of two policies, one with a potential to affect the lives of the majority of the population and the other with a low-level impact. While social interactions play a role in shaping support for both the EU and Poland's participation in the Iraq War, or a policy affecting a relatively small number of citizens, the impact is more extensive in the case of the EU and resembles more of a "network" effect rather than being limited to dyadic discussions. The argument and large-N findings demonstrate that attitudes on foreign policy emerge as an interplay of local and national factors, with the local playing a stronger role in establishing specific views.

## **Policymaking Linkage**

Studying the roots of public opinion clearly merits attention when the public has a direct voice in shaping the country's future by granting support or limiting approval for policies through referenda, as earlier discussed. Yet even when the public lacks such direct opportunities to shape the direction of policymaking, it can indirectly hold the leaders accountable for the course they choose to pursue internationally. Since leaders are vulnerable to the public during elections, they need to select their policy commitments carefully (Fearon 1994). Under certain conditions, the policymakers care about public opinion precisely because ignoring it could be costly. While the project focuses predominantly on the relationship between social interactions and the roots of public opinion on foreign policy, it shows that studying attitude formation is significant, in large part, because under certain conditions the policymakers will respond to public views on a policy. When this happens, the public has an indirect impact on policymaking.

Building on previous research on public opinion-policymaking nexus, this work argues that policymakers will be more responsive to public opinion when they perceive a stable support for a policy, which is likely to be an issue during elections. On the contrary, when attitudes are envisioned merely as trends prone to change, the need to respond to the public diminishes. Policymakers simply cannot ignore long-term opposition to a policy from a significant segment of the population or a strong interest group as opposition may become too costly in the long run. Even if leaders restrain from regularly following national and local polls, they consult with advisors, who might be on a lookout for such long-term opposition, or experience pressure from interest groups to take action. Before the 2003 referendum campaign, for example, several policymakers explained that they were

responsive to farmer and construction unions whose views on the EU remained unchanged for several years and posed a threat to the accession referendum (Policymaker interview source #1), a policy that considerably increased the prestige of the ruling administration. They were less concerned, however, about others groups in society whose organization and long-term opposition appeared limited (ibid).

How do networks fit into this policymaking picture? As I earlier explained, the policymaker-responsiveness argument rests on the assumption that long-term views can be distinguished from short-term opinions, and that we have some knowledge about the emergence of both. With the exception of works on social networks (for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954), current literature on public opinion has little to say about such developments. In fact most studies either argue that public opinion, while prone to random fluctuations at the individual level, is generally stable when taken as aggregate (Page and Shapiro 1992) or that attitudes change in less than two years (Converse 1964). Most theorists, however, provide little explanation for the emergence of both patterns. Yet as interviews with selective policymakers in Poland demonstrate, perceptions of long vs. short-term opposition can determine whether the leaders respond to specific groups in the society, and as such should be of interest to researchers. The social-network approach provides a causal explanation for the emergence of stable, more long-term beliefs and for short-term views. By focusing on the mechanism through which social interactions shape attitudes, we can understand to what extent the context and content of interactions can affect specific patterns of attitudes.

In chapter seven, I distinguish between three mechanisms of influence, information diffusion, learning, and group pressure, and delineate the role of each in attitude formation.



I argue that when social interactions emphasize *learning* about specific policy, attitudes will be more resistant to change through time because individuals will voluntarily develop strong beliefs about the issue. For example, chapter four shows that Euroskeptic attitudes in the three Polish villages of Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki remained stable for the period of three years because the village leader not only diffused information about the EU, but engaged in extensive argumentation and debates with others in an effort to educate the community about what he deemed as perilous policy.

When *group pressure* is the main mechanism through which social networks foster specific attitudes on a policy, such attitudes are likely to remain stable initially, but may change when individuals leave their communities and no longer adhere to the norms their initial groups imposed. Group pressure is simply a mechanism of coercion, and so here genuine learning rarely takes place. Not surprisingly, in such contexts individuals can easily alter their opinions when faced with changing circumstances. Lastly, when individuals are exposed to random pieces of *information* during discussions, their views will fluctuate as they are likely to change their opinions as new information arrives.

Findings show that when learning, as opposed to information diffusion, is emphasized in social discussions about the EU, attitudes will be stable through time. Chapter seven thus provides preliminary evidence for policymaking-public opinion linkage by showing how social interactions can help explain patterns of attitudes. Such patterns, in turn, shape policymakers' responsiveness to the public.

### **Recommendations for Policymakers**

Understanding the roots of public opinion should provide important insights to policymakers interested in pursuing and successfully implementing policies requiring

public approval, whether directly through referenda or indirectly by holding the leaders accountable during elections. A social-network approach to studying public opinion suggests that attitude formation on policies with great stakes for the people is a process evolving, for the most part, locally during informal discussions and interactions. As opinion or network leaders often set the agenda for the discussions and/or define the appropriate response to the policy for the group or a community, they are of vital importance in generating conformity of views. Not surprisingly, policymakers interested in consolidating support in highly-contested areas, should target such leaders rather than rely on pamphlets and television campaigns to achieve the desirable voting outcome.

While national elites should recognize the social aspect of attitude formation that stresses greater emphasis on local dynamics, they do not necessarily need to be familiar with local issue. Instead, the goal would be to locate a credible community leader and rely on him/her to educate the public. Given that such leaders may control information flows in tight communities and serve as connectors among individuals, they are particularly effective in diffusing the message to a large number of people. Even more importantly, when such leaders educate individuals about the issue by engaging in debates and translating the meaning of the policy to the community, they may ensure that emergent attitudes are actually stable through time. This, in turn, may build a solid support ground for the policymaker.

When trying to understand whether specific groups in society are likely to oppose a policy in the long-run, national elites would benefit from investigating how group leaders diffuse ideas. If the dominant leadership of an interest group, for example, engages in debates, extensive discussions, and encourages active opposition to the policy among group

members then policymakers should expect long-term opposition. When this is the case, they would be advised to consider the demands of such groups when pondering the policy's direction.

### **Chapter Overview**

I develop the project's argument and present empirical evidence by proceeding in the following manner. In chapter two, I examine how the dissertation's core ideas build upon and contribute to current research on public opinion and foreign policy. I focus on contribution to the works on the roots of attitudes and the relationship between public opinion and policymaking.

I present the theoretical argument in chapter three, concentrating predominantly on developing a causal story linking social networks to attitude formation on foreign policy. In this realm, I explore variation in local network effects depending on broader national factors, including public perceptions of national consensus on the issue and policy stakes. I dwell more on the actual mechanisms through which attitudes are shaped in the network by distinguishing between information diffusion, learning, and group pressure. I argue that such distinction is not only valuable in understanding the causal story of attitude formation, but also in forming specific predictions about stability of views. I then examine how local attitudes can diffuse to neighboring areas and what limits the process. Lastly, to complete the story of networks and public opinion, I bring the policymaker into the picture to explore how perceptions of attitude stability or fluctuation affect the nature of policymaking and international negotiations.

In chapter four, I engage in in-depth case analysis of the emergence of Euroskeptic views in three villages in a strongly pro-EU county as a way to examine my theoretical

argument about the causal linkage between networks and attitude formation on foreign policy. I investigate the root of opposition to the supranational organization by evaluating several plausible explanations before demonstrating the role of network leadership and village connections in disseminating anti-EU attitudes. I also explain why the views have remained largely unchanged since the 2003 referendum on Polish membership by focusing on specific network mechanisms through which views on the EU have been formed. I conclude providing some policy-relevant implications.

Chapter five discusses the research design for testing some of the propositions outlined in chapter three, with the main focus of examining the impact of networks on public opinion on a larger sample. I explain my choice of Poland as a case for hypothesis testing. Here I also elaborate on the process of sample selection, data collection, and variable coding. Lastly, I describe potential problems with research design, including selection bias and endogeneity, and address how they are minimized in this study.

I test hypotheses about network effect in the context of two policies, Polish membership in the EU and the country's participation in the Iraq War, in chapter six. After presenting results from descriptive statistics and the logit model, I discuss the findings' significance for building the broader theory of social networks and public opinion on foreign policy. I also return to the causal story, arguing that networks with minority opinions on a policy with high stakes are particularly effective in persuasion and influence as they survive in the midst of an opposing, national consensus.

Chapter seven focuses on the networks-public opinion link to policymaking by elaborating how policymakers respond to specific, long-term trends in public opinion. The section relies on preliminary interviews with members of the Polish delegation responsible

for negotiating the country's accession to the EU to show empirical support for the argument. I then examine the utility of the social-networks approach in explaining the stability of attitudes, to which the policymakers respond, by analyzing how learning, group pressure, and information provision, or the three mechanisms of persuasion, affect the longevity of views. I present concluding remarks and suggestions for future research in chapter eight.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDIES ON THE ROOTS OF PUBLIC OPINION

#### Introduction

The project builds upon previous work on public opinion and foreign policy by contributing to the growing research on the roots of attitude formation. Most research in this area examines emergence of specific attitudes by focusing almost exclusively on individual's demographic characteristics while neglecting the increasingly important social context within which decisions are made, opinions formed, and identities defined. In today's every-connected world, individuals make sense of the developments around them through the lens of their social environments—people and interactions that collectively serve as information providers, markers of norms, and sources facilitating the emergence of lasting beliefs. By ignoring the impact of social interactions on individuals' lives, studies on the emergence of specific attitudes on foreign policy have overlooked the important dynamics that are becoming even more important today. This study seeks to fill this gap by showing how a network perspective not only helps explain attitude formation on vital policies, but offers additional insights about such phenomena as understanding durability and fluctuation of opinions.

In this section, I review previous theoretical arguments and highlight empirical findings relating to research on public opinion formation on foreign policy to show how a social-network approach can provide new insights on existing scholarship. I then argue that studying attitude formation from a network perspective has significant implications for understanding the impact of public opinion on policymaking in the realm of foreign policy.

The chapter concludes with final remarks on the project's overall contribution to the existing literature.

### **Research on the Origins of Public Opinion**

The project contributes to the literature on the roots of public opinion on foreign policy by demonstrating the role of social environments in attitude formation and examining how such an approach complements traditional, individual-focused approaches. Current literature predominantly focuses on specific economic, ideological, political, and demographic factors as it tries to explain support for wars or enthusiasm for European enlargement. I seek to contribute to this growing body of research by treating individuals less as atomic figures and more as members of communities, groups or simply networks that connect them to others. A social perspective, I would argue captures the dynamic nature of public opinion, accounting for changes that traditional models often struggle to address.

Previous work is rather static as it focuses on variables that are either always stable (e.g. gender) or change in specific stages (e.g. level of education). Research has then employed such variables to test their impact on foreign policy attitudes. Numerous works have shown , for example, that education, political knowledge, income, gender, regional roots, and occupation matter in whether people support a more internationalist or isolationist policies ( Almond 1960, Hughes 1978, Isernia 2001, Colton 2002, Wittkopf 1990, Sinnott 2000, Nincic 1997).<sup>1</sup> Professionals with high incomes, findings show, are favorably inclined towards cooperative internationalism, but express reluctance when it

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<sup>1</sup> Page and Shapiro (1992) are among the few who strongly object to models emphasizing individual characteristics in opinion formation. They argue that most people are guided by standards emphasizing a broader national good rather than individual or group interests.

comes to supporting military interventions. On the contrary, lower educational levels are linked with greater propensity towards militant and isolationist policies in the U.S. (Wittkopf 1990, Nincic 1997). In the context of gender, some studies show that women usually favor peace-oriented policies (for example, Sahliyah and Deng 2003, Goldstein 2001), though findings here are still inconclusive showing that through time gender gaps diminish.

Findings are quite similar in the context of public attitudes on European integration. Advocating a utilitarian model of opinion formation, Gabel (1998a, 1998b), for example, argues that individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds will derive divergent benefits from market liberalization—the key policy driving integration. Depending on these variations, some groups, such as professionals with competitive skills, are likely to benefit from greater liberalization and, in turn, exhibit more supportive attitudes towards the supranational project than others. The findings are also supported by Gabel and Palmer (1995), Gabel and Whitten (1997), Anderson and Reichert (1996), Anderson and Kaltenthaler (1996), and lately by Karasinska-Fendler, Skotnicka-Illasiewicz, Sobotka, Swierkocki (2000) and Slomczynski and Shabad (2003) who study the significance of utilitarian calculations in Poland.

The economic model of attitude formation is supplemented by yet another set of individual-based explanations that incorporate the role of beliefs and perceptions. Core beliefs, research shows, serve as heuristics through which citizens form ideas about world affairs. Early on Almond (1960) has argued that “psycho-cultural” elements often define national character and in countries, such as the U.S., where arbitrary aggression is negatively evaluated, the use of force abroad might not be easily accepted. In contexts



outside of the U.S., beliefs about threats associated with Western institutions such as NATO have been cited as the main cause of anti-American views in Russia (Shirayev and Zubov 2000). Other works have touched upon the role of national sentiments that associate foreign policies of openness with potential threats to indigenous cultures (McLaren 2002). Individuals who fear that the quality of their culture will deteriorate as a result of policies promoting greater cooperation and integration with other nations are likely to exhibit supportive stand towards militarism and oppose grand projects such as European integration (Juhász 2001, McLaren 2002). Research on beliefs, however, fails to address how individuals come to adopt certain beliefs over others that are freely floating in society. By introducing the idea of social networks, the project can add to this body of work by demonstrating how network leaders utilize learning to foster specific beliefs on issues.

Lastly, it is worth to mention the large body of work linking party preference to positive or negative attitudes on specific policies. Numerous works demonstrate that citizens rely on parties as a lens through which they view political developments abroad. Not surprisingly then, parties' outlook on policies often shapes the public's foreign attitudes, such as the degree of hawkish or dovish predisposition (Sahliyeh and Deng 2003, Evans 2000). Often, however, partisanship preferences operate in the context of strategic considerations such as when granting support to the government is at stake, rather than forming the basis for evaluating specific policies. For example, Hug and Sciarini (2000) show that specific nature of binding referenda mobilize supporters of governing parties to advance EU membership in what the public considers a vote of confidence for the ruling coalition.

Recent research on EU membership has shown that partisanship considerations might not provide an adequate explanation for the rise of particular opinions. Many parties in Eastern Europe with Eurosceptic platform, for example, have pro-EU constituencies, showing that certain gap exists between party and public views (for example, Bielasiak 2003, Ehin 2002/2003, Kopecký 2004 ). In a similar way, Holsti (1996) finds that the traditional partisanship distinction is less useful in explaining policy preferences related to trade. Finally, sometimes the relationship between party preferences and policies could vary if policies are multidimensional with sub-issues, in which case secondary effects are also considered and might obscure the expected correlations between ideology and policy preference (Carrubba and Singh 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that decades of findings related to partisanship while still significant, have been increasingly questioned. It appears that identifying with a particular party cannot adequately capture all the dynamics through which individuals form policy preferences. Instead results suggest that specific conditions such as issue importance to the party and individual's attachment to a party strengthen the connection between party positions and individual opinion (Ray 2003).

In light of existing research, the project builds on the individual models of public opinion by showing ways in which one's social environment can mold attitudes, thereby demonstrating how a social-network approach can better predict the probability that individuals will support a specific policy rather than oppose it. Given that most individuals are embedded in some form of social interactions, I introduce a more process-oriented focus to the study of attitude formation. In addition, such a perspective can help fill some theoretical gaps in current findings on belief formation, for example, by demonstrating how

network leaders can encourage learning about an issue that leads to long-term support for a policy.

Most importantly, however, the project's contribution is to show the *process* through which attitudes emerge, a phenomenon that is rarely studied in general, and never in the context of foreign policy preferences. By investigating the rise of Euroskeptic attitudes in three Polish villages (Chapter 4), I examine how local leaders and social linkages among people facilitate not only the formation of attitudes but also the diffusion of specific views to others. In doing so, I contribute to current studies by delineating the process behind the findings.

### **Implications for the Public Opinion-Policymaking Literature**

Vast and, at times, competing, literature in the public opinion-policymaking realm has shown a division between a notion that public opinion, so fickle and irrational, has little or no impact on policymaking (for example, Snow and Brown 1997, Almond 1960, Cohen 1973, Rosenau 1961, Mearsheimer 1990) and the idea that leaders respond to public preferences when deciding about the appropriate course of action. Only recently, scholars have acknowledged that public opinion has a conditional impact on policymaking, an area of research to which this project directly speaks to.

To distinguish the theoretical argument about conditional nature of public opinion, and thus the type of research to which a network perspective on attitude formation can contribute, it is worth to briefly contrast it with the realist and liberal take on public opinion and policymaking as such line of thinking sets the stage for perceiving the public opinion/policymaking linkage as conditional. Rooted in realist thought, original ideas linking public opinion to policymaking essentially argue that concentration of power in the

international system, rather than domestic factors, serves as a primary force driving foreign behavior (Waltz 1979). Many realists have proposed not only that the public's knowledge of foreign affairs is limited, mediocre, and prone to fluctuations, but also that it is the elites who set the agenda and generate support for policies. Some empirical evidence supports such ideas. For example, in his study of America's policy towards China from 1949-1979, Kusnitz (1984) shows that at times the public "followed" the lead set by the authorities. Similarly, Shapiro and Jacobs (2000) argue that the trend in public opinion has been, at times, in the direction of policymakers leading the public. In general, however, the realist view has been criticized for failing to adequately capture the public—individuals who are more attentive than previously thought and possibly more immune to elite manipulations.

In contrast to the realist view, the liberal school of thought elevates the impact of domestic actors in shaping states' foreign behavior. In democratic societies where electoral accountability is high, the role of the public becomes ever more increasing. Responsive to "audience costs," leaders in free societies are more likely to commit themselves to a course of action once they publicly declare such intention (Fearon 1994).<sup>2</sup> Some empirical studies have shown that when the public's support is low, presidents are more likely to pursue aggressive foreign policies to boost their popularity (for example, Oneal and James 1991, James and Hristoulas 1994), particularly before elections (Wang 1996), and are likely to modify their policies in accordance with public preferences (Nincic 2004). Studies on democracies have argued and shown that the public in such regimes is particularly sensitive

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<sup>2</sup> Some challenge the impact of audience costs in presidential accountability. For example, Shapiro and Jacobs (2000) assert that accountability is an issue only prior to elections, leaving room for policymakers to manipulate the public and/or maneuver without public constraints. Challenging the notion of constant accountability, they argue that the public often forgets what issues were at stake.

to war casualties and costs (for example, Stam 1996, Russett 1990, Gartner, Segura, Wilkening 1997, Morgan and Campbell 1991), which would prompt democratic leaders to exercise caution when engaging in potentially lengthy wars. Thus the importance of “audience costs” is now commonly cited as a significant determinant of how democracies will behave in international crisis, and provides a renewed interest in the public’s impact on leadership constraint.

While the democratic accountability argument on which the public opinion/policymaking nexus relies so heavily is often supported in empirical analysis, plenty of evidence also exists to demonstrate instances where democratic leaders pursued policies contradictory to public preference. For example, Polish governing administration largely ignored public opposition to the country’s participation in the Iraq war, fearing little electoral accountability from an issue unlikely to generate long-term beliefs that could hurt the administration as a voting issue. Thus, policymakers clearly do not respond to public opinion when pursuing every international policy. Consequently, the most fruitful line of research acknowledges more complex relationship between public opinion and policymaking.

The conditional argument, to which this project offers some insights, shows that the linkage depends on domestic structure, including media coverage of the issue, and leader characteristics, including beliefs about the role of the public in democratic governing. Starting with the domestic structure, the public’s impact, the logic goes depends on the levels of centralization in political systems, on the strength of societal organization, and on the characteristics of policy networks. Open and decentralized political systems with society-dominated policy networks (e.g. USA) allow public opinion to affect policies. In

contrast, decentralized systems with state-dominated networks (e.g. France) inhibit the role of the public in foreign-policy decisions (Risse-Kappen 1991). Such an argument, however, fails to explain variation in public opinion's impact within the decentralized systems where such opinions might be considered in the first place. After all, not even in such systems is public opinion always respected.

Bringing the media into the picture and the policymaker can help address this gap in the domestic structure argument. Extensive media coverage of a policy and framing appealing to individual emotions and interests can activate public interest and signal to the policymaker which issues deserve attention given their mass or special interest appeal (Powlick and Katz 1998, Trumborf 1998). Although it is plausible that leaders might have a way to diminish issue intensity and thus curtail their responsiveness to the public by conducting business in private (Baum 2004), such tactics are increasingly difficult to employ in an age where communication technology makes it increasingly difficult to escape media's watchful eye. Consequently, the media's importance in defining the national mood is vital in sending the message to policymakers about the public.

In this project I argue that understanding policymaker responsiveness to the public can be linked to the leadership's perception of what the public voice really means, once it is activated. Understanding media coverage is thus part of the argument as such coverage may signal to the leader the national mood. In my argument I depart from a focus on leadership style that emphasizes presidential beliefs about the merit of including public voice in a democracy (Foyle 1999) as an explanation for considering public views in decision making. While such an approach might be useful when clear-cut presidential styles can be identified, leaders often possess mixed governing styles and views on the

public's role in the process, making it difficult to decipher when the president might include or exclude the voice of fellow citizens. Instead, in the final stages of the project I argue that democratic leaders are concerned about electoral punishment and thus will respond to public opinion if they perceive that opposition to an issue is likely to be durable. When the public deeply believes in an issue, it is likely to remain loyal to the same views for a long time, suggesting a certain stability of attitudes. Stability of views is important if the policy is vital enough to be used as a voting issue by the public. Thus, for example, the policymaker could be concerned about long-term Euroskeptic beliefs among the general public, which could use the EU as a voting issue, or similarly express attentiveness if such beliefs are formed among significant groups that could mobilize voters on larger scale. The network perspective offers clues as to why some opinions are more durable than others by explaining the process through which attitudes emerge.

## **Conclusion**

Instead of relying exclusively on individual-based explanations, I show how one's social environment diffuses information about policy, sets norms of behavior, and encourages learning about policy to shape either long or short-term perspective on an issue depending on the mechanism through which the process of influence occurs. Naturally, the project integrates the network perspective to existing work by arguing that individual models of opinion formation are useful, in particular, to explain the views of opinion leaders, often serving as network leaders in local communities, or attitudes of those who rarely engage in political discussions or rarely observe others' political behavior. Yet, it also suggests that existing approaches have neglected to explore the role of social environment in shaping the views of those embedded in interpersonal interactions. As a

result, the project advocates a more comprehensive view of public opinion formation by showing when the individual models are appropriate, and how the social-network approach adds to these models by accounting for attitude formation and patterns in stability of views.

In addition to providing theoretical insights about the origins of attitudes, the network perspective introduced here is useful in thinking about durability and fluctuation of views. Given that most individual characteristics are static or change little through time, it is difficult to account for unexpected fluctuations of public attitudes. For example, most individual models would be unable to effectively explain such phenomena as surprising rejection of EU Constitution by the French, once considered the most fervent supporters of integration. Furthermore, current models as they are leave many unanswered questions. For example, why is it that people hold certain beliefs over others and what triggers change in beliefs? Addressing such questions is relevant both for existing explanations of attitude formation and for understanding change in views on foreign policy. By exploring how different mechanisms of attitude formation in a network can shape the longevity of attitudes, the project contributes to the current literature on public opinion on foreign policy by filling this gap.

Studying patterns of attitudes, I then show, can help us understand when policymakers are likely to respond to public interest as they pursue specific policies, for example, by pressing for a certain group's interests during international negotiations. When policymakers are convinced that the public or specific groups in the society are likely to oppose a policy in the long run, especially if such a policy can become a voting issue, they will be more responsive to domestic demands. Thus, the network perspective can add new



insights to the public opinion-policymaker research by delineating conditions under which the leaders are more likely to listen to the public's voice.

## CHAPTER 3

### SOCIAL NETWORKS, PUBLIC OPINION, AND FOREIGN POLICY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

#### Introduction

Studies on social networks and their role in shaping social identity are found in several disciplines (for example, Walsh 2004, Watkins and Danzi 1995, Straits 1991). Research in this area has examined how the frequency and types of interactions affect political attitudes (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995, Kenny 1998). Findings have demonstrated that influence is often manifested in cohesive networks characterized by frequent interactions among members or evolves in networks in which people occupy similar structural positions (for example, Burt 1987, Nieuwbeerta and Flap 2000). Yet social interactions occurring in networks not only serve as a basis of influence, but also as a mechanism through which social identity is defined, formed, and reshaped (Walsh 2004). Social relations, Walsh (2004) discovered, profoundly affect individual perceptions of the world when our focus turns to the content of message and conversations. Consequently, scholars are now discovering numerous, and often complementary, ways in which social interactions shape views and attitudes, such as those concerning opinions about foreign issues and policies.

The argument presented below builds on these studies. First, I present a simple model showing how social interactions can affect individual calculations about preferences for foreign policies. I then examine network dynamics at the micro level by developing several hypotheses that distinguish among the mechanisms of social influence, including

learning, group pressure, and simple information provision.<sup>3</sup> To date, learning, group pressure, and herding have been studied separately, therefore, inhibiting us from comparing the different conditions under which each might emerge, and in turn, lead to varying behavioral outcomes. Understanding which one of these mechanisms dominates in communities, groups, or dyadic relationships has significant implications for our understanding of the emergence of durable attitudes on foreign issues. I also revisit some existing theories about network composition in the new context presented here. Lastly, I analyze how salience of policy issues can determine the relevance of social networks in attitude formation.

In subsequent sections, I develop hypotheses that examine how network effects can spread locally and nationally. Finally, I show how a network-based perspective, which explains trends in public opinion, can have important implications for policymaking. I then conclude with final thoughts on the linkage between social networks and public opinion on foreign policy by arguing that a network-based perspective on attitude formation needs to consider the interplay between local and national dynamics to effectively capture the process through which opinions are formed.

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<sup>3</sup> A social learning mechanism is similar to the mechanism that operates in cohesive networks in which influence spreads through contact and discussions. Social learning, as discussed here, incorporates anything from simple information transfers to much deeper, normative learning. In the latter instance individuals form preferences about policies because they truly believe in them.

Group pressure could be found in structurally equivalent networks, but is not meant here to focus on structure exclusively. Instead studying this particular mechanism of influence allows enough freedom to incorporate structure into analysis while also considering specific contents of messages and the nature of interactions.

## **The Model of Social Influence on Opinion Formation**

To understand the role of social interactions<sup>4</sup> in shaping attitudes on foreign policy, it is imperative to focus on social interactions as a factor that can affect individual calculations of benefits associated with particular policy and hence shape individual preferences. The model presented here serves to illustrate how opinion formation evolves at the micro-level when social environment, in addition to individual characteristics, is considered.

We begin with some assumptions. First, we can assume that individuals employ a rational calculation of the costs and benefits associated with a particular policy. This assumption is consistent with post-Vietnam findings on public opinion depicting opinions as consistent and rational (Page and Shapiro 1992) rather than emerging as a product of mood swings (Almond 1960). Second, we can assume that attitudes are, to some extent, a reflection of individual calculations. This assumption is consistent with numerous findings on the role of education, occupation, and income on developing preferences for specific policies (for example, Wittkopf 1990, Isernia 2001, Gabel 1998a & 1998b). For example, a businessman may consider supporting a trade liberalization policy because he believes it will improve his business relations. Third, we assume that individuals are embedded in some form of social communities. Whether it involves attending work, socializing with friends and family, volunteering at local clubs, or at the very least living within the boundaries of neighborhoods, individuals are members of social communities (for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Watkins and Danzi 1995). Although, the extent to which

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<sup>4</sup> I often use the terms social networks and social relations interchangeably. While these concepts are not the same, they are clearly related. Social relations, including direct or indirect interactions among people, often emerge in some form of social networks where individuals are connected through shared experiences, cultural similarities, etc.

individuals are actively and voluntarily embedded in social communities varies, most individuals engage with others in some form of activities.

To model opinion formation, we can begin with an individual who makes a decision as to whether he/she will support a policy X. If the policy's benefits for the individual will outweigh potential costs, the person is likely to support the policy. The individual will make calculations about the policy's possible outcome based on his/her personal attributes, such as education and income, that enter into consideration in combination with information about the policy acquired from the media or local elite.

Adding social interactions to this scenario, however, can change individual cost/benefit calculations and lead to different behavior (Bagozzi and Lee 2002) or opinion preferences. For example, if an individual is embedded in a neighborhood that as an aggregate unit is likely to lose from policy X, then he/she might end up in a losing position. A previous win-win situation now turns into a win-lose outcome in which a person as an individual will benefit from a policy, but lose when his/her community faces costs. Naturally, an egoistic actor would exhibit limited concern about community good and could still follow his/her individual interest. Nevertheless, being embedded in social interactions means that the individual's very existence is often dependent on his/her relations with the community<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, self-interest is now constrained because people exist in relationships with the other (Katz, Lazer, Arrow, and Contractor 2005). For example, an individual might be reluctant to support trade liberalization, which may hurt his small business by increasing competition, yet the community he belongs to might benefit from outside investments that could offer new employment opportunities.

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<sup>5</sup> The term community is loosely employed here. It could include anything ranging from dyadic interpersonal relations to broader group relations.

Although, supporting the policy is a potential loss for the businessman, it is a win for the community which consists, among others, of the man's unemployed daughter and his friends from the chess club. In this case, an individual may not immediately support a policy that could negatively affect his business, yet prove beneficial to the community he respects and loves. As a result, community relations may constraint the natural, self-centered behavior.

Social relationships change individual calculations about policies because they provide benefits to individuals who participate in those relationships. If forfeiting group interest for personal benefit means losing the benefits derived from socialization, then individuals face a dilemma about whether or not to support policy X. If social benefits outweigh individual gains then individuals are likely to object to policy X. Therefore, social interactions can alter individual attitudes on policies and complicate the dynamic of opinion formation, making it a reflection of both individual and community interests.

### **Social Networks and Opinion Formation at the Micro Level**

In this section, I explore the different mechanisms through which social networks can shape attitudes on foreign policy. The distinction between the three main mechanisms, information provision, group pressure, and learning, are vital in understanding trends in public opinion such as fluctuations and stability through time. None of the previous studies on social networks identify all of the three mechanisms by contrasting and comparing their impact on the process of attitude formation. By making the distinction, however, I develop a causal story behind the network-opinion linkage and suggest ways in which the three mechanisms can potentially affect the durability of views.

In addition to exploring the role of such mechanisms in attitude formation, the section also examines how specific network characteristics, such as frequency of

conversations, relationship ties, and proximity between the discussants, might increase the network's impact. Lastly, the section introduces the role of policy stakes in shaping the extent to which the network effect on attitude formation might be stronger or weaker.

*Transmission of Influence: Information Provision*

In general, we can identify three ways in which social networks can affect individual calculations of policies under varying conditions. In this section, I address the first of those mechanisms—information provision. Here, I look at how social networks can shape opinion formation by directly delivering information about policy X, clarifying costs and benefits associated with that policy. In addition, I describe how individuals derive information indirectly by merely observing the behavior of others and in doing so engage in herding. Here, social networks do not so much pose the dilemma of whether policy X will be at odds with individual vs. group preferences, but rather they serve as translators of the policy's implications for the group.

In the realm of direct information provision, two scenarios illustrate the logic of social influence that shapes public views on foreign policy.

Scenario 1:

In the first scenario, I assume that at least some citizens in any given country lack information about foreign policy initiatives. Depending on the type and complexity of the issues, the number of “uninformed” individuals could vary, but we assume here that a steady portion of the population continuously possesses little or no information about critical policies. The assumption is plausible. For example, when it comes to European integration, Eurobarometer surveys have demonstrated that only a very small percentage of Poles could identify basic EU symbols such as the flag or the anthem, and the majority

admitted to having little or no knowledge about their country's accession process. When asked about information on European enlargement, majority of citizens in 14 out of 15 surveyed EU countries admitted to being weakly informed on the issue (European Commission 2001).

Uninformed individuals might be prone to social influence even when they display little interest in politics. In social settings, individuals care about their reputations and, therefore, tuning to news about national issues that are publicly discussed might be important if one's status and image are at stake. In other instances, people could be exposed to information even if they do not explicitly look for it, but happen, for example, to join a conversation during which political issues are discussed. In such a way, information randomly ventures and registers with an individual (Hague and Sprague 1995). Consequently, we can see that social networks can shape attitudes of uninformed citizens when they are motivated to obtain information (ibid 1995) or even when no such desire exists.<sup>6</sup>

#### Scenario 2:

In the second scenario, we assume that individuals have some knowledge about foreign policy and a general interest in developing a preference. Such people, who are neither political experts nor complete novices, represent another prospective group of individuals that could be prone to social influence. In general, seeking new information is costly particularly if it involves gathering specialized knowledge. Unlike completely uninformed citizens, whose first priority might include acquiring basic information, or

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that the extent to which citizens are informed is not necessarily related to their level of education. Education need not imply political awareness. For example, a highly educated computer scientist might seek information related to his/her field while completely filtering news related to foreign policies such as the latest reports on international negotiations.



political experts, who possess a plethora of facts, those in between are interested in expanding their rudimentary knowledge to assess how a given policy might affect their lives.

In many cases, specialized information is difficult to obtain, requiring time and effort to collect. For instance, the issue of EU expansion into Eastern Europe illustrates the problem of locating complex facts. Although an extensive media campaign has been launched in Poland six months prior to the referendum, some citizens were unable to obtain news about ways in which accession would impinge on their businesses. Before making a firm decision on whether to support or reject Poland's entrance into the European Union, a Polish owner of a glass-making company devoted endless hours trying to collect information from the local administration on how his business might be affected by new regulations. Unable to secure concrete facts and directed from one building to another, the man turned to a trusted priest who finally convinced him to support the EU (Bockowska, Leszczynska, Szymanska-Borginon, and Wysocka 2003b). Therefore, it is not surprising that relying on social networks should present a particularly attractive option for moderates in need of information, especially when the network consists of credible experts (Downs 1957; Bikchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch 1992).<sup>7</sup> Such networks provide a quick and fairly inexpensive channel through which knowledge can be acquired. In addition, network experts could be helpful in translating difficult concepts and in bridging the link between foreign policy and one's daily life (Wellman, Chen, Weizhen 2002).

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<sup>7</sup> Political experts are likely to be resistant to social persuasion, and with strongly developed preferences they are likely to remain loyal to their view regardless of what happens in the network (Huckfeldt and Johnson 2002). Often they serve as opinion leaders.

Besides serving as providers of information directly, social networks often signal information indirectly. Herding, for example, represents an indirect way through which social networks can affect public opinion on foreign issues by providing information to individuals about the policy. If individuals observe that people they consider experts adopt one view over another, and that such a view is embraced by enough people, then they are likely to follow the same path. When “fashion leaders” set trends, individuals forgo personal information in favor of herding (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1992). The source of information is critical in initiating herding behavior. Knowledgeable individuals who transform messages in a way that attract individual attention and who develop ties across groups will be more successful in starting a trend.

Herding is also likely to emerge in certain contexts where conditions favor diffusion of specific attitudes and opinions. In other words, the existence of herding-ripe circumstances commands individual attention and encourages the formation of attitudes on issues. For example, communities experiencing high levels of unemployment might be more prone to follow a source linking Poland’s membership in the EU to painful reforms in the working sector that could hurt those whose jobs are already in jeopardy. Such circumstances clearly call for individual action or, at the very least, give rise to concerns that push people to form specific opinions on the issue. When people begin to adopt the views initiated by a credible source, more individuals will follow as they observe other people subscribing to the views in the midst of circumstances that encourage this dynamic. In such a manner, popular trends in one’s network can easily diffuse to the broader community resulting in fairly uniform trends in public opinion.

The extent to which individuals will engage in herding is also dependent on their personal level of information. Individuals constantly weigh personal knowledge with the signals they receive from the outside. In general, we should expect that people will forgo their own information when they observe that at least two people before them have formed the same opinion about an issue. Simple models of herding behavior have shown that in such instances, individuals will respond to outside signals because they will assume that two individuals would not have supported the same option unless it was credible (Banerjee 1992).

*Transmission of Information: Learning<sup>8</sup>*

Building on the foundation of information provision, social networks can also affect public opinion by encouraging deeper, normative learning about policies. Rather than borrowing definitions from cognitive psychology, which focuses on the individual and not on the social aspect of learning, I employ a definition advocated by Checkel (2001) in his study of elite learning in Ukraine. Learning, as studied here, refers to a social process of persuasion aimed at utilizing argumentation and discussion to convince one to form a specific view on an issue. In this sense, learning involves a great deal of argumentation and debating in the absence of coercion (ibid).

Focusing on learning, we turn to the logic provided by constructivism. Although predominantly concerned with state as opposed to individual behavior (for example, Wendt 1998, Katzenstein and Hemmer 2002), constructivist assumptions about the role of social interactions in shaping interests could be extended to the domestic environment as I am

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<sup>8</sup> I distinguish between simple information provision and deeper, normative forms of learning.

showing here. Networks create an opportunity for individuals to socialize, interact, and learn about foreign initiatives, such as European integration. They create an environment for normative reflection that can mold individual identity in relation to the group.

Normative learning is more complex than just simple registration of random information and should be manifested by a genuine belief in the cause. This is what separates learning from simple information acquisition.

A distinction also needs to be made between learning and being influenced to learn as a result of pressure to conform to group standards. For example, adopting norms on human rights conditional on financial assistance does not mean that a country truly believes in the significance of such rights or that it has formed a policy after careful analysis and evaluation. Instead, a country may support such norms because not doing so would mean exclusion from the benefits that a country obtains from respecting the laws of the international community. In other words, national elites adopt a policy not because they think it is normatively the right thing to do, but instead they do so because they are forced to, albeit indirectly. Genuine learning, on the other hand, should evolve in instances where individuals are free from pressure to adopt specific preferences. Such process can occur through extensive interactions in which discussions about foreign policies are debated, dissected, and approached without the shadow of power.

#### *Transmission of Influence: Group Pressure*

The third dynamic through which social networks can shape public opinion and substantially alter individual calculations of policy preferences, is rooted in the role of networks as providers of material and social goods. Whether they provide advice on reproduction, help with finding employment, or serve as an anchor in times of personal

tragedy, many individuals turn to their social networks for support when facing material or social needs (Uehara 1994; Wellman, Wortley 1990). Therefore, the value of network relations could be so high that socialization takes place in the shadow of material incentives making learning a secondary concern. Individuals might embrace a particular stand on foreign policy, such as supporting European integration or opposing a controversial war, not necessarily because they believe in that cause, but rather because they have an interest in preserving the benefits they receive from network relations (for example, status, popularity, material rewards, etc.).

The pressure to alter one's behavior to meet group's standard is present in the lives of many across the world, testifying to the power of group norms in shaping individual attitudes and behavior. For example, when police in a small town of Truro in Massachusetts intended to collect DNA samples from the male population to solve a murder mystery, a refusal to do so, despite the voluntary nature of the testing, risked humiliation and thus forced many to take part in the procedure. The words of one such resident suggesting the existence of pressure to agree to the procedure could be easily applied to many other towns and contexts across the globe, "I wish I could be bold enough to refuse. [But] it's a difficult situation. It's a small town...The word gets out. You already hear who has refused," (Ripley 2005). Given the importance people attach to their reputation, the concept of group pressure in shaping one's thinking and behavior is thus useful in understanding attitude formation on foreign policies, particularly those where the stakes to the population are high.

The extent to which one is willing to accept the group's norms will largely depend on the group's importance to the individual, the group's insistence on preserving specific

norms, and the benefits one derives from the socialization process (for example how significant is popularity to one's esteem (Bernheim 1994) ).<sup>9</sup> Those whose circle of friends is limited to one group will face greater pressure to preserve particular relations because they receive benefits only from that one circle. Individuals in such cases are likely to consider group and individual interest—the latter being a function of group membership—when forming preferences about policy X. Here the role of social interactions is not merely about providing information and therefore facilitating opinion formation, but about directly affecting individual calculations through evaluation of individual and group interests. Yet the pressure of adopting group norms is greatly reduced when individuals have multiple and unrelated family and friendship ties, which reduce the pressure to conform to one particular group standard. Even when some relations dissipate due to severe opinion differences, having alternative social groups can mitigate the loss.

#### *Transmission of Influence and Stability in Attitudes*

Depending on whether social networks serve merely as information providers or encourage deeper, normative learning, they will have varying impact on attitude formation. Given that normative learning implies genuine belief formation about issues, social interactions that emphasize learning about policies are likely to foster more stable opinions. Attitudes formed through learning are likely to evolve over time in the midst of extensive discussions involving debates, argumentation, and critical analysis of the policy. Once core ideas are set, arrival of new information may do little to affect the formation of specific beliefs on an issue. As a result, attitudes formed through learning are likely to resist

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<sup>9</sup> The prerequisite for deriving benefits is rooted in the group's ability to communicate the nature of benefits and in the mutual recognition of the members.

international and domestic trends and therefore result in more permanent and predictable attitudes.

On the contrary, social interactions during which information about a policy is only occasionally provided or mentioned is rarely conducive to forming stable views on an issue. In such contexts, random facts are diffused, often without a deliberate intention to discuss the policy. Not surprisingly, when individuals are exposed to new and contradictory information, they are more likely to update their thinking and abandon what they heard previously. Since their discussions rarely focused on critical analysis of the policy, the opportunity for developing long-term beliefs on an issue were limited. Thus,

*Hypothesis 1:* When learning is the main mechanism through which social networks shape attitudes, individuals who are part of such networks are likely to exhibit long-term commitment to the policy advocated by the network.

*Hypothesis 2:* When simple information provision is the main mechanism through which social networks shape attitudes, such views will be more likely to fluctuate.

The prevalence of group pressure as a mechanism of influence in the network should have implications for stability of attitudes on foreign issues. Belonging to a group that vehemently emphasizes adoption of specific attitudes and beliefs on political issues could force individuals to subscribe to a view. Although such views are likely to be strong, in the long-run they are prone to change. Whether they change jobs, relocate to another town or city, or simply make a personal transition, chances are that throughout their lifetimes individuals will switch or abandon their group in favor of others. As individuals' social networks change, so too does the pressure to subscribe to one view. Therefore,

*Hypothesis 3:* When public opinion on foreign policy is shaped only through group pressure, it will be stable initially but prone to fluctuations through time.

#### *Network Composition and Influence*

We can also focus on how network composition affects the extent to which public opinion can be shaped. Network interactions have been commonly studied by social network scholars, sociologists, and political scientists (for example, Clares and Johnson 2001, Beck 2002, Burt 1987, Uertha 1990). Therefore, I revisit some of the main arguments, which I will then apply and test in the context of foreign policy opinion-making.

Many scholars (for example, Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Kenny 1998; and Putnam 1966) demonstrate that small groups, specifically close relationships between friends and family, are most significant in influencing individuals. People inherently seek to belong and maintain close ties. Often, individuals form relationships in the first place because they are attracted to people who share their values. It is often the family and close friends who constitute the main source of information (Straits 1991). Although Granovetter (1973) and Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, and Levine (1995) argue that these social cohesion models fail to relate to interactions and greater information flow that increasingly take place at work and facilitate the importance of “weak” ties, the importance of intimacy as a precondition for influence remains significant. Influence need not only be restricted to learning by being exposed to information from various discussants as in the case of interactions at work or more distant networks. Another form of influence occurs when individuals adopt an opinion of a family member because they genuinely care about the potential negative or positive effect that a particular issue might have on that individual. In such a context, the



social influence at play is that of pure intimacy that again becomes instrumental in shaping preferences, further reinforcing the importance of “strong” ties. Hence, this leads to the following proposition:

*Hypothesis 4:* Social influence should be greater among discussants sharing strong ties—family and close friends—than among those with weak ties.

Based on the studies of cohesive networks (for example, Burt 1987), we should also expect that the more frequent the interactions between political and social confidants, the more likely that opinion conformity on foreign issues will occur. Political discussions reinforce ideas and clarify uncertainties. The more an individual is exposed to ideas, the more likely that learning and persuasion will occur. Consequently, we can form the following hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 5:* Interpersonal discussions are likely to have a stronger impact on influencing opinion about foreign policy when the frequency of political discussions is high.

Finally, proximity between individuals should affect their levels of interactions, which in turn, are likely to facilitate discussions, making influence possible. Inhabiting the same city or village reduces the geographic distance that can serve as a potential barrier to social interactions. Individuals living close to each other have a greater probability of interacting in general, even when the purpose is not to discuss politics. Yet it is often in the midst of such interactions that political conversations can surface randomly. For example, people living in the same city may meet more frequently to play golf than those who live far apart, and it is during such an activity that political discussion can take place. Thus, we can expect the following:

*Hypothesis 6:* As proximity between the discussants increases, the greater the network effect.

In the two preceding sections, I began to explore the causal story behind the network influence by focusing on the different dynamics through which attitudes are shaped. One way to approach the process of attitude formation is to focus on the three mechanisms through which social interactions can generate the formation of specific opinions. Depending on whether political discussions encourage learning about the policy, serve merely as an instrument of basic information diffusion, or reinforce group norms, individual thinking on the policy may be prone to change in some contexts but not in others. Lastly, I revisited the logic found in previous research about the importance of network composition to examine when networks can shape attitudes in the first place. Whether they may have lasting or only temporary effect, it is worth to understand what may facilitate the initial impact. Thus, by focusing on frequency in political discussions, nature of the discussant/respondent relationship, and geographic proximity among the discussants it may be possible to explain the initial effect.

*Foreign Policy Salience: What are the Stakes?*

Building on previous discussion, we can explore the network effect by focusing not only on network composition, but also on the policy that is actually discussed. To understand why networks shape individual views in some instances and not in others, it is vital to understand how the issues at stake affect the strength of the network's persuasive power. Networks function in a broader environment, and while they often set local preferences, national agenda-setters determine which policies and issues are deemed as worthy of discussion in the first place. Whether they involve the national elite or the mass

media, these actors mold the debates, outline the costs and benefits to the nation, and determine which policies matter. Before a local network leader engages in norm formation, and before individuals consider it important to learn about an issue, an agenda of importance needs to be set. The greater the stakes in the policy in terms of costs and benefits to the public, whether material, social or cultural, the greater the chances that network relations will have a more profound impact on public views.

First, the issue will be important enough to be the subject of discussions, whether random or intentional. Since more people in such cases can emerge as losers or winners, specific communities may have a lot at stake in opposing, or supporting the policy. Not surprisingly, in such instances there might be more pressure from one's network to stick with the group.

Second, when national agenda-setters show that stakes are high for the public, citizens are more likely to be interested in obtaining information as to how they might be affected by the policy's implementation. As uncertainty increases, people may be more inclined to turn to their friends and co-workers for information and be swayed one way or another by more opinionated discussants. Consequently, we can conclude the following:

*Hypothesis 7:* The larger the stakes to the general public, the greater the network's significance in shaping individual views.

### **Networks and Macro-Level Effects**

The focus in preceding hypotheses centered heavily on the mechanism through which social interactions shape public opinion at the local levels that is through interpersonal and group interactions. But social dynamics can also affect opinion formation

at broader, community and regional levels, which are then likely to generate attention from local or even national policymakers.

The proliferation of views from community X to other communities should be a function of three elements: degree of proximity among communities, frequency of interactions, and community size. First, proximity and level of interactions are clearly related as proximity usually facilitates communication and allows for emergence of trade, business, and personal ties. Proximity between communities increases the probability that individuals will be engaged in similar activities and will be exposed to developments in communities they border. We should expect that a bordering community with extensive ties to community X, which harbors Euroskeptic attitudes, will not only be exposed to these views but likely to adopt at least some of them. Here, for example, influence could travel through herding.

Studies in economics and political behavior (Bikchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1992) have shown that an important element of herding behavior is observing whether a large number of people already subscribes to a particular view or engages in a certain behavior. Numbers are a way of transmitting information to individuals that supporting a policy must be right if many individuals do so. Therefore, if individuals in community Y are exposed to numerous Eurosceptic views from community X, they are likely to consider those views as substantial and in turn subscribe to them as well. Naturally, this is more likely to occur when community Y is not following its own trends in the first place.<sup>10</sup> In

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<sup>10</sup> This point is highly significant. Herding will not be effective on larger scale when individual communities have competing and highly salient norms and traditions. Local community norms will in this case constitute private information that will be preferred to public or outside information.

other words, community Y here is not a collection of political experts but novices that are more open to social influence.

Influence could also travel between communities when leadership from one community “learns” about the policy and its implications to the people from leadership of another community. The former might then educate individuals about the policy’s costs and benefits, affecting attitude formation on the issue. Regardless of whether herding or learning are the mechanisms through which views are diffused between communities, it is clear that in both instances the need for interactions is large.

Second, the size of communities is another important factor that could tip the balance in favor of diffusion beyond a local level. As the size of communities increases, so does the probability of the rise of diverse and independent groups. In very large communities, the intimacy that often brings individuals closer together and defines them as one is harder to achieve. When individuals from large communities interact with a neighboring community where opposition to the EU is great, they might be influenced by those interactions but the extent of herding will be limited only to their own groups. In other words, the influence is unlikely to affect the entire community because the size of that community simply impedes social interaction at the wider level. At that point, the herding effect will not be strong enough to encompass the large community, but possibly remain limited to smaller sub-communities. Based on the two points, I can form the following proposition:

*Hypothesis 8:* The network effect is more likely to diffuse between neighboring communities when they are small in size, close in proximity, and have a high rate of interactions.

Yet we should also recognize that network effect is possible at the national level, even when communities do not interact and are spatially diffused. Under certain conditions, individuals from diverse communities can follow the crowd and generate a degree of conformity when it comes to supporting policies. A condition that facilitates herding in the absence of interactions and proximity is ultimately rooted in the ability to make individuals believe that certain social consensus exists about national preferences and the mimicking of social behavior is of greater value than remaining loyal to one's personal information. Such consensus can be achieved when the mass media convince individuals that most of the public accepts the policy and efforts to resist it would be futile. In doing so, the press can construct or reinforce cultural ties among people (Strang and Meyer 1993).

This type of consensus construction can be a powerful tool for shaping and transforming public opinion. For example, in his work on Japanese deregulation policies Schoppa (1993) has shown that local shopkeepers did not resist deregulation once they were convinced by the media that others supported the policy and an overwhelming social consensus favored deregulation. In essence individuals in such situations need not only consider their personal preference for the policy, but also the extent of others' preferences. Similarly, Strang and Meyer (1993) argue that herding or diffusion of practices can occur in the absence of direct interactions as long as individuals belong to common social categories—finding that builds on earlier work about structurally equivalent networks. It is those cultural similarities that reinforce diffusion of ideas could build consensus around policies. I argue here, that cultural similarity exclusively is unlikely to generate herding at the national level. When new economic and social policies emerge, they often create losers and winners amid culturally similar individuals. An individual who belongs to the same

national category as the population that is accepting a new trend or new policy, will have to evaluate whether the newly emergent national consensus can be challenged and at what cost. To determine this, an individual is likely to turn back to his/her local community for answers.

The dilemma for an individual becomes greater when the interest of one's local community is considered and when that interest clashes with social consensus at the national level. While models of herding behavior and information cascades illustrate that herding can be offset by external disturbances (Bikchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1992), this could vary depending on the depth of the initial cascade. This would then suggest that media reports, which oppose local information, might change attitudes at the local level but only when community norms are shallow.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, an adoption of a norm or innovation is largely dependent on its adaptability to local environment (Ormrod 1990). Thus, in general, individuals should be more responsive to the needs of their local groups and communities than to national consensus if their lives are more rooted in local activities than in national ones. We can further infer that herding at the national level is likely to occur when local community interests match the national interest. In the absence of such consensus individuals who are embedded in local groups from which they derive substantial benefits will probably adopt the local norm, although, the process of influence may be harder. We can form the following proposition:

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<sup>11</sup> Scholars who support cultural models of diffusion, which emphasize cultural similarity rather than interdependence, often argue that broader national and international trends could offset local ones when adopters and followers belong to the same social category (for example, Strang and Meyer 1993). However, this model becomes problematic in cases where individuals might be classified as belonging to multiple social categories. In such instances, it is difficult to predict which social category is more salient. I argue here that adherence to local norms, rather than to national or global ones, will be greater when individuals derive substantial social and material gains from local communities.

*Hypothesis 9:* Consensus on foreign policy preferences among distant communities is likely to converge at the national level when the media transmit reports about emerging social consensus and pressure to adopt alternative views at the local level is minimal.

*Hypothesis 10:* When national consensus clashes with local interests, individuals are likely to adopt the views of their local group/community, although the rate of such adoption should be smaller than when consensus exists at both levels.

The preceding section illustrated that network influence is clearly affected by the interplay of local and national dynamics. While attitudes can diffuse from one community to another under specific conditions, such as when high level of interactions links people together in tight communities, ultimately individuals will have to make sense of their local interactions and the broader, national consensus on the policy. When a national consensus on a policy begins to form, individuals who are exposed to divergent norms face difficulty in deciding which they should adopt. While individuals are still more likely to remain loyal to their most immediate environment, many will, in fact, follow the national trend. It thus may be harder to influence people to support a particular view when local norms clash with the broader, national consensus.

### **Networks and Policymaking**

Understanding how social interactions shape public opinion is one way of thinking about attitude formation on foreign policy. Another is to examine how they can alter preferences of policymakers whose voice, after all, directly determines the nature of international arrangements in most instances. In essence, this last section shows the policy implication of studying social networks' effect on public opinion by bringing together the



connection between mechanisms of attitude diffusion, stability of attitudes, and policymaking.

The logic of two-level games (Putnam 1998) demonstrates that decision makers' ability to negotiate agreements depends largely on the types of benefits and costs that domestic groups will bear from the policy. Policymakers, therefore, not only ponder the offer from international negotiators, but they also consider whether domestic interest groups would accept a particular deal. When public opinion is activated policymakers become accountable to their constituencies. In addition, the outcome of international negotiation can change when the number of actors whose views need to be considered broadens (Schoppa 1993). Once the public or vital interest groups are mobilized on an issue, the policymaker then needs to make a deal that is acceptable to the groups.

The policymakers, of course, might pay attention to the growing public consensus on foreign policy, particularly one that is likely to be used as a voting issue, but ultimately they are more likely to be concerned with stability of such views. After all, if public opposition to an issue is perceived as merely temporary, the need to address such opposition may not be as vital as when the opposition is likely to persist through time. If policymakers can correctly distinguish between a temporary trend in public opinion and a long-term consensus, they can not only decide when to respond to the public's demand, but most importantly they can employ it effectively as a strategy during international negotiations. As a result understanding patterns of public opinion, which the network perspective shows can vary depending on the mechanism through which attitudes are shaped, has a strong implication for understanding policymaker attentiveness to public views, and the leaders' ability to utilize public opinion as a negotiating tool.

## **Conclusion**

Social interactions, this section has argued, play a vital role in public attitude formation on foreign policy and in shaping policymaking. Given that individuals' lives are often embedded within social structures governing one's perceptions of reality, it is not surprising that studying public opinion on foreign policy through the lens of social networks can reveal how political discussions affect one's thinking about issues. The chapter shows how social interactions can shape views on foreign issues and how attitudes can diffuse between communities. It also addresses the relationship between local norms and national mood to examine how individuals make sense of policies as national and local citizens. I have argued that when faced with local and national clash of ideas, individuals will adhere to local norms, although the process of influence will be harder in the absence of consensus.

In addition to explaining individual attitude formation and diffusion of views, the social-network approach advocated in this chapter improves our understanding of fluctuations and stability of view, and thus provides theoretical explanation for such recent phenomena as rejection of EU constitution. Depending on whether social networks diffuse information about a policy, define appropriate norms of behavior, or encourage deep learning about an issue, I have argued, we can expect varying outcome in public opinion patterns. When individuals are merely registering facts, they are more likely to alter their thinking about an issue once they encounter new or contradictory information. On the other hand, when individuals learn, dissect, and evaluate a policy, they are more likely to form deeper and lasting convictions.

Understanding patterns of public opinion, or even attitudes of specific groups in the society, has strong implications for policymaking. When faced with stable attitudes on a policy that could be used as a voting issue, the policymaker will be much more responsive to public voice than when attitudes reflect a temporary trend. The social network approach employed in this study is thus useful not only in understanding individual attitude formation on foreign policy but also in explaining stability and fluctuation of public opinion, phenomena of value to leaders in democracies.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANTI-EU OPPOSITION IN PARZYNÓW, IGNACÓW, AND MOSTKI— THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS, LEADERSHIP, AND LEARNING ON LONG-TERM VIEWS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

#### Introduction

With 700 inhabitants, the village of Parzynów is a quiet, mostly farming area. It hardly distinguishes itself from the other 13 villages comprising the Kobyla Góra commune and villages in the larger Ostrzeszów county in southern part of the Poland's Wielkopolska region. Yet in 2004 referendum vote on Polish membership, Parzynów and two neighboring villages, Mostki and Ignaców, were the only three areas in a strong pro-EU commune of Kobyla Góra boasting majority opposition to the country's membership in the supranational organization. What accounts for the villages' resistance? More importantly, what can the story of Parzynów reveal about the way in which attitudes on foreign policy emerge locally?

The story of Parzynów and the neighboring villages of Mostki and Ignaców illustrates the role of social networks in shaping preferences on foreign policy, in this context opposition to the idea of Polish integration with the European Union. It suggests that when attitudes emerge through a process of social interactions that encourage learning about an issue, views on a policy can be stable and resistant to dominant trends through time. From a policy perspective, the case suggests that national elites should direct their attention to local networks when striving to gain support for major international policy initiatives. Specifically, in countries where voter ambivalence towards the EU favors party mobilization on the issue (Kriesi 2007), leadership should rely on local networks to spread

the message in a relatively quick and cost-effective manner. By targeting village leaders who mold collective attitudes on the issue party representatives can start a cascade of Euroskeptic views that can travel quickly among individuals who pass such views to others in a network. Since tight network structures breed familiarity among people, it is much more likely that once a dominant view takes hold, it will be harder to deviate from the established norms. In such a way, party representatives can ensure not only that specific views are disseminated, but more importantly, that they are stable through time.

### **Parzynów, Mostki and Ignaców: Case Selection**

Selection of the three villages as subjects of my study on the formation of attitudes on foreign policy seemed a natural choice given the unusual behavior of the villagers during the 2003 referendum on Polish membership in the European Union. Given that majority of residents in the three villages who opposed the pro-EU current prevalent in the entire Ostrzeszów county were the only ones to do so, such behavior could offer insights into ways in which deviant attitudes emerge in locally homogenous areas (tables 1 and 2). The in-depth case study of the villages may also provide the best way to examine causal mechanisms (Pahre 2005) of attitude formation and thus build upon the quantitative analysis of Polish support for the EU in subsequent chapters.

After selecting the case, I began to explore possible explanations for EU opposition in the region by analyzing data on unemployment, occupation, and interviewing numerous sources at three administrative levels: the county (Ostrzeszów), the commune (Kobyła Góra), and the village (Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki). I initiated interviews at the county level first and relied on snowball sampling to reach individuals in the commune and

villages of interest. I conducted a total of 20 in-depth interviews over the course of four weeks in September of 2006.

Table 1: Polish Membership in the EU—Referendum Outcome in Kobyla Góra<sup>12</sup>

Village/Town	Pro-EU Vote	Anti-EU Vote
Kobyla Góra (town)	81.3%	18.7%
Pisarzowice & Baldowice	74.2%	25.8%
Mąkoszyce and Rybin	73.1%	26.9%
Bierzów	71.3%	28.7%
Myślniew	58.0%	42.0%
<b>Parzynów</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>53.1%</b>
<b>Ignaców and Mostki</b>	<b>46.1%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>
Ligota	69.5%	30.5%
Marcinki	64.0%	36.0%
Kobyla Góra	100.0 %	0.0%
AVERAGE VOTE FOR ALL	69.7%	30.3%

Table 2: Polish Membership in the EU—Referendum Outcome in Ostrzeszów County<sup>13</sup>

Commune	Pro-EU Vote	Anti-EU Vote
Czajków	57.6%	42.4%
Doruchów	55.0%	45.0%
Grabów nad Prosną	65.2%	34.8%
Kobyla Góra	69.7%	30.3%
Kraszewice	64.4%	35.6%
Mikstat	63.0%	37.0%
Ostrzeszów	77.8%	22.2%
AVERAGE VOTE FOR ALL	69.9%	30.1%

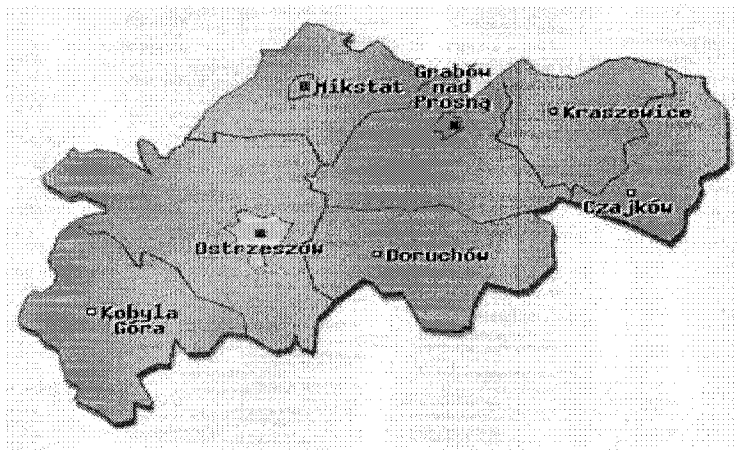
I approach the study by dissecting several explanations for the villagers' attitudes on EU membership. Previous work stresses the importance of socio-economic factors in

<sup>12</sup> Referendum 2003 Results—Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza (National Elections Committee)

<sup>13</sup> Referendum 2003 Results—Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza (National Elections Committee). Poland is divided into 16 administrative units or voivodships (provinces). Provinces are divided into counties and counties are divided into communes.

consolidating specific foreign policy preferences (see chapter two for review). According to such explanations, the villagers should embrace Euroskeptical views if they expect to lose from integration. Thus high rate of unemployment or unusual poverty levels, for example, might indicate opposition to integration. A social-network approach, on the other hand, would focus less on specific individual characteristics, concentrating instead on attitude formation as a social phenomenon evolving in the context of local interactions among community members. Material factors can still be emphasized in such an explanation, but they do not in themselves constitute the explanation. In other words social interactions can ensure critical analysis of benefits from EU membership, but how such benefits are defined is subject to the group. Such a perspective would then invite a closer look at the group or the network as primary focus of explanation.

Figure 1: Ostrzeszów County and Its Communes—Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki Are Located in Kobyla Góra Commune<sup>14</sup>



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<sup>14</sup> The county, composed of 3 cities and 130 villages, has approximately 55,000 inhabitants (Ostrzeszów County Official Website 2005).

## **Socio-Economic Factors: Failure to Explain EU Opposition in the Villages**

Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki share similar socio-economic characteristics, resembling other villages and towns in the Ostrzeszów county, a mostly agricultural area known also for its tourist attractions (Oblicza Ziemi Ostrzeszowskiej 2006). The three villages belong to a group of 13 villages comprising the Kobyla Góra gmina or commune that is part of larger Ostrzeszów powiat or county. The latter belongs to the Wielkopolska voivodship, one of 16 Polish provinces. To what extent do various villages and towns differ in their economic characteristics? And what can such characteristics tell us about unique voting behavior of the subjects studied in this chapter?

First, the villages belonging to the Kobyla Góra commune constitute fairly homogeneous societies, with most individuals employed in agriculture, construction, and to a lesser extent in trade and tourist sectors (the latter two are mostly dominated by the county's town or city inhabitants) (Ostrzeszów County Official Website 2005). Villages extending beyond Kobyla Góra, but part of Ostrzeszów county, are also mostly agricultural territories with farming as the main occupation (Oblicza Ziemi Ostrzeszowskiej 2006, interview source #1). Given that villages differ little on the occupation spectrum, this factor, often part of the economic-based explanation for attitude formation, is unlikely to account for variation in the vote.

Second, unemployment levels, usually associated with opposition to the EU, also fail to explain the three villages' voting behavior in the referendum. Data suggest that levels of unemployment have remained stable during the period of 12 months before and after the referendum. Furthermore, at nearly 12 percent, the unemployment rate in the Kobyla Góra commune has not been unusually high when compared to the county's



remaining communes (table 3). While the county administration does not maintain separate records on unemployment levels for each village, interviews with village leadership and the county's labor administration suggest an absence of unusually high unemployment levels in Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki (interview source #2).

Lastly, all village leaders were exposed to the same level of pro-EU campaigning initiated by county authorities and the local media. Invited to information sessions in the communes, the leaders received lengthy pamphlets meticulously outlining benefits of EU membership with little insight about the negative aspect of integration (Poland in the EU pamphlet 2003, interview sources #1 and #2). On many occasions, the county leader expressed his approval for the EU in interviews with local media, stressing benefits to youth and opportunities to travel and work freely in the integrated Europe (interview source #1). Given the wave of pro-EU messages circulating in the county, anti-EU camp that emerged in the villages of interest cannot be attributed to media and campaign exposure.

Consequently, I conclude that focusing solely on the region's economic characteristics and campaign/media exposure provide little explanatory power for anti-EU majority vote in the three villages. Instead, I argue that opposition to the EU in the area of interest was driven by strong anti-EU leadership in Parzynów and the close network relations that govern the village and the neighboring Ignaców and Mostki. While the leader's opposition to the EU can be best explained by a combination of cultural factors, exposure to anti-EU press, and support of the League of Polish Families, a Euroskeptic party founded in 2001, attitudes of the majority of village inhabitants, as I will later argue, reflect the leader's initiative to educate the community about the issue and thus cannot be easily understood by merely examining one's socio-economic background.

Table 3: Levels of Unemployment in the Ostrzeszów County in 2003<sup>15</sup>

Administrative Commune	Level of Unemployment
<b>Kobyła Góra</b>	<b>11.5 %</b>
Doruchów	11.1%
Czajków	5.0%
Kraszewice	6.7%
Grabów	13.0%
Mikstat	12.2%
Ostrzeszów	40.5%

### **Parzynów: Strong Leadership and Learning in the anti-EU Network**

The story of EU opposition in Parzynów cannot be understood without examining the village leader and network relations governing the community. A series of interviews with county, commune, and village leaders as well as with ordinary citizens reveal that the root of anti-EU majority vote in the 2003 referendum could be traced to the dynamic sołtys, or the leader of Parzynów, and his efforts to educate the people about the future his country was likely to embrace. Social relations in Parzynów revolve around the figure of the sołtys who actively guided the community for over eight years.

Figure two illustrates network connections among 20 individuals, with the Euroskeptic leader linked to the largest number of people. To map the linkages and uncover the anomaly in village voting, I began by conducting an interview with the county official whom I asked to provide me with the names of people with whom he engaged in discussions about the EU. I then interviewed such individuals and asked them whether they interacted with the people I had previously interviewed, and whether they could provide names of other discussants. In doing so I could trace whether interviewed subjects

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<sup>15</sup> Labor Market Information on Unemployment in the Ostrzeszów County for the Year 2003—County Labor Administration.

interacted with each other and map their connections. The use of snowball sampling, particularly important in locating hard-to-reach individuals (Clark 2006), facilitated my contact with village inhabitants who are often reluctant to speak with outsiders. Given that I was interested in the three villages with majority Euroskeptic vote in the 2003 referendum, I limited my interviews to those individuals who resided in such areas, with the exception of my first interview with the county leader. To map the connections, the data was presented in a 20 by 20 matrix with a score of one assigned to a pair of individuals who have interacted with each other and zero in the absence of interactions.

It is important to note the limitations of data collection and the sample from which I mapped the connections in figure two and figure three presented later in the chapter. One possible problem in this study is the relatively small sample of interviewees, an issue that could limit the generalizability of findings. In several instances I was unable to reach all the discussants named by my subjects, mostly due to cultural barriers. Although I was seen interacting with village leadership, I was nevertheless an “outsider” whose intentions were, at times, misunderstood despite endless attempts to explain the purpose of my visits to villages and the goal behind the interviews. Cultural barriers, often considered one of the most challenging aspects of field research (Clark 2006), can be overcome by clarifying the purpose of the research and by relying on trusted contacts to introduce the researcher to other interviewees. Yet even when such tactics are employed, there is always a strong probability that some people will be reluctant to participate in the study. In this case, the subject of European membership was a sensitive one, eliciting a certain level of anxiety among some individuals who refused to speak with me, fearing that interacting with me might, for example, affect their applications for funds from the EU. Consequently, figures

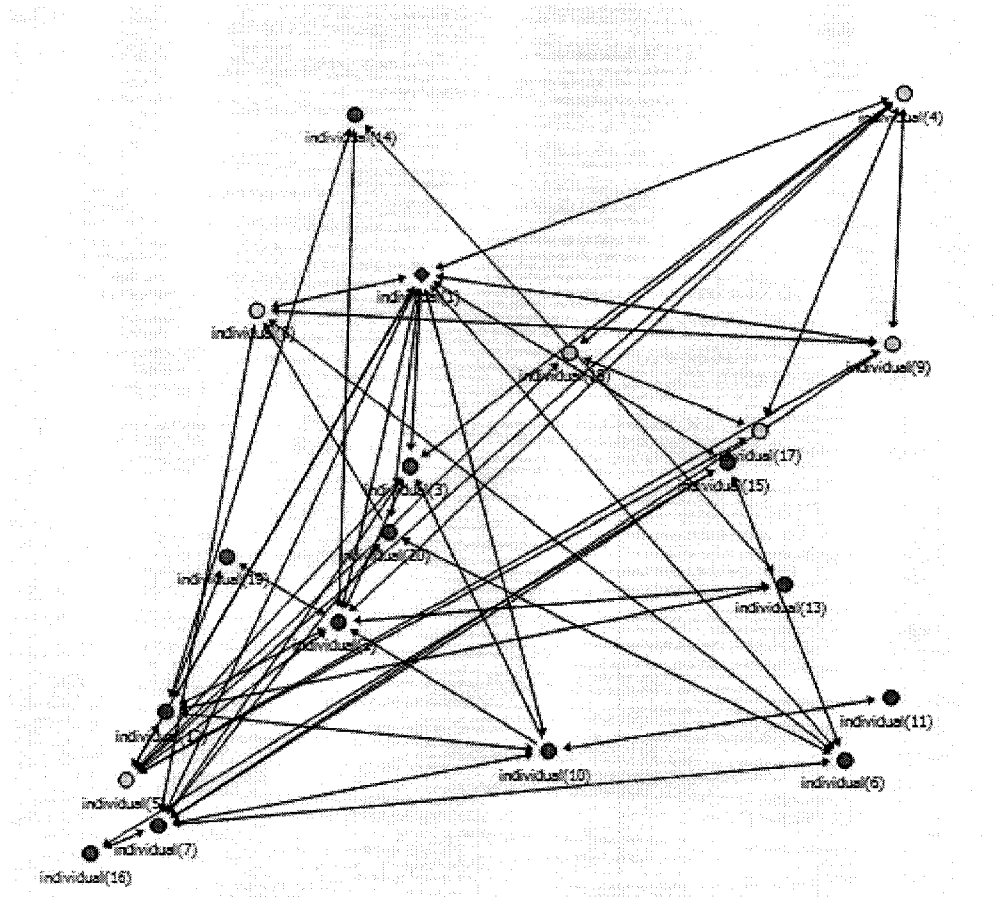
two and three are not meant to map connections in non-exhaustive way. Instead, they present a sample of the linkages governing village relations with the network leader at the center of such relations.

When thinking about the generalizability of findings presented here, it is vital to note that uncovering the causal mechanism that explains Euroskeptic vote in the three villages constitutes the main purpose of this study. As such, in-depth analysis of a small sample of interviewees can be appropriate when attempting to understand social relations governing village interactions, as long as such subjects are representative of the larger village relations. Thus, the small sample on which this study is based should not limit the project's contribution in developing a causal story of networks and public opinion formation. Furthermore, the main finding emerging from such exploration, linking network relations to the mobilization of anti-EU views, is tested on a national sample of Polish population in chapter six thereby minimizing the issue of generalizability. Other findings, such as calculations of network connections, popularity and centrality, are employed to aid in the development of the causal story, and when utilized in such a way they do not serve to test major hypothesis.

What are the characteristics of network relations in Parzynów? Attitudes about the EU in the village are disseminated through various channels that include both formal and informal ones, but they usually initiate with the sołtys or can be traced to his leadership. Although not everyone in the village has personal relations with the sołtys, at least one member in each household has interacted with him given that he often welcomes visitors

Figure 2: Network Relations in Parzynów, Ignaców, Mostki and Attitudes on Polish Membership in the European Union<sup>16</sup>

The figure illustrates distribution of pro-EU (in yellow), anti-EU (in red), and neutral (in blue) attitudes among a snowball sample of 20 individuals. The anti-EU leader of Parzynów (red diamond) has extensive connections to villagers, local leaders of two neighboring villages, commune, and county officials. With the exception of village leadership, county and commune pro-EU elite (individuals 4,5,17, 18) have relatively few connections to local villagers.



<sup>16</sup> The mapping of connections for figure 2, figure 3 and table 4 was generated using NetMiner, a social network analysis software.

paying taxes. Others who may not have had direct interactions with him are, nevertheless, familiar with his activism, hearing the latest gossip from others (interview source #1 and #2).

The formal channels through which attitudes might have been shaped, though with considerably less success in Parzynów than in other areas in the county, included interactions with government officials and village leaders. For example, before the referendum villages held meetings to discuss Polish membership in the EU, often serving as hosts to representatives of agencies designated by the government to educate people about European integration (Agencje do Spraw Modernizacji & Rekonstrukcyjacji Rolnictwa). During such meetings the sołtys attempted to, as he claimed, “dispel the propaganda,” carefully designed to undermine Polish independence (interview source #4). It was during such gatherings that many villagers vehemently agreed with the sołtys, supporting his arguments and failing to “learn” from government officials about the alleged benefits of EU membership. As the formal channels through which attitudes might have been shaped consisted overwhelmingly of pro-EU rhetoric, such channels cannot explain the prevalence of Euroskeptic views.

Instead, informal interactions among community members serve as a lens through which anti-EU attitudes and vote can be better understood. I argue that the patriotic sołtys, a firm believer in loyalty to one’s country and a passionate proponent of Polish independence, encouraged learning about the EU and employed positive norms to shape the attitudes of many villagers. The anti-EU and pro-patriotic norm was diffused through social, informal conversations during collection of taxes or interactions in the village *świątlnica* or a community center where people socialize, play games, and organize parties

(interview source #3 and #4). While, on many occasions, the leader shared with people his arguments against European integration, he hardly resembled an authoritarian figure dictating views and pressuring individuals to adhere to specific opinions. Instead, he guided the discussions, while fostering an atmosphere that allowed the villagers to present their attitudes, which in turn appeared to be molded into a collective set of views. Clearly, the discussions and main arguments were initiated by the sołtys, but the level of hierarchy did not create a strictly top-down flow of conversations.

In this instance, learning about the EU that occurred during interactions with the village leader resembled a social process during which individuals were persuaded through, what Checkel (2001) would describe as, “argument and principled debate,” rather than coercion. Learning then, as defined here, involves a social process of discussion aimed at convincing one to adopt a specific view and thus differs from a process of persuasion that involves coercion or pressure.

Which mechanism facilitated diffusion of attitudes on the EU in Parzynów? I have argued earlier (see theory chapter) that distinguishing between different modes through which networks shape attitudes can affect the levels of attitude stability. For example, when learning is involved, as opposed to mere information diffusion or mimicking of others’ behavior, attitudes might be more stable over time even when new information arrives or individuals from one’s social circle depart. Since learning implies a deeper belief, it suggests a degree of stability. Distinguishing the mode through which attitudes are shaped is thus useful not only in understanding patterns in public opinion on foreign policy, but most importantly, in examining governing elites’ response to public opinion when devising a policy. The case suggests that individuals who were influenced by conversations with the

sołtys were certainly exposed to a combination of learning and a strong sense of patriotic norm that he clearly encouraged. Interviews with villagers and observations in the field showed that learning was the dominant mode of influence in the network.

While deciphering learning is conceptually challenging, one can employ such indicators as asking questions about the EU to determine the individual's basic knowledge, and then probe more extensively to observe if the individuals can offer substantive reasoning for their opinion. Additionally, observing informal interactions among groups of villagers with the sołtys could reveal the leader's approach in making his arguments, in this case a determination to explain the European Union's detrimental effect on Polish independence and the country's identity, while also illuminating the villagers' responses to such argumentation. Individuals who genuinely believe in an issue should exhibit the same argumentation across different settings rather than change their opinion depending on circumstances (Checkel 2001). Given that I interviewed many of the individuals separately and collectively during group discussion with the sołtys, the stability of opinions in different contexts could be easily observed. Since I only noted inconsistency in one interviewee (interview source #13), I could determine that my subjects' opinions were genuine rather than formed because of specific pressures governing different settings.

While learning was the dominant mode through which network relations influenced attitude formation in the village, it was not the only one. To a lesser extent some villagers were swayed because being on the "good side" of the sołtys, even if one did not personally interact with him, offered some material benefits. The leader was known, for example, for defending battered women or helping those in particularly dire economic need (interview source #4). Evidence suggests, however, that while such benefits existed, they were not



widely distributed so as to attribute material interests with a power to sway attitudes on a larger scale (interview source #5).

Simple information diffusion or group pressure, thus, were not the main modes through which attitudes were shaped in this case. First, interviews with many villagers demonstrated that they attached an emotional value to the subject of their country's membership in the EU—a belief that mere information digestion or mimicking of others' behavior was unlikely to elicit. The emotional attachment was backed by specific opinions about opposition to the EU, invoking material, cultural, or social reasons, and for the most part resembling the persuasive argumentation that could be in one way or another traced to the leader's rhetoric. Second, network interactions fostered anti-EU views but did not encourage individuals to publicly ostracize or in any way “punish” deviants by deliberately excluding them from the group. While occasionally some villagers referred to proponents of EU expansion as “lizusy” or those who “kiss up,” such terms were not widely employed to describe those with alternative views. Furthermore, interviews with pro-EU village counsels suggested they experienced little or no pressure from the majority who opposed the EU to adopt the dominant norm in their community.

What then explains the emergence of learning as the dominant mode through which anti-EU attitudes were shaped in the network? We might expect that learning is more likely to emerge when individuals belong to diverse social circles and thus experience little pressure to adhere to dominant views. Exposure to unique perspectives should allow individuals to freely evaluate and accept the views they find most convincing. On the contrary, I discovered that learning can occur in homogeneous communities as long as sanctions for deviant views are not implemented. More importantly, I would argue that

focusing on the leadership of the network offers a better way of understanding the dynamic of influence. Network leadership rather than network composition, I suggest, plays a vital role in determining whether learning, simple information diffusion, or group pressure constitute the primary means through which networks shape views on foreign policy.

The leader of Parzynów was determined to educate the public about the perils of EU membership and what it truly meant to be patriotic. A learned man known for diligent note taking on the media's portrayal of the EU, he exhibited a high level of involvement in village life (interview source #3, #5 and #6, figure 1). Through informal interactions, he created a venue for speaking about politics and encouraged individuals to dissect the impact of Polish membership in the EU on their daily lives. Given that the sołtys was active in council meetings, defended battered women, and spoke about preserving the integrity of the country, individuals believed that his message about the EU was credible and in the farmers' interest (interview source #6, #7, and #8). His argumentation had a strong appeal among Poles—it invoked a norm of patriotism, courage, and anti-communism. During informal discussions, opposition to the EU was framed as defense of Polish interests against potential loss of sovereignty, against the threat of equality in Europe—ideas alluding to bitter memories of living under German and then Soviet occupations. The sołtys's commitment to such norms was known even to the burmistrz or the leader of Ostrzeszow county who perceived him as a maverick and a “devil,” responsible for the anti-EU turnout in Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki (interview source #1).

Besides relying on patriotic arguments, the sołtys also presented facts that addressed individuals' basic economic interests. For example, he warned that the EU would slowly destroy Polish fishing and farming industries. Such arguments (both patriotic and

economic) were often cited by villagers (for example, interview sources #2, #7, and #9) in their opposition to the idea of Polish membership in the EU and greater European integration. Deep learning was possible because the leader, a credible figure in the community, encouraged discussions about the EU that addressed the meaning of “true” Polish identity with all the emotional attachment such a topic elicits while also offering arguments appealing to individuals’ material side. This combination of reasoning, poignant rhetoric, and assistance to villagers in need defined the leader’s stand in the village. As one council member confided, it was the authority and the credibility of the leader that inspired loyalty with the strong anti-EU, patriotic norm (interview source #5).

Figure 3 depicts the leader’s central placement in village activities. Constructed using data from interviews with 20 individuals in the same manner as discussed earlier (figure 2), the figure highlights individuals’ position in the network. Unlike figure 2, which mapped connections without focusing on centrality, figure 3 illustrates actors’ potential to control information flows between individuals. In this case, the Parzynów leader is the main bridge connecting many individuals with each other in the villages. The leader’s large “betweenness” factor relative to all others in the network suggests his vital position in maintaining the villages’ communication structure. Betweenness is calculated by taking every pair in the network and counting the number of times a node can interrupt the shortest paths or geodesic distance between the two nodes of the pair (Watabe 1998). The softys’s score of 0.38 far exceeds the mean score of 0.06 for other actors (nodes), placing him in the center of the network.

In addition to being the central figure in the village network, the Parzynów leader, not surprisingly, is also the most popular individual. Table 4, based on the same data as

figures 2 and 3, illustrate the leader's simple in-degree measure, which reflects the number of relations received by the actor from all others. Actor  $j$ 's indegree is thus calculated as the sum of 1s, or occurrence of a relation, within actor  $j$ 's column in a matrix (Knoke and Kuklinski 1982). The sołtys's indegree measure is 11 and largely exceeds the network mean of 4.9. When a leader enjoys popularity in the network and controls information flows, he/she can then influence the format and, to some extent, the content of conversation as shown in this case when deeper forms of learning constituted the dominant mechanism of shaping anti-EU views.

Having established the prominent role of village leadership in shaping attitudes through learning, it is important to examine the impact of learning on *long-term* views on foreign policy, in this case levels of support for European integration. I would argue that learning in the network has been associated with long-term majority opposition to the EU in Parzynów. While in the 2003 referendum, 53 percent of individuals opposed Polish membership in the EU (Juszczak 2003), little has changed in 2006 when I witnessed strong opposition to the EU during discussions with villagers. The sentiments ran high suggesting that network interactions facilitated long-term opposition to the idea of European integration, and attitudes remained fairly stable in the course of three years. This provides initial support for the proposition that when social networks encourage learning about an issue, support for a policy is likely to be stable through time.

Figure 3: Network Connections in Parzynów, Ignaców, Mostki, Commune, and County Leadership: Control of Information Flows

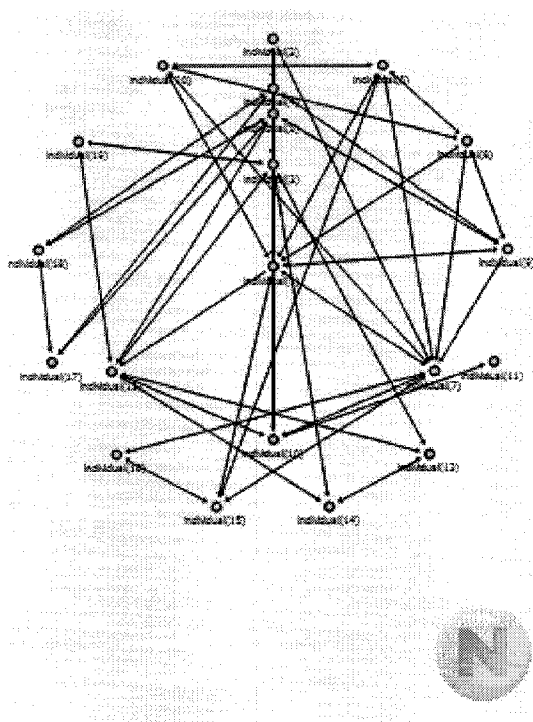


Table 4: Popularity in the Network: Number of Contacts Received from Others

Measure	In-Degrees
Sum of All Contacts	97
Mean Number of Contacts	4.85
Std. Deviation	2.67
Minimum	1
Maximum	11

### Parzynów, Mostki and Ignaców: Diffusion of Attitudes to Neighboring Villages

Besides Parzynów, two other villages, Mostki and Ignaców, displayed unusually high Eurokeptic turnout in the county, suggesting that anti-EU attitudes could have diffused from the main village to neighboring areas. While none of the two villages, with a combined population of less than 200 (Referendum 2003 Results), had a strong leader who would initiate an anti-EU norm, both boasted majority opposition to EU membership (54

percent). Given the presence of less active leadership in Ignaców and Mostki than in Parzynów (interview source #9), the outcome is puzzling.

I would argue that similar voting outcomes in the villages could be explained by the flow of anti-EU norms from the neighboring Parzynów to Ignaców and Mostki facilitated by close network relations connecting the three villages. Whether they have visited each other, attended social gatherings, or helped one another in the fields, the villagers from the three areas have been linked by common activities (interview source #3, #12, #14). It was during such interactions that political issues were discussed and the meaning of European integration dissected (interview source #15). The discussions usually focused on the economic aspect of integration and its impact on the farmers' work in the fields. Yet the content of argumentation, while not enforced by specific figures in the village, was, nevertheless, shaped by the Parzynów sołtys, albeit indirectly. Since the sołtys was highly respected by the leadership from neighboring villages, it was often such leaders who carried the message to the people after hearing it from the sołtys. For example, the Mostki sołtys explained that the leader of Parzynów was like "Lepper [leader of the populist party Samoobrona] in that he defended the poor," and thus his opposition to Polish membership in the EU should be followed (interview source #6). Once such attitudes were picked up by some individuals, they could easily diffuse to others in highly integrated villages as the ones above.

The spread of Euroskeptic norms, thus, can be traced to the main opinion leader, in this case the Parzynów sołtys, who was responsible for initiating the cascade. His views were then picked up by the leaders from neighboring villages who passed them along to others in their own villages. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate that after the Parzynów sołtys,

leaders of Mostki and Ignaców are also major connectors in village relations—a factor that makes them well positioned to diffuse opinions to others. What made the dissemination of Euroskeptic norms in the neighboring villages particularly effective was not only the villagers' exposure to anti-EU opinions from their own leadership, but also their awareness that others before them, majority of farmers in Parzynów, have already adopted such views (interview source #6 and #15). Acceptance of Euroskeptic views in this case was easily possible because the villagers had two strong channels through which they were exposed to anti-EU norms: their own leadership and the observance of anti-EU views of villagers in Parzynów.

The occurrence of cascading attitudes was also possible because the villages that followed the example of Parzynów did not have the leadership (interview source #1).or norms opposing the adoption of anti-EU views. As a result, Euroskeptic attitudes did not collide with existing norms. This is consistent with my hypothesis that interactions among communities create linkages that favor attitude diffusion, particularly in the absence of local norms that might oppose the adoption of such views.

Undoubtedly geography, in this case proximity to Parzynów, played a role in the adoption of Euroskeptic attitudes. Located next to each others, the villages have rather obscure boundaries distinguishing one area from another. Aside from a road sign reminding the drivers they are about to enter a specific village territory, it is difficult to notice, the almost artificially-marked separation. The clustering of the three villages is significantly different from the surrounding village and town areas, which are mostly separated by several kilometers of uninhabited fields. The proximity has undoubtedly facilitated

interactions among the villagers, making it easier to observe each others' behavior and develop a sense of prevalent attitudes on issues as sensitive as the EU.

The interesting point about network relations governing village relations is that mutual connections in the network do not have to be very high for diffusion to occur. For example, network density<sup>17</sup> in this case was 0.3 on a scale from zero to one, indicating that number of ties among people was not as high as one might have expected, although it is still indicating a fair level of connectedness. This suggests that, at times, being connected to only one, but credible, person who harbors a Euroskeptic attitude might be enough to influence another person's views on the issue. In other words, average citizens do not always need to boast multiple connections to Euroskeptic individuals in order to adopt an anti-EU position and truly believe in it. Those who rely on multiple connections to make a decision about whether or not to support a policy might simple have a higher threshold for adoption of new ideas. On the other hand, those with limited number of ties who embrace a specific view might have a lower threshold for acceptance. This might explain why in a network with fair, although not high, level of connectedness among villagers we still see dominant emergence of Euroskeptic views.

While preceeding discussion focused on diffusion of attitudes to neighboring villages, it is also vital to address why other villages in the same commune were not exhibiting the traces of the "Parzynów effect." The anti-EU norm was unlikely to diffuse to other villages in the Kobyla Góra commune or beyond because the level of integration with remaining villages was very low (interview source #4 and #7). The geographic proximity

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<sup>17</sup> Network density represents the number of all ties occurring in the matrix divided by the number of all possible ties (Knoke and Kuklinski 1982). Density was calculated based on the same data used to construct figures 2 and 3.



of Parzynów, Ignaców and Mostki encouraged greater levels of social interactions, which, in turn, promoted the spread of anti-EU norms from Parzynów to the two villages. Since surrounding villages were separated from the Euroskeptic enclaves by several kilometers, the frequent interactions that integrated Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki in both the social and work setting did not expand to other areas. In the absence of such connections with surrounding villages, especially with the sołtys who initiated the Euroskeptic norms, exposure to local rhetoric challenging European integration remained minimal.

In light of extensive Euro-friendly campaigns dominating the county, most villages simply succumbed to pro-EU messages, ensuring a strongly favorable turnout in the 2003 referendum. The campaigns were designed to provide information to farmers about various ways in which the EU might benefit their well-being, from providing funds for the purchase of modern farming equipment to offering opportunities for travel and work abroad (Poland in the EU 2003). Yet the educational material and the overall tone of county campaigns were rarely critical (ibid, interview source #1). Given that most villages in the Kobyla Góra commune lacked the kind of leaders who challenged the dominant line of thought initiated by county leadership, the pro-EU information, to which local leadership and majority of villagers were extensively exposed to, created an atmosphere that limited the emergence of Euroskeptic norms.

### **Concluding Discussion: Theoretical and Substantive Implications**

The case presented here offers theoretical insights about ways in which individuals form attitudes on foreign policy while also presenting policy-relevant implications. First, the story of Parzynów and its neighboring villages illustrates that traditional socio-economic explanations fail to capture the emergence of strong anti-EU norm in the

villages, and thus may be limited in their explanatory power. By investigating the local networks, I argued that Euroskeptic attitudes can be better understood by looking at village relations and the role of local leadership in diffusing anti-EU ideas.

Second, the case shows the importance of credible leaders in initiating specific trends in the network. It is hard to imagine the rise of Euroskeptics in the county without the presence of the Parzynów sołtys who displayed great fervor in teaching people about the meaning of patriotism, an idea he defined as opposition to the EU. Being a patriot, the leader often declared, was about remembering the country's culture and its history. As Poland's history is clearly linked to painful memories of German occupation, expressing enthusiasm for entering an organization "dominated" by the former enemy was equivalent to desecrating the memory of those who fought for Polish independence (interview source #4). Similarly, joining the EU, which neglects the continent's Christian roots, is an abandonment of Polish identity so clearly defined by its Catholic tradition (ibid). By relying on social relations linking villagers in the community, the leader could easily invoke such pro-Polish norms to mold and diffuse anti-EU arguments on a larger scale.

Findings are consistent with earlier literature on the impact of local opinion leaders in influencing people's behavior (for example, Putnam 1966) and show how such leaders can exploit network relations to achieve a desirable outcome. Yet the causal story developed here also shows that the network structure facilitated the learning process by allowing the message to reach multiple individuals in a relatively quick way. This demonstrates not only the importance of the opinion leader, but also the value of network connections in generating majority opposition to European integration. In the realm of networks, the case illustrates that high network density is not necessary for diffusion of

specific attitudes, even views, like opposition to the EU, which might be particularly challenging to disseminate. While some level of connectedness is vital, as the case demonstrated, even individuals with limited ties can adopt a specific policy preference as long as the source of the message, the contact, is credible.

Third, by focusing on local leadership and network relations in the villages, I find that learning about foreign policy can occur in homogeneous communities when pressure to adhere to dominant views is missing. Although my theory suggested that diverse social circles would encourage the flow of divergent ideas and thus invite greater level of critical thinking, and in turn, learning, I find that network composition might not be as critical as earlier assumed. Instead, the case shows that learning among villagers dominated because it was encouraged by the leadership. Thus, looking at the motivation of network leader might better explain the mechanism through which attitudes are shaped than levels of network homogeneity. In this case, the Parzynów sołtys was determined to engage villagers in informal discussions, aiming to present facts, arguments, and foster a debate about the meaning of Polish identity in the context of unified Europe.

Fourth, the case demonstrated that when learning is the mechanism through which networks shape attitudes on foreign policy, such attitudes are likely to remain stable. Given that learning process is often accompanied by debates and dialogues about the policy, individuals are more likely to support an issue because they had the opportunity to think about it, whether deliberately or by observing others' informal discussions. In this case, evidence suggests that anti-EU opposition was strong in Parzynów in 2003 and it remained rather unchanged in 2006, when discussions on the subject still evoked passionate rhetoric. Given that Euroskeptical views ran contrary to the popular rhetoric of national and county

leadership, the stability of such attitudes through time suggests that individuals truly believed in their stand on the issue, refusing to succumb to the county's dominant views.

Lastly, findings demonstrate that diffusion of attitudes can extend beyond the community initiating a specific norm, in this case an anti-EU stand, when some level of interdependence exists. Close relations among villages in Ignaców, Mostki, and Parzynów created an opportunity not only to work and socialize, but also to occasionally discuss political developments. Given that villages were mostly inhabited by farmers, whose status in the integrated Europe was somewhat debated in the national media, there was a need to understand precisely how Polish membership in the EU would impact the villagers. Not surprisingly, political discussions about the EU accompanied social interactions, although they were not deliberately organized. Instead, the dominant views initiated by the sołtys could diffuse because such discussions often emerged in the midst of ordinary, daily tasks that people engaged in such as paying taxes or milking a cow. I argue that without interdependence consisting of frequent non-political interactions, the probability of diffusing controversial political messages would be small. The existence of network connections meant that messages could penetrate the neighboring communities during informal interactions.

On the other hand, neither the Parzynów sołtys nor the Parzynów villagers interacted with members of more distant communities in the Kobyla Góra commune or beyond to create a wider anti-EU network. Evidence suggests that while more distant communities might have heard about the Parzynów sołtys, they did not interact with him or belonged to "his" village, and thus did not bestow upon him the credibility status that he enjoyed. Similarly, interactions with anti-EU villages were scarce, suggesting the weakness

of network linkages. As a result, such distant communities were less likely to consider Euroskeptic views, opting instead to consume the pro-EU message so widely circulated by county and national officials.

What did the pro-EU campaigns look like and how influential were they? The county organized several meetings prior to the 2003 referendum designed as educational venues for village and town leadership. It was during such formal gatherings that economic benefits were usually discussed, with details about the integration's impact on agriculture clearly spelled out (interview source #3). In addition to such formal events, average individuals were exposed to intense campaigning consisting of pro-EU presentations by governmental interns in villages, poster and pamphlet distributions from campaign booths set up in each communes, and buses distributing EU-related information (interview source #1 and #11). Given the intensity of pro-EU activities in the county and lack of local leadership that would challenge county messages, it was not surprising that almost 70% of the region's inhabitants vehemently supported Polish membership in the supranational organization (Referendum 2003 Results). Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki, however, could resist the dominant pro-EU message because the credibility of the village leadership and tight network structure linking the areas together ensured the diffusion and stability of opposing views.

In conclusion, the story of the three villages illustrates how human relations, rather than merely economic factors, can govern the process of attitude formation on foreign issues such as Polish membership in the European Union. Although the case examined the emergence and survival of an anti-EU network in a heavily pro-EU county, my theory suggests that similar mechanism of attitude formation could emerge in pro-EU networks,

albeit at a faster rate given that such networks would run in conformity with popular views at the national level. The case served to illuminate the importance of network leaders and specific dynamics, such as learning, through which networks shape attitudes. It thus supports previous findings about the impact of local opinion leaders, while expanding such works by showing that while opinion leaders may initiate certain norms, it is the inherent characteristic of network connectedness that enables the norms to diffuse quickly to a large group of people. This, of course, has significant implications for studying emergence of attitudes, as illustrated here, as well as explaining unexpected changes in public opinion such as the surprising rejection of European constitution by the French.

The study of causal mechanisms advanced in this project contributes to existing works on public opinion by demonstrating the importance of learning mechanism in the network for long-term stability of attitudes on policy. The distinction between learning as opposed to random information dissemination, as examined in this case, is also vital because it suggests that “learned” messages can survive even when the leader is gone. Thus while the leader initiates the beliefs and relies on network connections to disseminate the message, it is the mechanism of dissemination that is likely to affect the longevity of view on policies long after the leader is gone.

From a policy perspective, the case suggests that when attempting to generate support for difficult policies in highly contested areas, national elites might be better off tapping into local networks than campaigning on television or distributing pamphlets. Given that individuals rely on local networks to obtain information, locating the network leader might be particularly effective in shaping attitudes on wider scale. Not only do such leaders have access to a large number of people, but as the case has shown, they can affect

the message's durability by relying on specific mechanism, such as learning, to shape the nature and stability of attitudes.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH DESIGN: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

#### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I investigated the emergence of Euroskeptic attitudes in three villages in an overwhelmingly pro-EU area in Poland by showing how social interactions governing village relations molded opposition to the EU. While the chapter delineated the causal mechanisms linking social interactions to attitude formation and provided preliminary support for some hypothesis, its main purpose was to trace the process through which specific views emerged. In this part of the project, I will describe my research design for examining whether the impact of such interactions is a phenomenon that could be generalized to the broader population.

Since I employ original data to examine my theoretical propositions, the main focus of this section is on case selection, survey design, and data collection. Unlike previous works, which rely heavily on the Eurobarometer data to study public opinion on the EU, I gather information on interpersonal discussions, a phenomenon that the Eurobarometer generally does not address. New data introduced here will thus expand existing data sets by venturing into a social aspect of opinion formation. The survey I introduce here suggests how we can begin investigating social interactions in the most basic form by concentrating on political discussions.

A social-networks approach to studying public opinion on foreign policy needs to integrate previous research into the analysis to examine both the role of personal and social factors in attitude formation. The variables selected for the analysis and described in



greater detail throughout the chapter account for individuals' socio-economic characteristics while focusing mainly on various ways in which social interactions could affect levels of support for a policy. By studying both, we can attempt to form a more complete understanding of the process through which specific opinions evolve.

Studying the linkage between interpersonal discussions and attitude formation poses some challenge in designing the research as we attempt to isolate independent effects of specific variables. Social interactions, after all, may involve some extent of reciprocity that may occur as ideas are exchanged during political conversations. In the final sections of the chapter, I discuss potential issues related to endogeneity and selection bias to which a social-networks research design may be vulnerable.

### **Conceptualization, Case, and Data**

*Conceptualization:* Social networks focus on relationships linking individuals rather than on individuals themselves (Freeman 2004). They are most commonly studied by looking at patterns in interpersonal relations or by investigating community relations in tribes and villages (Scott 1991). Social interactions can vary in nature with some involving discussions among people, participation in specific activities that bring individuals together, and/or some combination of the two. For example, in previous chapter I focused on political discussions and on non-political linkages such as individuals' involvement in recreational and work activities to uncover the rise of Euroskeptic norms in the community. A broader focus on social interactions that may characterize network relations offers the benefit of studying causal linkages between networks and emergent attitudes on foreign policy (Chapter 4). At the same time, a more complex definition could present difficulties for proposition testing on a large scale as observing a full gamut of individual interactions

may be impossible. Consequently, this chapter conceptualizes social network relations as interpersonal communication and thus focuses less on the wide range of community and/or group relations that may characterize a more complex study of networks.

*Case:* I rely on Poland as a case study in this project. The case has a variation on my key explanatory variable, the network effect, a design that avoids inference bias (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994) and is appropriate particularly for testing probabilistic hypotheses (Pahre 2005). Poland has a strong tradition of social interactions and political discussions dating to the emergence of underground opposition during Communism (Osa 2003, Radziszewski 2001). The government's control of the media forced individuals to rely on the word of mouth to disseminate sensitive information while engaging in discussions of the regime's abuses. Because of the strong legacy of underground communication and the importance of social networks in mobilizing people to support Solidarity's cause (ibid 2001), the case might be particularly effective in testing the importance of networks on attitude formation. At the same time, the importance of social networks is being transformed by societal and economic changes resulting in greater individual mobility and shattering of traditional, close-knit communities. This then suggests that while Poland has a tradition of social discussions during which political issues are constantly debated and interpreted, such traditions are also undergoing transformation and could vary in magnitude.

I can now proceed to examine the selection of the two Polish policies that could be the subject of discussions in the social network: support for Polish membership in the EU and involvement in the War in Iraq. The choice of the policies and the country has both substantive and methodological grounds as suggested briefly in the preceding discussion,

but which I shall further elaborate here. From a substantive point focusing on Poland warrants attention. The country's international presence has grown since the end of the Cold War, and understanding how individuals view such change is vital in studying the relationship between public opinion and policymaking particularly in those states which are emerging as fully independent actors in the international arena. Substantively, we still have limited understanding of public opinion and foreign policy linkages in either developing world or in those states undergoing major societal and/or economic transitions. Such linkage is particularly important in instances where the public has a direct influence over the country's foreign policy. Because public referendum, rather than a policymaker, ultimately decided the fate of Polish membership in the EU, this case is a testimony that studying the roots of public opinion is a fruitful line of research.

In light of the country's recent accession to the EU and its post-communist transitions, studying Poland offers another substantive benefit. As the largest member from the newly-admitted countries, Poland is a challenging case to the EU. Clem and Chodakiewicz (2004) argue that the country's large agricultural sector poses a problem to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the organization's strict regulations on food processing. Further, Poland's recent opposition to changes in the EU's voting structures suggest that the country's vocal membership in the EU could be problematic for the organization. In light of such developments, understanding the public's outlook on Poland's role in the EU becomes particularly important and deserves closer attention.

Focusing on a controversial policy such as membership in the EU has an advantage from a methodological perspective in that it ensures some variation in the kinds of attitudes that networks disseminate. No longer under the Soviet influence, Poland is in the process of

consolidating its identity. Whether it is defined in terms of Polish nationalism, closer ties with the United States, or greater integration with Europe, Polish identity, so often a source of national debate, is clearly linked to the country's international presence and ties with Europe and the United States. Before joining the European Union in 2003, membership in the supranational organization had been disputed in Poland where the agricultural sector had empowered a rather strong Euroskeptic faction of the Polish population, inspiring heated debates among the public. Thus, by selecting a rather controversial policy, I can be certain that my explanatory variable will study the impact of both pro and anti-EU networks on individual attitudes.

Introducing a second case, Polish involvement in the war in Iraq, offers similar but also new substantive and theoretical benefits. In addition to its recent entry to the EU, Poland's participation in the war in Iraq has generated some controversy of its own, often culminating in debates as to whether the newly-admitted EU member has abandoned its European brothers while deepening its ties with the U.S. Commanding multinational force in south-central Iraq (9000 troops) with 1500 of its own soldiers stationed in 2006, Poland is the fifth largest contingent in the war-torn country (Tarvainen and Sibieski 2004, BBC News 2006).<sup>18</sup> Although Polish participation in Iraq enjoyed initial support from the public, approval of the policy has steadily declined (Knowlton 2005). Disagreement about Iraq means that just like in the case of EU membership, I have variation in the content of network preferences for an issue—an important element of my explanatory variable.

Studying both the Iraq war and EU membership also allows me to investigate how the policy's popularity and its potential impact on the people can strengthen or weaken the

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<sup>18</sup> Current troop level is 1,500—a decline from the initial 2,500 deployed in 2003 (Agence France Presse 2003).

impact of social networks in shaping public attitudes on the policies of interest. The two foreign issues that have dominated Poland's international agenda differ in the way they affect the public, the scope with which they have been covered by the media, and the extent to which the public could directly affect the course of policy. All those components could determine the level and intensity of conversations in the network, clearly a significant factor in examining how networks shape attitudes.

First, the public had no direct impact on the Polish government's decision to ally with the U.S. in the Iraq war and in the ultimate crafting of the policy involving troop deployment. The public's impact was mostly limited to expressing opposition in polls as there was never any referendum on the issue. A different picture, however, emerged when EU membership was debated. For the first time, the public was in a position to directly affect the course of the policy through a referendum, which supported Polish membership in the supranational organization. Since one policy involved the public directly while the other curtailed involvement, it is likely that network influence might have been more extensive in the case where the people were in greater control of the policy.

Second, the issue of Iraq, while significant, rarely reached the level of debate that the EU policy had. The question of European integration not only delivered front-page stories in major newspapers but was also the subject of several news and educational programs featuring membership debates and/or the latest cultural scoop on European countries, for example Smak Europy (The Taste of Europe). In addition to more extensive media coverage, the subject of EU membership was popularized by governmental campaigns permeating Polish cities and towns in the form of meetings with national and local elites, pamphlet distributions, and even informational bus tours (interview source #1).

Such massive levels of campaigning were never undertaken when the issue of troop deployment was discussed because the public had no direct impact on the policy.

Third, integration is likely to have a much greater and longer impact on average citizens than participation in the war. Even before formal accession many businesses, such as small companies in the food sector, faced major challenges in reforming organizational and financing practices often at great costs (The Polish Voice 2004). Many, as in the case of dairy plants, were forced to shut down (Vyse 2006). In contrast to the EU issue, costs in Iraq are not as directly felt by the people. While Poland lost 17 soldiers with many more wounded since the war began, Polish troops have encountered considerably less problems in Iraq than other coalition members (BBC News 2006). Not surprisingly, the war has never ignited overwhelming public debate because the linkage between such policy and the citizens was limited.

The unique characteristics of the two policies highlighted here provide a useful opportunity to observe ways in which the impact of social networks on public opinion varies depending on the different issues discussed by such networks. As explained in chapter three, we should expect that social networks will significantly affect opinion formation when a particular policy generates strong national debate, and therefore is the subject of interpersonal discussions in the first place. In addition, I expect that the networks' role in shaping attitudes should increase if the course of the debated policy is not only directly determined by the public, but also if the policy has a potential to affect majority of the population.

Lastly, it is important to describe the explanatory variable, which constitutes the main focus of the study. The explanatory variable, the network effect or exposure to

another person's views on the policy, not only varies in the intensity of political discussion, but also in the actual content and preferences emerging in such discussions. Content clearly represents a vital component of the explanatory variable because the study focuses on how specific content/angle of the discussion affects how individuals think about a topic. Thus the research design needs to ensure that the case has networks with varying content of discussions. By studying two disputed policies, albeit one being more controversial than the other, I ensure that individuals interact with some people who might support those policies and with others who might strongly reject them. Such a variation in the level of support for a policy in a network ensure that the explanatory variable varies in all of its components—the discussants' views on the policy as well as level of interaction and relationship strength. The selected case thus allows me to study, for example, whether interacting frequently with a close friend leaning strongly towards the EU is more likely to spark pro-EU attitudes in an individual than interacting once a week with a colleague who encourages anti-EU discussions.

How generalizable are observations from this case? Findings from Poland can be easily extended to other contexts with a) some tradition of social interactions and b) variation in the policy perspectives discussed by networks. Most East-European countries, for example, have developed informal opposition networks that facilitated dissemination of information during Communist rule. It is highly probable that individuals in such countries have a tradition of utilizing informal conversations as a mechanism to learn about and discuss their countries' policies. Such countries are also facing new debates about national interest and identity, issues likely to spark divergent perspectives in different social circles. Furthermore, results presented here would naturally apply to those countries outside of

Eastern Europe with a strong tradition of oral communication and reliance on personal connections. Thus, most countries in the developing world where social connections still constitute a vital component of daily life might be of interest for further exploration.

*Data:* Survey data are an integral component of studying the extent to which social networks shape individual attitudes on foreign policies, allowing us to generalize initial observations into a larger population. The project addresses the two main issues of interest outlined earlier by relying on a survey of public opinion on EU membership and the war in Iraq that I designed in the summer of 2004. Initial construction of the survey took place in 2003 and was modified after analyzing preliminary results from fieldwork conducted in the same year. The final version, found in the appendix, was developed in two stages and constitutes the core of my analysis. Unlike the early, pilot-study version, current questionnaire is longer, with more in-depth questions about respondents' networks. Venturing beyond numerous questions related to the EU, the survey also addresses another policy—support for the war in Iraq. Incorporating Iraq into the current and final version of the survey was a critical step in understanding how differences in policy characteristics affect the impact with which social networks shape opinions on unique issues.

*Sampling:* The target population in the telephone survey consists of Polish citizens age 18 and over. I imposed the age restriction to ensure that only those who could vote in the EU referendum, and therefore actively shape their country's future, participated in the study. The sample size includes 1000 respondents and was determined as follows: First, I selected sample size for 90 % probability level or a standard deviation score that expresses the percentage of the variable's values that fall within a set interval when the variable is normally distributed (Czaja and Blair 1996). 90 % probability level is a standard deviation



score of 1.64. Second, variance was expressed in two categories: percentage of those respondents who are Polish nationals at least 18 years of age (targeted population) and percentage of those who are either foreign nationals or Polish nationals age 17 or below (non-targeted population). In the first category, we have approximately 82 percent and 18 in the second (Poland Demographics Profile, Index Mundi 2004, The World Almanac 2006). Variance is, thus, expressed as  $0.82 \times 0.18 = 0.1476$ . Third, confidence interval or margin of error is set to .02. This yields a sample size of (Czaja and Blair 1996):

$$[(\text{probability level or standard deviation})^2 \times \text{variance}] / (\text{confidence interval})^2$$

$$[(1.64)^2 \times (0.82)(0.18)] / (0.02)^2 = 992.45 \sim 1,000 \text{ respondents}$$

I chose telephone surveys in my study rather than face-to-face or written interviews because the former offers specific benefits. Although the disadvantage of phone surveys involves the risk of omitting those respondents who do not own phones, possibly a unique segment of population, this format traditionally ensures greatest response rate over a relatively short period of time (Czaja and Blair 1996). In addition, telephone surveys represent one of the most cost efficient ways of conducting interviews (ibid 1996).

The selection process of the sample proceeded in the following manner:

First, respondents were selected from 64 stratified units given that Poland has 16 provinces<sup>19</sup> and four types of cities/villages depending on size, for example cities with

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<sup>19</sup> The provinces (województwa) include: Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia), Kujawsko-Pomorskie (Cuiavian-Pommeranian Province), Łódzkie, Lubelskie, Lubuskie, Małopolskie (Little Poland), Mazowieckie (Mazovia), Opolskie, Podkarpackie (Subcarpathia), Podlaskie (Podlesian Province), Pomorskie (Pomerania), Śląskie (Silesian), Świętokrzyskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie (Warmian-Mazurian Province), Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland), Zachodnio-Pomorskie (Western Pomerania). The largest and most populated is Mazovia with the capital Warsaw (the province is about the size of Maryland and Connecticut).

200,000 inhabitants or greater, cities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants, cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants, and villages. Thus, by crossing 16 provinces and four different types of cities/villages, we obtain 64 units from which we select respondents.

Second, we determined the number of interviews we needed to generate for each province. In order to do so, we took the percentage of population for each province relative to total population in the country and multiplied it by a 1000—the required sample size. For example, the Dolnośląska province has a population size of 2,971,195<sup>20</sup> which is approximately 7.69 percent of the country's total population. Multiplying the percentage by 1000 gives us 77 (7.69 % X 1000), or the number of interviews necessary in that particular province.

Third, we determined the number of interviews required in each village/city type within each province. We did this by multiplying the percentage of specific city type population relative to total province population for all city/village sizes by the number of interviews needed in the particular province for all city/village types. For example, if the population in cities with size less than 50,000 inhabitants in the Dolnośląska Province constituted ~ 31.4 percent of the total population in that province for all city/village sizes, we would multiply 31.4 percent by 77—the total number of interviews required in the Dolnośląska Province—to give us a total of 24 interviews. We now have determined the exact number of interviews we needed in each province for each city/village size.

Fourth, once we knew the number of desired interviews, we then randomly selected specific villages and cities to interview within each province and city/village type. Fifth,

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Lubuskie is the least populated province, while Opolskie is the smallest in size (World Gazetteer 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Data is based on population status as of June 30, 2001.

telephone books were used as a sampling frame to select respondents in the randomly-selected cities or villages.

Lastly, to ensure that individuals with various educational (elementary, technical, high school or two-year college, four-year college or higher) gender (male, female), and age levels (18-29, 30-39, 40-59, 60 and higher) were included, a quota was established to choose the number of respondents with different socio-economic backgrounds reflecting national distribution. Thus, for example, the number of interviews in each age category was chosen by establishing the percentage that the population in a specific age group constituted relative to total population for all age groups (here, 29 661 771 is the total population for all age groups), and then by multiplying the percentage by a 1000 or the number of desired interviews in the study's sample. An age group 18-29 would require 254 interviews because we have approximately 7,543, 207 individuals in such category or 25.4 percent of total population in all age categories (29, 661,771). Multiplying 25.4 percent by 1000 yields 254.

Within each age category, there was a quota for males and females established based on the same formula. The quota for level of education was conducted in the same way as that for age, independently of age and gender. Quota for place of inhabitation (province and city size) was also established independently of age and gender and was discussed earlier.

*Data Collection:* IMAS International, a research company in Wrocław, Poland, assisted in data collection that lasted three weeks, beginning on August 20, 2004 and culminating on September 8, 2004. Interviews were carried out using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews), a computer technology used to collect survey data. CATI allows interviewers to enter responses into a computer file when conducting an interview (Czaja

and Blair 1996). The computer technology improves quality control by reducing interviewer error and managing sample administration (ibid). For example, the system limits the range of values that can be entered and checks some answers against others for internal consistency (ibid). Since such “data cleaning” is performed while the interview is conducted, the need to re-contact the interviewee in case of errors is reduced. Each interview was approximately 16 minutes long, with a 39 percent response rate.

The survey provides insights about Polish discussions on EU membership and the war in Iraq. (Specific survey questions can be found in the appendix at the end of project). Departing from the traditional Eurobarometer data, often employed to study EU-related issues, the survey is divided into six sections exploring characteristics of the respondents’ political confidants, which include frequency of discussions, level of trust and political knowledge, as well as geographic proximity of interactions. With 58 questions on the subject of interpersonal interaction and public opinion, the survey is the first source of data outside of the United States exploring social interactions and attitudes on foreign issues.

*Dependent Variable:* Two variables are the focus of the analysis: 1) the degree of support for Poland’s membership in the European Union, 2) the degree of support for Polish participation in the Iraq war. Respondents were also asked about their support for European efforts at integration, but I do not focus on this question in the statistical analysis as data on the issue is nearly identical as the one for dependent variable measuring support for Poland’s membership in the EU. The respondents addressed two questions that constitute the basis for the dependent variables. These were: 1) Which of the following describes best how you feel about Poland’s membership in the European Union? 2) And what do you think about the war in Iraq. Which of the following best describes how you

feel about Poland's participation in the war in Iraq? (Appendix, questions I4,5,6).

Respondents could choose answers such as definitely supportive of Poland's membership in the EU/Polish involvement in the war in Iraq, rather supportive to rather unsupportive and definitely unsupportive. These were then coded as dummy variables, with a value of 1 assigned to all the supportive answers and 0 to neutral or non-supportive ones. A score of zero was assigned in cases when the responded was uncertain about his/her stand on the issue. In such a case, a response "It's hard to say," was noted, though not read out loud, but only coded when the responded was clearly ambivalent.<sup>21</sup>

*Independent Variables:* Below I introduce the key explanatory variable included in the model of attitude formation on foreign policy. I also highlight the interactive terms based on the main explanatory variable.

Social Network Variables:

1) Perceived Discussant Views—I measure the impact of individual exposure to particular viewpoints—the network's influence—by looking at EU and Iraq war preferences of the discussants named by survey respondents. The respondents are asked the extent to which they think their discussants 1) support Poland's membership in the EU, 2) support Polish involvement in the Iraq war, and 3) support European integration. Specifically, the survey asked the following: Please think about the person with whom you most often discuss politics with. It could be someone from your family, maybe a neighbor, friend, or someone you know from school, work, or meet in church or other organization. 1) Which of the

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<sup>21</sup> Given that, at times, individuals are not interested in giving in-depth answers to telephone surveys, an option of "It's hard to say," was not initially provided in order not to encourage respondents to simplify answers out of convenience. Instead, that option was marked when the respondent clearly appeared uncertain about the issue.

following best describes this person's attitude about Poland's membership in the European Union? 2) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards efforts at European integration? 3) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq? (Appendix, questions II1j,k,n). Response answers, or the independent variables, were coded as ordinal variables ranging from -2 to 2 for the first discussant and from -1 to 1 for the second discussant, the merged measure for the second one was employed because the full measurement did not yield enough observations in each category.<sup>22</sup> As a result, I merged the category to avoid potential bias in estimation. Individuals without a discussant were coded as zero, the same value as individuals who named a discussant with a neutral view. Such coding was necessary to avoid the problem of missing data for those individuals who did not name a discussant yet should be included in the model. Given that I am seek to explain attitude formation on foreign policy in general rather than just study the views of those individuals who have a discussant, the coding decision is appropriate. I also included a dummy variable that distinguishes between individuals without discussants and those with discussants to determine whether the network effect might somehow be influenced by those individuals who did not name a discussant and were coded in the same manner a those individuals who had a discussant with neutral views.

It is also important to note a potential problem that could occur with employing an indirect measure of discussant opinions if the respondent has an inaccurate perception or recollection of the views. Despite this potential shortcoming I rely on respondent perceptions for several reasons. First, given that we are interested in how exposure to social

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<sup>22</sup> The merged category was also used for the first discussant in the Iraq case.

views affects opinion formation, what might matter more is the perceived message rather than the actual one (Mutz and Martin 2001). Second, even if we accept the potential bias in respondent perceptions, the inaccuracies are fairly small. For example, in their study of voting behavior in presidential elections, Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt (2002) found that the difference between actual and perceived preferences for candidates was modest suggesting that reliance on perceptions is not as problematic as initially assumed. We have no indication that Polish respondents should behave differently in recalling their friends' or family's political views. Finally, contacting all the discussants named by the respondents directly requires significant financial resources that go beyond the scope of this project. Thus, relying on respondent perceptions should not present a major problem, and so such measure is utilized in this chapter<sup>23</sup>.

2) Relationship Ties \* Discussant Views: this interactive variable measures the extent to which relationship ties between the respondent and the discussant could affect information dissemination, and thus preference formation on foreign issues. Relationships are ordinal variables with natural ranking ranging from interacting with a family member to a neighbor. Variable 'relationship ties' was thus coded from 4 to 1 (4 indicating interacting with a family member, and 1 interacting with a neighbor). Specific details about all the relationship ties can be found in the appendix (question IIIa). Discussant views were coded from -1 indicating opposing views on the policy to 1 indicating supportive views with 0 as neutral.<sup>24</sup> The interactive term thus ranges from -4 to 4. While the ranking is clear with

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<sup>23</sup> For further discussion on potential problems with perceived and actual discussant views, please refer to the final sections of this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> The discussants' views in the interactive terms are coded from -1 to 1 instead of from -2 to 2 as is the case with the main explanatory variable because the interactive term with the expanded coding produces too many categories for which we do not have enough

respect to family and friends, it may be less natural for some to include co-workers ahead of neighbors. Consequently, I employ an alternative measure of the interactive term, by coding relationship ties as dummies and the base term, the discussant view, also as a dummy with 1 indicating supportive views and 0 non-supportive or neutral. No significant change occurs in the results when the second coding is employed.

3) Frequency of Political Discussions \* Discussant Views: frequency of political discussions, an ordinal variable ranging from daily to once a month and less than that and coded from five to one, is multiplied by discussant views (Appendix, question III e).

Discussant views were coded from -1 indicating opposing views on the policy to 1 indicating supportive views with 0 as neutral. The interactive term ranges from -5 to 5.

4) Proximity \* Discussant Views: respondents were asked to identify the discussant's place of inhabitation. Answers ranged from "in my neighborhood" to "beyond the borders of my city/town," and were coded as an ordinal variable ranging from three to one (3=in my neighborhood, 2=in my city/town, 1= beyond the borders of my city/town) (Appendix, question III d). Discussant views were coded from -1 indicating opposing views on the policy to 1 indicating supportive views with 0 as neutral. The interactive term thus ranges from -3 to 3.

It is important to address the difference in the coding of the dependent variable, the respondent's views, and the independent variable, perceived discussant's views. While the latter is coded as a dummy, the former takes an ordinal value from -2 to 2 indicating levels of support and opposition. Given that a small number of people, reported neutral

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observations. Hence, in the interactive variables the discussants' supportive views are merged together as are unsupportive ones.



views, I decided to code the dependent variable as a dummy with 1 indicating pro-EU attitudes and 0 marking neutral or Euroskeptic views, rather than have large variations in the response categories. Such problem, however, disappears when I focus on the independent variable. Here, all neutral categories are merged with cases where respondents reported no discussants to avoid the problem of missing data. Since I am interested in studying attitude formation in general, the merging is necessary to include individuals without network relations in the analysis. Once such individuals are merged with those who have neutral discussants, the neutral category now contains many observations. As I earlier explained, I also recognize that merging the two categories could be problematic in itself as it may be that one of the merged variables completely accounts for specific outcome. To address this problem, I included a dummy variable to distinguish between individuals with and without discussants.

*Control Variables:* Previous research notes the impact of several demographic and personal characteristics on attitude formation. Below I describe the variables, emphasizing expected relationships and coding rules.

Socio-Economic Factors:

1) Age: We should expect that younger people would be more supportive of EU membership given that greater integration facilitates cross-border travel and promises rewarding opportunities. Studies support this notion (for example, de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005, Gabel 1998a, Slomczynski and Shabad 2003). In the case of the Iraq war, it is likely that older generations would favor Polish involvement in the war because of their traditional sentiment towards the U.S (Applebaum 2005). Depicted as an ordinal variable in the survey ranging from 12 to 1 (please refer to the appendix for specifics on the

coding, question I1), I recoded the variable from 3 to 1 with 1 including ages 18-39 or younger individuals, 2 including ages 41-59 or a middle-aged individuals, and 3 including ages 60 and greater or the elderly. Such simplified coding was employed to increase the number of observations in categories, many of which had limited data prior to the merger.

2) Education: Previous studies have shown that greater educational levels are associated with higher levels of support for EU membership (Gabel 1998b). Studies in the context of U.S. foreign policy have demonstrated that support for militant policies is stronger among those with limited educational background (Wittkopf 1990, Nincic 1997) possibly suggesting that individuals with lower education will approve of Polish involvement in the war. Level of education is an ordinal variable coded from three to one, where 3=higher than high school, 2= high-school or equivalent, 1=elementary (Appendix, question I2).

3) Gender: Some work on gender and foreign policy has demonstrated that women favor peace-oriented initiatives (Sahliyeh and Deng 2003, Wittkopft 1990, Goldstein 2001). This, in turn, might imply that Polish women should be supportive of the EU and opposed to their country's presence in Iraq. Gender is a dummy variable coded one for female and zero for male (Appendix, question I3).

4) Occupation: Previous work has shown that professionals and managers might greatly benefit from easy access to EU countries where specialized skills are often in demand, while other groups such as unskilled manual labor, for example, could lose as it adjusts to strict EU regulations (Gabel 1998a). Not surprisingly then we should expect that those likely to benefit from integration should be most supportive of EU membership. In addition, studies also show that farmers are usually opposed to greater levels of integration from which they expect to lose (Slomczynski and Shabad 2003, McLaren 2007). Based on

such findings, I code occupation as a dummy variable in the following manner—when the dependent variable is the EU: 1 for professionals/specialists (doctors, architects, etc.) and 0 for non-professionals, 1 for managers and 0 for non-managers, 1 for qualified manual labor and 0 for non-qualified manual labor<sup>25</sup>, 1 for farmers and those employed in the agricultural sector and 0 for non-farmers. Base category is others, which may include housewives, workers in trade and service, small business owners, students, the unemployed, those who are retired, and other occupations specified by the interviewees (Appendix, question IV1c).

When the dependent variable is the war in Iraq, I code dummies based on findings from research about support for war among the U.S. public (for example, Wittkopf 1990) as works on the subject in the Polish context are minimal and often anecdotal. Results show that those in professional and managerial occupations are consistently the strongest supporters of “cooperative internationalism,” while blue-collar occupations, farmers, and the retired are usually considered hardliners and thus would support “militant internationalism,” (Wittkopf 1990). Based on such findings, I assign the following variable coding: 1 for professionals and 0 for non-professionals, 1 for managers and 0 for non-managers, 1 for qualified manual labor and 0 for non-qualified manual labor, 1 for farmers and 0 for non-farmers, 1 for the retired and 0 for non-retired. Base category is others, which may include housewives<sup>26</sup>, workers in trade/service, small business owners, students, the unemployed, and other occupations specified by the interviewees.

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<sup>25</sup> Given that only a small number of respondents were classified under the nonqualified manual labor category, the dummy for this occupation was excluded from the analysis.

<sup>26</sup> Although Wittkopf (1990) also focuses on housewives when studying attitudes on foreign policy including support for cooperative and militant initiatives, I do not concentrate on the group in my analysis as the number of respondents in “housewife” category is very small.

5) Income Change: Individuals whose income declines in a year could attribute the development to their country's new political and economic situation. Those experiencing decline in income could link it to EU-related reforms or to costs associated with Polish involvement in Iraq. Income change is an ordinal variable ranging from 2 to -2 (2=financial situation has improved greatly, 1= it has improved somewhat, -1=it has deteriorated somewhat, -2=it has deteriorated greatly). A value of 0 indicates no change in financial situation (Appendix, question IV3).

6) Expectations of Long-Term Benefits: Some have argued that it is not the policy's actual cost/ benefit that matters in shaping preferences, but instead future expectations that determine levels of support (Tucker, Pacek, and Berinsky 2002). Those with favorable expectations should express pro-EU views. The expectations variable is ordinal and coded: 2=Poland's membership in the EU will benefit my family a lot, 1= membership will benefit my family somewhat, -1=membership will harm my family somewhat, -2= membership will harm my family a lot. 0 indicates no net change (Appendix, question V5).

7) Place of Inhabitation: Given that rural areas are inhabited by farmers whose practices would have to be reformed after accession to meet EU standards, it is possible that inhabitants of villages might exhibit greater opposition to the EU than those who live in town and cities. I use a dummy variable to distinguish between rural and urban areas, with 1 indicating village inhabitation and 0 indicating towns and cities.

#### Partisanship and Proxies:

1) Level of Support for the Government: Research has shown that individuals evaluate

foreign policies through the lens of domestic developments (for example, Anderson and Kalthenthaler 1996; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993). A favorable view of the government, for instance, should generate greater support for EU membership and Polish role in the Iraq war. Support for the government's handling of the economy is an ordinal variable, which I recoded for the analysis in the following way: 1=very satisfied of the government's handling of the economy or somewhat satisfied, -1=somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Zero was used for those who were ambivalent or refused to respond (Appendix, question V6). I collapsed the coding from -2 to 2, as it appeared in the survey, to the one above to ensure that enough observations were present in each group.

2) Party Support: The impact of partisanship on influencing individual preference for policies has been widely studied in various contexts (for example, Sahliyah and Deng 2003, Evans 2000). According to such studies, those who support pro-EU parties will also exhibit pro-EU attitudes. Respondents were asked to indicate the party they would vote for if parliamentary elections were held today (Appendix, question V7). Rather than working with various parties, I classified them according to their level of support for the EU and the war in Iraq. For example, parties were classified as strongly pro-EU, somewhat pro-EU, soft Euroskeptic (somewhat anti-EU), and hard Euroskeptic (strongly anti-EU)<sup>27</sup>. The same was done in the case of the Iraq war. The ordinal variable was then coded as 1=strongly pro-EU or somewhat pro-EU, -1=somewhat anti-EU or strongly anti-EU. Zero indicated neutrality. I merged the supportive measurements and the opposition measurement to ensure that enough observations were present in each group. I relied on newspaper articles, official party websites, and secondary sources, to obtain information about party platform

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<sup>27</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) define soft Euroskepticism as contingent opposition to the EU, while hard Euroskepticism as an outright opposition.

on the two issues. Table 5 illustrates final party classification according to levels of support for the two policies at the time when survey answers were gathered (Summer 2004).

Table 5: Party Support for the EU and the war in Iraq

Party	Level of EU Support	Level of War Support
Prawo & Sprawiedliwość	soft Euroskeptics <sup>28</sup>	strongly supportive <sup>29</sup>
Platforma Obywatelska	strongly pro-EU <sup>30</sup>	strongly supportive <sup>31</sup>
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej	strongly pro-EU <sup>32</sup> (governing party)	strongly supportive <sup>33</sup>
Unia Pracy	strongly pro-EU <sup>34</sup>	somewhat supportive <sup>35</sup>
Samoobrona	hard Euroskeptics <sup>36</sup>	strongly unsupportive <sup>37</sup>
Polskie Stronictwo Ludowe	soft Euroskeptics <sup>38</sup>	somewhat supportive <sup>39</sup>
Liga Polskich Rodzin	hard Euroskeptics <sup>40</sup>	strongly unsupportive <sup>41</sup>
Unia Wolności	strongly pro-EU <sup>42</sup>	strongly supportive <sup>43</sup>
Socjaldemokracja Polska	strongly pro-EU <sup>44</sup>	strongly unsupportive <sup>45</sup>
Polska Partia Narodowa	hard Euroskeptics <sup>46</sup>	strongly unsupportive <sup>47</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001)

<sup>29</sup> Polish Agency Press (PAP) (2003)

<sup>30</sup> Araloff (2005)

<sup>31</sup> CBOS (2004)

<sup>32</sup> Szczerbiak (2002)

<sup>33</sup> As of 2004 SLD was supportive of sending troops (TV interview 2004), later, however, it shifts its position. Currently, the party calls for troop withdrawal (Wikipedia 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Unia Pracy Official Website (2006)

<sup>35</sup> Initially supportive of invasion, the party now calls for troop withdrawal (Wikipedia 2006, Unia Pracy Official Website 2006).

<sup>36</sup> *ibid* (2002)

<sup>37</sup> Decydent/re-print in Andrzej Lepper's personal website (2004)

<sup>38</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001)

<sup>39</sup> PSL Committee Resolution (2004)

<sup>40</sup> *ibid* (2001)

<sup>41</sup> Radio interview with Roman Giertych (2004)

<sup>42</sup> Szczerbiak (2002)

<sup>43</sup> CBOS (2004)

<sup>44</sup> SDPL's Official Website (2006)

<sup>45</sup> SDPL's Official Website (2006)

## Level of International Trust

1) The extent to which individuals exhibit positive perceptions of other nations can translate to specific preferences for policies (Brewer, Gross, Aday, Wilnat 2004). Trust in Western nations such as Great Britain, France, Germany should translate into more supportive outlook on European integration. On the other hand, approaching Russia with trust could mean suspicion of policies supporting European integration. Those who trust the United States and UK should display rather supportive attitudes on Poland's participation in the Iraq war. Trusting France, Germany, and Russia—states that opposed the war—should be associated with greater suspicion of U.S. actions in Iraq and thus lower support level for Polish participation in the mission. Respondents were asked whether Poland should trust selected nations or whether the country should be cautious in its relations with those nations. I examine five variables: level of trust for 1) Russia, 2) France, 3) Germany, 4) UK, and 5) US. Each variable, ordinal and coded as follows in the survey: 2= definitely trustful of the country, 1=somewhat trustful, -1=somewhat cautious, -2=definitely cautious, was merged for the analysis and recoded as -1 for distrustful opinions, 1 for trustful ones, with a score of 0 assigned to the neutral “sometimes trustful, sometimes cautious” response (Appendix, question V8). As in many earlier variables, the groups had to be merged to ensure that enough observations were present in each category.

## Media Coverage Bias

1) Perceived Media Bias (Aggregate): Whether it sets the agenda, disseminates facts, or grants air time to personalities lobbying for specific issues, the mass media have been

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<sup>46</sup> This small nationalistic party was named by several survey respondents. Official party platform and stand on the EU and the war can be found on the party's website (2006).

<sup>47</sup> PPN's Official Website (2006)

explored and studied extensively as the mechanism responsible for shaping public opinion (Iyengar and Simon 1994, Dorman and Livingston 1994). I examine whether exposure to various media outlets is associated with individual support for pro-EU policies and pro-Iraq war policies. We might expect that attentiveness to pro-EU or pro-Iraq newspapers or TV programs could generate similar attitudes in individuals exposed to such outlets.

Respondents were given a set of TV programs and newspapers and asked to select those they read/view regularly. They were then asked to indicate the extent to which they thought each program/newspaper displayed pro-EU/pro-war leanings in regular coverage. Variable for perceptions of each medium bias is ordinal and coded in the survey as: 1=media definitely supportive of the policy, 1=media somewhat supportive, -1=media somewhat unsupportive, -2=media definitely unsupportive, 0= no bias <sup>48</sup> (Appendix, questions III1a-2, III1c, III3a-2, III3c, III2b-2, III2c, III4a-2, III4b). Individuals are generally in agreement about the national outlets' attitudes towards the EU, with all, for example correctly identifying Gazeta Wyborcza and Rzeczpospolita, the two main daily newspapers, as pro-EU.

In order to capture total exposure to various TV programs and newspapers, I added the values assigned to opinion of each newspaper/TV program for the total opinion score, and then recoded all positive values or supportive attitudes as 1, all negative or opposing views as -1 and assigned a value of 0 for neutral attitudes. The outcome is an ordinal

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<sup>48</sup> I rely on perceived pro/anti-EU, pro/anti-Iraq media bias as reported by the discussants. While it would be best to rely on the researcher's own measure of such bias, particularly to cross check with individual perceptions, logistical problems prevent me from conducting content analysis on my own. Given that some respondents named local press in their interviews, locating the vast number of such publications becomes a rather daunting, if not impossible task. Since the media's impact is not the core focus of this project, I do not attempt my own content analysis.



variable coded from -1 to 1.<sup>49</sup> In the analysis, I only employ the print variable as TV and print are highly correlated and inclusion of both could lead to biased estimators.

### **Analysis and Potential Problems: Endogeneity, Misperception, and Selection Bias**

To analyze survey data, I rely on a logit model and employ four models for each issue area, support for Polish membership in the EU and support for Polish participation in the Iraq war. The first model, based on 1000 observations, examines attitude formation of individuals who have and don't have political discussants, while models two, three, and four examine the impact of specific network characteristics and thus focus on the sample of individuals who named a discussant (571 observations).

Three issues might present a problem in this research design: potential for selection bias, misperception of discussant views, and possible endogeneity. The first issue could become problematic and inflate network effect if respondents select people with whom they discuss politics because of similar views in the first place. I would argue, however, that such behavior is less likely to occur on regular basis, and thus the probability of introducing systematic bias in the analysis is limited. Individuals are often bounded by their place of employment, geography and even family they are born into when engaging in interactions with others. As such, individuals are constrained by social structures when choosing conversation partners. In most instances, people make choices about their interactions based on some combination of opportunity, access, and instrumental behavior (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995).

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<sup>49</sup> Selection bias should not be problematic in this case. Most of the media outlets, especially the large daily newspapers, have all been established long before the EU or the War in Iraq landed on the country's agenda, and thus should not have been selected by individuals based on prior beliefs about the two major foreign issues.

Furthermore, even if we assume that despite the limitations of work settings, individuals can still choose people they connect with from the very few they have access to, it is only probabilistic that such individuals will form relationships solely based on political similarity. In some instances people connect with others because of shared interests that may have little to do with politics, yet political conversations can emerge in the midst of such connections. In other instances similar personality types might find it easier to interact. In other words, while it is always possible that individuals may choose to converse with others based exclusively on political similarities, it is just as possible, if not more so, that they may not do so. For example, 97 percent of respondents who named a discussant in this survey have conversed about personal matters in addition to political ones, and only three percent have engaged solely in political discussions (Chapter six). Although potential for selection bias might exist, it is likely to be small and not systematic enough to affect the credibility of the analysis.

Misperception of discussant views is the second problem with social network analysis that could introduce bias in the analysis when the only available data on the discussants' views come from the respondent. It is possible, for example, that incorrect perceptions of such views may exaggerate the discussant effect, as I have explained earlier in the chapter. One can examine if that is the case by running an analysis that controls for the discussant's objective or self-reported vote. Studies show that introducing the control does not eliminate the social network effect when either perceived or actual views of the discussant are considered (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Although perceived rather than actual views usually inflate the effect slightly, both add significantly to the understanding

of voting preferences (Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002). As a result, misperceptions of discussant views are less problematic than might be assumed.

Lastly, endogeneity could introduce another problem in the analysis if the respondent and the discussant both shape each other's views on political issues. In such case, the respondent, for example, could be both influencing the discussant's views, while also being influenced. I would argue that this is rather unlikely to occur on a large scale as numerous interviews that I conducted during field research suggest the existence of some kind of hierarchy between the respondent and the discussant when political influence is considered. Usually one person is either more knowledgeable on the issue or has greater credibility in the group. While it is true that in my analysis I cannot discern whether the respondent or the discussant is the source of influence, although usually not both as I earlier argued, the direction of influence is of little importance from a theoretical perspective as the study focuses on the existence of influence in general. The problem may occur if endogeneity leads to biased results, and thus affect our understanding of the strength of such influence.

One way to address the endogeneity issue is to produce a vote instrument for the discussant that is free from any possible reciprocal impact from the respondent. It is possible to estimate the discussant's vote choice based on his/her demographic characteristics, and then use predicted probabilities from the logistic regression to arrive at the discussant's independent vote (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Such procedure, however, is problematic in that it estimates the discussant's independent vote choice solely based on demographic factors without considering that a discussant might be affected by another discussant who is not the main respondent. In other words, completely eliminating

endogeneity may never be truly possible, suggesting that the use of instrumental variables may not fully resolve the problem. Still, among studies that employed instrumental variables to address endogeneity in network analysis (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995) and those which did not (Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002), no major change in network's effect has been noted. In light of such studies, I do not anticipate that endogeneity would affect my analysis in a significant way.

## **Conclusion**

Exploring complex human relationships is often challenging particularly in large-N studies where capturing the impact of social interactions on attitude formation requires simplification to generalize findings to larger population at the expense of understanding the wide gamut of social relations that govern human relations. While the Eurobarometer data occasionally presents information about people's reliance on friends and family for EU-related information, to this date measuring the social aspect of attitude formation on foreign policy has been neglected. This study addresses this problem by focusing on interpersonal communication among people and measuring the network effect in a simple way, mainly by looking at policy preferences of people's conversation partners. Additionally, the new data introduced here explores how frequency of conversations, relations among discussants, and discussant proximity shape opinions about policies.

As we seek to understand the relationship between social interactions and attitude formation, we can also utilize the data to investigate variation in network effect depending on the policy. By collecting information not only about Polish attitudes towards the EU, but also the citizens' support for their country's participation in the war in Iraq, policies that are unique in the extent to which they are likely to affect people, I introduce issue variation

into the study to develop better theoretical understanding of the network-public opinion connection.

Even after a researcher develops measures for network effects and collects data, he/she must still address potential problems when studying social interactions and attitude formation. Endogeneity, misperceived views of the discussants, and selection bias can all lead to bias estimates. Previous works, however, have shown that such issues are not as problematic as they may initially appear. When one relies on the respondent's perceived views of the discussant, while controlling for the actual ones, the network effect is statistically significant in both instances (Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt 2002). Similarly, the significance holds whether one introduces instrumental variables to correct for endogeneity or not (ibid 2002, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Even concerns about people selecting discussants based on political similarities, a phenomenon that introduces selection bias, are minimized given that most individuals converse about personal matters with their political discussants and thus most likely connect because of broader similarities. When potential problems with research design are evaluated and minimized, data on social interactions and public opinion can help us get an empirical grasp on propositions examining attitude formation on foreign policy.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE EMPIRICAL IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN ATTITUDE FORMATION ON FOREIGN POLICY

#### Introduction

I have argued that interpersonal social networks can mold attitudes when they serve as information channels, establish group norms, or encourage learning about foreign issues. Chapter four has demonstrated that social interactions among individuals and local opinion leaders, rather than socio-economic factors, explained the emergence of Euroskepticism in three Polish villages in a strongly pro-EU region. Given that interpersonal and group discussions about the benefits and dangers of EU membership proved influential in shaping local opposition to the country's membership in the organization, it is vital to understand just how prevalent such a phenomenon is. In chapter four, I traced the causal linkage between social interactions and attitude formation, arguing that network-based explanation is much better suited to studying emergence of divergent attitudes in demographically-similar areas. Yet if social approach to studying attitude formation truly merits attention, it is critical to examine the extent to which social interactions govern individual lives in a way that may affect people's thinking about foreign issues.

In addition to determining if social interactions' impact on attitude formation can be generalized to broader population, it is also important to decipher when such impact will vary. Do certain network characteristics, such as close geographic proximity between discussants, frequent conversations, and close relationship ties increase levels of influence in the network? And how do different policy characteristics affect the extent to which social conversations emerge in the first place?

I have argued earlier that social interactions, particularly political discussions, emerge in the shadow of broader national developments and thus need to be examined in this context. After all, local norms in communities may, at times, clash with national consensus about the policy's benefits or costs. When a collision of interests emerges, individuals will face conflicting information. Ultimately, I argue that in light of such developments local networks should be more influential in shaping individual thinking about the policy, but the level of influence might be slower than in cases when local beliefs complement national ideas about the policy. I further examine variation in network effect on attitudes by analyzing how specific policy characteristics might facilitate the process of influence. By contrasting EU membership, a policy whose fate was decided by the people in a referendum and which had a potential to affect large segments of the population, with a policy of involvement in the war in Iraq, a less-salient issue whose future was decided by the government, I can study whether specific policy characteristics encouraged network discussions in a way that might have increased or decreased social influence. The empirical analysis presented here will not only explore the social aspect of attitude formation, but will also help us understand how a network perspective can alter thinking about attitude formation advanced in the literature.

### **Explaining Individual Support for EU Membership: Description and Analysis**

In this section, I focus on explanations for the emergence of Polish views on their country's membership in the European Union. I begin with basic descriptive statistics outlining respondents' views on the EU, depicting the presence of interpersonal discussions on the subject, and characteristics of discussant-respondent relations. One way to assess the credibility of new survey data is to compare some of its results to other data sets, as a way

to check for consistency. Table 6 shows findings from the Eurobarometer, the most commonly utilized data in research on EU and public opinion, and BBC News tracing attitudes from 1995 to the 2003 referendum. Public views on the policy have fluctuated, with support ranging anywhere from 51 to 77 percent. Recent results from the 2003 referendum, however, are similar to the numbers presented in this survey (table 7) thereby suggesting that new data employed in this study is credible.

Table 6: Support for EU Membership in Poland-Previous Polls\*

	1995	1997	2001	2003**
Support	72%	72%	51%	77%
Indifference	9%	12%	27%	-----
Disapproval	19%	15%	11%	23%

\*Stadtmüller (2000); European Commission (2001); BBC News (2003), \*\* Referendum

Table 7: Support for EU Membership and European Integration: June-July 2004

	EU Membership	European Integration
Support	70.5%	76.4%
Indifference	7.3%	5.4%
Disapproval	22.2%	18.2%

Polish citizens are actively involved in political discussions. Approximately 57 percent of respondents converse with someone about EU membership, while 12 percent of such people talk about the issue with two individuals (table 8). The numbers are nearly identical for broader discussions about European integration. Far from living as isolated creatures, more than half of the population is embedded in social discussions.



Table 8: Percentage of People Who Named a Discussant

	EU Membership	European Integration
One Discussant	57%	57%
Two Discussants	12%	12%
Three Discussants	1%	1%
None	43%	43%

Just how much do people discuss the EU? Interpersonal communication about political matters constitutes a frequent activity in Poland. Approximately 40 percent of interviewees discuss the EU with the first discussant a few times each week, and 37 percent do the same with the second discussant (table 9). Daily conversations are generally rare—only five percent of respondents talk about the issue every day with the first discussant and four percent do so with the second discussant. Overall, the level of discussions is certainly high, but it is not surprising given that historically Poles have developed a strong tradition of oral communication, encompassing both personal and political matters (Radziszewski 2001).

Table 9: Frequency of Conversations—EU Membership/European Integration\*

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Daily	4.9%	4.2%	0.0%
Few Times/Week	39.0%	37%	33.3%
Once/Two Weeks	23.4%	27.7%	33.3%
Once/Month	17.3%	16.8%	25.0%
Less	15.4%	14.3%	8.7%

\*Numbers for the two issues are nearly identical

Not surprisingly, individuals most commonly discuss the EU with family members and close friends. Close to 47 percent of people report talking about the policy to family and 26 percent of individuals engage in conversations with close friends (table 10). The

numbers are similar for both the first and the second discussant. The importance of discussions with co-workers, or weak ties (Granovetter 1973), is not very high with less than 20 percent of people conversing with someone from work about the EU. This clearly highlights the lasting importance of strong ties in the choice of political discussants.

Table 10: The Respondent's Relationship to the Discussant

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Family	46.5%	45.4%	41.7%
Close Friends	26.0%	24.4%	33.3%
Co-Workers	19.4%	19.3%	16.7%
People from Clubs	0.5%	0.8%	0.0%
Neighbors	7.5%	10.1%	8.3%

Social interactions are to some extent evolving within specific geographic boundaries. Majority of political discussants inhabit the same city or village as the respondent (44 percent for the first discussant and 50 percent for the second one) and a third lives in the same neighborhood as the respondent (table 11). Not surprisingly, the third discussant's geographic proximity is confounded to areas outside of the respondent's city or village, suggesting a limited scope of interactions among the two.

Table 11: Discussant-Respondent Geographic Proximity

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Neighborhood	31.8%	28.6%	33.3%
City/Village	44.2%	50.4%	25.0%
Beyond	24.0%	21.0%	41.7%

The most interesting aspect of the descriptive data is a strong agreement in respondent-discussant attitudes on EU membership, particularly in the case of the first

discussant. Pro-EU respondents were paired with pro-EU discussants in 84 percent of the cases, in comparison to being associated with anti-EU discussants in only 15 percent of the cases. In one percent of all the cases, they were matched with those displaying neutral views (table 12). The interviewees who opposed the EU were associated with anti-EU discussants in 68 percent of the cases, with pro-EU conversation partners in 31 percent of the cases, and with neutral discussants in less than two percent of the cases. The attitude agreement weakens when the second discussant is considered, but only with respect to anti-EU views. While similarity of opinions is strong in the pro-EU category, it declines in the anti-EU group. Here, anti-EU respondents are matched with anti-EU discussants in 54 percent of the cases, while in 42 percent of the cases they are paired with conversation partners exhibiting pro-EU views.

The agreement in views, however, loses its value with neutral respondents. Here interviewees are most commonly paired with discussants supporting the EU (60 percent), followed by neutral (23 percent) and anti-EU discussants (less than 17 percent). While the agreement is perfect when the third conversation partner is examined, findings about the last discussant are approached with a degree of caution as only 12 respondents named such as person in the first place. This suggests that we have insufficient data to make any substantive conclusions about the third discussant. It could be that if more respondents named a third discussant, the agreement would be small given the decline we have already observed with the second discussant in the neutral and opposing categories.

Table 12: Comparing Respondent/Discussants Attitudes on EU Membership (in Percentages)

	Supportive Respondent	Neutral Respondent	Opposing Respondent
Supportive Discussant	(84.1)*(84.4)**(100.0)***	(60.0)(40.0)(0.0)	(30.8)(41.7)(0.0)
Neutral Discussant	(1.2)(2.2)(0.0)	(23.3)(20.0)(0.0)	(1.7)(4.2)(0.0)
Opposing Discussant	(14.7)(13.3)(0.0)	(16.7)(40.0)(0.0)	(67.5)(54.2)(100.0)

\*indicates the first discussant; \*\* indicates the second discussant; \*\*\*indicates the third discussant

How do we explain the strong agreement in respondent/discussant views on the EU? The agreement could be an outcome either of selection bias, that is similarity is observed because people simply choose to discuss politics with those who agree with them in the first place, or social influence, as I have claimed to be the case in this study. As I have argued in chapter five, selection bias is unlikely to explain the observed pattern in attitude agreement. First, individuals are often limited by geographic boundaries and their environment when it comes to choosing discussants (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995), a phenomenon that imposes considerable limits on people's freedom to select their conversation partners. In a way, individuals are destined to take advantage of the interaction opportunities created by their surroundings.

Second, even if people can still select conversation partners among the restricted pool their environment guarantees, it is less like that they will form relationships based primarily on similarities in political views. Individuals are often drawn together because of common personality traits or hobbies, many of which need not be politically oriented. Findings in this study demonstrate that rarely do people restrict their conversations only to politics. In fact, 97 percent of respondents reported discussing personal and non-political

matters with their conversation partners. As a result, the existence of systematic agreement in views on the EU across the sample of population studied here cannot be attributed to selection bias.

Instead, a more plausible explanation for similarity of views on the EU can be attributed to a causal relationship in which one of the conversation partners persuades the other either through argumentation, provision of simple information, or through pressure, as I argued in chapters three and four. I can now estimate whether such causal relationship is statistically significant for the broader population, and how the network-based approach compares to previous explanations for the emergence of views on the EU.

I estimate four models predicting pro-EU attitudes among the public. Model 1 features the impact of discussants one and two, while controlling for individual's background information, media exposure, expectations of future benefits from the EU, and political views. Consisting of 1000 observations, the model explains pro-EU attitudes of a sample of individuals consisting of those who named a discussant and those who did not. Given that individuals who did not name a discussant were coded as 0, the same category as those who named a discussant with neutral views as a solution to the missing variable problem, I include a dummy to control for the impact of those citizens as a separate category. Models 2, 3, and 4 analyze the impact of specific network characteristics, including frequency of conversations, relationship ties, and geographic proximity between the respondent and his/her discussant, on developing pro-EU views. As such, the three models estimate the impact of networks for a sample of respondents who named a discussant in the first place (N=571). By focusing only on individuals who engage in social

and political conversations, we can get a better sense of how such people differ from the broader population in the way they form opinions on foreign policy.

*Results from Statistical Analysis: the Big Picture*

Findings from the first model suggest that discussing politics with a pro-EU individual has a statistically significant impact on supporting Polish membership in the EU. The same is true for the second discussant, a result that supports the core argument of this study (table 13). While coefficients in logit are not directly interpretable as they are in linear regression analysis, we can rely on calculations of odds ratios to see the amounts by which the odds of favoring pro EU are multiplied, with one-unit increase in the independent variable of interest (Hamilton 1998). Results, found in the appendix, show that odds of being pro EU are multiplied by 2.1 with each one-unit change in the discussant's view, from strongly anti EU to somewhat anti EU. Although the odds ratio is the same for the second discussant (2.1), the impact, however, is smaller than for the first discussant because the one-unit change in the second discussant's opinion takes him/her from being Euroskeptic to neutral. Thus change in the x category is substantively much larger than one-unit change from strongly Euroskeptic to somewhat Euroskeptic for the first discussant. It should be recalled from chapter five that such coding was necessary given that not enough observations were present in each category for the second discussant, necessitating a less restrictive measurement. Consequently, the odds ratio for the second discussant should be interpreted while keeping in mind what the one-unit change in x actually implies for the first and for the second discussant.

Predicted probabilities provide a better understanding of the actual impact that network variables have on attitude formation when we examine the probability of

exhibiting pro-EU attitudes when the independent variable changes from its minimum to a maximum value. Model 1 shows that when one's political discussant is strongly pro EU there is a 92 percent probability that the respondent shares similar views on the subject. The probability of being pro EU decreases by 54 percent when one's political discussant strongly opposes the EU (table 14). Interestingly, the discussant's impact on shaping anti-EU attitudes rather than pro or neutral views, while strong, is smaller than in the case of shaping pro-EU opinions. Having a strongly pro-EU discussant means that there is only a 4 percent chance that the respondent will exhibit different views on the issue, in comparison to 38 percent when the discussant has strongly anti-EU attitudes.

The impact of the second discussant on attitudes towards the EU, while statistically significant, is somewhat weaker than that of the first discussant. For example, conversing with a strongly anti-EU discussant is not necessarily bad for shaping pro-EU views as evident by the 60 percent probability of being pro-EU when the discussant's view is completely opposite. However, having a strongly pro-EU discussant increases that probability to 88 percent.

What do these results suggest? First, building on information from descriptive statistics, findings show the existence of a statistically significant relationship between individual's pro-EU attitudes and those of his/her discussants. As I argued both in chapter five and earlier in this section, selection bias can be dismissed as an explanation for the relationship. Instead, interpersonal interactions with others reinforce ideas and often influence how we think about political issues, such as the EU. This not only confirms earlier findings from my analysis of the rise of Euroskepticism in Polish villages in a pro-

EU region, but extends the analysis by showing that a network effect is, indeed, responsible for shaping EU attitudes on a larger scale.

Second, findings suggest that the process of influencing attitudes is easier when it comes to molding pro-EU minds than it is in the case of shaping Euroskeptic ideas. It is quite rare for individuals with strongly pro-EU discussants to develop anti-EU views, while the probability of supporting Polish membership in the organization stands at 38 percent when the discussant is strongly anti EU. In a way, such results are not surprising from a theoretical perspective. When people are faced with conflicting ideas, the process of influence is hampered because individuals have to make sense of competing information and argumentation. As a result, those who are faced with such ideas may have a harder time choosing between them. In such circumstances, more people will adopt the “deviant” views of their immediate discussants, although some will defect and stick with the majority view. Naturally, we see more people accepting pro-EU views in the absence of conflicting information. Here, individuals face no major dilemmas and easily embrace the views of the discussants, which reinforce the mainstream thinking about the policy.

Does this mean that network’s effect is merely limited to reinforcing national consensus? I would argue that while at times social interactions reinforce vaguely formed ideas about a policy, they also influence formation of initial views. Studying Euroskeptic networks is particularly useful in testing the influence argument. If individuals are not influenced by networks, and the latter merely serve to reinforce the dominant national ideas then we should expect that individuals who are exposed to anti-EU views should simply ignore them and stick with the mainstream consensus. We can see, however, that when one converses with a strongly anti-EU person, the probability of exhibiting Euroskepticism is



55 percent. In comparison, there is a 38 percent probability of being pro membership when the discussant strongly opposes the EU. The difference in probabilities suggests that in spite of perceived national consensus, individuals with Euroskeptic discussants are more likely to adopt the views of their conversation partners.

Given that Euroskeptics in Poland have often been ostracized in public conversations and labeled as “backward,” (interview source #16), it should have been particularly difficult for influence to occur. Yet as predicted probabilities demonstrate an individual with a strongly anti-discussant is more likely to embrace anti-EU views than to support the organization. Furthermore, case study in chapter four has shown that even when individuals are surrounded by pro-EU campaigns, they can resist dominant ideas when local leaders and the norms governing village relations encourage the adoption of opposing views. I would thus argue that by focusing on Euroskeptic networks, I can make a reasonable claim that influence does occur during interpersonal discussions.

Since individuals can influence others to oppose the EU, it is highly probable that a similar, albeit often less challenging, process occurs in the context of pro-EU discussions. The differences in predicted probabilities simply suggest that pro-EU discussants may only provide basic information or engage in considerably less argumentation to actually encourage their uninformed or indifferent conversation partners to support the EU. In some contexts, individuals may be remotely aware of the mainstream opinions, but may still be undecided themselves. It is then that pro-EU networks may convince people by providing additional information or by translating the meaning of a policy. In such situations, networks do not merely reinforce pre-existing pro-EU ideas as they may not have been formed yet. Yet if an individual possesses a vague sense of what the nation thinks, it simply

may be easier for him/her to be convinced about an issue when network discussions abstain from delivering conflicting information. While it is true that at times, pro-EU networks may reinforce already established ideas, it is just as likely that they shape preferences that have not yet been formed.

In conclusion, influencing one's view in the direction of Euroskepticism might be harder when the national environment is highly dominated by pro-EU rhetoric. When individuals believe that others around them support the supranational organization, it becomes difficult to accept opposing, anti-EU views. As a result when national beliefs challenge views introduced to individuals through interpersonal contact, the process of influence, while still occurring, might be harder to achieve when conversations simply confirm what the nation already supports. The finding thus reveals the connection between attitude formation, one's immediate social network, and the larger perceptions of what the nation thinks. Most importantly, it lends initial support to hypotheses 9 and 10, which suggested that when networks challenge national consensus about a policy, their impact on attitude formation will be weaker than when conflicting ideas are absent.

Turning to control variables, only some emerge as statistically significant. Specifically, financial improvement within the past year is strongly associated with pro-EU views as are expectations of benefits from joining the EU. Most notable here is the large impact of future expectations of benefits on pro-EU attitudes, with individuals who anticipate decline in benefits having a 25 percent probability of developing supportive views on the policy. In contrast, those expecting large improvements can boast a 91 percent probability of forming pro-EU opinions. Lastly, supporting a pro-EU party is associated with supportive views on the issue.

Clearly, the most surprising aspect of these findings is the lack of statistical significance of variables measuring individual's demographic characteristics, including age, occupation, and education. In addition, the impact of mass media is not significant, as might have been expected given the popularity of studies linking media's effect to public opinion (please see chapter two for a review). After running several base models to examine why the variables, traditionally thought to be important predictors of attitudes on the EU, provide little explanatory power here, I noted that the effect of age, occupation, education, and the mass media disappears when we control for expectations of future benefits from the EU, party's view on the EU, and the discussant's impact. Future expectations of benefits eliminate the impact of age and occupational category classified as managers, specialists, and teachers. Party view on the EU and the discussant's impact absorb the effect of managers/teachers as well as the impact of farmers, age, education, and the media. As a result, when we control for partisanship, the networks, and expectations of benefits, demographic variables previously thought to predict attitude formation lose their explanatory power.

An even more comprehensive picture emerges after comparing attitude formation of individuals who named a discussant with those who did not. The big difference is the media's effect and income change. Among those who named a discussant, introducing the network variable eliminates the impact of education, income change, and the media. Among those who did not name a discussant, media is never statistically significant, but income is. What do we make out of this? People who refrain from discussing the EU with others are much more influenced by changes in their income when deciding whether or not to support the EU. They are also influenced by the party they support and its view on the

policy. Lastly, expectations of future benefits from the EU clearly shape the formation of their views. People who named a discussant are much more likely to be affected by the media, level of education, income change, party view, and expectations of benefits.

However, when we control for the network's influence, the impact of the media, education, and income disappears. Thus, individuals who engage in discussions with others are much less motivated by their financial situation when forming an opinion about the EU than are people who abstain from discussing the policy with others.

Surprisingly, the impact of one's farming occupation on attitude formation appears to matter only for those people who named a discussant and *only* when the network variable is introduced into the analysis. This is particularly surprising because the variable is statistically significant under these two conditions. The finding may suggest that among farmers in my sample, social interactions evolve in the context of one's occupation. It might be that people engage in discussions about farming and thus come together in the first place because of common work connections. Yet once they are together, conversations with others shape their thinking about the policy. In fact evidence from my field research supports this explanation. Whether they help each other with milking the cow or work in the fields, people initiate work-related discussions that easily spill into other areas, including politics (Chapter four).

#### *Results from Statistical Analysis: Network Characteristics and Attitude Formation*

In addition to examining the exposure to pro or anti-EU discussants and addressing the impact of networks in relation to other control variables, I explore the network variable in a greater detail. By focusing on relationship ties between political discussants, frequency of interactions, and proximity between those who engage in political discussions about the

EU, I can delineate the role of specific network characteristics in attitude formation.

Models 2, 3, and 4 examine the effect of each interactive variable (discussant's view on EU X variable of interest, such as frequency of interactions) separately to avoid high levels of multicollinearity and potentially biasing the analysis<sup>50</sup>. Focusing on those respondents who named a discussant, the models present results based on 571 observations.<sup>51</sup>

Findings suggest that increase in frequency of discussions about the EU with a pro-EU person has a statistically significant impact on developing supportive attitudes towards the organization. Results, which support hypothesis 5, show a 90 percent probability that a respondent will exhibit pro-EU views when he/she frequently converses with a pro-EU discussant in comparison to 56 percent when such conversations take place daily with a Euroskeptic or neutral individual (table 14). Surprisingly, neither relationship ties nor proximity between the discussant and the respondent have any impact on shaping pro or Euroskeptic attitudes of those individuals who named a political discussant. This suggests that in an age where levels of communication increasingly transcend geographic boundaries, living in the same neighborhood or even the same town may no longer be a necessary factor in shaping political views. Interactions are still important, as model 2 demonstrates, but the physical contact may be less so. Discussing politics with a pro-EU

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<sup>50</sup> A base model for those respondents who named a discussant is in the appendix.

<sup>51</sup> Given that only 12 percent of respondents named a second person with whom they discuss politics, I do not test the impact of relationship ties, proximity, and frequency of interactions for the second discussant. The rather small number of observations this percentage produces does not provide enough degrees of freedom to assess the impact of interactions and controls, many of which are ordinal with several categories. Given that in several instances some categories cannot be merged and not enough observations are present to reach appropriate conclusions, I limit my analysis only to the first discussant.

Table 13: Polish Pro-EU Attitudes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<b>Network</b>				
Discussant 1	0.731 (0.099)***	0.340 (0.218)	0.566 (0.228)**	0.580 (0.216)***
Discussant 2	0.767 (0.303)**			
Dummy 1	0.272 (0.187)			
Dummy 2	0.357 (0.320)			
Disc X Frequency		0.199 (0.094)**		
Frequency		-0.151 (0.114)		
Disc X Relationship			0.088 (0.093)	
Relationship			-0.074 (0.136)	
Disc X Proximity				0.124 (0.131)
Proximity				-0.023 (0.177)
<b>Background</b>				
Education	0.276 (0.179)	0.465 (0.292)	0.483 (0.292)*	0.478 (0.292)
Gender	-0.031 (0.178)	-0.085 (0.269)	-0.018 (0.278)	-0.060 (0.264)
Intellectual	0.020 (0.609)	-0.239 (0.757)	-0.148 (0.757)	-0.212 (0.749)
Age	-0.179 (0.128)	-0.203 (0.206)	-0.203 (0.206)	-0.201 (0.207)
Manager/Teacher	0.420 (0.280)	0.199 (0.370)	0.170 (0.374)	0.218 (0.369)
Skilled Labor	-0.022 (0.221)	-0.264 (0.313)	-0.259 (0.313)	-0.264 (0.312)
Farmer	-0.436 (0.463)	1.471 (0.798)*	1.325 (0.776)*	1.407 (0.783)*
IncomeChange	0.236 (0.091)***	0.134 (0.136)	0.124 (0.134)	0.119 (0.134)
City/Village	0.233 (0.181)	0.141 (0.274)	0.159 (0.272)	0.161 (0.274)
<b>Politics</b>				
Government Support	0.023 (0.190)	0.229 (0.295)	0.227 (0.301)	0.247 (0.302)
Party View on EU	0.683 (0.143)***	0.791 (0.199)***	0.818 (0.198)***	0.817 (0.198)***
<b>Expectations</b>				
Future Benefits	0.835 (0.088)***	0.930 (0.130)***	0.905 (0.127)***	0.908 (0.128)***
<b>Media</b>				
Print	0.153 (0.205)	0.343 (0.254)	0.346 (0.250)	0.372 (0.249)
Constant	-0.513 (0.601)	-0.091 (0.813)	-0.355 (0.838)	-0.524 (0.853)

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01, N=1000 (Model 1), N=571 (Models 2,3,4)

Table 14: Selected Predicted Probabilities for Model 1 and 2 (Pro-EU Attitudes), when  $x=\min$  and  $x=\max$ <sup>52</sup>

	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Network</b>		
Discussant 1	(0.38)(0.92)	
Discussant 2	(0.60)(0.87)	
Disc X Frequency		(0.56)(0.90)
<b>Background</b>		
Farmer		(0.85)(0.92)
Income Change	(0.72)(0.86)	
<b>Politics</b>		
Party View on EU	(0.62)(0.86)	(0.65)(0.90)
<b>Expectations</b>		
Future Benefits	(0.25)(0.90)	(0.23)(0.93)

friend rather than a pro-EU co-worker, again, matters less than expected, providing little support for hypothesis 4 and 6.

What do these findings suggest about specific network characteristics and ways in which attitudes are formed? When political attitudes are molded, the process is about discussion, argumentation, and information diffusion especially when the policy has a direct impact on a large segment of the population. In the Polish case, for example, the local leader, so influential in shaping opposition to the country's membership in the EU in the villages of Parzynów, Ignaców, and Mostki, discussed the issue with people while collecting taxes, working, and socializing (Chapter 4). He relied on extensive argumentation and poignant rhetoric to get the message across during daily activities. In the absence of such extensive

<sup>52</sup> Predicted probabilities show how a change in the variable of interest from a minimum to maximum value affects the dependent variable while holding all other variables at their mean. Predicted probabilities are presented for those variables that are statistically significant in the models.

interactions, the process of influence was hampered as evident by the limited existence of Euroskeptical attitudes beyond the three villages in the pro-EU region I studied.

Lastly, it is important to note that just like in models 2,3, and 4 traditionally employed control variables are not statistically significant. Here again, only expectations of future benefits from the EU and party support are statistically significant across all three models when discussant interactive terms are employed. Supporting a pro-EU party has a strong impact on one's pro-EU attitudes as do expectations of benefits from the membership. Along with discussant views, the two variables are robust, suggesting that attitude formation can be best explained by a combination of specific material considerations (expectations of benefits), party support, and network influence. Findings thus challenge traditional studies relying extensively on individual's demographic characteristics as explanations for attitude formation on the EU.

### **Explaining Individual Support for the War in Iraq: Description and Analysis**

I have argued earlier that network effect might vary depending on issue type, with a stronger impact on political views when a policy has clear and direct impact on average citizens. In the absence of high stakes, the importance of networks might be smaller precisely because the policy is unlikely to affect the general population, decreasing the need to understand the issue in the first place. To test this argument, I study the formation of views on the war in Iraq. As outlined in chapter five, the war in Iraq has a direct impact on those individuals whose relatives have been sent to monitor the situation in the war-torn country but on the population as a whole. Consequently, critical examination of the war during conversations should be small, which means that the role of networks as providers either of specialized information or as sources of group pressure should be minimal.



A majority of Poles (78 percent) opposed their country's involvement in the war unfolding in Iraq in 2004 while almost 17 percent supported the effort, according to survey results. Approximately five percent of the population remained indifferent about the policy's direction. The numbers from my data, listed below in table 15, are similar to other surveys measuring Polish attitudes towards Iraq. For instance, the World Public Opinion reports that approximately 70 percent of individuals called for troop withdrawal both in 2004 and 2005 (Ramsay and Stephens 2005).

Table 15: Support for Polish Participation in the war in Iraq: June-July 2004

Support	16.8%
Indifference	5.2%
Disapproval	78.0%

At first glance it appears that interpersonal communication about Iraq resembles the patterns found in the case of the EU. About one half of the respondents have at least one person with whom they discuss the war, a figure just slightly lower than the one for the EU (57 percent). In both instances, the number of people with a second discussant is almost similar (12 percent for EU and 11 percent for Iraq). Half of the population surveyed in this study does not discuss the war with anyone, a number slightly higher than in the case of EU membership.

Table 16: Percentage of People Who Named a Discussant

One Discussant	50.3%
Two Discussants	11.3%
Three Discussants	1.2%
None	49.7%

The level of interactions is also similar for both cases, with majority of respondents discussing the war a few times each week. This is true for the first and the second discussant. Just like in the case of the EU, daily discussions about the war are not very frequent (table 17). Only six percent of people discuss Iraq daily with one person, and four percent do so with the second discussant. Although I expected war discussions to be less popular, basic descriptive results indicate that frequency of discussions changes little with respect to different issues.

Table 17: Frequency of Conversations-the War in Iraq

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Daily	6.2%	8.0%	0.0%
Few Times/Week	49.5%	46.0%	33.3%
Once/Two Weeks	18.7%	14.2%	33.3%
Once/Month	12.9%	25.7%	25.0%
Less	12.7%	6.1%	8.3%

More similarities with the case of EU membership emerge when we examine the identity of the discussants with whom individuals converse about the war. Almost half of all discussants are family members, followed by close friends, and co-workers (table 18). Occasionally, people discuss Polish involvement in the war in Iraq with their neighbors, although the number of such discussants lags behind family, friends, and co-workers.

Table 18: The Respondent's Relationship to the Discussants

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Family	46.5%	45.4%	41.7%
Close Friends	26.0%	24.4%	33.3%
Co-Workers	19.4%	19.3%	16.7%
People from Clubs	0.5%	0.8%	0.0%
Neighbors	7.5%	10.1%	8.3%

Lastly, the discussants usually live in the same village or city as the respondent, again suggesting that people are somewhat restricted in their choice of conversation partners by geography. Only 24 percent of respondents indicated they discussed the war with discussants living outside of their city or village (table 19). In general, it is the third discussant, possibly the least influential one, who is most likely to be separated geographically from the respondent. These findings clearly resemble basic frequencies from the EU case and indicate little initial difference in respondent/discussant characteristics, at least from a descriptive approach.

Table 19: Respondent-Discussant Geographic Proximity

	1 <sup>st</sup> Discussant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussant	3 <sup>rd</sup> Discussant
Neighborhood	31.8%	28.6%	33.3%
City/Village	44.2%	50.4%	25.0%
Beyond the City/Village	24.0%	21.0%	41.7%

As in the case of the EU, I find a strong agreement in discussant/respondent views on the war. For example, respondents supporting Polish participation in the war are paired with pro-Iraq discussants in over 70 percent of the cases and with those opposing the policy in almost 30 percent of observations (table 20). Respondents opposing the war are matched with anti-Iraq discussants in 89 percent of the cases. Those numbers decline slightly for the second discussant. Essentially, the level of respondent/discussant agreement on the war in Iraq is quite similar to the figures in the case of the EU, initially suggesting little difference between the two issues.

Table 20: Comparing Respondent/Discussants Attitudes on the War in Iraq (in Percentages)

	Supportive Respondent	Neutral Respondent	Opposing Respondent
Supportive Discussant	(70.7)*(60.0)**(100.0)***	(28.6)(16.7)(0.0)	(9.4)(15.9)(0.0)
Neutral Discussant	(0.0)(12.0)(0.0)	(33.3)(33.3)(0.0)	(1.8)(1.2)(0.0)
Opposing Discussant	(29.3)(28.0)(0.0)	(38.1)(50.0)(0.0)	(88.8)(82.9)(100.0)

\*indicates the first discussant; \*\* indicates the second discussant; \*\*\* indicates the third discussant

Initial look at these numbers may suggest a similar causal story as in the case of the EU, although statistical analysis of the results may help clarify the process of influence. As in the case of the EU, I expect that selection bias will be minimal here (for an explanation, please refer to the discussion in chapter five as well as to preceding sections). To better understand how, if at all, the Iraq issue may vary in generating the network effect, below I estimate four models of attitude formation on the policy. Just like in the case of the EU, the first model examines attitudes of 1000 respondents, with about one half of them representing individuals who discuss the war with others. Models 2,3, and 4 focus on specific network characteristics, including frequency of discussions, relationship ties, and geographic proximity between the respondent and the discussant, and examine ways in which variation in these characteristics may affect opinion formation.

#### *Results from Statistical Analysis*

Descriptive statistics showed a strong agreement in attitudes on the war among the respondent and the first and second discussant. Yet, the story changes slightly with results from the logit analysis (table 21). Several points emerge from the findings. First, model 1, which presents results based on the entire surveyed sample of individuals, including those

with and without a discussant, demonstrates that having a pro-Iraq discussant has a statistically significant impact on the respondent's pro-war attitudes. The odds ratio suggests that as the discussant's views change from anti war to indifferent, a one unit increase in  $x$ , the odds of being pro war increase by 4.6. The effect for the second discussant is smaller, with a change from anti war to indifferent resulting in a 1.1 increase in the odds of being pro war, suggesting that network effect is much more about the first, rather than the second, discussant.

Analysis of predicted probabilities provides additional information about the variables' impact on attitude formation. Having a strongly pro-Iraq discussant, findings demonstrate, means that there exists a 46 percent probability that the respondent will harbor similar views (table 22). When the discussant opposes Polish involvement in the war, the probability that the respondent will exhibit anti-war opinions reaches 94 percent. This suggests a rather strong impact of the first discussant particularly in the direction of anti-war attitudes. The impact in the pro-war direction, however, is much smaller than in the case of shaping anti-war views. For example, a respondent with a pro-war discussant has a 46 percent probability of supporting the war and a 42 percent probability of opposing it. While having a pro-war conversation partner increases the probability of being pro rather than anti-war by four percent, the number clearly does not suggest a big difference. Again, what this implies is that when individuals are exposed to conflicting ideas, they face difficulty deciding whether to follow the national consensus or adopt the views of a discussant. In light of such competing ideas, they are slightly more likely follow the discussant, but a good portion of individuals will choose not to do so.

What do these findings suggest about the network's impact on shaping attitudes on the war? It is clear from descriptive statistics that people talk frequently with others about the war, yet pro-war networks are not extremely successful in generating a strong pro-war following. While in the EU case the Euroskeptic influence was harder to achieve, it was nevertheless much greater than in this case. I would argue that this distinction supports my theoretical claims about the diminished power of networks in influencing attitudes when the policy has only an indirect impact on the people. Since the stakes are small, pro-war discussants may either not engage in extensive argumentation and persuasion to influence people to adopt their views, and even if they attempt to do so, they may not be successful because the pressure to form specific preferences may not even be there. In light of the general anti-war mood in the country, it is easier for people to simply adopt the mainstream views.

Networks, of course, still play some role in molding how people think about the war. Clearly, findings indicate that network effect is statistically significant and thus we cannot dismiss it. It is most probable that anti-war networks reinforce national ideas during conversations or help form the views of people who are indifferent or uninformed about the policy. The network effect in this case manifests itself through a different process than the one in the case of the EU. Here, influence may be limited to information dissemination more so than to extensive argumentation and dissection of the policy.

Second, findings suggest that unlike in the EU case, the second discussant's impact is not statistically significant therefore suggesting that network influence in the Iraq case is limited to only one person. Again, this suggests that network effect is not very extensive, and thus differs from what I found in the case of the EU. The "network" effect in the Iraq case is

better characterized, as a limited, dyadic phenomenon rather than a “network” impact in the true sense of the word because the issue has never reached the level of intensity among the public as debates about Polish membership in the EU have. The finding about the second discussant together with limited impact of pro-war networks on developing pro-war views supports hypothesis 7 and demonstrates that network effect varies depending on the policy at stake.

Third, one of the interactive terms, geographic proximity between the discussant and the respondent, is statistically significant among those respondents who named a discussant (models 2,3 and 4). Results indicate that discussing the war with an individual who opposes the war and lives close to the respondent increases the probability that the respondent will exhibit anti-war opinions. Unlike in the case of the EU where extensive conversations were important in molding attitudes, here attitude formation is less about quantity of discussion about the policy and more about interacting with person in any context. This may again reinforce my earlier point about the different processes through which network effect may manifest itself. In the case of the EU, extensive conversations mattered because the policy was controversial and the need to critically examine it was great. On the contrary, here extensive argumentation and dissection of the policy may not be necessary because the issue’s importance to the general public is low. Instead, information about the policy may randomly surface during common interactions facilitated by geographic proximity.

Lastly, it is important to note the impact of several control variables, most notably those that are robust across all the models (table 21). Results show that females, as opposed to males, are less likely to approve of Polish participation in the Iraq war, supporting traditional studies emphasizing gender differences in war attitudes (Goldstein 2001). Such a

difference, however, seems to be limited to war-specific issues as the variable is not statistically significant in the case of the EU. In addition, one's place of inhabitation has a significant impact on molding war-related attitudes. Specifically, individuals living in the city are less likely to support the war than fellow citizens in the countryside. In terms of political variables, both approval of the government's performance and support of anti-Iraq parties have a statistically significant impact on one's views on the war. Not surprisingly positive evaluation of the government increases support for the war, while loyalty to a party harboring anti-Iraq stand decreases the probability of pro-Iraq views. Party support is robust across different policy issues, the EU and the war in Iraq. Finally, turning to international trust as predictor of attitudes, findings show that strong level of trust towards the United States is statistically significant in helping explain pro-war attitudes, while individuals who trust France are most likely to oppose the war.

Findings related to control variables are consistent with previous research, particularly the strong results on gender differences and war. Occupational variables become insignificant as predictors of attitudes when additional controls are introduced, including distinction between city and village inhabitation, networks, and party views. The most notable impact of the network variable is that it eliminates the importance of mass media in attitude formation, posing a serious challenge to studies on the media's effect. Overall, however, the networks and party view on the war do not drastically alter previous explanations, as was the case, to some extent, with the EU. With the exception of challenging the media's impact on attitude formation, the network approach complements previous works and provides additional insight about ways in which war-related views are formed.



	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<b>Network</b>				
Discussant 1	1.529 (0.161)***	1.066 (0.266)***	1.063 (0.246)***	0.761 (0.245)***
Discussant 2	0.123 (0.340)			
Dummy 1	-0.659 (0.214)***			
Dummy 2	0.183 (0.347)			
Disc X Frequency		0.044 (0.110)		
Frequency		-0.046 (0.133)		
Disc X Relationship			0.055 (0.105)	
Relationship			-0.207 (0.163)	
Proximity				-0.056 (0.219)
Disc X Proximity				0.289 (0.161)*
<b>Background</b>				
Education	-0.110 (0.214)	-0.392 (0.358)	-0.394 (0.357)	-0.398 (0.360)
Gender	-1.057 (0.220)***	-1.214 (0.353)***	-1.111 (0.372)***	-1.242 (0.359)***
Intellectual	0.579 (0.527)	0.535 (0.725)	0.535 (0.730)	0.541 (0.736)
Manager/Teacher	-0.216 (0.316)	0.129 (0.474)	0.090 (0.473)	0.101 (0.475)
Age	-0.068 (0.151)	0.037 (0.241)	0.028 (0.241)	0.043 (0.243)
Skilled Labor	0.101 (0.264)	0.592 (0.391)	0.497 (0.395)	0.501 (1.020)
Farmer	-0.156 (0.662)	0.599 (0.964)	0.469 (0.985)	0.367 (0.977)
IncomeChange	-0.015 (0.111)	-0.117 (0.172)	-0.121 (0.172)	-0.119 (0.171)
City/Village	-0.671 (0.229)***	-0.988 (0.374)***	-0.999 (0.365)***	-1.021 (0.370)***
<b>Politics</b>				
Government Support	0.404 (0.184)**	0.667 (0.302)**	0.654 (0.300)**	0.703 (0.304)**
Party View on Iraq	0.458 (0.171)**	0.527 (0.259)**	0.545 (0.259)**	0.470 (0.261)*
<b>International Trust</b>				
UK	0.029 (0.145)	-0.148 (0.217)	-0.143 (0.216)	-0.174 (0.218)
France	-0.254 (0.139)*	-0.413 (0.211)*	-0.405 (0.213)*	-0.395 (0.212)*
US	0.519 (0.136)***	0.774 (0.211)***	0.764 (0.208)***	0.793 (0.210)***
Russia	0.034 (0.159)	-0.106 (0.255)	-0.102 (0.258)	-0.112 (0.255)
Germany	0.029 (0.142)	0.041 (0.214)	0.075 (0.218)	0.063 (0.216)
<b>Media</b>				
Print	0.268 (0.177)	0.219 (0.232)	0.252 (0.232)	0.238 (0.234)
Constant	-0.065 (0.645)	0.745 (1.001)	1.232 (1.048)	0.784 (1.022)

\* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01, N=1000 (Model 1), N=503 (Models 2,3,4)

Table 22: Selected Predicted Probabilities for Model 1 and Model 2 (Pro-Iraq Attitudes), when  $x=\min$  and  $x=\max$ <sup>53</sup>

	Model 1	Model 4
<b>Network</b>		
Discussant 1	(0.04)(0.46)	(0.04)(0.48)
Dummy 1	(0.14)(0.08)	
Proximity X Disc 1		(0.05)(0.24)
<b>Background</b>		
Gender	(0.17)(0.08)	(0.14)(0.04)
City/Village	(0.14)(0.07)	(0.11)(0.06)
<b>Politics</b>		
Government Support	(0.10)(0.20)	(0.07)(0.25)
Party View on Iraq	(0.06)(0.15)	(0.04)(0.11)
<b>International Trust</b>		
France	(0.13)(0.08)	
USA	(0.07)(0.18)	(0.04)(0.18)

### Concluding Discussion: Theoretical Implications from Findings on Attitude Formation

Results from the analysis presented in this chapter provide empirical and theoretical insights about the role of interpersonal discussions in molding views on EU membership and the war in Iraq. Building on findings from the in-depth study of the rise of Euroskepticism in Polish villages, the large-N analysis suggests that at least half of the population engages in social discussions about politics, a testimony to the growing importance of social interactions in people's lives. The chapter takes those findings a step further by integrating both demographic and social components of attitude formation to

<sup>53</sup> Predicted probabilities show how a change in the variable of interest from minimum to maximum value affects the dependent variable while holding all other variables at their mean. Predicted probabilities are presented for those variables that are statistically significant in the models.

understand the process through which specific views develop. Several points emerge from this analysis.

First, findings presented in the two cases suggest that the process of attitude formation on foreign policy can be best understood by looking at a combination of individual and social explanations, rather than approaching it by studying exclusively demographic factors. When social networks are introduced into the analysis, many of the traditional variables lose statistical significance, clearly demonstrating that traditional thinking about attitude formation is missing an important process through which views are molded. At the same time, half of the population does not discuss political issues with others, suggesting that network-based approach is not sufficient to capture the entire dynamic.

Second, network effect varies to some extent on the broader national developments, demonstrating that attitudes evolve through local and national dynamics. The impact of networks changes depending on the type of policy, with greater effect when large segments of the population can potentially feel the policy's consequences. Given that stakes are high in such instances social networks are much more likely to serve as a source of specialized information and as markers of local norms. Findings here demonstrate that while the first discussant is statistically significant in shaping attitudes both in the EU and Iraq context, the effect is not as extensive in the latter case. Unlike with EU attitudes, the network effect is limited only to the first discussant in the Iraq case, suggesting a dyadic rather than a network impact.

Third, broader national sentiments on a policy can affect the networks' impact on attitude formation, again suggesting that understanding the interplay between local and

national developments helps explain the process through which social interactions shape political views. When the discussant's opinion runs contrary to what the individual thinks is the dominant view in the country, influence in the opposite direction, while occurring, is slightly more difficult to accomplish. This is particularly difficult to achieve when the policy has less relevance to the public and the pressure to adopt specific views is minimal. Thus, we can see that in the case of Iraq, for example, pro-war networks are less effective in influencing people to support the war. Yet, similar, minority-view networks generating Euroskeptic following are much more effective in the case of the EU because the policy can have far-reaching consequences on the lives of many people, creating the need to critically examine the issue. Since the policy may create losers and winner, there might also be more pressure on individuals to adopt the views of local networks. This shows that the causal process of influence may vary depending on the policy and the broader national consensus surrounding the issue.

Fourth, building on my previous point, I argue that when the policy's stakes are small, political discussions serve to reinforce ideas of those individuals who have some vague notion about the national mood on the issue, disseminate facts to those uninformed about the policy, and also serve to directly persuade people on the issue, though to a lesser extent. The element of persuasion in the case of low-stakes policy is less effective when discussant ideas oppose the national consensus, suggesting that the process of attitude formation in the direction that supports the national mood may involve less persuasion and more information dissemination and idea reinforcement. When the policy, however, has high stakes, such as the EU, direct persuasion is much more evident and extensive conversations, as findings from interactive models in the EU case demonstrate,

are vital in driving such influence. Overall, this shows that the process through which networks shape attitudes may actually differ depending on policy type.

Findings from this chapter demonstrate that Euroskeptic networks are successful in molding anti-EU views, and they most likely employ persuasion or group pressure to convince people to embrace the “deviant” views. Given that majority of Polish population in 2004 supported the EU, people clearly had a greater chance to be exposed to pro-EU views. The Euroskeptic discussants, thus, must have worked harder than EU supporters to convince people to stick with the overall unpopular view. For example, local leader in the Parzynów village in Poland engaged in extensive discussions and argumentation to educate and convince people that EU membership would entail cultural and economic costs. The rise of Euroskepticism in the villages I studied demonstrated that a process of influence and persuasion, rather than merely reinforcement of vague ideas, accompanied attitude formation (Chapter 4).

Fifth, network effect is clearly about some reinforcement of previous ideas, dissemination of new information to help form initial views, and persuasion. In chapter five and earlier here, I have argued that selection bias is less challenging to the causal mechanism linking networks to the emergence of specific attitudes. Individuals are not always free to choose their discussants as geographic boundaries often define the pool of people available for interactions. Even if one still enjoys some freedom to select a specific conversation partner, it is less likely that politics draw people together in the first place. In fact, nearly all the respondents here reported discussing personal matters with people who also serve as their political discussants. Other studies report similar observations (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). It thus appears that political similarity is not

the main and prevalent reason behind the selection of conversation partners. I would also dismiss an argument that in light of asymmetry of opinions on a policy, with more pro than anti-EU views in society, discussant/respondent agreement reflects the large probability of chance association rather than any causal influence. Euroskeptical individuals have probably as many opportunities as EU supporters to meet pro-EU people, yet they nevertheless are much more likely to exhibit the Euroskeptical views of their discussants. As a result, it is unlikely that chance association is the explanation for the network effect demonstrated here.

Lastly, based on the results introduced here, I can provide a summary of a theoretical story about attitude formation. About half of the population, which does not engage in political discussions with others, forms attitudes on the EU, or a high-stake policy, based on expectations of benefits from membership in the supranational organization, party view on the EU, and income changes. Unlike previous studies (for example, Gabel 1998a, 1998b), I find that these factors eliminate the impact of occupation and education on attitude formation, questioning these prevalent findings. On a low-stake policy, such as the war in Iraq, the same factors play a role, in addition to support of the government's performance and gender. The impact of the latter may have less to do with policy stakes, and more with its war-related issue given the rather strong findings on women favoring peace-oriented initiatives (Goldstein 2001).

The other half of the population, which discusses politics with other people, differs somehow from those who do not engage in such interactions. Among this group of individuals, we have those who serve as opinion or network leaders and those who are either uninformed about politics or simply lack more sophisticated information to form an

opinion. The group acting as molders of attitudes is likely to be affected by similar factors as the non-discussant sample when attitude formation is considered. The notable difference here is that such individuals are more responsive to media's influence, suggesting that they actively absorb and dissect messages they receive. Once the network variable is introduced, we can see that those who are influenced by others are no longer affected by the media or change in their income. They are still influenced by expectations of long term benefits and party's view on the issue. Thus, when we exclude the opinion leaders and those who do not discuss politics with others, we have at the very least a quarter of the population that is influenced by someone else's views on the policy and whose views cannot be explained using traditional demographic characteristics. The potential for the number of people influenced by networks may be even larger given that some opinion leaders may affect the views of multiple people, thereby decreasing the equal ratio between opinion leaders and the influenced individuals that I assumed here for the purpose of simplicity.

Why are these dynamics important and how do they alter our understanding of attitude formation on foreign policy? While studying individual attitudes offers theoretical insights about the way people absorb information and make sense of policies, it is clearly the aggregate effect of opinions that might be of greater interest, particularly to policymakers. The network perspective suggests that because people are connected to others individual attitudes can snowball, causing a rapid formation of specific public views on a policy. Consequently, policymakers should clearly target local network leaders when the policy first appears as a national issue to ensure the emergence of "favorable" national consensus. Leaders should be also attentive to groups opposing a

policy, which has significant consequences on majority of the population, when it first emerges. Given that information diffuses quickly in a network, such groups may inspire a growing following. Contrary to common expectations, findings in this chapter suggest that national elites should be particularly concerned when the opposition continues after a national mood begins to form in favor of the policy. An opposition that resists the emergence of national consensus exhibits loyalty to “deviant” attitudes and has a strong persuasive power that should not be neglected particularly when the fate of the policy is far from being decided.



## CHAPTER 7

### SOCIAL NETWORKS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKING

#### Introduction

In previous chapters, I emphasized the impact of social interactions on attitude formation by investigating the emergence of Euroskeptic attitudes at the local level and then by examining the network's effect on a larger, national sample. Here, I discuss how looking at attitude formation from a social perspective can be linked to specific patterns in opinions, phenomena of interest to policymakers.

Current research on public opinion and policymaking posits a conditional nature of public opinion/policymaking nexus, suggesting that either specific leadership or domestic characteristics might explain attentiveness to public views (for a review, please refer to chapter two). Building on this fruitful line of research, I investigate how perceptions of stability of public views or those of vital groups in society affect elite responsiveness to citizens. When leaders perceive public opinion to be more stable, they are much more likely to respond to its demands, or at the very least, to the pressure from vital groups in society. On the contrary, when opposition to an issue is perceived as merely temporary, policymakers are less likely to press for the groups' interest. Consequently, trends in attitudes serve as signals about groups' beliefs on an issue and their determination to hold the leader accountable.

This chapter argues that one way to understand fluctuations in public or group attitudes is to study the mechanism through which attitudes form in the first place. As a result, I rely on a social-network approach to show that ways in which networks influence

attitude formation are strongly related with the emergence of specific patterns in such attitudes. Clearly this analysis builds on previous chapters, which discussed the formation of attitudes on a large scale and examine the causal story linking social interactions to emergent opinions. Here, I explore the mechanisms further by studying how different modes through which the message is transmitted in a network affect durability of views.

In the next section, I briefly review the logic of the argument as it was presented in the theory chapter of this project. As I delineate the difference between three mechanisms of attitude formation, learning, group pressure, and information diffusion, I suggest what it all means for the longevity and fluctuation of preferences. Relying on preliminary data from interviews with 31 individuals, I present some qualitative findings about the process of influence before testing the argument statistically. My discussion then ventures into the policymaking realm. Here, I examine how Polish policymakers' perceptions of specific groups' attitudes on the EU affected elite responsiveness to such groups during accession negotiations in 2001.

### **Social Networks, Mechanisms of Influence, and Stability of Attitudes**

Earlier in this project, I have argued that when social networks emphasize deep learning about a policy rather than serving merely as information providers, attitudes are much more likely to remain stable through time. In a similar way, when learning is the mechanism through which attitudes are formed among interest groups, we should also expect that such groups would be better organized and active when pursuing their agenda. Given that learning emphasizes deeply rooted beliefs, often translating into specific political behavior such as participation in voting, letter-writing campaigns, meetings with local officials, and ability to disseminate influence to others, it is a mechanism through

which a sense of loyalty and personal attachment to an issue develops. Not surprisingly, when network leaders encourage learning through active discussions of the policy, attitudes formed in such a manner are likely to remain stable. Groups with strong convictions are often able to attract a wide and stable membership base and engage in successful activism (Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski 2005).

Social networks can also exert a degree of pressure on individuals to accept certain ideas or risk being ostracized. I have earlier discussed how common such a phenomenon can be in different contexts, whether in a small Massachusetts town or Euroskeptic village in Poland. As individuals receive material and social benefits from belonging to a group or a community, they are likely to adopt the views of the group. Attitudes formed in such a way should exhibit stability, at least initially, when individuals belong to the group. Through time, however, attitudes may change once individuals leave their communities and the pressure to adhere to certain perspectives may no longer exist.

In contrast to group pressure and learning, the mechanism of information diffusion, whether through direct interaction in a network or through herding, which involves observation of others' behavior, is likely to generate fluctuating attitudes. As a result in the absence of group pressure or deeply-formed beliefs, individuals can easily change their mind when faced with new or contradictory information. It is such information updating that can generate change in thinking, rendering attitudes less predictable. While learning and group pressure clearly involve information diffusion, they are ultimately about something greater than mere digestion of facts so often forced upon people in the current information age. In the case of learning, attitudes evolve through a process of discussion and critical analysis of information usually through an

extensive period of time. In the case of group pressure, information is packaged and translated to fit the interest of the group. The distinctive nature of information processing when learning and group pressure are involved suggests that longevity of attitudes may not be the same as in instances when information is randomly diffused.<sup>54</sup>

### **Research Design: Data and Method of Testing**

To design the study, I proceeded in several steps beginning with case and data selection to thinking about conducting in-depth interviews to collect information vital for the analysis of trends in attitudes.

*Case:* In order to examine the relationship between the mechanism through which social networks shape attitudes on foreign policy and stability of such attitudes, I collected preliminary data from in-depth interviews with Polish citizens whose attitudes were shaped through social interactions. Here again, I focus on attitudes towards Polish support for the country's membership in the EU. The case of Poland and the EU was selected because it allows us to study changes in attitudes as theoretically attributed here to social network dynamics. Given that a strong network effect is present in such a case (see chapter six), we can select individuals who are part of network relations to determine how such interactions affect their long or short-term thinking about the policy.

*Data:* In selecting the sample, I concentrated on choosing individuals based on variation in the main explanatory variable, the mechanism of network influence, to determine how changes in such variable affected the outcome, in this case the stability or fluctuation of attitudes in a period of seven years, or the time since Polish negotiations with the EU first began. The key aspect of this study was to find individuals who might

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<sup>54</sup> Please refer to chapter three (Theory Chapter) for more detailed discussion of learning, group pressure, and information diffusion.

be exposed to learning, group pressure or simple information diffusion in the network. To ensure such variation, I relied on data obtained from interviews with individuals who were the subject of my field research in chapter four (for more detailed discussion of sample selection, please refer to chapter four) as well as an additional interviews in two other villages, a small town, and two cities. Again, I relied on personal contacts to reach individuals in these areas. The main challenge was to locate people who were influenced by others either through learning, group pressure, or by being exposed to simple facts or basic information. Thus, individuals exposed to group pressure, I suspected, would belong to highly integrated, perhaps small communities. I also expected that learning could have been the mechanism of influence in areas where individuals have opportunities to interact and engage in critical analysis of the policy, individuals working in cities or alternatively small communities where pressure to adhere to specific views was missing. In terms of information diffusion, such mechanism should be present in areas where individuals are exposed to diverse groups without experiencing pressure to adopt a certain perspective.

Consequently, I conducted interviews with individuals in villages that lacked any dominant network figures as well as ones which had credible opinion leaders, including Parzynów (the subject of my case analysis in chapter six), Sułów, Durnkowa, and Milicz, and cities where I could interview individuals who either had wide business circles or belonged to limited groups, including Gliwice and Warsaw. Reaching my interview subjects was, naturally, not a random process, but one during which I relied on personal contacts to locate different segments of the population. Since my goal was to determine how different mechanisms affect durability of views, I needed to ensure that I have

variation in the “mechanism” variable, which often meant that I had to interview more individuals than necessary to locate those influenced by learning, group pressure, or by simply being exposed to basic information. Given that in-depth interviews were necessary in this case, I attempted initially to speak with over 30 individuals, a number large enough to allow for the use of statistical analysis of the data to derive meaningful conclusions about my observations. Thus, initial sample size was 40 individuals, with nine being eliminated because such individuals either did not discuss politics with anyone, were the source of influence not the recipient or provided incomplete information. In the end, a total of 31 individuals remained as eligible interview subjects.

*Interviews and Distinction among the Mechanisms:* The main focus of each interview, lasting from ten to 20 minutes, was to understand the mechanism through which one’s social network affected opinion formation on the policy. As I mentioned earlier, all interview subjects were first asked questions about their level of political knowledge and the knowledge of their political discussants to determine whether the person was a source or recipient of influence. Only those who were the recipients were interviewed.

In the second phase of the interview, individuals were asked about their support for Polish membership in the EU and probed for explanation of their views in order to conceptually distinguish between learning, group pressure, and information diffusion as a mechanism of influence. Since learning often evolves in the midst of extensive argumentation (Checkel 2001), individuals exposed to such mechanism should be able to provide clear explanations for their support. Individuals who provided extensive factual arguments that were consistent throughout the interview were classified as exposed to learning once it was clear that their social circles did not impose any penalties for

alternative views. To determine possible group pressure, I asked the following question: “If your view differed from the view of the person/group you interact with, would that difference have any impact on your relationship?” or “Would people talk about you if your views on the issue differed?” Individuals who would say “yes” to such questions would be classified as being loyal to the group. Their views in this context are much more likely to reflect group pressure than genuine learning (please refer to questionnaire under chapter four in the appendix for specific questions). Individuals who provided either basic or sophisticated facts about the policy, but were unable to provide meaningful explanations and did not experience pressure from others to form the view were usually classified as being exposed to information. Such people did not exhibit genuine learning about the policy.

Naturally, given that measuring the three mechanisms of influence is conceptually challenging, the interview content was flexible and, often, required additional questions in order to determine precise nature of influence if the above questions/observations failed. In cases where additional questions provided little insight and the distinction could not be deciphered, the subject was eliminated from the data (one such case). Interviews were conducted in the late summer of 2006.

*Dependent Variable:* Attitude stability was measured by the question “In the past seven years have your views on Polish membership in the EU, remained the same or changed at all?” and coded as a dummy, 1 for stable attitudes and 0 for change. Given the preliminary nature of this study, I rely on respondent’s recollection of his/her views rather than on longitudinal data that would measure such views at different points in time.

*Independent Variable:* The mechanisms through which social networks shape attitude (learning, group pressure, information provision), were coded as a dummy given that learning and group pressure are both likely to lead to stable attitudes, although that stability should change through time in the case of group pressure. Given that all the subjects in my sample who experienced some kind of pressure from the group remained in the group for seven years, the time period about which they were asked, the pattern in their views should be the same as for those subjects exposed to learning. The variable was thus coded as 1 for learning/group pressure and 0 for information. Please refer to the section about interview structure for explanation as to how I distinguished among the mechanisms.

*Control Variables:* I controlled for alternative explanations including exposure to mass media, age, and level of education.

1) Mass Media: It may be possible that exposure to different types of coverage of the EU might affect change in attitudes. For example, it could be that individuals who are exposed to pro-EU coverage might be prone to stability in views given that such perspective dominates the national agenda and might reinforce national consensus.

Individuals were asked about their exposure to mass media including TV and press. I coded programs/newspapers/magazines with positive coverage of the EU as 1, those with negative angle as -1, and neutral ones as 0. I then added the values for a total score for each newspaper/ TV program to obtain an aggregate measure of exposure. The aggregate measure was then coded as a dummy variable with 1 indicated pro-EU coverage and 0



neutral or negative.<sup>55</sup> It is, of course, possible that asking about current media exposure may not account for how coverage changed during the period of seven years. I would, however, argue, that most publications in Poland are guided by ideological divisions that are, to some extent, set in place unless major editorial reform introduces drastic changes. All individuals were either loyal to the same set of programs/magazines in the past seven years or if the loyalty changed, it usually involved replacing one pro-EU medium for another, thus not altering the aggregate media score.<sup>56</sup>

2) Age: Change in attitudes may, to some extent, be dependent on one's age. Young adults, for example, are often searching for their identity, changing social groups, and learning to navigate in the world. As a result such individuals are more likely to change their views on foreign issues than individuals who encounter less change in their lives, possibly at an elderly age. Age is coded as a dummy with 1 indicating individuals in the 18-39 category or younger generations and 0 indicating 40 and up, or older generations.

3) Education: Lastly, educated individuals may change their opinions as they discover new information about the issue. Higher education exposes citizens to new facts, encouraging less rigidity when it comes to issue loyalty. Education is an ordinal variable, coded 1 for elementary or basic education, 2 for high school to two-year college, and 3 for four-year college and higher.

### **Descriptive Observations and More on Causality**

What does the data suggest about the way people form their attitudes when engaged in social and political discussions? First, it appears that slightly half of the

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<sup>55</sup> Given that a negative score was present for only one individual, the negative observation was merged with the neutral ones and the variable recoded as a dummy.

<sup>56</sup> To avoid multicollinearity, I include only the print variable in the analysis.

respondents are actually forming strong opinions about the EU and are engaged in extensive discussions and argumentation during social interactions with others or are pressured by their group to adopt a specific view on the policy. The other half is only exposed to basic information, often unable to fully justify the expressed opinion. For example, it might be that a person heard from a friend that another acquaintance just arrived from the UK after earning a substantial amount of money, a piece of information suggesting that being a member of the EU delivers material benefits (interview source #17). Discussing the friend's positive experience in the UK makes one interviewee a supporter. In other instances, individuals obtain information less directly by listening to conversations of others while playing cards in a local pub (interview source #18). Here an individual becomes a supporter after hearing that being in the EU will be "good for the country," (ibid).

In general, social interactions in the above contexts deliver basic facts about a policy either directly by sharing stories about individual experiences associated with EU countries or more indirectly when people overhear discussions of others' while participating in a social gathering. What matters here is that discussions about the policy are limited in scope and depth, leaving those who formed opinions with vague perceptions. Thus while the social process in this case creates a "supporter" or an "opponent," one can only wonder about the durability of such views.

In fact, data suggests that those who are exposed to limited information about the EU during social interactions are much more likely to change their opinions on the subject than those who engaged in more extensive argumentation or were pressured by their social group to form an opinion. Among those who have been exposed to simple

information about the policy, 67 percent have changed their mind one way or another during the past seven years, or the time since the policy first became an issue (table 23). In contrast those who have engaged in genuine debates or experienced pressure from their groups to form particular views were much more likely to remain loyal to their position. Only 13 percent of such individuals have changed their mind about the policy in the past seven years.

Table 23: Mechanism of Influence and Attitude Stability

	Simple Information	Learning or Group Pressure
Change in Attitudes	66.7%	12.5%
Stability in Attitudes	33.3%	87.50%

Not surprisingly, individuals who are exposed to random pieces of information are much more likely to change their views when new information arrives. This, of course, can have a potentially destabilizing effect at the aggregate level of public opinion as external shocks that deliver a whole new set of information may trigger potentially quick change in attitudes. For example, the unexpected change in French support of the 2005 constitution suggests that new information, in this case Dutch rejection of the constitution, might have delivered a whole new set of ideas about the EU and the future of integration. The “No” vote might have triggered a cascade of negative information, changing the tone of political discussions. Since people are connected to each other, as I have argued in earlier chapters, new information can quickly disseminate and trigger change in opinions.

The possibility for change in attitudes should not be underestimated, even if such change is not permanent. If network discussions do not encourage deep and genuine

learning about a policy, individual opinions on a policy will be based on random facts that can be easily updated. For example, an interviewee in my data suggested that she was initially uncertain about the EU, leaning more towards skepticism about Polish membership in the organization because she had doubts about potential benefits. After conversing with a friend and hearing about another friend's positive experience in the UK, she changed her mind and became a supporter (interview source #17).

Turning to the other half of the sample, which includes some individuals who genuinely learn about the policy and some who were pressured to adopt a specific view, we can see that their approach to the policy differs from that of earlier-discussed sample. Individuals who "learned" about a policy were engaging in very frequent discussions with others and most were exposed to multi-layered arguments, touching upon economic and cultural aspects of integration and Polish role in Europe.

For example, one respondent mentioned that she supported the EU because she believed it would benefit the younger generations (interview source #19). Membership in the EU, she argued, allows young people to take advantage of the European job market and educational institutions. The 55-year-old woman, who often discussed the policy with her more knowledgeable and influential husband, saw little benefit for herself, but was a supporter because she thought the EU would benefit future generations of Poles (ibid). Overall, individuals who engaged in extensive discussions were similar to this woman in that they all could provide comprehensive and well-thought out reasons for their position. Although they were influenced by their discussants to lean towards specific views, the influence was generated because discussions involved critical analysis, albeit with slight bias towards a particular position. Such individuals were much

more resistant to random pieces of information coming their way because the learning process has already exposed them to critical analysis and shaped their ideas about the policy.

Among this sample of individuals, a small number of people formed their position on the EU because of group or community norms, which defined the appropriate course of thinking. In general, individuals in this group either displayed more sophisticated rational for their views or had little explanation, suggesting that they were exposed only to small pieces of information. Either way, they were all concerned about what was appropriate to think in the context of their social identity (interview source #20). At times, the social group to which an individual belonged labeled Euroskeptics as “backward” and “village like” thereby making it difficult for a person to think differently for the fear of being ostracized. Since interviewees in this group identified strongly with their group, they displayed more stable attitudes than those who felt little pressure to adopt a specific stand on the issue.

### **Preliminary Results from Statistical Analysis**

Having shown earlier that different mechanisms through which social networks shape attitudes are associated with unique patterns of views, I test whether the relationship is statistically significant. Results from a logit model demonstrate that specific mechanisms of diffusion play a vital role in the stability of attitudes on Polish support for their country’s EU membership, even when controlling for demographic factors, such as age and education, and exposure to pro or anti-EU media coverage (table 24). When one’s network interactions encourage learning about a policy or exert a degree of pressure on the individual to adopt specific views, attitudes are much more likely to be

stable through time, in this case seven years, than when networks merely disseminate information about the issue.

Findings are statistically significant at 0.01 level, suggesting that a network perspective can provide useful insights not only in about attitude formation, but also

Table 24: Attitude Stability: Polish Support for European Union Membership

Network Mechanism	3.054 (1.098)*
Age	-0.113 (1.027)
Education	-0.542 (0.630)
Media	1.131 (1.132)
Constant	-0.593 (1.197)

\*p<0.01, N=31

improve our understanding of stability and change in views on foreign policy. This provides preliminary support for hypotheses one, two, and parts of three.

Given the importance of the three mechanisms on stability of views, who is most likely to be exposed to each of those? In general, the patterns in my sample do not suggest any overwhelming relationship between one's educational background and a specific mechanism, although it appears that individuals with college education are more likely to be influenced through argumentation and thus "learn" about the policy through social discussion or experience group pressure (table 25). Least educated individuals are more often forming their opinions through exposure to simple or random information.

Table 25: Level of Education and Exposure to Different Mechanisms of Influence

	Elementary	High School to Two-Year College	Four-Year College or Higher
Simple Information	53.3%	80.0%	27.3%
Learning or Group Pressure	46.7%	20.0%	72.7%

This may suggest that when opinion leaders discuss politics with highly educated individuals they may feel more compelled to employ critical analysis and argumentation to encourage adoption of specific views. On the contrary, they may simple trust that delivering random facts may suffice when their discussants have lower educational background. The finding builds on observations from chapter four, the in-depth case analysis of Eurskepticism in the villages, by showing that network leaders sometimes consider the characteristics of the people they interact with when presenting their arguments.

### **Implications for Policymaking**

I have earlier argued that understanding fluctuation and stability of attitudes is particularly useful when such patterns have an impact on policymaking. Given that the logic of the argument was presented in the theoretical chapter of this project, it will suffice to say here that policymakers may be more responsive to public attitudes if such attitudes are stable and could be used as a voting issue, holding a democratic leader accountable to the public. The same logic applies to responsiveness to the demands of specific interest groups in society. I would argue that well-organized groups capable of generating membership and funds can mobilize effectively precisely because they possess strong conviction on the issue. Not surprisingly, leaders are more inclined to address the

needs of such groups than they are responding to groups they believe may change their stand on the issue.

Polish accession negotiations to the EU illustrate how perceptions of durability and fluctuation of attitudes of specific groups in society affected policymakers' responsiveness during vital stages of policy drafting. Unlike traditional interstate negotiations, the accession talks were unique in a sense that they involved the making of agreements between Poland and 15 EU countries, with the European Commission facilitating the process and communication between the various camps (Negocjacje 2001-2003). As such, accession negotiations created many opportunities for lobbying, opening room for domestic groups to express their grievances.

Although the main focus of negotiations was to reduce the discrepancies in Polish and EU laws governing a myriad of spheres including agriculture, fishing, the environment, labor, etc., some of those areas exhibited greater differences than others, suggesting that a specific agreement might affect some domestic groups more than others (ibid). While this structural component of negotiations might naturally explain why the negotiating team would be more concerned about the interests of some, very specific groups, it is less useful in understanding why the negotiators nevertheless displayed selectivity in their attentiveness among the groups which would have to modify their practices. For example, Polish practices in farming and nursing sectors differed substantially from those in the EU countries, requiring numerous sessions to determine how to reduce major discrepancies between the two (Biegaj 2001). Yet the farmers were given many concessions, while the nurses were essentially the losers during negotiations.



The different response to the two groups is rooted in policymakers' perceptions of each group's ability to mobilize and pose a challenge to the referendum. In general, concerns about reversal in public opinion, which was mainly supportive of accession, were minimal (Policymaker interview source #1). While the negotiating team trekked the country as part of the national pro-EU campaign before the referendum, there was growing consensus that public opinion was favorably oriented towards the policy (ibid, Policymaker interview source #2). Instead, policymakers were concerned about well-organized groups with long-term opposition to accession. Known for staging dramatic protests, such groups could potentially sabotage the referendum. For example, the farmers were known to block roads and dump tons of grain to protest governmental policies (Zygulski 2001).

Evidence from initial interviews with policymakers in Poland supports the notion that leaders respond to expectations of long-term opposition from groups they believe will stand by their beliefs. For example, a member of the negotiating team from the Ministry of Infrastructure, explained that construction workers' demands for maintaining low taxes on building materials was a thorny issue during negotiations with the EU (Policymaker interview source #3). Unlike many social groups, the interviewee admitted he knew the Polish delegation had to press for the interests of such workers as their views on the tax issue remained vehemently opposed to the EU's initiatives, and prospects were slim that such attitudes could change. Other members of the public, he believed, could be swayed, posing little problems for the negotiating team.

Polish delegation paid considerably less attention to demands from nurses and other sectors because such groups had little resources and displayed a lackluster

mobilization effort. In general, a strong consensus existed that the groups' opposition would be short-lived, and thus addressing their demands was never a top priority (ibid). Indeed, such groups received little they asked for even though an attempt was made by a member of the negotiating team to preserve the Polish qualification standard for nurses (Policymaker interview source #4). There was simply not enough responsiveness from the Polish side and also little flexibility from the EU, as I would argue, because the opposition of such groups was seen as fleeting and not potentially threatening to the accession process.

Just as the Polish team responded to the demands of construction workers, the negotiating group pressed for the interests of farmers because most did not believe that the farmers' opposition to specific production quotas would be temporary and thus could be easily ignored (Policymaker interview source #5). Given that farmers constituted a potentially large voting bloc and their demands remained rigid, addressing their needs was of vital concern to the negotiating team. Furthermore, a policymaker in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development explained that a belief in the farmers' long-term opposition had an impact on the flexibility of the negotiators who represented the EU (ibid). In both examples, the groups' long-term beliefs on the issue affected their ability to mobilize and press the leadership to successfully secure their demands (a transition period for the lower taxes on building materials and larger milk quotas). More interestingly, the Polish leadership could present the rigidity in the attitudes of such groups as an effective negotiating tool that limited the Polish delegation's ability to grant concessions, thereby necessitating greater flexibility from the other side.

How can policymakers decipher whether opposition is likely to be short or long term? Addressing this question is clearly important given that elite response to the groups and the public is highly dependent on perceptions. Groups that are particularly well-mobilized are most likely to exhibit long-term commitment to the cause as effective mobilization is often possible in the first place because members believe in their stand on the issue. Thus, successful mobilization often signals to the leader the extent of the opposition and its possible longevity. Indeed, preliminary evidence from interviews in the context of Polish negotiations supports this claim (Policymaker interview source #3).

Perceptions of long-term opposition can also emerge after policymakers interact with opposition groups either informally during talks at the domestic level or by receiving reports from local elites about the level of activity in various communities. The structure of accession negotiations, which was designed to allow additional negotiating sessions in areas where Polish law differed vastly from that of the EU (Negocjacje 2001-2003), also created an opportunity for extensive interactions with domestic groups. It is during such meetings that the opposition's commitment to the issue might have been revealed. Finally, policymakers may also observe levels of support in national polls, which many in fact did (for example, Policymaker interview source #2 and Policymaker interview source #4), to understand whether specific groups in society opposing the policy exhibit particularly stable views.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that one way to think about the impact of social networks on policymaking is to focus on when leaders respond to public opinion or demands made by specific groups in society, and thus examine how a network-

perspective can improve our understanding of the public-policymaking nexus. I proposed that a network approach to studying public opinion is particularly useful in examining durability and fluctuation in attitudes, phenomena of concern to policymakers especially before referenda are held. Several points emerge from this study.

First, the theoretical contribution in this chapter speaks to the literature on social networks and the works on public opinion and foreign policy. I have argued and shown, albeit at the preliminary level, that when network leaders encourage learning about a policy or when the group exerts a degree of pressure on the individual to accept a specific norm, individual attitudes are much more likely to remain stable through time. When social interactions are merely disseminating facts about a policy, attitudes formed through such interactions are likely to change when new information arrives. The distinction between the network mechanisms thus contributes to the networks literature by departing from excessive emphasis on network structure and focusing more on ways in which network dynamics affect specific outcomes. Research in this area is still evolving, with more recent works, for example, focusing on contents of discussions in shaping identity in U.S. cities (Cramer Walsh 2004).

Second, findings in this chapter contribute to the works on public opinion and foreign policy (for example, Gabel and Whitten 1997, Janssen 1991) by providing explanations for potential trends in public opinion. This chapter has shown that when individuals receive random information about a policy, they are much more likely to change their level of support for the policy than people who might be part of a network that establishes norms of behavior and encourages loyalty to particular views. Unlike explanations at the individual level that may approach the study of public opinion by

concentrating on one's demographic background, and thus remain inherently static in nature, the network approach is useful in studying attitude change and fluctuations. For example, a demographic-based approach might argue that as individuals age they exhibit more stable attitudes because maturity may inspire people to reflect on their beliefs and form more lasting preferences. The network perspective, however, shows that when "mature" individuals change their place of inhabitation and become embedded in new communities, they may accept the norms established in such environments, a development prompting change in certain attitudes. As a result, the network approach can account for attitude change where individual-based explanations fail because the former focuses less on individual characteristics and more on how individuals behave when part of a group or a community.

Third, building on previous chapters, this study offers further insights into the causal connection between networks and attitude formation. It suggests, for example, that educated individuals are more commonly exposed to argumentation and extensive discussions in their network interactions, which leads to long-term learning about a policy. Opinion leaders, it appears, may use different methods of persuasion during political discussions depending on their conversation partners' background. Less educated individuals are more exposed to simple information during political discussion, and as such are often more prone to change their mind when new information arrives.

Lastly, understanding levels of attitude stability is important in those contexts where individuals have a direct say in referenda as well as in areas where such attitudes affect policymaking. The chapter highlights potential policy implication by arguing that policymakers are much more likely to be responsive to stable rather than fluctuating

attitudes, whether those of the public or specific interest groups. When leaders perceive that opposition to an issue comes from groups with limited ability to sustain demands through time and hold the leader accountable, they have little incentive to address the needs of such individuals. Because groups with short-term opposition to an issue usually pose little threat of expanding their influence to others in a society, national leaders minimize their risk of electoral punishment. Preliminary evidence from interviews with members of the Polish delegation negotiating EU accession support such claims. The distinction in the leaders' perceptions of long vs. short term beliefs of groups is not limited solely to the Polish context. For example, when deciding whether to address Palestine's specific political demands, Ariel Sharon, chose instead to respond to what he believed was deeply, rooted, long-term hatred of the Jews, and thus his policy of limited negotiations over the West Bank's status reflected the Israeli leader's distinction between long-term (deeply rooted hatred) vs. short-term (specific political demands) beliefs (Samuels 2007).

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

#### **Revisiting the Argument**

This project relies on a social-network approach to investigate attitude formation on foreign policy. Departing from traditional studies emphasizing demographics as explanations for the roots of public opinion (for example Gabel 1998a, Wittkopf 1990), I argue that people act and think differently when they are part of a larger unit, whether a small dyadic network, a larger group, or a community. Embedded in social interactions, individuals form preferences reflecting group, rather than personal interest. Given that individuals derive social and material benefits from a group, they can forgo their individual thinking for more collective, group identity. Such ideas can explain, for example, why an educated individual, traditionally assumed to support European integration, may oppose the supranational project when policies in such direction could adversely affect the farming community he inhabits.

Besides serving as markers of norms and identities for groups and communities, social networks reinforce vague ideas about foreign policy, diffuse basic and more sophisticated information pertaining to the issue, and encourage the formation of long-term beliefs about a policy that may have little to do with identity formation. The mechanism of influence, I have argued, will depend to a large extent on the type of policy that is at stake. A controversial policy with a potential to affect large segments of the population, such as membership in the European Union, implies that more people may be divided into losers and winners after the policy is implemented. When such is the case,

political discussions will not only be more extensive, but most importantly, they are likely to involve argumentation and persuasion. On the contrary, a policy with low stakes has a minimal potential to divide a society and thus the need for persuasion, specialized information, and extensive argumentation will be smaller. In the end, this suggests that the process through which the “network effect” manifests itself differs depending on the policy. As a result, this study shows the local aspect of attitude formation while also considering how opinions form in light of the broader, national developments.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

Several theoretical contributions emerge from this study. First, the project examines how individuals make sense of foreign issues when embedded in local interactions while also being part of a larger nation. In doing so, the study examines network effect in light of national dynamics, instead of treating one or the other separately. The project argues that when local norms clash with national ideas about the policy, individuals will adopt the views of their communities/groups, although the process of influence will be weaker than when national consensus reinforces local ideas. Empirical findings in the context of EU and the war in Iraq support this notion by demonstrating that network effect in the direction that opposes that national consensus, while statistically significant, is nevertheless weaker than in instances when networks mold pro-EU and anti-Iraq views.

Second, the project argues that network effect will be stronger when policies have direct impact on majority of population, and thus the stakes are great when it comes to mobilizing public support or opposition. Findings show that network effect varies depending on the type of foreign policy, but not in the traditionally expected manner.



Specifically, the network effect for less salient issue, such as the war in Iraq is limited only to one person with whom individuals discuss politics rather than extending to the broader network as was the case in the issue of EU membership. This suggests that network effect for less salient policies is not as extensive as for those when public stakes are high, which naturally, may signal smaller degree of connectedness on less salient issues. Clearly, degree of connectedness may have important implications for understanding aggregate changes in public opinion as more extensive network influence can prompt large change in a relatively short time period.

Third, in addition to building upon the literature on the roots of attitudes on foreign policy, the project contributes to the works on public opinion and policymaking by supporting the conditional nature of public opinion/policymaking nexus and arguing that leaders will be responsive to the public or specific groups in society if they believe their views on the issue are stable rather than prone to fluctuations. Such implication flows from the idea that studying mechanisms through which social networks shape attitudes can determine the extent to which such attitudes remain firmly established or change. The project thus distinguishes between learning or deep beliefs, group pressure, and information diffusion/herding as explanations for varying patterns in attitudes. Findings in the case of Polish support for EU membership demonstrate, for example, that when social networks encourage learning about a policy or establish specific norms governing group or community relations, attitudes formed in such manner are likely to remain stable. On the other hand, when social networks merely disseminate facts or when individuals form their preferences for a policy by observing what others in their network support, attitudes are likely to change when new or contradictory information arrives.

By focusing on network-based explanations for attitude fluctuation, albeit at the preliminary level, the project directly contributes to previous research in the area of public opinion by arguing that demographic explanations and those focusing on political awareness/knowledge (for example, Saris and Sniderman 2004) are either too static to effectively account for change, particularly in a short period of time, or unable to capture change in individual's behavior when one is embedded in group interactions. Unlike earlier explanations, which may not be well equipped to explain rapid change in attitudes, as it occurred in the case of French rejection of EU constitution in 2005, a network-based approach may offer some insights. Given that networks facilitate diffusion of information in a quick manner, it is possible that anti-EU cascade of information began after the Dutch rejected the constitution, and the idea of further integration received some scrutiny. A network-based explanation may suggest, for example, that network leaders could have picked up and disseminated new information. Since information travels fast in a network, it is possible that negative attitudes toward the policy formed quickly and generated the unexpected change in views.

Building on previous point, the project also speaks directly to the networks-literature by contributing to the study of social influence and durability of political views. Rather than focusing either on the impact of one's social group on stability of views or on aggregate distribution of preferences (for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995, Blau 1957, Segal and Meyer 1974), I emphasize the mechanisms through which the message is diffused as an explanation for potential fluctuations in attitudes. Looking at the mechanisms of diffusion, I argue, may explain why influence is greater among some

social groups than others and thus account for greater durability of views in some contexts but not in others.

### **Empirical Contribution**

In addition to theoretical contribution, the project provides empirical insights by testing network-related ideas in a context outside of the U.S. Previous research on social networks and public opinion focused predominantly on support for U.S. elections (for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). This project is the first one to examine the role of social networks in the context of support for foreign policy in Poland using original survey data on interpersonal discussions.

Not surprisingly, research on public opinion and foreign policy is also dominated by studies focusing on the U.S. and Western Europe. With the exception of some recent work on Polish public opinion on the EU (for example, Słomczynski and Shabad 2003, Christin 2005, Bielasiak 2002, Cichowski 2000), empirical findings in the context of Eastern and Central Europe are not only limited, but rarely engage in hypothesis testing to arrive at broader generalizations. As a result, original data sets focusing on the region are also rare.

This project provides insights about Polish attitudes on two very current issues, support for the country's membership in the EU and support for participation in the war in Iraq, and thus illuminates ways in which Polish citizens make sense of two different policies. In addition to broader generalizations from statistical analysis, the study introduces an in-depth analysis of the emergence of Euroskeptic networks in three Polish villages. As uncertainty about the future of European integration grows, studying Euroskeptic networks is particularly valuable in understanding ways in which these

“deviant” groups consolidate their opposition. Not only are such studies at the local level rare in general, they are nonexistent in the context of Poland.

In addition to its empirical contribution to understanding Polish public opinion, the study also helps address recent political phenomena related to European integration, including French rejection of EU Constitution. Studies predicting referenda outcome on the constitution (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005) have relied on individual demographic characteristics and fears of immigration to explain support for the policy. Yet such an approach could not predict the unexpected change in French attitudes (70 percent of the population supported the project, while less than eight months later 55 percent rejected the constitution despite high voter turnout). As I explained in the preceding section, the approach advocated here helps explain formation of public views before referenda on vital policies are held.

### **Policy Relevance**

In light of the project’s theoretical contributions, several policy recommendations emerge. First, the network approach I proposed in this study suggests that in an increasingly connected world individual attitudes can quickly disseminate to others. As a result, policymakers interested in consolidating support for a specific policy must ensure that they tap into local networks as soon as the policy emerges as an issue. Once a local cascade of views takes off, attitudes might snowball rapidly ensuring a positive outcome for national elites. This, of course, does not necessarily imply that policymakers need to engage every community. Instead, they would be advised to identify most “connected” local leaders and rely on them to disseminate information about the policy.

Second, policymakers should be concerned about opposition that survives even after national mood on a policy begins to consolidate. A rise of “deviant” views among vital groups in society in the midst of emerging consensus signals that opposition members are loyal to their beliefs and thus are likely to hold the leader accountable during elections. As a result, policymakers who are faced with such groups should be particularly responsive to their needs, rather than dismissing them as merely irrelevant. Interestingly, leaders may, at times, actually benefit from such opposition when trying to secure a better international deal during negotiations. By demonstrating to the other side that important domestic groups are expected to harbor long-term opposition to the policy, national elites may see more flexibility that can help them secure a better deal and gain approval at home.

Lastly, as the case study of Euroskeptic attitudes in three villages in Poland demonstrates, national elites should rely much more on local network leaders rather than on traditional campaigning tools, including pamphlets and advertisements, to reach potential supporters, *especially* in highly contested areas. Not only do network leaders serve as connectors in the community, bringing individuals together and ensuring rapid diffusion of ideas, but they are particularly successful in defining the content and stickiness of such ideas. This approach is both more effective and cost efficient than the usual campaigning strategies.

### **Directions for Future Research**

This study suggests that social discussions are not always about argumentation and critical examination of the policy. Often, political discussions disseminate basic information or reinforce vaguely existent ideas. Consequently, as my preliminary analysis

has shown, attitudes are less durable when social interactions are limited to simple information diffusion because people have less understanding of the issue and personal attachment to the cause. In light of this dynamic, future research might investigate how external shocks affect information updating in networks and ultimately alter aggregate opinions.

For example, rapid change in attitudes towards EU constitution among the French suggests that earlier rejection of the policy by the Dutch might have given a boost to French Euroskeptics and shaken national perceptions about European integration. The Dutch “no” essentially delivers a new set of information to the public and creates an opportunity for people to update their thinking. Since a lot of network relations only deliver basic information, it might have been the case that the external shock provided a whole new set of information that legitimized opposition to the constitution. Future studies might examine conditions under which external shocks can lead to rapid changes in public opinion by investigating how new information is picked up and disseminated among groups and communities.

Much more progress could also be made in understanding the different mechanisms through which attitudes are shaped during social interactions. It might be fruitful to integrate current findings on the importance of specific network mechanisms on attitude stability with studies on network leadership to examine when leaders are more likely to encourage learning about policies, impose specific norms governing network relations, or merely disseminate random facts about an issue. Research integrating these ideas may focus on specific leader characteristics, his/her relations with the community, and external constraints to understand why a particular mechanism was utilized to shape

attitudes. Such a study would be particularly useful in contexts where local leaders are both highly valued in communities and extensively connected to many individuals.

Building on the above point, future research may examine the role of network leaders in shaping long or short-term support for peace initiatives or for improving ethnic relations in war-torn societies. By employing group norms to define acceptable behavior towards a former enemy and ostracizing those who break such norms, network leaders could ensure improvement of local tensions. Furthermore leaders who encourage honest discussions about the enemy and dispel stereotypes could employ a “learning” mechanism to mold stable attitudes that could easily spread throughout highly-connected communities. Some preliminary evidence seems to support this notion. For example, local leaders were credited with maintaining peaceful relations in Bhiwandi, an Indian town near Bombay, when Muslim-Hindu riots engulfed the region, leading to massive violence in towns and villages (Varshney 2007). A more systematic look at the impact of learning, information diffusion, and group pressure on the emergence of long-term positive norms might be useful in helping us understand how to achieve ethnic reconciliation in a war-torn society. Future research in this area could analyze in particular how change in local leadership affects ethnic relations. It might be fruitful to examine if positive norms encouraged by the leader are likely to survive, and if so, what happens when new leadership attempts to reverse them.

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Interview source #2: Villager 1

Interview source #2: Wójt (Leader of Kobyla Góra commune) Jerzy Przygoda

Interview source #4: Sołtys (Leader of Parzynów) Stanisław Hemmerling

Interview source #4: Radny (Village administrator) Rafał Noculak

Interview source#5: Sołtys (Leader of Mostki) Kazimierz Hoja

Interview source#6: Villager 2

Interview source#7: Villager 3

Interview source#8: Villager 4

Interview source#9: Sołtys (Leader of Ignaców) Pawlak

Interview source #10: Assistant to the Leader of Ostrzeszów County, Magdalena Kułak

Interview source #11: Villager 1 (Ignaców)

Interview source #12: Ostrzeszów County Labor Office

Interview source #13: Villager 5

Interview source #14: Villager 6

Interview source #15: Villager 7

Interview source #16: Inhabitant of Gliwice

Interview source #17: Inhabitant of Sułów

Interview source #18: Inhabitant of Sułów

Interview source #19: Inhabitant of Sułów

Interview source #20: Inhabitant of Gliwice

Policymaker Interview Source #1: Member of the Negotiating Team for Poland's  
Accession Negotiations to the European Union

Policymaker Interview Source #2: Member of the Negotiating Team for Poland's  
Accession Negotiations to the European Union

Policymaker Interview Source #3: Member of the Negotiating Team for Poland's  
Accession Negotiations to the European Union

Policymaker Interview Source #4: Member of the Negotiating Team for Poland's  
Accession Negotiations to the European Union

Policymaker Interview Source #5: Member of the Negotiating Team for Poland's  
Accession Negotiations to the European Union

## APPENDIX

### Chapter 4 & 7

#### Interview Questionnaire for Villages

- 1) What is the highest level of education that you completed?
- 2) What is your age?
- 3) Gender  
Female.....1  
Male.....0
- 4) How would you evaluate this person's political knowledge? Would you say that this person is.....  
Very knowledgeable about politics..... 2  
Somewhat knowledgeable about politics... 1  
Somewhat not knowledgeable about politics..... -1  
Not knowledgeable at all ..... -2  
It's hard to say (is not read out loud)..0
- 5) Please think about the European Union. Which of the following describes best how you feel about Poland's membership in the European Union?  
Definitely supportive.....2  
Rather supportive.....1  
Rather unsupportive.....-1  
Definitely unsupportive.....-2  
It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0
- 6) Please explain why you support/oppose Poland's membership in the European Union?

[Open-ended response, look for the type of information provided, how extensive it is, what is the level of argumentation?]

7) Please think about your views about the EU during the past seven years, or the time since accession negotiations began. During this time, how would you describe the level of change in you views?

- Definitely unchanged.....2
- Rather unchanged.....1
- Rather changed.....-1
- Definitely changed.....-2
- It's hard to say.....0 (is not read out loud)

8) Do you sometimes speak with anyone about domestic politics or international events?

If yes, please think about the person with whom you most ofen discuss politics with. It could be someone from your family, maybe a neighbor, friend, or someone you know from school or work.

9a ) This person is.....[repeat for up to three discussants]

- Family member ..... 4
- friend ..... 3
- someone I know from school/work..... 2
- neighbor.....1

9b) How frequently do you discuss politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that.....1

9c) Which of the following describes best how this person feels about Poland's membership in the European Union?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud)...0

9d) How would you evaluate this person's political knowledge? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about politics..... 2
- Somewhat knowledgeable about politics... 1
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about politics..... -1
- Not knowledgeable at all ..... -2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud)..0

9e) Where does this person live?

- In my neighborhood.....3
- In my city/town.....2
- Beyond the borders of my city ..... 1

9f) [Ask only if the person's views are the same as those of his discussant as it is in such cases that network influence occurs ]

If your view differed from the view of the person/group you interact with, would that difference have any impact on your relationship with that person/group?

[Open-ended question, the interviewee is asked to elaborate]

9g) [Ask only if the person's views are the same as those of the discussant]

Would people talk about you if your views on the issue differed from theirs?

[Open-ended question, the interviewee is asked to elaborate]

9h) Besides discussing political issues, please describe any other contexts in which you interacted with this person

[Open-ended question]



10) Have you ever interacted with.... [ask about previous interviews in the data set]

Yes.....1  
No.....0

## Chapter 5

Survey: Poland's Entrance into the European Union and Participation in the War in Iraq

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### Part I. Demographics

#### 1) Age:

18 - 19 .....	1
20 - 24 .....	2
25 - 29 .....	3
30 - 34 .....	4
35 - 39 .....	5
41 - 44 .....	6
45 - 49 .....	7
50 - 54 .....	8
55 - 59 .....	9
60 - 64 .....	10
65 - 69 .....	11
70 or greater.....	12

#### 2) Education:

Elementary.....	1
High School.....	2
Higher .....	3

#### 3) Gender:

Female.....	1
Male.....	0

- 4) At the beginning, please think about the European Union.  
Which of the following describes best how you feel about Poland's membership in the European Union?

Definitely supportive.....2  
Rather supportive.....1  
Rather unsupportive.....-1  
Definitely unsupportive.....-2  
It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

- 5) Which of the following best describes your attitude about efforts that are made to unite Europe?

Definitely supportive.....2  
Rather supportive.....1  
Rather unsupportive.....-1  
Definitely unsupportive.....-2  
It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

- 6) And what do you think about the war in Iraq? Which of the following best describes How you feel about Poland's participation in the war in Iraq?

Definitely supportive.....2  
Rather supportive.....1  
Rather unsupportive.....-1  
Definitely unsupportive.....-2  
It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

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## Part II. Interpersonal Communication

- II. 0) Do you sometimes speak with anyone about domestic politics or international events?

Yes.....1  
No.....2 (Go to section III)

- II. 1) Please think about the person with whom you most often discuss politics with. It could be Someone from your family, maybe a neighbor, friend, or someone you know from School, work, or meet in church or other organization.

II. 1a) This person is.....(only one answer is marked)

- Family member ..... 4
- Friend ..... 3
- Someone I know from school ..... 2
- someone I know from work
- someon I meet in church or other organization, for exmaple, religious, recreational, political, etc
- Neighbor.....1

II. 1b) What is this person's education, to the best of your knowledge?

- Elementary ..... 1
- High school ..... 2
- Higher ..... 3

II. 1c) What is this person's occupation?

- Company chairmans, professionals, specialists (doctors, architects, lawyers, etc.), consultants, advisors, college professors ..... 1
- Intellectual/mental workers – bureaucrats, teachers, nurses, managers ..... 2
- Services and trade.....3
- Qualified manual labor ..... 4
- Unqualified manual labor ..... 5
- Farmers and those employed
- In the agricultural sector ..... 6
- Owners of small businesses ..... 7
- Housewife ..... 8
- Student ..... 9
- Others..... 10
- Currently unemployed ..... 11
- Retired..... 12

II. 1d) Does this person live in?

- In my neighborhood ..... 3
- In my city/town ..... 2
- Beyond the borders of my city ..... 1

II.1e) How frequently do you discuss politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.1f) How would you evaluate this person's political knowledge? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about politics..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about politics..... 3
- Somehwat not knowledgeable about politics..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all ..... 1

II.1g) Did you ever discuss with this person issues not related to politics, for example, personal matters?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

II.1g-2) How frequently do you discuss issues not related to politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that.....1

II.1h) Have you ever discussed with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.1h-2)
- No..... 2 → go to question. II.1i)

II.1h-2) How frequently do you discuss with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.1i) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the EU? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the EU ..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the EU ..... 3
- Somehwat not knowledgeable about the EU ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.1j) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude about Poland's membership in the European Union?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.1k) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards efforts at European integration?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.1l) Have you ever discussed Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.1l-2)
- No..... 2 → go to question. II.2

II.1l-2) How frequently do you discuss Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.1m) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the situation in Iraq? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the war..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the war..... 3
- Somehwat not knowledgeable about the war ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.1n) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.2) Is there another person that comes to your mind with whom you discuss politics?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.2a)
- No.....2 → go to Part III

II.2a) This person is.....(only one answer is marked)

- Family member ..... 4
- friend..... 3
- Someone I know from school ..... 2
- someone I know from work  
someone I meet in church or other  
organization, for exmaple, religious,  
recreational, political, etc  
Neighbor.....1

II.2b) What is this person's education, to the best of your knowledge?

- Elementary ..... 1
- High school ..... 2
- Higher ..... 3

II.2c) What is this person's occupation?

- Company chairmans, professionals,  
specialists (doctors, architects, lawyers,  
etc.), consultants, advisors, college  
professors ..... 1
- Intellectual/mental workers –  
bureaucrats, teachers, nurses,  
managers ..... 2
- Services and trade.....3
- Qualified manual labor ..... 4
- Unqualified manual labor ..... 5
- Farmers and those employed  
In the agricultural sector ..... 6
- Owners of small businesses ..... 7
- Housewife ..... 8
- Student ..... 9
- Others..... 10
- Currently unemployed ..... 11
- Retired.....12

II.2d) Where does this person live?

- In my neighborhood ..... 3
- In my city/town ..... 2
- Beyond the borders of my city ..... 1

II.2e) How frequently do you discuss politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.2f) How would you evaluate this person's political knowledge? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about politics..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about politics..... 3
- Somehwat not knowledgeable about politics..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.2g) Did you ever discuss with this person issues not related to politics, for example, personal matters?

- Yes ..... 1
- No.....2

II.2g-2) How frequently do you discuss issues not related to politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.2h) Have you ever discussed with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.2h-2)
- No..... 2 → go to question. II.2i)



II.2h-2) How frequently do you discuss with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than  
that..... 1

II.2i) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the EU? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the EU ..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the EU ..... 3
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about the  
EU ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.2j) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude about Poland's membership in the European Union?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.2k) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards efforts at European integration?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out  
loud).....0

II.2l) Have you ever discussed Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.2l-2)
- No..... 2 → go to question. II.3

II.2l-2) How frequently do you discuss Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 3
- Less than that..... 1

II.2m) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the situation in Iraq? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the war..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the war..... 3
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about the war ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all..... 1

II.2n) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.3) Is there another person that comes to your mind with whom you discuss politics?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.3a)
- No.....2 → go to Part III

II.3a) This person is.....(only one answer is marked)

- Family member ..... 4
- Friend ..... 3
- Someone I know from school ..... 2
- someone I know from work
- someone I meet in church or other organization, for example, religious, recreational, political, etc
- Neighbor.....1

II.3b) What is this person's education, to the best of your knowledge?

Elementary .....	1
High school .....	2
Higher .....	3

II.3c) What is this person's occupation?

Company chairmans, professionals, specialists (doctors, architects, lawyers, etc.), consultants, advisors, college professors .....	1
Intellectual/mental workers – bureaucrats, teachers, nurses, managers .....	2
Services and trade.....	3
Qualified manual labor .....	4
Unqualified manual labor .....	5
Farmers and those employed In the agricultural sector .....	6
Owners of small businesses .....	7
Housewife .....	8
Student .....	9
Others.....	10
Currently unemployed .....	11
Retired.....	12

II.3d) Where does this person live?

In my neighborhood .....	3
In my city/town .....	2
Beyond the borders of my city .....	1

II.3e) How frequently do you discuss politics with this person?

Daily.....	5
Once/several times/week .....	4
Once every two weeks .....	3
Once a month .....	2
Less than that.....	1

II.3f) How would you evaluate this person's political knowledge? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about politics..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about politics..... 3
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about politics..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.3g) Did you ever discuss with this person issues not related to politics, for example, personal matters?

- Yes ..... 1
- No.....2

II.3g-2) How frequently do you discuss issues not related to politics with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that.....1

II.3h) Have you ever discussed with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.3h-2)
- No..... 2 → go to question. II.3i)

II.3h-2) How frequently do you discuss with this person Poland's membership in the EU?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.3i) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the EU? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the EU ..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the EU ..... 3
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about the EU ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.3j) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude about Poland's membership in the European Union?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.3k) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards efforts at European integration?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

II.3l) Have you ever discussed Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Yes ..... 1 → go to question. II.3l-2
- No..... 2 → go to part III

II.3l-2) How frequently do you discuss Poland's participation in the war in Iraq with this person?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that..... 1

II.3m) How would you evaluate this person's knowledge about the situation in Iraq? Would you say that this person is.....

- Very knowledgeable about the war..... 4
- Somewhat knowledgeable about the war..... 3
- Somewhat not knowledgeable about the war ..... 2
- Not knowledgeable at all.....1

II.3n) Which of the following best describes this person's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq?

- Definitely supportive.....2
- Rather supportive.....1
- Rather unsupportive.....-1
- Definitely unsupportive.....-2
- It's hard to say (is not read out loud).....0

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Part III. Media

Please indicate an answer which is closest to you

III.1a) How often do you watch news or political programs on TV?

- Daily..... 5
- Once/several times/week ..... 4
- Once every two weeks ..... 3
- Once a month ..... 2
- Less than that.....1

III.1b) In the past two months have you heard any of these program mention anything about Poland's membership in the EU?

- Yes ..... 1 →go to question III.1b-2)
- No..... 5 →go to question III.2a

III.1b-2) On average, how frequently have you heard any of these programs mention Poland's membership in the EU?

- Daily..... 4
- Once/several times/week ..... 3
- Once every two weeks ..... 2
- Once a month ..... 1

III.1c) I will now read to you the names of several TV programs. Please indicate those that you watch from time to time and indicate what, in your opinion, is their view on Poland's membership in the EU.

Program TV	Watches	Program's attitude towards Poland's membership in the EU				
		<i>Definitely supportive</i>	Somewhat supportive	Sometimes supportive, sometimes not	Rather un-supportive	Definitely un-supportive
<sup>57</sup> Smak Europy	1	2	1	0	-1	-2
Wiadomości wieczorne (na dowolnym kanale TV)	2	2	1	0	-1	-2
Teleexpress	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
Polityczne Graffiti	4	2	1	0	-1	-2
Forum	5	2	1	0	-1	-2
Tygodnik Polityczny Jedyński	6	2	1	0	-1	-2
Monitor Wiadomości	7	2	1	0	-1	-2
Zawsze po 21-szej	8	2	1	0	-1	-2
Is there any other program that you watch?..... .....	9	2	1	0	-1	-2
Other program, which one?..... ...	10	2	1	0	-1	-2

<sup>57</sup> Name of the program is given in Polish

III.2a) How often do you read the print media?

Daily..... 4  
Once/several times/week ..... 3  
Once every two weeks ..... 2  
Once a month ..... 1

III.2b) In the past two months, have you read anything about Poland's membership in the EU in any of the media?

Yes ..... 1 →go to question. III.2b-2)  
No..... 5 →go to question. III.3a

III.2b-2) On average, how often have you read anything on this topic?

Daily..... 4  
Once/several times/week ..... 3  
Once every two weeks ..... 2  
Once a month .....1

III.2c) I will now read to you the names of several newspapers and magazines. Please indicate those that you read from time to time and indicate what, in your opinion, is their view on Poland's membership in the EU.



Newspapers/ magazines	Reads	Print Media's attitude towards Poland's membership in the EU				
		<i>Definitel y supporti ve</i>	Somewh at supporti ve	Sometim es supportiv e, sometime s not	Rather un- supporti ve	Definitely unsupportive
Wprost	1	2	1	0	-1	-2
Polityka	2	2	1	0	-1	-2
Newsweek	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
Gazeta Wyborcza	4	2	1	0	-1	-2
Rzeczpospolita	5	2	1	0	-1	-2
Local press (please give the name) .....	6	2	1	0	-1	-2
Super Express	7	2	1	0	-1	-2
Przyjaciółka	8	2	1	0	-1	-2
Fakt	9	2	1	0	-1	-2
Any other newspaper/magazine? .....	10	2	1	0	-1	-2
Others? (which?).....	11	2	1	0	-1	-2

III.3a) In the past two months have you heard any mention about Poland's participation in the war in Iraq in any of the TV programs that you watch?

Yes ..... 1 →go to question III.31-2)  
No..... 5 →go to question III.4a

III.3a-2) On average, how frequently have you heard any of these programs mention Poland's participation in the war in Iraq?

Daily..... 4  
Once/several times/week ..... 3  
Once every two weeks ..... 2  
Once a month ..... 1

III.3b) I will now read to you the names of several TV programs. Please indicate those that you watch from time to time and indicate what, in your opinion, is their view on Poland's participation in the war in Iraq.

Program TV	Watches	Program's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq				
		<i>Definitely supportive</i>	Somewhat supportive	Sometimes supportive, sometimes not	Rather un-supportive	Definitely un-supportive
<sup>58</sup> Smak Europy	1	2	1	0	-1	-2
Wiadomości wieczorne (na dowolnym kanale TV)	2	2	1	0	-1	-2
Teleexpress	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
Polityczne Graffiti	4	2	1	0	-1	-2
Forum	5	2	1	0	-1	-2
Tygodnik Polityczny Jedyński	6	2	1	0	-1	-2
Monitor Wiadomości	7	2	1	0	-1	-2
Zawsze po 21-szej	8	2	1	0	-1	-2
Is there any other program that you watch?..... .....	9	2	1	0	-1	-2
Other program, which one?..... ....	10	2	1	0	-1	-2

<sup>58</sup> Name of the program is given in Polish

III.4a) In the past two months, have you read anything about Poland's participation in the war in Iraq in any of the media?

Yes ..... 1 →go to question. III.4a2-2  
No..... 5 →go to section IV

III.4a-2) On average, how often have you read anything on this topic?

Daily..... 4  
Once/several times/week ..... 3  
Once every two weeks ..... 2  
Once a month .....1

III.4b) I will now read to you the names of several newspapers and magazines. Please indicate those that you read from time to time and indicate what, in your opinion, is their view on Poland's participation in the war Iraq.

Newspapers/ magazines	Reads	Print media's attitude towards Poland's participation in the war in Iraq				
		<i>Definitel y supporti ve</i>	Somewh at supporti ve	Sometim es supportiv e, sometime s not	Rather un- supporti ve	Definitely unsupportive
Wprost	1	2	1	0	-1	-2
Polityka	2	2	1	0	-1	-2
Newsweek	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
Gazeta Wyborcza	4	2	1	0	-1	-2
Rzeczpospolita	5	2	1	0	-1	-2
Local press (please give the name) .....	6	2	1	0	-1	-2
Super Express	7	2	1	0	-1	-2
Przyjaciółka	8	2	1	0	-1	-2
Fakt	9	2	1	0	-1	-2
Any other newspaper/magazine? .....	10	2	1	0	-1	-2
Others? (which?).....	11	2	1	0	-1	-2

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Part IV. Demographics

IV.1a) Region:

Dolnośląskie.....	1
Kujawsko-Pomorskie.....	2
Lubelskie.....	3
Lubuskie.....	4
Łódzkie.....	5
Małopolskie.....	6
Mazowieckie.....	7
Opolskie.....	8
Podkarpackie.....	9
Podlaskie.....	10
Pomorskie.....	11
Śląskie.....	12
Świętokrzyskie.....	13
Warmińsko-Mazurskie.....	14
Wielkopolskie.....	15
Zachodniopomorskie.....	16

IV.1b) Size of city/town:

Village.....	1
City up to 50,000 inhabitants.....	2
City 51 – 200,000 inhabitants.....	3
City over 200,000 inhabitants.....	4
Warszawa.....	5

IV.1c) Occupation:

Company chairmans, professionals, specialists (doctors, architects, lawyers, etc.), consultants, advisors, college professors .....	1
Intellectual/mental workers – bureaucrats, teachers, nurses, managers .....	2
Services and trade.....	3
Qualified manual labor .....	4
Unqualified manual labor .....	5
Farmers and those employed In the agricultural sector .....	6
Owners of small businesses .....	7
Housewife .....	8
Student .....	9
Others.....	10
Currently unemployed .....	11
Retired.....	12

IV.2a) What is your net monthly income?

Up to 700 zł.....	5
700 – 2000 zł.....	4
2000 – 3000 zł.....	3
3000 zł or greater .....	2
Refused to answer .....	1

IV.2b) What is the net monthly income of your household?

Up to 700 zł.....	5
700 – 2000 zł.....	4
2000 – 3000 zł.....	3
3000 zł or greater .....	2
Refused to answer.....	1

IV.3) How, if at all, has your financial situation changed in the past year?

It has improved greatly .....	2
It has improved somewhat .....	1
It has stayed the same .....	0
It has deteriorated somewhat .....	-1
It has deteriorated greatly.....	-2

---

Part V. Political Views & International Trust

V.1) How would you evaluate your political knowledge? Would you say that you are....

Very knowledgeable about politics..... 4  
Somewhat knowledgeable about politics..... 3  
Somewhat not knowledgeable about  
politics..... 2  
Not knowledgeable at all ..... 1

V.2) How would you evaluate your knowledge about the EU? Would you say that you are....

Very knowledgeable about the EU ..... 4  
Somewhat knowledgeable about the EU ..... 3  
Somewhat not knowledgeable about the  
EU ..... 2  
Not knowledgeable at all ..... 1

V.3) How would you evaluate your knowledge about the war in Iraq? Would you say that you are....

Very knowledgeable about the war..... 4  
Somewhat knowledgeable about the war..... 3  
Somewhat not knowledgeable about the  
war ..... 2  
Not knowledgeable at all ..... 1

V.4) Do you think that Poland's membership in the EU will benefit or harm your family in the **short term**?

It will benefit a lot..... .2  
It will benefit somewhat..... . 1  
It will harm somewhat ..... -1  
It will harm a lot ..... -2  
Hard to say (not read out loud) ..... ..0



V.5) Do you think that Poland's membership in the EU will benefit or harm your family in the **long term**?

It will benefit a lot..... .2  
It will benefit somewhat..... .1  
It will harm somewhat ..... -1  
It will harm a lot ..... -2  
Hard to say (not read out loud) ..... ..0

V.6) How satisfied are you with the way the current administration is handling economic reforms?

Very satisfied ..... .2  
Somewhat satisfied ..... .1  
Somewhat unsatisfied ..... -1  
Very unsatisfied ..... -2  
Hard to say (not read out loud)..... ..0

V.7) If the parliamentary elections were held today, for which political party would you vote?

SLD..... 1  
PSL..... 2  
Unia Pracy UP ..... 3  
Samoobrona ..... 4  
Liga Polskich Rodzin LPR..... 5  
Platforma Obywatelska PO..... 6  
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość PiS ..... 7  
Unia Wolności UW..... 8  
Socjaldemokracja Polski SdPI (partia  
Marka Borowskiego) ..... 9  
Others? Which?..... 10  
I wouldn't vote ..... 11

V.8) Do you think that Poland should trust the following nations, or should it be cautious in its relations with them?

Please indicate for each nation that I will read.

Great Britain

Should definitely trust..... 2  
Should somewhat trust..... 1  
Should sometimes trust, sometimes be  
cautious ..... 0  
Should be somewhat cautious.....-1  
Should be definitely cautious.....-2

Germany

Should definitely trust..... 2  
Should somewhat trust..... 1  
Should sometimes trust, sometimes be  
cautious ..... 0  
Should be somewhat cautious.....-1  
Should be definitely cautious.....-2

France

Should definitely trust..... 2  
Should somewhat trust..... 1  
Should sometimes trust, sometimes be  
cautious ..... 0  
Should be somewhat cautious.....-1  
Should be definitely cautious.....-2

The United States

Should definitely trust..... 2  
Should somewhat trust..... 1  
Should sometimes trust, sometimes be  
cautious ..... 0  
Should be somewhat cautious.....-1  
Should be definitely cautious.....-2

Russia

Should definitely trust..... 2  
Should somewhat trust..... 1  
Should sometimes trust, sometimes be  
cautious ..... 0  
Should be somewhat cautious.....-1  
Should be definitely cautious.....-2

VI.1) These are all the questions, thank you. In the future we plan to conduct a similar study.  
Could we contact you again for an in-depth interview?  
Yes ..... 1 (Ask for the phone number and the respondent's name)

## Chapter 6

Table 11: Polish Pro-EU Attitudes—the Odds Ratio for Model 1

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<b>Network</b>	
Discussant 1	2.076
Discussant 2	2.148
Dummy 1	1.313
Dummy 2	1.429
<b>Background</b>	
Education	1.318
Gender	0.969
Intellectual	1.020
Age	0.836
Manager/Teacher	1.523
Skilled Labor	0.978
Farmer	0.647
Income Change	1.266
City/Village	1.262
<b>Politics</b>	
Party View on EU	1.979
<b>Expectations</b>	
Future Benefits	2.305
<b>Media</b>	
Print	1.166
Number of Observations	N=571

---

Table 11: Polish Pro-EU Attitudes Among Individuals with at Least One Discussant: Base Model

---

<b>Network</b>	
Discussant 1	0.760 (0.103)***
<b>Background</b>	
Education	0.475 (0.292)
Gender	-0.055 (0.264)
Intellectual	-0.206 (0.749)
Age	-0.192 (0.206)
Manager/Teacher	0.220 (0.369)
Skilled Labor	-0.262 (0.310)
Farmer	1.392 (0.776)
Income Change	0.123 (0.134)
City/Village	0.167 (0.270)
<b>Politics</b>	
Government Support	0.237 (0.299)
Party View on EU	0.817 (0.197)***
<b>Expectations</b>	
Future Benefits	0.892 (0.126)***
<b>Media</b>	
Print	0.364 (0.248)
Constant	-0.562 (0.746)
Number of Observations	N=571

---

\*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 12: Polish Pro-Iraq Attitudes—the Odds Ratio for Model 1

---

<b>Network</b>	
Discussant 1	4.612
Discussant 2	1.131
Dummy 1	0.516
Dummy 2	1.201
<b>Background</b>	
Education	0.896
Gender	0.348
Intellectual	1.785
Age	0.934
Skilled Labor	1.106
Manager/Teacher	0.805
Farmer	0.856
Income Change	0.984
City/Village	0.511
<b>Politics</b>	
Government Support	1.498
Party View on Iraq	1.580
<b>International Trust</b>	
UK	1.029
France	0.776
US	1.666
Russia	1.034
Germany	1.029
<b>Media</b>	
Print	1.307
Number of Observations	N=503

---

Table 12: Polish Pro-Iraq Attitudes Among Individuals with at Least One Discussant: Base Model

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<b>Network</b>	
Discussant 1	1.162 (0.125)***
<b>Background</b>	
Education	-0.379 (0.357)
Gender	-1.201 (0.352)***
Intellectual	0.534 (0.725)
Age	0.033 (0.240)
Skilled Labor	0.584 (0.389)
Manager/Teacher	0.100 (0.469)
Farmer	0.596 (0.961)
Income Change	-0.115 (0.172)
City/Village	-0.972 (0.362)***
<b>Politics</b>	
Government Support	0.656 (0.302)**
Party View on Iraq	0.528 (0.259)**
<b>International Trust</b>	
UK	-0.135 (0.215)
France	-0.413 (0.211)*
US	0.760 (0.208)***
Russia	-0.109 (0.255)
Germany	0.037 (0.214)
<b>Media</b>	
Print	0.216 (0.231)
Constant	0.574 (0.902)
Number of Observations	N=503

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\*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

Elizabeth Radziszewski was born in Gliwice, Poland, on March 30, 1979. She arrived in the United States in 1993. After graduating from Rutgers University in 2001 with a degree in Political Science/History and Journalism, she completed a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Illinois in 2003. Radziszewski will join the faculty at Yeshiva University as assistant professor in the fall of 2007. Her research interests include conflict dynamics at the interstate and intrastate level, foreign policy, and social-network analysis. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis and relaxing with her piano.