



Robert Schuman

*The International Promotion of Political Norms in
Eastern Europe: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis*

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**The International Promotion of Political Norms in Eastern Europe:
A Qualitative Comparative Analysis**

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The International Promotion of Political Norms in Eastern Europe: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis^φ

Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, the main regional organizations of Europe – the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – proclaimed human rights, liberal democracy, and peaceful conflict management to be the normative foundations of the New Europe.² Moreover, they defined support for political change as a new core task for themselves. They provided expertise and training to the transformation countries, gave financial support to the emerging civil societies and parties, and mediated in cases of conflict. They monitored the establishment and functioning of democratic institutions and the rule of law; they made financial assistance and the integration of the transformation countries into the Western organizations dependent upon compliance with their political norms and, in a few instances, intervened militarily to stop civil war and massive human rights violations or (such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, or Macedonia).

About one and a half decades later, ten consolidated East European democracies are or are about to become EU and NATO members. By contrast, other countries of the region (most of them in the Balkans) have not yet achieved democratic stability. Others still, mainly successor states of the Soviet Union, are consolidating autocracies rather than democracies. These divergent developments raise the question under which conditions European organizations have had an effective impact on compliance with norms of human rights, liberal democracy, and peaceful conflict management in Eastern Europe.

In answering this question, the article starts from two basic models of international rule promotion – external incentives and social learning – used in different strands of International Relations research. First, in the context of the rationalist-constructivist debate in International Relations, constructivist scholars have begun to develop theoretical accounts of “international socialization” that go beyond the material bargaining frameworks dominant in rationalist IR theory (for overviews, see Finnemore 1996; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Checkel 2004). These accounts are based on

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² See, for instance, the 1990 *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*.

processes of social influence (Johnston 2001), argumentation (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999) or persuasion (Checkel 2001) and include deep effects of interest and identity change. Second, the literature on international conditionality, which focuses mostly on the lending conditionality of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), also contrasts bargaining and social learning models and arrives at a skeptical assessment of the effectiveness of bargaining conditionality (see e.g. Kahler 1992; cf. Checkel 2000). Similarly, the literature on “Europeanization”, the impact of the EU on member state institutions, political processes, and policies, distinguishes “domestic change as a process of redistribution of resources” from “domestic change as a process of socialization and learning” (Börzel and Risse 2003; cf. Héritier et al. 2001).

Both models identify different conditions as crucial for the effectiveness of international norm promotion. Whereas the external incentives model focuses on the size and credibility of incentives provided by international organizations as well as domestic veto points and costs of adaptation, the socialization accounts emphasize the authority of the socialization agency, the legitimacy and domestic resonance of the norms, and the identity and cognitive priors of the target actors. In this article, I will test the causal relevance of the explanatory factors suggested by both models in a comparative analysis.

This test seeks to go beyond existing research on the international promotion of political norms in Eastern Europe.³ While there are numerous case studies in this field (see e.g. Linden 2000; 2002; Pridham 2001; 2002; Zielonka and Pravda 2001), systematic theoretical and comparative research is only just emerging (Kelley 2004; Kubicek 2003; see also Vachudova forthcoming). These studies mostly employ a similar theoretical framework contrasting rationalist and constructivist mechanisms and conditions. Paul Kubicek and his collaborators study seven countries and evaluate twelve variables stemming from a “convergence” (social learning) and a “conditionality” (external incentives) framework. However, the cases are aggregated at the country level, which is problematic because conditions vary between issue-areas and are subject to change over time. Moreover, the design of their comparison does not permit a rigorous analysis of the explanatory power of the independent variables.⁴

In contrast, Judith Kelley (2004) conducts a statistical analysis at the level of individual issues at various time points and finds that external incentives were generally necessary to overcome domestic opposition and bring about policy change. However, her cases are limited to issues of ethnic conflict and minority rights in four Eastern European countries. Finally, Jon Pevehouse (2002a; 2002b) analyzes – and confirms – the influence of regional organizations on democratic transitions and consolidation more generally. He does not, however, distinguish between the influences of external incentives and social learning in his empirical analysis and his data ends with 1992, that is, before the period of democratic consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe.

³ I do not take into consideration here the literature on the transfer of specific policy rules. See e.g. Jacoby forthcoming.

⁴ The same criticism applies to previous work by me and my collaborators. See e.g. Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel (2003).

To overcome the limits of these studies and check their results, this article covers various issues (authoritarian rule, minority conflict, secession) across different time periods in nine diverse countries – Belarus, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Turkey. In addition, it uses the techniques of combinatorial logic in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to analyze the 42 conditional configurations resulting from this diversity, to assess the conditions of effective incentives and learning, and to determine which of them were necessary and/or sufficient for political change.

The results largely corroborate the external incentives model. Credible EU (and, for some countries, NATO) membership incentives and low domestic adaptation costs are individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of compliance. However, the combination of credible incentives and low costs is not the only sufficient condition of effective international impact. In particular in the final phases of negotiations to open and conclude accession negotiations, credible membership incentives work in conjunction with a Western or European identity of the target government, too – even if compliance threatens the survival of the target government. In contrast, the social learning model fails to explain compliance. Identity was relevant only in combination with incentives, and the other conditions tested here (legitimacy and resonance) were not systematically related to the effectiveness of international norm promotion.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows: in the next section, I will discuss the models and the conditions and hypotheses to be tested. Subsequent sections introduce the QCA method, conceptualize the variables for the QCA analysis, and describe briefly the cases. The final two sections discuss the comparative analysis and draw conclusions from it.

Theory: External Incentives and Social Learning

The analysis is based on two alternative models of international influence on domestic change: the external incentives model and the social learning model (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier forthcoming).

The External Incentives Model

The external incentives model is a rationalist bargaining model. The actors involved are assumed to be strategic utility-maximizers interested in the maximization of their own power and welfare. In a bargaining process, they exchange information, threats and promises; its outcome depends on their relative bargaining power. According to the external incentives model, the relevant strategy of the European international organizations is political conditionality: the organizations set their liberal democratic norms as conditions that the Eastern European countries have to fulfill in order to receive rewards specified in advance. These rewards consist of assistance and institutional ties ranging from trade and cooperation agreements via association agreements to full

membership. Regional organizations pay the reward if the target government complies with the conditions and withhold the reward if it fails to comply. They do not, however, intervene either coercively or supportively to change the cost-benefit assessment and subsequent behavior of the target government by inflicting extra costs or providing additional, unconditional assistance.⁵

The analytical starting point of the bargaining process is a domestic status quo, which differs to some extent from an EU rule. This status quo is conceived as a “domestic equilibrium” reflecting the current distribution of preferences and bargaining power in domestic society. EU conditionality upsets this domestic equilibrium by introducing (additional) incentives for compliance with EU rules into the game. The most general proposition of the external incentives model is therefore that *a state complies with the norms of the organization if the benefits of the rewards exceed the domestic adoption costs*. More specifically, this cost-benefit balance depends on the size and credibility of international rewards, on the one hand, and the size of domestic adoption costs, on the other.

Size and Credibility of International Rewards

The size of the international reward depends on its quality and its quantity. With regard to quality, I propose that tangible, material incentives – those which enhance the welfare, security or power of the target government – are most likely to have a sufficiently strong impact to bring about compliance. The underlying logic of this proposition is that, to the extent that compliance with liberal democratic norms is perceived to threaten the security and the power of the state and the government of the day, these disincentives need to be balanced by positive incentives of the same kind. By extension, international organizations that are able to offer such incentives are more likely to have an impact than those that do not. Specifically, the EU and NATO, which both provide the highest economic and security benefits available from European international organizations, will potentially be most effective in inducing compliance. By contrast, the OSCE and the Council of Europe offer mainly social rewards – such as international legitimacy – and soft security. Therefore their influence is unlikely to be effective without support of the EU or NATO.

With regard to quantity, the higher the welfare, security, and power benefits offered by the international organizations are, the more likely the target states will comply. For example, the offer of EU membership will be more effective than that of mere association, and NATO membership with full security guarantees will have a stronger impact than NATO’s Partnership for Peace.

In addition, the international incentives need to be credible – both with regard to the regional organization’s threat to withhold rewards in case of non-compliance and, conversely, its promise to deliver the reward in case of rule adoption. In other words, effective political conditionality requires, first, the superior bargaining power of the

⁵ This is the strategy of “reinforcement by reward” described in Schimmelfennig (2000) and Schimmelfennig et al. (2003).

external agency (otherwise threats would not be credible). Second, on the part of the target states, it requires certainty about the conditional payments (otherwise promises would not be credible).

The credibility of the *threat of exclusion* is generally high in the relationship between European regional organizations and the target countries of democratic conditionality in Eastern Europe. Due to the highly asymmetrical interdependence that characterizes this relationship, the organizations possess superior bargaining power. Eastern Europe is only of marginal importance to the economy and security of the EU and NATO member states. In contrast, the region is heavily dependent on the EU market and will benefit much more strongly from accession than the EU member states (Baldwin, Francois and Portes 1997; Moravcsik and Vachudova 2003: 46-52). Likewise, it has faced higher insecurity in the post-Cold War era than Western Europe due to uncertainty about the course of foreign policy of neighboring Russia and ethno-nationalistic conflict. Thus, the region also benefits more strongly from NATO membership than the old member states benefit from NATO enlargement. Both asymmetries enhance the bargaining power of the main Western organizations.

The main issue, therefore, has been the credibility of the *promises*. To be credible, the regional organizations must be *capable* of paying the rewards (at a low cost to themselves).

First, promises are not credible if they go beyond capabilities. Second, the higher the costs of the rewards are to the organization, the more doubtful their eventual payment to the target countries will be. On the basis of this reasoning, intangible, social rewards have been more credible than tangible material rewards, and assistance and association have been more credible rewards than accession. Eastern enlargement involves substantial costs to the EU and NATO, which – although far from being prohibitive – are likely to exceed the marginal benefits of the member states (Schimmelfennig 2003: 37-62).

However, one also has to take into account the “sunk costs” of rewarding. In contrast to assistance, which requires comparatively small investments and can be stopped rather easily, enlargement involves costly, long-term negotiations and preparations and – in the case of the EU – a restructuring of institutions and policies. The further the pre-accession process advances, the higher are the costs of withholding the reward, that is, the investments that would be lost if the process was broken off or postponed to sanction a candidate state. Therefore, the credibility of promises in enlargement conditionality increases over time as the credibility of threats decreases. Moreover, the opening of accession negotiations with, and the subsequent accession of, a first group of candidate countries to the EU and NATO increased the credibility of rewards for the remaining candidates, as it demonstrated that the Western organizations were serious about enlargement.

In addition, political conditionality must be consistent to be credible. If international organizations were perceived to subordinate conditionality to other political, strategic, or economic considerations, the target state might either hope to receive the benefits without fulfilling the conditions or conclude that it will not receive the rewards at

any rate. Moreover, the effectiveness of conditionality would suffer if organizations used different conditions or different criteria for measuring fulfillment.

Of course, the political conditions of membership varied. The membership criteria of the CoE were stricter than those of the OSCE, and less strict than those of the EU and NATO. This has not been problematic, however, because conditions complemented rather than contradicted each other, and organizations with stricter conditions also offered higher rewards. EU political conditions have been in line with recommendations and demands of the OSCE and the Council of Europe (CE), that is, those European organizations most directly concerned with the human and minority rights situation in the CEECs. Moreover, they were reinforced by the fact that NATO had made accession subject to the same conditions as the EU. Thus, target countries could not play one organization off against another and reap high benefits in spite of non-compliance.

Domestic Costs

If target states are confronted with credible conditionality, and if they are offered equally beneficial rewards, the external incentives model postulates that the size of domestic adoption costs determines whether they will accept or reject the conditions. We assume that adoption is always costly – otherwise it would have taken place in the absence of conditionality. For the purpose of this study, we focus on the domestic *political or power* costs of *governments*.

First, the liberal democratic norms, which are the subject of political conditionality, usually limit the autonomy and power of governments. They prohibit certain undemocratic and illiberal practices on which a government may rely to preserve its power – such as suppressing opposition parties or civic associations, curbing the freedom of the press, or rigging elections. Moreover, they may change power relations between governmental actors – such as increasing the independence of courts or limiting the political influence of the military. Finally, above all in the case of minority rights, they affect the composition of the citizenship and empower certain social and ethnic groups. This may erode the social power base of governments and, in their opinion, threaten the security, integrity, and identity of the state.

Second, in the Eastern European countries, the number of societal veto players is generally considered to be small (Dimitrova 2002: 176; Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2003: 498-499). Political parties have been organized top-down, are weakly rooted in society and social organizations, and depend on the state for their resources. Industrial relations are generally characterized by a state-dominated corporatism (in many cases even patrimonial networks), and an active civil society has failed to emerge despite promising beginnings in the revolutions of 1989. Rather, levels of political participation have declined.⁶ This characteristic of societal weakness also holds for Turkey.

⁶ For general assessments along this line, see, e.g., Ágh (1998: 52 and 106); Birch (2000: 15-16); Kaldor and Vejvoda (1999: 11, 19-22); Merkel (1999: 494-532); Sitter (2001: 75-76, 87).

In sum, I propose the following hypothesis based on the external incentives model: *The likelihood of compliance increases, as the size and credibility of international rewards increase and the power costs of compliance for the target government decrease.*

The Social Learning Model

The social learning model follows core tenets of social constructivism. It has informed studies of international socialization in general (Checkel 2001) and constitutes the most prominent alternative to rationalist explanations of conditionality (Checkel 2000; Kahler 1992) and Europeanization (Börzel and Risse 2003). In contrast with the rationalist model of conditionality, the social learning model assumes a logic of appropriateness (March and Olsen 1989: 160-161). According to this logic, the actors involved are motivated by internalized identities, values, and norms. Among alternative courses of action, they choose the (most) appropriate or legitimate one. Correspondingly, arguing about the legitimacy of rules and the appropriateness of behavior (rather than bargaining about conditions and rewards), persuasion (rather than coercion), and “complex” learning (rather than behavioral adaptation) characterize the process of rule transfer and rule adoption.

In this perspective, European regional organizations represent a European international community defined by a specific collective identity and a specific set of common values and norms. Whether a non-member state adopts the community’s rules depends on the degree to which it regards them as appropriate in light of this collective identity, values, and norms (Schimmelfennig 2003: 83-90). The most general proposition of the social learning model therefore is: *a state complies with the norms of the organization if it is persuaded of their appropriateness.*

The sociological institutionalist literature distinguishes three main mechanisms of social learning: imitation, argumentation and influence (see e.g. Checkel 2004; Johnston 2001).⁷ According to the mechanism of *imitation*, the community norms are templates that help actors understand and interpret social situations and provide scripts for the roles that they are supposed to play in the international community. The socialization agency provides a role model and demonstrates appropriate ways of behavior, which the target states learn through dense contacts and role-playing. Typically, the socializees adopt international norms as a result of unreflective processes of habitualization.

The *argumentation* mechanism postulates that community norms are normative validity claims argumentatively justified by the socialization agencies in international discourses. Thanks to the “power of the better argument”, the target actors are persuaded by the legitimacy of the validity claims and change their identity and interests accordingly (Checkel 2001; Risse 2000). Thus, according to this mechanism, social learning implies a reflective process of normative internalization.

⁷ Note that the labels for these mechanisms vary in the literature. For instance, Johnston (2001) distinguishes “persuasion” (here: argumentation) and “social influence”; Checkel (2004) calls the three mechanisms “role playing”, “normative suasion” and “strategic calculation” (subsuming both social and material incentives).

Finally, social *influence* is based on the use of social incentives and disincentives (such as image or status; Johnston 2001). Social rewards (such as popularity, respect, a positive image) require the adoption of the community norms. Otherwise, the target states are threatened with social punishments (such as shaming and shunning).

Interestingly, however, the literature has identified a fairly consistent catalogue of favorable conditions for all three mechanisms of social learning (Checkel 2001: 562-563; Johnston 2001: 498-499; Risse 2000: 19). Because of this common set of conditions, a single social learning model can be specified and tested, even though the test will not permit any direct observation and differentiation of the mechanisms. The common conditions are: novelty, legitimacy, identity, authority, and resonance.

Novelty. First, social learning is most likely to be effective, if the target actor “is in a novel and uncertain environment” (Checkel 2001: 562). “Novices” are prone to engage in role-playing, listen seriously to the arguments of international organizations, and seek international recognition and a favorable image. They compensate their uncertainty by taking clues from their social environment.

Legitimacy. Legitimacy refers to the normative quality of the regional organizations’ norms. According to Thomas Franck, compliance will depend on “the clarity with which the rules communicate, the integrity of the process by which they were made and are applied, their venerable pedigree and conceptual coherence. In short, it is the legitimacy of the rules which conduces to their being respected.” (1990: 38; cf. also 1990: 49). Obviously, the minimal condition is that demands on the target governments must be based on organizational rules rather than mere *ad hoc* interests of the member states. Moreover, if the democratic and human rights rules disseminated by the regional organizations are clearly defined, consensually shared, and consistently applied among their member states, their compliance pull will be high.

Identity. Identity refers to the international community that the target government regards as its relevant “in-group” and that it aspires to belong to. Non-member states are more likely to be persuaded by international organizations if they identify themselves with the community of states represented by these organizations (Checkel 2001: 563; Johnston 2001: 499).

Authority. In addition, social learning is more likely to be effective if the agency of norm promotion “is an authoritative member of the in-group to which the persuadee belongs or wants to belong” (Checkel 2001: 563). Generally, authority is enhanced if regional organizations rather than individual states engage in norm promotion and if these regional organizations have or aspire to have universal membership in the region rather than representing just a narrow selection of regional states.

Resonance. Resonance refers to the cultural or institutional match of a specific external rule with the already existing domestic values, norms, practices, and discourses in a specific issue-area. The higher the “degree of normative fit” of an international rule,

the more likely the target government will conceive the norm as being legitimate, accept it as an obligation, and subsequently translate it into institutional political practice (Cortell and Davis 2000: 69). Despite high general identification with an international community, the resonance of a specific rule propagated by this community may be low.

Two of these conditions, however, are excluded from the analysis because they are likely to be constants in the context of this study. On the one hand, novelty is a constant feature because all target states examined here have either been established or re-established after the end of the Cold War (such as the Baltic countries or the successor countries of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union); or they have at least experienced regime change bringing to power new elites. On the other hand, there is no variation in authority because the agencies of norm promotion consist in the same set of regional organizations for all the cases.

In sum, I propose the following alternative hypothesis based on the social learning model: *The likelihood of compliance increase with the legitimacy and resonance of the norms and the identification of the target state with the international community.*

Design and Method

The analysis in this paper is based on the method of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) proposed by Charles Ragin (1987; 2000). In this section, I briefly outline the underlying assumptions and goals of QCA and explicate the selection of units of analysis and cases.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Charles Ragin defines the essence of qualitative research by its case-orientation. Qualitative analysis distinguishes itself from quantitative research not just – or not so much – by the (limited) number of cases or the (qualitative) kind of data and measurements but by its “holistic character”. Qualitative social researchers look at and compare “cases as wholes”: “cases are viewed as configurations – as combinations of characteristics” (Ragin 1987: 3). Qualitative research then seeks “to determine the different combinations of conditions associated with specific outcomes or processes.” (Ragin 1987: 14) As a consequence, qualitative research is less concerned with the number of cases than with the variety of conditional configurations. It does not work with sampling, frequencies, and probabilities; its methods are logical rather than statistical. It is not interested in the general significance and explanatory power of individual variables but in their embeddedness in causal fields as either individually or jointly necessary and/or sufficient conditions (Ragin 1987: 15-16). This corresponds to the interest of this article in discovering the conditions of effective international impact on political change in Eastern Europe.

However, qualitative analyses often become more difficult to conduct and interpret as the number of cases and variables increases. Commonalities become rare and

difficult to identify, the number of possible comparisons increases geometrically, and the number of logically possible combinations of causal conditions increases exponentially (Ragin 1987: 49-50). Using Boolean algebra, QCA offers a tool to handle more than the handful of cases and causal configurations typically analyzed in qualitative research without, at the same time, requiring the large n of statistical analyses. It is capable of examining complex patterns of interactions between variables and contains procedures to minimize these patterns in order to achieve parsimony (Ragin 1987: 121-123). Thus, QCA helps to improve qualitative research without having to compromise on its basic features.

Basic QCA requires the researcher to conceptualize variables dichotomously and use binary data (0/1). “Fuzzy-set” QCA (Ragin 2000) also works with values between 0 and 1 and thus allows for a more fine-grained and information-rich analysis. However, fuzzy-set QCA still requires the researcher to define a theoretically meaningful qualitative “breakpoint” and to interpret the intermediate values as degrees of membership in the 0 or 1 class of cases. For reasons of simplicity and clarity of interpretation, I therefore decided to eliminate theoretically less relevant information and to use a binary coding.

The data is arranged as a “truth table”. That is, each conditional configuration (combination of values of the independent variables) present in the data set is represented as one row together with the associated (“truth”) value of the dependent variable. Finally, the truth table is analyzed with procedures of combinatorial logic to arrive at a solution specifying a parsimonious combination of necessary and sufficient causes (Ragin 1987: 86-99).

Case Selection and Units of Analysis

The analysis is restricted to *problematic cases*, that is, East European countries in which there was substantial initial conflict between European political norms and state behavior. The most important substantive reason for this selection is the interest of the research project in the impact and effectiveness of international norm promotion rather than more generally in the causes of democratization or democratic consolidation per se. Unproblematic cases of democratic transition and consolidation either did not trigger specific activities by regional organizations at all or generated largely redundant supportive measures. This also has methodological implications. In the problematic cases, it is easier to distinguish the international impact from endogenous change, that is, change that would have occurred in the absence of international norm promotion.

Based on these considerations, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia were excluded from the list of countries, as these countries had achieved a high degree of democratic consolidation before EU or NATO membership incentives set in.⁸ The further selection was guided by the aim to include a high degree of variation in the independent variables and their combination. Since it was difficult to estimate the values

⁸ See, for instance, their Freedom House ratings, which already matched those of Western democracies in the early 1990s. See www.freedomhouse.org.

of the independent variables for all variables and countries – especially with regard to the domestic variables of resonance and costs – the analysis is based on countries from different parts of the region, with different conflicts and domestic situations, in the hope that these differences would in turn guarantee high variation on the independent variables both longitudinally for the development of the country and horizontally across countries. The selection of Belarus, the Baltic countries of Estonia and Latvia, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Cyprus, and Turkey includes northeastern, central European and southeastern countries as well as countries with or without ethnic conflicts, democratic governments, a credible membership perspective, or a communist legacy.⁹

However, the units of analysis in this qualitative comparative study are not countries at the aggregate level but time- and issue-specific *conditional configurations*. The country cases are subdivided according to time periods and issues if the value of at least one independent variable changes from one time period to another or from one issue-area to another. Temporal subdivisions most often result from changes in the credibility of the membership incentive and changes in government (entailing changes in resonance and costs). Issue subdivisions most often involve those between general liberal democratic norms, minority rights, and issues of secession, entailing variation in legitimacy, resonance, and costs. As a consequence, the number of cases is not only higher than the number of countries (42 cases for 9 countries) but also varies strongly among the countries – between 1 (for Belarus and Montenegro, with no relevant changes in conditions over time and among issues) and 9 (for Estonia with 3 separate issues and up to 4 time periods).

Variables

In this section, I will describe the conceptualization of the variables. In general, the study is designed as a theory-testing qualitative study of the conditions under which European regional organizations have an effective impact on political change in the Eastern Europe. The variables are conceptualized dichotomously according to theoretically relevant qualitative states: the threshold for a positive value (1) is the expectation – based on the competing models – that the quality of the independent variable will enable or further compliance. A value of 0 indicates that compliance will be prevented or impeded.

The *dependent variable* of the study is (target state) *compliance* with the demands of regional organizations. To discriminate between compliance and non-compliance, the main indicator is legal rule adoption. A state is considered to be in compliance if it has signed a treaty and/or passed a law on the basis of the norm promoted by the regional organization. Thus, compliance goes beyond political declarations of acceptance. By contrast, norm-conforming implementation of the law is not checked consistently.

⁹ Other potentially interesting countries are Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Croatia, Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the end, they were not included because of resource constraints and after a quick check suggesting that they would probably not contribute significantly to variation on the independent variables.

The *independent variables* of the external incentives model are *credible incentives* (CREDINC) and *costs*. A value of 1 is assigned to a credible perspective of EU and/or NATO membership implying that less sizeable tangible benefits, let alone intangible benefits, will not be sufficient to induce compliance in norm-violating target governments. In addition, even these high benefits need to be based on a credible promise to be effective. Before 1993/1994, when EU and NATO made their general decisions to expand to the East, credibility was generally low. Afterwards, it became high for the central European countries, which were generally expected to be the main candidates for a first round of enlargement, whereas it remained low until later in the decade for the other associated countries (the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Romania). For the remaining countries of the “Western Balkans” and Turkey, credibility only turned high in 1999, when the EU offered membership in connection with its Stability Pact for the Balkans and accorded Turkey an explicit “candidate status”.

Costs are low (1) if the adoption of international norms engenders no or negligible power costs for the target government. This is the case if compliance is not perceived to endanger the dominance of the ethnic core group, to threaten the integrity and security of the state, to undermine the target government’s practices of power preservation, or lead to a breakdown of the government (a breakdown of the coalition or a loss of parliamentary support). Otherwise, domestic costs are considered to block compliance (0).

In the end, international rewards and domestic costs cannot be regarded in isolation. Whether a government will comply or not, depends on the net benefits or costs attained by comparing rewards and costs. On the one hand, norm-violating governments will not adapt to international demands in the absence of a credible promise of NATO or EU membership. On the other hand, however, these promises will not lead to compliance if domestic power costs are high. In other words, according to the external incentives model, high credible incentives and low domestic power costs are assumed to constitute individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions.

For the *social learning* model, the independent variables are legitimacy, identity and resonance. As to *legitimacy*, consensually shared and consistently applied international rules are categorized as “high legitimacy”, which is also the value for the expectation of compliance in a social-constructivist perspective (1). If external rules are *ad hoc*, ambiguously defined or inconsistently used, or if they are neither shared nor met by (a significant number of) the organization’s member states, their legitimacy is considered to be low (0). The general rules of liberal democracy and human rights meet the prerequisites of high legitimacy in the Western organizations. The major exception are minority rights, which – in contrast with individual non-discrimination rules – do not belong to the traditional liberal human rights catalogue of Western democracies, are not part of the EU’s *acquis communautaire*, and are not shared and accepted by all Western countries (De Witte 2000: 3; Schweltnus forthcoming). Whereas this lack of legitimacy should result in non-compliance according to the social learning model, it should not matter according to the external incentives model.

A positive *identification* with the European international community is indicated if a government consistently presents and describes itself and its state as “Western” and/or “European”, as sharing the collective identity, the fundamental values and norms of the Western or European community, and as aspiring to belong to this community. By contrast, identification is coded 0 if nationalist or other, non-Western or non-European identity constructions dominate the public self-descriptions of the government.

Resonance is measured at the level of target state governments, not state institutions or general public beliefs. If the principles on which international rules are based correspond to, or do not contradict, basic political beliefs and party ideologies, resonance is conducive to compliance. In other words, “neutral resonance” is the breakpoint for the presence of resonance. Conversely, if international rules contradict the party program or ideology of at least one party in government, the situation is “low resonance” (0). Again, according to the external incentives model, neither identification nor resonance should matter for compliance.

Case Descriptions

In this section of the paper, I provide a very brief description of the cases. For reasons of space, this description will neither provide data and evidence for the values of the variables nor a narrative of how the interplay of variables led to compliance or non-compliance.¹⁰ The aim here is simply to introduce the main conflicts and factors, which characterize each of the country cases, and provide some descriptive background ahead of the QCA.

Belarus

| Case ID | CREDINCENT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|---------|------------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| BEL | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

In Belarus, the systematic violation of European political norms began when President Lukashenka changed the constitution in 1996 and established an autocratic regime. Given the absence of a credible membership perspective, a Western identity of the political elite, and the resonance of liberal norms with the Lukashenka regime – and given high costs of political change – the conditions of compliance were unfavourable according to both the external incentives and the social learning model. International efforts to promote democratic norms ranging from shunning and sanctioning of the Lukashenka regime to constructive engagement through the OSCE’s mission in the country have not produced compliance.

Cyprus

In the Cyprus case, the conflict consists in the division of the island, since the Turkish invasion of 1974, into the (internationally recognized) Republic of Cyprus in the South

¹⁰ The case descriptions and values for the variables are based on a book manuscript on *Political Conditionality and International Socialization in the New Europe* (with Stefan Engert and Heiko Knobel).

and the (unrecognized) Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The norm violation resulted from the Turkish rejection of a federative solution and a negotiated settlement to unify the island, a long-time demand by both the United Nations and the EU. There are two target governments in this case: the government of Turkey (CYPTur) and the government of the TRNC (CYPN). For the Turkish government, the conditions for compliance have improved over time. Turkey was offered a credible EU membership perspective in 1999. In 2002, the AKP with its flexible, non-ideological position on Northern Cyprus, won the elections. Finally, even the Turkish military acquiesced in a federative solution. This acquiescence removed the major item of domestic power costs and led to compliance in 2003. By contrast, conditions remained basically constant on the Turkish Cypriot side but, ahead of the 2004 referendum on the unification of Cyprus, it complied with the UN Peace Plan nevertheless.

| Case ID | CREDINCENT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|-----------|------------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| CYPTur-99 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CYPTur-02 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CYPTur-03 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| CYPTur+03 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| CYPN-03 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| CYPN+03 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Estonia

In Estonia, international demands focused on three issues linked to the treatment of the large Russian-speaking minority in the country: the gradual granting of citizenship to the minority (Cit), automatic citizenship for minority children (Ch), and the public use of the Russian language (Lan). In addition, the high number of cases results from many changes in government. Whereas identification with the West and Europe was constantly high in Estonia, the resonance of the minority rights varied depending on the composition of the government (strength of nationalist parties). Estonia generally complied with the international demands, originally formulated by the OSCE's High Commissioner for National Minorities, after they were linked to EU membership. In the final phase of EU accession negotiations, compliance was not even prevented by high domestic costs of compliance resulting from divisions within the coalition governments and the absence of parliamentary support.

| Case ID | CREDINCT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|-----------|----------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| ESTCit-95 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ESTCit-97 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ESTCit-99 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ESTCit+99 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ESTCh-95 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ESTCh-97 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ESTCh+97 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ESTLan-99 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| ESTLan+99 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Latvia

| Case ID | INCENTIVES | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|-----------|------------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| LATCit-97 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LATCit+97 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| LATLan-99 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LATLan+99 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

In Latvia, the issues were the largely the same as in Estonia but resonance was generally lower for the, on average, more nationalist Latvian coalition governments. As in the case of Estonia, compliance required credible EU membership incentives.

Montenegro

| Case ID | INCENTIVES | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|---------|------------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| MON | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

In Montenegro, which had become *de facto* independent from Yugoslavia in the final years of the Milošević regime, the EU exercised pressure on the government of Milo Djukanović to refrain from declaring formal independence and to agree to a new federation of Serbia and Montenegro. After the EU had linked compliance with substantial financial subsidies and a membership perspective, the Montenegrin government complied in 2002 despite a rift in the coalition.

Romania

| Case ID | CREDINCT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|---------|----------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| ROMD-93 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ROMD-96 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ROMD-00 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ROMD+00 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| ROMM-93 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ROMM-96 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ROMM-00 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ROMM+00 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

In Romania, international demands focused on two issues: compliance with general liberal democratic norms (ROMD) and with collective minority rights for the Hungarian minority (ROMM). In both cases, conditions improved over time: first, when the post-communist Iliescu government developed an unambiguously Western identification in the first half of the 1990s; then with a credible membership perspective and a change in government. Even when Iliescu returned to power in 2000 and resonance was reduced again, the government continued to comply.

Slovakia

| Case ID | CREDINCT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| SLOD-98 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SLOD+98 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SLOM-98 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SLOM+98 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

In Slovakia, the contentious issues were the same as in Romania. Although the country had a credible EU and NATO membership perspective from the start, during the Mečiar government (1994-98), which included parties of the extreme left and right alongside with the populist HZDS, high domestic power costs and a lack of identification and resonance resulted in non-compliance. This changed completely after the parliamentary elections 1998 when a broad pro-democratic and pro-European coalition under Prime Minister Dzurinda came to power. Whereas Slovakia was denied accession negotiations with the EU and NATO in 1997, it was admitted to both organizations in 2004.

Turkey

| Case ID | CREDINCT | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| TURDP-99 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TURM-99 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TUR-02 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TUR+02 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

In the case of Turkey, the EU demanded the abolition of the death penalty (DP) as well as the non-discrimination of the Kurdish minority and the civil control of the military (M) as conditions for the opening of accession negotiations.¹¹ Legitimacy and identity were high from the beginning but not sufficient to induce compliance. The credible membership perspective for Turkey accorded in 1999 alone did not immediately result in compliance either. Only the parliamentary elections of 2002, which removed the Kemalist parties from power, led to a single-party government of the moderate Islamist AKP and resulted in low domestic adoption costs and high resonance, finally brought about compliance on all three issues.

¹¹ The three issues are combined into one or two cases when conditional configurations are identical.

Yugoslavia

| Case ID | INCENTIVES | COSTS | LEGITIMACY | IDENTITY | RESONANCE | COMPLIANCE |
|------------------|------------|-------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| YUGR-00 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| YUGKS-00 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| YUGS+00 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| YUGIc+00F | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| YUGIc+00S | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

During the Milošević regime (until 2000), domestic power costs of compliance in Yugoslavia were high, and identity and resonance were generally low. Despite varying incentives and high legitimacy, Yugoslavia did not comply with the democracy conditions of the EU’s Regional Approach (R) and Stability Pact (S) nor with the demands of the international community regarding the Kosovo (K) province. After the end of the Milošević regime, both the conditions and compliance improved. In the case of cooperation with the International Tribunal, however, there was a conflict between the federal government (F) under President Koštunica and the Serbian government (S) under Prime Minister Djindjić, which can be attributed to different domestic adoption costs.

Comparative Analysis

Truth Table

The truth table (Table 1) summarizes and lists the conditional configurations present in the data.¹² For each configuration, the table also shows the number of cases and case identifiers. The cases cover 17 out of 32 logically possible configurations (2^5 for 5 binary independent variables).

Table 1 Truth Table

| CRE DIN C | C O S T S | LEGITI MACY | IDEN TITY | RESON ANCE | COMPLI ANCE | Cases |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | CYPTur+03, ROMD-00, SLOD+98, TUR+02, YUGS+00 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | ROMD+00, YUGIc+00S |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ROMM-00 |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | LATCit+97, ROMM+00, SLOM+98 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | C 0/1 | CYPTur-03 <i>ESTCh+97,</i> <i>ESTLan+99</i> |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | C 0/1 | CYPTur-02, CYPN- |

¹² For all results reported here, I used the “crisp-set analysis” procedures in fsQCA 1.1. The program can be downloaded at <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~cragin/fsqca.htm>.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|--|---------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | | 03, TUR-02, YUGIc+00F CYPN+03, LATLan+99 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | SLOD-98, YUGKS+00 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | C 0/1 | | ESTCit-99 <i>ESTCit+99, MON</i> |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | SLOM-98 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | ESTCh-97 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | ESTCh-95, TURDP-99 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | ESTLan-99 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | CYPTur-99, LATLan-99, ROMD-96, TURM-99 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | BEL, ROMD-93, YUGR-00 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | ESTCit-97 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | ESTCit-95, LATCit-97, ROMM-96 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | ROMM-93 |

Two observations are important at this point. First, one (but only one) bivariate combination is systematically missing in the table: costs = 1 and identity = 0. That is, there are no cases in which low identity is associated with low costs. Target governments with a weak or absent European or Western identity always incur high adoption costs. Conversely, target governments with low adoption costs always identify strongly with the Western international community. By contrast, a strong Western or European identity does not exclude high adoption costs and vice versa. The implications of this observation will be discussed below.

Second, three conditional configurations (rows 5, 6 and 8) are contradictory, that is, the same configuration of conditions leads to compliance in some cases and non-compliance in others. In contrast to a probabilistic statistical analysis, a deterministic logical analysis cannot incorporate such contradictory results. There are two technical solutions to this complication (1987: 113-118). The first is to include frequencies and significance to exclude either the positive or negative cases. For instance, one might exclude the less frequent outcomes in the contradictory rows. This solution, however, would not only “violate the spirit of case-oriented qualitative research” (Ragin 1987: 118) but, given the way in which the units of analysis were defined above, also bias the analysis in favor of the countries with higher within-country variation.

The second way is to recode all contradictory outcomes as either 0 or 1 or to treat them as absent or missing (thereby reducing the configurations to be analyzed from 17 to

14).¹³ Coding the outcomes as “false” (0) is the conservative option, which yields highly certain causal patterns but might exclude further or simpler causally relevant conditional configurations (type II error). By contrast, coding them as “true” (1) is more inclusive but might overstate the causal effect of some conditional configurations (type I error). The configurations produced by the analysis are then better interpreted as conditions under which the outcome is possible or probable rather than certain. I will use all three options to cover the entire range of interpretations of the outcomes.

Analysis

The Boolean analysis yields the following results (Table 2) for all three specifications of the contradictions. If all contradictions are recoded as compliance cases (outcome 1), credible membership incentives and a Western/European identity of the target governments are jointly sufficient for compliance. If the contradictions are treated as missing configurations, this is still one possible solution. However, credible incentives are also sufficient in combination with low domestic power costs of the target government. Finally, if all contradictions are recoded as non-compliance cases (outcome 0), credible incentives, low domestic costs, and a Western/European identity are all necessary (and jointly sufficient) to produce compliance.

Table 2 QCA solutions

| Contradictory configurations | Solution |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coded as compliance | credinc <i>AND</i> identity |
| Coded as missing | credinc <i>AND</i> identity <i>OR</i> credinc <i>AND</i> costs |
| Coded as non-compliance | credinc <i>AND</i> costs <i>AND</i> identity |

The QCA solutions show three independent variables to be causally relevant. Credible incentives figure as a necessary condition in all three solutions combined with identity and/or costs. Thus, in the absence of credible membership incentives, there will not be compliance even if other conditions are highly favorable (according to the external incentives or the social learning model). In particular, the issues of automatic citizenship for children born in Estonia and the abolishment of the death penalty in Turkey (before 1999) show that governments have not acted on these issues without credible membership conditionality, even though domestic costs were low. On the other hand, credible membership incentives alone are not sufficient to produce compliance. This is true for the Mečiar regime in Slovakia, the Milošević regime in Yugoslavia as well as, until recently, for Cyprus and Turkey.

The analysis suggests that credible incentives need to be combined with Western/European identity or low domestic costs or both. Here, the inconclusiveness of the analysis results from the contradictory configurations. Following the conservative interpretation of the results, we can be certain to see compliance if credible membership incentives, low domestic power costs, and a Western or European identity are jointly

¹³ Technically speaking, in fsQCA, this third option requires the analyst to specify contradictions (together with remainders) as “don’t care”.

present (see the first four configurations in the truth table). According to the looser interpretations, credible membership incentives may be sufficient in combination with either a positive identity or low domestic power costs alone.

Extension

To arrive at more determinate findings, it would be necessary to discriminate more clearly between costs and identity and to solve the contradictions. On the one hand, it would be helpful to find at least one case combining low costs and low identity. However, this is not an easy task. Generally, low identity cases are rare in post-Cold War Europe. Most governments identify themselves clearly with the Western or European international community. In our selection, there are only 7 cases of low identification, concerning above all the Lukashenka regime in Belarus, the Mečiar regime in Slovakia, and the Milošević regime in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, for these authoritarian or autocratic regimes, compliance with liberal democratic norms also involved or still involves substantial power costs. To find more cases of low identity, one would have to go further east into the post-Soviet space, but then again the combination of non-Western identities and autocratic government appears to be even stronger in this region. Thus, it may very well be that the absence of the combination low costs/low identity is a fact of real political life rather than an artefact of the case selection.

To solve the contradictions, Ragin's most recommended strategy is to go back to the cases and see whether contradictions result from poor conceptualization or omitted variables. A Boolean analysis of the contradictions (as suggested by Ragin 1987: 113-115) reveals that contradictions appear when credible incentives (1), positive identity (1) and high domestic costs (0) are combined with either high legitimacy or high resonance. In other words, and viewed from the perspective of the model of external incentives, high domestic power costs may in some cases permit compliance under otherwise favorable conditions. Which are these deviant cases, and do they have features that distinguish them from the other high cost cases?

The cases in question are highlighted by italics in the truth table (Table 1): the acceptance by the Northern Cyprus government of the UN Peace Plan in 2004 (CYPN+03); the compliance of the Estonian government, in the course of EU accession negotiations, with international demands for more generous rules for citizenship and the public use of minority languages (ESTCh+97, ESTCit+99, ESTLan+99); changes in the Latvian language law on the eve of the Helsinki summit of European heads of government and state in December 1999 (LATLan+99); and the acceptance by the government of Montenegro of a federation with Serbia rather than formal independence (MON).

Two commonalities of these cases come to mind. First, the high costs in each case do not result from general threats to the survival of the regime or the integrity of the state. Rather the cases involve democratically elected target governments and result from the threat by coalition partners to leave the government or by parties in parliament to withdraw support from a minority government. Thus, the costs can be classified as

moderately high in comparison to the costs of compliance for authoritarian or autocratic governments. Second, most cases concern “endgame” situations between the EU and the candidate countries. The government of Northern Cyprus complied immediately before the referendum that would decide the inclusion of the Turkish Republic in the EU; Estonia (except for the children’s citizenship case) and Latvia complied with demands for minority rights in time for accession negotiations to be opened or completed; Montenegro gave in just in time before the EU would have canceled the financial aid, on which the state budget strongly depends, and excluded the country from the list of membership hopefuls. In sum, it appears that the time pressures emanating from the concluding phase of high-stake negotiations with regional organizations add sufficiently to the size and credibility of the external incentives to overcome moderately high domestic power costs. Of course, this plausible *ad hoc* explanation of the deviant cases would have to be tested systematically, for instance, by adding two further variables or by refining the conceptualization of the credible incentives and costs variables. And it would need to be confirmed independently by additional cases not yet included in the sample.

Indeed, by introducing an “endgame” variable and coding final negotiation phases (just ahead of decisions to open or to conclude accession negotiations) as “1”, the contradictions disappear – except for the Estonian case of citizenship for children of stateless parents, which was solved in December 1998 before the final phase of EU accession negotiations. The QCA solution (dropping the single remaining contradictory configuration from the analysis) is *credinc-AND-costs OR identity-AND-endgame*. That is, the solution confirms the external incentives model as a sufficient configuration of conditions. However, it permits a second sufficient cause: the combination of Western/European identity with the pressure of final negotiation phases. This result generally mirrors the original analysis, since we can understand “endgame” as a situation of particularly high and credible membership incentives for compliance.

Conclusions

The analysis generally corroborates the external incentives model. First, it shows that high and credible incentives are necessary for the international promotion of political norms to succeed. In the absence of such incentives, external efforts fail to produce democratic change in non-compliant countries. Second, however, credible incentives alone are not sufficient to bring about such change. They need to be combined with other conditions.

The external incentives model suggests that the additional requirement is low domestic power costs. This proposition is generally supported by the evidence. Both in the original analysis and for the re-specified model, credible incentives and low costs are jointly sufficient if contradictory configurations are disregarded. However, this is not the only jointly sufficient configuration: a combination of credible incentives (or “endgame” negotiations, according to the re-specified model) with positive Western identity is sufficient to bring about democratic change as well. Finally, according to the conservative interpretation of the original analysis, both costs and identity have to be favorable to translate credible incentives into compliance.

These findings suggest that a mixed model integrating identity into the external incentives model works just as well, or even better, as the “pure” model. How can we make sense of this result despite the fact that identity is based on an alternative theoretical model of international norm promotion? I suggest that a positive identification might be interpreted as a factor that reduces the perception or salience of costs. Positive identification creates a strong interest in membership in the organizations of the “aspiration group” as a basic foreign policy goal. In particular at decisive “moments of truth” in or before accession negotiations, governments with a positive identity tend to value the membership perspective more highly than moderate short-term costs and to comply even if they risk losing power (temporarily). In other words, the endgame situation strengthens the “credible incentives” term of the calculation vis-à-vis the “domestic costs” term if target governments are favorably disposed toward the regional organizations in general. Even in endgame situations, however, this will not work if power costs are substantial and durable (regime change) or if identification is low.

In contrast, the conditions of the social learning model are not corroborated by this analysis. First, even in the presence of positive identity, high legitimacy, and at least neutral resonance, compliance did not follow (see several of the Baltic minority rights cases). Second, neither legitimacy nor resonance show up as necessary, let alone sufficient, conditions in any of the QCA solutions. Third, the other factor of this model – identity – was not relevant alone but only in combination with factors from the external incentives model.

This theoretical result confirms the general findings of Kelley (2004) and Kubicek (2003) on the basis of a broader selection and greater diversity of countries and issues. Conversely, it challenges the general behavioral relevance of individual case studies showing social learning processes in international norm promotion in Eastern Europe (Checkel 2001; Gheciu 2003). Finally, it adds an analysis of necessary and sufficient conditions absent in Kelley’s statistical analysis and Kubicek’s looser comparative analysis.

The analysis suggests that the size and credibility of external incentives is the most relevant factor for the effectiveness of international norm promotion – at least in the short term. The promotion efforts of European regional organizations have not failed when the international legitimacy or domestic resonance of international norms was low, or because of a lack of “ownership”, but when external incentives were purely social rather than material, too small compared to the domestic costs of adaptation, or not based on credible promises. However, whether political changes wrought by membership conditionality will be sustainable after accession remains to be seen. In addition, in light of this analysis, the era of effective political norm promotion in Europe may be coming to an end. On the one hand, the EU is proposing a “New Neighborhood Policy” for the “Wider Europe” (in the East and across the Mediterranean) that explicitly excludes the promise of membership. On the other hand, the autocratic or authoritarian governments are likely to lack the Western identity and to reject the power costs and the risks of regime change that come with the conditionality of the European regional organizations.

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