INSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE INTEGRATION PROCESS IN THE EU

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Socialization as a power discourse: conceptualizing the Eastern enlargement of Western international institutions[1]

Abstract: International relations literature of the last decade has characterized the post-Cold War order in Europe as the dissemination of Western norms and institutions eastward. In this process Western international institutions, in particular NATO and the EU, have been regarded as socializers and educators who transform former Soviet bloc states into Western-style liberal democracies through 'teaching and persuasion'. This paper analyzes the implications of the socialization model as a discourse on the relations between NATO and the EU, and former Soviet bloc states. It argues that, even a decade after many of these states have 'joined the West' as NATO and EU members, the socialization narrative has perpetuated a distinction between the

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'West' as an epistemological-civilizational concept and Central and Eastern Europe as a complementary 'other'. The distinction between socializers and the socializees as passive receptors of Western norms has been codified as a 'West vs East' narrative in the literature and public discourse. This paper argues that the preoccupation with a one-way direction of influence in IR literature has not only maintained a false dichotomy but also overlooked Eastern European agency and the role of these new member states in shaping the Western institutions.

Introduction

The transformation of former Soviet bloc states into Western-style democracies and the integration of these states into Western international institutions have been of particular interest in international relations (IR) literature of the last two decades. IR literature has in particular paid attention to NATO and the EU as agents of change in Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs). Among various other theoretical attempts to explain the role of Western international institutions in the transformation of the former Soviet bloc, constructivist IR emphasizes the role of norm transfer.

In line with the constructivist camp, this paper argues that the eastward expansion of Western international institutions and the transformation of former communist countries into Western-style liberal democracies cannot be understood without taking into account the role of norms and identity. This paper focuses on the socialization approach as an explanatory model for the external influences in the transformation of former Soviet bloc states into full-fledged NATO/EU members. The model regards the Western international institutions as norm-setters for the former communist states, which adopted rules and norms, and learned to play the role of Western countries. The socialization approach accounts for the importance that the perspective of becoming part of the 'Western value community' played in those states' transformation.

However, the socialization account also contains problematic implications. As this paper argues, socialization entails a power discourse that is rarely explicitly stated in the literature, but which has a profound impact on the way relations between the socializer and the socializee are conceptualized. My critique of the socialization model as a narrative on Eastern enlargement

of Western institutions revolves around what I identify as its three inherent problems: (1) its omission of the socializee's perspective, (2) the creation and perpetuation of a strict dichotomy between the socializer and the socializee, and (3) the removal of Western norms and identity from their specific historical and cultural context.

After I identify the advantages of the use of the socialization approach as a theoretical model in conceptualizing Eastern enlargement, I will present my critique. I will also provide some remarks beyond theory and discuss the implications of socialization as a narrative in political and public discourse.

1. The socialization model

While economic and security considerations constituted significant driving factors for the Central and Eastern European countries to join the international institutions and to conduct necessary reforms to be accepted as members, the depth of their transformation and the willingness of governments to conduct costly reforms could not be explained without the normative role of these international institutions. This assumption is supported by the fact that in the pre-accession period references to a common identity were made frequently on the part of both the candidate countries and the institutions themselves, which emphasized solidarity with the countries based on common values and identity. Membership in the EU and NATO symbolized the 'return to the West' for these countries. This symbolic meaning was an essential motivating factor for internal reforms to fulfil membership criteria. Equally, on the part of the institutions, the willingness to enlarge and to play an active role in the transformation of the new members could not be understood without taking into account the institutions' identities as 'norm disseminators'. As Helene Sjursen points out about the pre-accession period,

> the fact that the element of kinship-based duty is strong in the arguments related to enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe might contribute to explaining why important financial efforts [were], for example, put into helping Poland to fulfil the conditions for membership. Under normal conditions Poland should not have been allowed into the EU in the first round of enlargement [Sjursen 2002, p. 505].

Socialization literature, which deals with normative transformation, focuses on the "external influences of democratization through the promotion/

socialization of a specific norm set espousing a commitment to a 'Western' conception of liberal democracy" [Flockhart 2005, p. 6]. Broadly, socialization is understood as a process of one actor's adaptation and internalization of another actor's norms, which happens through frequent interaction between those actors [Checkel 2001; Flockhart 2005; Johnston 2005; Lewis 2005]. The socialization model as applied to former communist states and Western institutions implies that by virtue of membership in the institutions and the interaction with the institutions and their older members, the former Soviet bloc countries undergo transformation. Through the adaptation and institutionalization of Western norms they become Western states [Checkel 2001; Gheciu 2005b; Sedelmeier & Schimmelfennig 2004].

Scholars emphasizing the role of strategic choice argue that the subject of socialization chooses to adapt norms and regulations designated by the international institutions through rational cost-benefit calculation [Schimmelfennig 2003; Sedelmeier & Schimmelfennig 2004; 2005; Sedelmeier 2012]. Incentives for compliance can be of material, such as economic, but also of non-material nature, such as the inclusion into a community. By contrast, the internalization model of socialization understands it as a process in which the subject is externally transformed to accept and institutionalize the outsider's norms [Checkel 2001; Flockhart 2006; Gheciu 2005a]. Socialization is understood as deeper transformation of norms and preferences, rather than the mere fulfilment of criteria for membership. By virtue of the interaction with the socializer, the subject internalizes new norms and preferences. As Jeffrey Checkel argues, "social learning involves a process whereby actors through interaction with broader institutional contexts (norms or discursive structures), acquire new interests and preferences – in the absence of obvious material incentives" [Checkel 1999, p. 548]. The process of social learning can be understood as argumentative persuasion and induced preference change without overt coercion [Checkel 2001]. The persuader can change the subject's beliefs about the appropriate courses of action. These beliefs are then institutionalized and internalized by the subject. Socialization understood as internalization of norms is linked to identity change [Gheciu 2005b; Hooghe 2005]. In the process of socialization, the subject's identity undergoes transformation as the subject beings to identify with the norms and interests of the socializer.

The two models explaining the mechanisms of socialization, however, are not necessarily exclusive, because a switch from strategic calculation to internalization can happen later through routinization and rationalization [Checkel in Schimmelfenning 2005, p. 831]. A state can initially comply with an externally imposed norm to achieve a certain prize, such as member-

ship in an international institution. In a second stage, for example over the course of membership, however, it can become more deeply socialized due to frequent interaction with other members of the international institution. Participating in the EU/NATO as a value community, the state over time begins to identify more strongly with this community and internalizes its norms. Intensifying interaction through institutional arrangements transferred from the EU/NATO to member states (or partners) increases social learning and adaptation of norms, which in return reinforces the transfer of institutions [Flokhart 2005; Sedelmeier & Schimmelfennig 2005]. Focusing on the temporal component, socialization can be seen as an ever-deepening process of internalization and institutionalization of common norms over time. Once a state chooses to go on a certain track and once certain norms are institutionalized (critical junctures), it becomes very unlikely for a state to go in a different direction because the cost of going in the reverse direction is too high [Pierson 2000]. The path-dependence of socialization suggests that an ever-closer association with common norms is a self-reinforcing process of 'increasing returns' [Pierson 2000].

The socialization approach has been useful in explaining the link between former communist states' membership in the EU and NATO, and the transition towards Western liberal democracies. The debate between the two models of socialization concerns the question whether the process has been motivated by rational choice or normative and identity factors. The internalization model of social learning provides useful insight into why a state's identification with an international institution as a value community can account for its deep transformation, in particular after achieving membership. However, both models share common assumptions: both approaches view socialization as a top-down process of transformation, in which the 'socializee' is a passive receptor. Both models of socialization also entail an unequal power relation between the socializer and the socializee, expressed as a 'West-East' narrative that is difficult to overcome.

2. Power relations in the socialization model

Even though it is rarely explicitly discussed, the socialization model in its different forms implies a power relationship between the socializer and the subject of socialization. In the case of the post-Cold War transformation of the CEECs, socialization is understood as a top-down process of norm diffu-

sion, in which the international institutions socialize post-communist states through 'teaching and persuasion' [Gheciu 2005a]. This happens through a 'mutual recognition of their social roles as teachers/ students' [2005a, p. 100]. The international institutions teach norms that draw boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and help the states establish a legal and institutional framework to reinforce these boundaries [2005a].

To explain socialization as a non-coercive process, constructivist scholars emphasize the role of identity as reinforcing the resonance of external influences. Socialization is successful if the subject identifies with the social group of the promoter of the norms or the norm-maker [Gheciu 2005a]. This is supported by the argument that one of the reasons why post-communist states conformed to NATO or EU norms was that they understood themselves to be part of the cultural and historical 'West' which these institutions symbolized. The problem with this explanation for successful socialization, however, is that it easily becomes circular: a common identity becomes both a condition and the end point of socialization. In a case where a common identity already exists, socialization as a transformation process would no longer be necessary. The relations between the 'norm-maker' and 'receiver' therefore have to be seen as more complex and differentiated.

The implicit top-down approach and role distribution of 'teacher' and 'student' in the socialization model is not simply overcome by successful incorporation of the new member. Even after membership states that entered international institutions based on conditionality maintain a position that is "qualitatively different from other member states that have not experienced pre-accession conditionality" since the "adjustment pressures of membership are different for states that did not participate in the making of these rules" [Sedelmeier 2012, p. 6]. Thus, portraying Western institutions and their older members as socializers and the former Soviet bloc states as receptors of socialization, this theoretical model maintains a distinction between the 'one' and the 'other', which it categorized as an 'East-West' divide even after membership.

There have been attempts in the literature to capture a two-directional process of influence to account for, among others, the new members' ability to shape the international institution that they are part of. This has been especially the case in the Europeanization literature which understands the relation between the EU and member states "as a circular process, with continuous and constructive effects that national and European level politics exert on one another". In this sense, a state becomes Europeanized "not only by adopting some EU polices, but also by becoming able to represent its interests and ideas in Brussels" [Pomorska 2011, p. 1]. However, as Karolina Pomorska

points out, the circular process can only occur at a later stage of integration because "for effective uploading [of interests and ideas], first a member states has to undergo a process of institutional adaptation" [2011, p. 2]. In other words, even Europeanization as a two-way track process presupposes a degree of socialization that precedes it.

3. Critique of the socialization model

The section is structured along three points of critique of socialization both as a theoretical approach and as a model for studying the post-Cold War transformation of the CEECs. The first point concerns the omission of the socializee's perspective, that is, the Eastern European societies' own narrative about their post-Cold War transformation. Secondly, I critically analyse the implied dichotomy between socializer and subject of socialization, which in the literature on NATO and EU enlargement is categorized as a 'West-East' divide. The final critique point concerns the omission of the specific historical and cultural context of the norms promoted by the socializer, which is another inherent feature of the socialization approach. In the case of Western institutions and former Eastern bloc states, this last point has especially problematic implications. Because the 'West' as an identity community based on the recognition of collective norms emerged in the context of the Cold War, the existence of the Eastern bloc as an opposing 'other' had identity-forming function for Western international institutions. After the Cold War, the dissemination of Western norms eastward and the 'socialization' of new member states has become the 'new vocation' by which the two Western institutions define their identity. Thus, the reliance on the existence of 'subjects of socialization' inherent in the West's self-definition constitutes an additional obstacle to the overcoming of the 'East-West' dichotomy in both academic and public discourse.

3.1. Omission of the socializee's narrative

The first problem of the socialization model is its failure to account for the socializee's perspective. As Charlotte Epstein argues in her critique of the use of socialization in IR, "the logic of the concept […] inherently impedes the possibility of fully restoring the perspective of the socializee, insofar as

the latter can only ever be apprehended on the receiving end of the socialization process". Furthermore, this account reduces the socializee's response (acceptance or resistance) to a reaction "rather than a fully fledged, autonomous capacity for agency bound up with particular identities" [Epstein 2012, p. 140].

When examining the socializee's narrative in the case of the post-Cold War transformation of Central and Eastern European states, it becomes apparent that these states do not consider themselves receptors of an externally determined process. Although the narratives of the various former communist societies are far from homogenous, they entail certain overarching themes. The identity of self-liberation from communism and the 'strive towards the West' of Poles, Czechs or Hungarians lead to a very different understanding of a common European or Western identity and historical narrative than the socialization model implies. From this perspective 'the return to Europe' was seen as having to a large extent resulted from the states' own agency [see Davies 1984; Malksoo 2010; Szacki 1998; Verdery 1996; Wöll & Wydra 2008]. The different narratives of former Soviet bloc states emphasize historical ties with the 'West' and resulting from it the righteous entitlement to the institutional integration with the West and to a voice within this community. According to the historian Norman Davies, Poles see themselves as embodying the 'ethos and soul of Europe' and in the light of a history of repeated 'captivity' by totalitarian power believe much more strongly in ideals of the 'West' and 'European solidarity' [cited in Malksoo 2010, p. 62]. After the Cold War the "membership in institutionalized Europe has been pursued as a seal for the broader cultural belonging" [2010, p. 61].

The idea of the 'West' had a direct impact on the resistance against communist dictatorship and served as an ideal to which the resistance movements aspired. Although for the people of Central and Eastern Europe, who had been separated from the rest of Europe for over forty years, the 'West' was often an abstract and idealized concept, it served as a counter-model to the system they lived in. Even without a concrete image of how it could be implemented, Harald Wydra argues, "democracy became a powerful state of expectation, a heartfelt desire and empire of the mind" [Wöll & Wydra 2008, p. 62]. According to Elemér Hankiss, the systematic destruction of Eastern European societies by communism led to the development of a "*modus vivendi* in response to their situation" [Hankiss 1994, p. 117]. What Hankiss calls the 'paradigm of the prisoner' was a sense of martyrdom among societies in communist countries which gave the state of oppression and captivity by the Soviet Union a moral meaning. This paradigm of the prisoner "fostered a sense

of hope among those who saw themselves as prisoners [and gave the] people living in the East […] hopes for a new and authentic life" [1994, p. 117]. Having lived in a space between Russia and the West as 'two relevant others', those countries wanted to assert their belonging to the 'West', which became synonymous with the achievement of freedom and prosperity. Thus, despite the fact that the idea of the 'West' had been abstract and ideational, and that newly freed states had to learn how to implement reforms and undergo institutional transformation, this 'myth of the West' constituted a guideline for change after the Cold War.

The emphasis of Western democratic ideals and the 'myth of the West' as part of the CEECs' identities is contrary to the image of these countries as passive receptors of socialization. From the perceptive of these states, the adoption of Western ideas was a voluntary, active and self-initiated process based on an appeal to their historical identity, and not something that was externally imposed [Szacki 1998; Wöll & Wydra 2008]. In addition, the strong desire to be accepted as NATO and EU members voiced by Central and Eastern European societies after 1989 and their appeal to a common culture and common values have to a large degree incentivized the international institutions to consider enlargement. This means that the international institutions were themselves impacted and transformed by the actions of these states. Thus, the one-way direction of change depicted in the socialization model fails to account for the complexity of the integration between the EU/NATO and former Soviet bloc countries, which becomes clear when the narrative of the latter is taken into consideration.

3.2. East vs West dichotomy

Another problematic feature of socialization as a theoretical model is its clear role distribution between the norm disseminator and norm receiver. By the model's own logic, this dichotomous relation could only be overcome through successful socialization. In other words, the socializee would have to fully adopt and internalize the socializer's norms and fully assume the socializer's identity. This means that socialization can only be considered successful if the 'student' becomes an exact replica of its 'teacher'. There are, after all, no criteria for the measurement of success other than the socializer's expectations. The direction of normative change that the 'student' undergoes is based on the socializer's assumption that the student ought to 'behave like itself' [see Epstein 2012, p. 142]. However, given the distinct historical and

cultural context of both actors' norms and identities, one could ask whether such an outcome would even be realistic or desirable. The uncritical view of the socializer's expectations makes the criteria for the measurement of successful socialization highly problematic. The model suggests the student's continuing dependency on the socializer resulting from its constant struggle to receive recognition.

The implied dichotomy between socializer and socializee and the imposition of the categories of the former on the latter, reinforces a power discourse. As Susanne Rudolph argues, the "academic practice of imposing concepts on the 'other'" creates a hegemonic relationship between the exporter of categories and the subject studied [Rudolph 2005, p. 6]. Without being reshaped to fit the new context, these categories of study become "modes of creating and controlling" [2005, p. 7].

The socialization literature creates such a power discourse in its depiction of the relationship between the Western institutions and former Soviet bloc states. The model assumes a certain desirable path of transformation for the CEECs as immature versions of Western states without accounting for these countries' own beliefs and identities. This account is not limited to academic literature but is a discourse that transcends the public sphere. As Maria Malksoo argues, the unequal power relation inherent in the 'East-West' dichotomy and the strife towards reaching the aspirational state of 'being the West' has been internalized by the former communist states. Despite "entering 'institutional Europe' […] these states have been constructed as 'not quite European' by the dominant and long-standing Western European narrative, and this construction has fundamentally shaped security and foreign policy discourse over 20 years" [Malksoo 2010, p. xiii].

From the CEECs' perspective, the 'East-West' dichotomy intrinsic to the socialization narrative has paradoxical implications. On the one hand, it fails to acknowledge those countries' entitlement to their distinct identities, with their own understanding of democracy or sovereignty. On the other hand, the socialization discourse constructs 'Eastern European' states as categorically distinct from 'Western Europe'. Both implications create an image of passivity and dependency maintaining the unequal power relation between these countries and the Western institutions. The socialization narrative uses the geographical categories of 'East' and 'West' for the description of what are not geographical concepts but ideological or civilizational concepts – the 'West' constitutes a model to which the 'East' is or should be aspiring. In addition, the narrative inadequately constructs the 'East' and the 'West' as two homogenous bodies.

3.3. De-contextualization of norms and identity

The socialization model neither takes into account the specific cultural and historical context in which the norms that spread from socializer to socializee arise, nor does it differentiate between competing interpretations of these norms. In consequence, it treats this set of norms as coherent and universal. By doing so, the various authors of the socialization literature inadvertently make the assumption that the process of socialization follows a progressive path. What Epstein criticizes as the 'inherent normative teleological design' of socialization theory is its implicit claim that there is a certain 'correct' direction of normative change, in which the socializee replaces 'bad' with 'good' norms [Epstein 2012, p. 137]. However, the process of transformation and norm diffusion depicted as 'socialization' always happens in a particular cultural or historical context. The treatment of the socializer's norms as universal or neutral and not as a set of beliefs originating from a specific context hides the theory's in-built bias towards the socializer's perspective.

In the study of Western international institutions, the de-contextualization and de-historicization of norm diffusion in the socialization literature is especially problematic because it does not critically deal with the West's self-identification as 'socializer'. A contextual account reveals that norm diffusion has been an integral part of both NATO's and the EU's self-definition as Western identity communities.

The socialization literature on the Eastern enlargement relies on the understanding of the EU and NATO as community representatives, embodying the European and Euro-Atlantic community of states respectively. According to Schimmelfenning, "both 'Western' communities define their collective identity not merely by geographical location […] but mainly by liberal values and norms" [Schimmelfenning 2003, p. 4]. The identities of the two communities are also tied to a sense of mission in international behaviour: "both organizations seek to disseminate liberal principles of domestic and international conduct in their international environment; they socialize outside states into the liberal order and thereby seek to expand the European or Euro-Atlantic liberal international community" [2003, p. 4]. Thus, an essential quality of the European and Euro-Atlantic community is self-replication through the socialization of others. Once a state successfully adopts the communities' norms, which means that it becomes a successful replica, it can be incorporated into the communities. When the subject states "adopt the collective identity of the liberal international community, share its values and follow its norms, they

are both willing and entitled to join the international organizations of the community as full members" [2003, p. 4].

Although some continuity exists to pre-twentieth century ideas, what Schimmelfennig refers to when speaking of Western ideas and norms is a context-specific discursive construct of the Cold War that remained relevant in the post-Cold War period. In response to a common Soviet threat and conclusions drawn from the devastating experience of World War II, the Western world – that is the members of NATO and the EU's predecessor institutions – developed a common set of ideals and values [Wöll & Wydra 2008]. "Western Europe defined its eastern boundary as a frontier of defence of the 'European unity', thus establishing NATO and the EU to develop a specific Western identity" [Malksoo 2010, p. 58]. Standing in opposition to totalitarianism as a 'defining other', the 'West' as an identity community became a normative concept that provided a common normative or ideological framework for cooperation.

The 'negative othering' of Eastern bloc countries, thus, had an identity-forming function for the West. Although for forty years the people of Western and Eastern Europe lived separate lives, they "were bound tightly together, engaged in a strange and silent dialogue […] or perhaps it was only two monologues, since it was not too important that either side listened to the other" [Hankiss 1994, p. 116]. The West's 'paradigm of the missionary' and a counterpart to the 'paradigm of prisoner' was based on the idea that the democratic and liberal West was a source of good in the international environment. This perception of themselves in opposition to their Eastern neighbours imprisoned under the totalitarian rule of the Soviet Union, boosted the self-esteem of Western Europeans and gave them a sense of mission and vocation and an 'alibi of unselfishness'. Thus, "for each the other became an indispensable source of values and meaning" [1994, p. 116].

After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the 'paradigm of missionary' in its original version lost relevance which forced the West to readjust its self-perception in relation to the 'East'. With the disappearance of the Soviet threat, both NATO and the EU (or European Communities) lost their old role as institutions protecting the West. Thus, the idea of a mission to democratize the newly freed countries in a way became a 'new paradigm of missionary' that replaced the old one. Membership perspective and conditionality became NATO's and the EU's most powerful foreign policy tools. The new goal of the Western institutions had become to "consolidate democracy across the eastern half of the continent by anchoring central and eastern European countries to the West" [Asmus 2008, p. 98]. The EU and NATO re-defined themselves

as norm-spreading international bodies which set an example for others and positively change others.

The EU's self-designated identity as a 'normative power' would be meaningless without the existence of norm-receivers as 'negative others'. As a 'special' kind of international actor – special for its commitment to democracy, multilateralism and human rights – the EU's external policy is based on the vocation to "extend its norms into the international system" [Manners 2002, p. 252]. Although the CEECs do not constitute the only 'relevant other' to the Western institutions, they have been of particular importance precisely because they constitute such successful cases of norm diffusion.

Thus, the depiction of Eastern Europe as being "in Europe but [remaining] different from Europe in many ways" continued after the Cold War ended and was particularly visible in the debates about the inclusion of the new members in the European Union and the expansion of NATO [Adamovsky 2003, p. 613]. This discourse on Eastern Europe establishes and perpetuates the power relations between the states and the Western institutions. Malksoo describes the situation of Eastern European states that have joined Western institutions as a perpetual struggle "of becoming 'more European'" [Malksoo 2010, p. 80].

The absolute dichotomy of the Cold War has been replaced by complex 'shades of otherness', such as a categorization of Eastern Europe expressed in the membership criteria of the EU or NATO [see Kuus 2007]. Some of the Eastern European states are considered Western enough to become incorporated into the institutions but are in many ways still expected to play a subordinate role. In turn, this perpetual state of subordination *vis-à-vis* the West becomes incorporated into those states' identities. As Malksoo argues, "the 'liminal Europeanness' […] emerges not just as a discursive, but importantly experiential category embodying [the states'] inherited knowledge about themselves as 'Europeans but not quite Europeans'. The category expresses their lived experience […] and their historical borderline sense of having somehow 'lost' properly belonging to the West" [Malksoo 2010, p. 56].

Thus, the discursive power relation between the West and the post-communist states in Eastern Europe, which is an integral part of socialization theory, plays a role of identity formation and enforcement. For the Western institutions, the 'civilizing mission' towards the new and potential member states has a self-affirmative function without which they would lose – or at least would be forced to re-define – the proclaimed moral dimension of their foreign and security of policies. The 'teacher-student' relationship depicted in socialization literature therefore maintains and disseminates the very discourse by which the EU and NATO justify their special roles as 'value communities'.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the socialization model as a theoretical approach depicting the relationship between the two Western international institutions, NATO and the EU, and former communist states. I argued that the socialization approach has made a useful contribution to the study of the connection between EU/NATO expansion and the democratic transformation of former Soviet bloc states because it recognizes the significance of the international institutions' representative role as 'communities of Western values'. I have portrayed the debate between two different camps within the socialization literature which attribute the process to either rational-choice or internalization of norms by the socializee.

However, I contend that both models of socialization rely on essentially the same assumptions. The socialization approach in its various forms portrays the 'subjects' of socialization as passive receptors of an outsider's norms and maintains a dichotomous relation between the socializer and the subject of socialization. The model essentially contains a power discourse that is not explicitly discussed. I laid out three points of criticism, which contribute to the unequal power relation in the portrayal of socialization: (1) the omission of the socializee's narrative, (2) the creation of dichotomous relations, and (3) the de-contextualized account of the socializer's identity and norms.

In the IR literature on EU/NATO enlargement, using the socialization approach, the relation between Central and Eastern European countries and Western international institutions has been depicted as an East-West dichotomy, in which the 'East' is portrayed as a less mature version of the 'West'. Because of the Western institutions strong identification with the role of 'socializers', this narrative exists not only in academic literature but also has a strong presence in political public discourse. This paper therefore calls for a more contextualized account of the transformation process, which is critical of the power discourse implied in socialization and which takes the 'socializee's' perspective into consideration.

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