

# Wounded Collective Identity in Europe: Trauma, Religiosity, Modernization and Visions of the Future Based on Empirical Studies of Thirty-Eight European Countries<sup>1</sup>

**TAMÁS LÁSZLÓ**, *ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; Századvég Foundation, Budapest, Hungary* | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3465-8684>

**ANDRÁS MÁTÉ-TÓTH**, *SZTE University of Szeged, Department for Study on Religions; Sapientia College of Theology of Religious Orders* | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2709-1411>

**MIKLÓS GYORGYOVICH**, *KRE Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Budapest, Hungary; Századvég Foundation, Budapest, Hungary* | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2955-9647>

**BERNADETT BALASSA**, *SZE Széchenyi István University, Department of International and Applied Economics, Győr, Hungary* | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6473-3591>

**DÁVID KOLLÁR**, *Budapest Metropolitan University, Budapest, Hungary; PPKE Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary; Századvég Foundation, Budapest, Hungary* | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5146-2753>

## ABSTRACT

Máté-Tóth (2015, 2022) uses the concept of woundedness and the theory of wounded collective identity to describe the collective self-understanding of the Central and Eastern European region. An international study by the Századvég Foundation in 2022, based on 38,000 respondents (1,000 per country), provided an opportunity to test the theory on a European sample. This study sought to answer the question of the prevalence of a wounded collective identity in Hungary and other European countries, and whether the theory has any region-specific relevance. The results show that regional in-betweenness can be considered to be a determining factor for wounded collective identity.

## KEYWORDS

Wounded Collective Identity, Religiosity, Securitization, Regional In-Betweenness, Trauma, Modernization

---

<sup>1</sup>Acknowledgement: The data collection serving as the primary empirical source for the analysis presented in this study was carried out as part of the Századvég 'Project Europe' research series. The database is the property of the Századvég Consortium, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for making it available and contributing to the usability of the research results.

## The Theory of Wounded Collective Identity: The Context and Background of the Study

### *Social and Historical Context*

Central and Eastern Europe (henceforth the CEE region) is not only a geographical unit within Europe but also a region full of meaning. The diversity of meanings in the region is rooted in historical, cultural, and political interpretations and interests. In the social sciences, this area of Europe is discussed in various ways. In political science, on the one hand, the relationship with the former Soviet sphere of interest, which changed radically around 1990, is taken as one benchmark, while the relationship with the European Union is seen as the other. The processes of power-sharing and power-exercising identifiable in the countries (or groupings of countries) of the region are discussed within this political science framework partly in relation to Western European and North Atlantic traditions and solutions, and partly to Asian traditions and solutions (Ramet and Hassenstab 2019). In post-structuralist political science, the discourse about the region places struggles between hegemonies at the forefront of interpretation, together with attempts to validate post-colonial approaches. In sociology, the most fundamental framework of interpretation of contemporary social processes – considered in a sense to be universally valid – is modernization.

An overview of the theoretical genealogy of political science and sociology approaches shows that most of the theories used today originated in Western Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the theory of modernization can be traced back to Max Weber (1967), it really took off after the functionalism of the American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1967) (see: Delanty 2008). By the time David Martin developed his general theory of secularization (Martin 1978), many European and American sociologists already considered it universally evident that the more modern a society is, the less religious it is. Thus, the analysis of the CEE region also operates with the indicators of modernization. This approach dominates in the questionnaire design of large international surveys and the interpretation of the data obtained.

The past half a century has demonstrated the enduring relevance of the theories once developed but also the limits of their interpretative capacity. It was mainly researchers from the former Asian and African colonies who drew attention to these limitations. On the other hand, authors with CEE backgrounds increasingly point out that these approaches focus on the processes and characteristics that are of most concern to societies in their region (Boatcă and Parvulescu 2020, Boatcă and Spohn 2010, Subotić 2019). There is no question that the study of modernity is necessary and valid in the countries of the region, since its indicators and research traditions allow for comparisons at the European or even the world level. However, at the same time, the aspects that play a specific role in this region can not only complement the general picture but also require an original interpretative framework, based on the historical and cultural experiences of the region. The authors of the present paper consider the theoretical framework of wounded collective identity (henceforth abbreviated as WCI) developed by Máté-Tóth (2015, 2022 and 2025) as a starting point that seems to meet the above criterion. At the heart of the theory is the geocultural and geopolitical in-betweenness of the region's peoples and countries, which has characterized the region since the split of the Roman Empire into East and West and continues to do so today. In this study we discuss the co-produced research of the last few years starting from this baseline, which was primarily designed to test the validity of the woundedness-based approach, and secondly we present and analyse the results obtained.

## ***Theoretical Framework: Woundedness and Securitization in Central and Eastern Europe***

Máté-Tóth uses the notion of woundedness and the theory of wounded collective identity to describe the collective self-understanding of the Central and Eastern European region (Máté-Tóth 2015, 2022 and 2025), based on the traumatic memory of small regional states in the classic works of Bibó (1946). Scholars writing and analysing the main characteristics of Central and Eastern Europe highlight the crucial role of feeling threatened (Mäliksoo, 2019), experiencing permanent trauma (Subotic, 2018 and 2019) and being vulnerable due to pressure from the East and West. Although all societies, both within and outside Europe, have their own historical traumas, the aforementioned authors argue that, for Central and Eastern Europe, the trauma dimension plays a central role in societal self-interpretation. (See the arguments for the wounded collective identity approach in Máté-Tóth 2025.)

The source of the feeling of threat in the countries of the region – both in the culture and the politics of memory – can be identified in the form of events that are interpreted as historical and collective injuries. Their significance originates from the fact that they are interpreted as injustices, that is they imply a morally based attitude (Máté-Tóth 2019) and are often ‘inherited’, constituted through intergenerational transfers (Bauer et al. 2021). The traumatization of the region is not only localized at the micro level of family memory, but also at the macro level of social institutions, as there are events strongly linked to the multiple changes in state sovereignty, the world wars and their consequences, and the fundamental uncertainty of national autonomy and state sovereignty. This contingency and malleability can still be felt in the region today (Máté-Tóth 2019) and, as experience has shown, is also questioned, which, as we have seen in the case of Ukraine, has had very real and far-reaching consequences for the lives of the peoples living there, and not only in the 20th century.

It is worth pointing out, in relation to the central notion of wounded collective identity, that real or perceived wounds become truly meaningful in the discursive processes of society, which creates not only their past but also their present relevance. Following Buzan (Buzan et al. 1998), who developed the theory of securitization, Máté-Tóth and Szilárdi (2022) extended the discourse theoretical approach to the interpretation of religion in relation to the collective identity of Central and Eastern Europe. As they write in their study, securitization is one of the main characteristics of the region, both in the private religious and in the public religious spheres. (ibid.) The religious aspect of the notion of woundedness also seems relevant because, according to the Christian tradition, wounds are not only linked to a sacrificial, suffering discursive position, but also have a positive meaning if they provide a specific aura to the community that experiences suffering (see, for example, the pathos-laden name that has been used throughout history: Poland or Hungary, ‘the Christ of the nations’).

In addition to the notions of woundedness and securitization, the concept of *ressentiment* can also be considered relevant to the theory of wounded collective identity. Originating from Nietzsche’s moral psychology (Reginster 1997; Kiss 2022), *ressentiment* refers to a durable affective stance rooted in perceived injustice and the re-evaluation of moral hierarchies. In the context of Central and Eastern Europe, this emotional pattern can be understood as one of the collective responses to historical trauma and vulnerability, giving woundedness its specific moral and affective tone. While the empirical analysis does not operationalize *ressentiment* as a separate variable, the theoretical affinity between wounded collective identity and *ressentiment* allows for interpreting collective woundedness as a morally charged, evaluative response to historical experience. Thus, *ressentiment* can be viewed as an affective mechanism that contributes to the discursive reproduction of wounded collective identity in the region.<sup>2</sup>

To relate WCI to nationalism theory, we follow constructivist insights that nations are “imagined” political communities whose solidarities are reproduced through symbols, narratives, and institutions (Anderson 1983). At the same time, we avoid treating WCI as mere invention: ethnosymbolist arguments stress that modern national attachments draw on pre-existing cultural repertoires and myths, which shape

<sup>2</sup> Although within the framework of the present paper the concept of *ressentiment* is primarily used as an interpretative tool for understanding the research findings, in other studies we have carried out the detailed theoretical adaptation of this concept to the practice of empirical social research (Kollár et al. 2025).

the emotional availability of grievance (Smith 2004). Calhoun's synthetic view — seeing categorical identities as tools that articulate already salient similarities and differences without reducing nationalism to ethnicity — helps situate our measure: WCI indexes a perceived injury to the nation's moral order rather than generic in-group pride (Calhoun 1993). Finally, in line with Brubaker's cautions against scholastic "myths" in nationalism studies, we make no assumption that nationalism is intrinsically violent or purely elite-manipulated; WCI captures a grievance frame that can be mobilized in multiple directions (Brubaker 1998).

### ***Previous Empirical Findings Related to the Theory of Wounded Collective Identity***

The theoretical framework for the model of wounded collective identity was defined by Willfried Spohn's theory of European identity (Spohn 2015), while some of the research questions were formulated based on the international pastoral theology research of Aufbruch.<sup>3</sup> The wounded collective identity model – modified on the basis of empirical research (Tárki 2020, 2022) – includes, in addition to perceptions of regional in-betweenness, societal memory, personality, welfare expectations, certain demographic factors, in particular settlement type, and religiosity. As Máté-Tóth and Balassa state, the feeling of 'collective woundedness can be considered an almost universal phenomenon in Hungarian society' (Máté-Tóth and Balassa 2022, 72). According to linear regression analysis, this collective wounded identity is particularly visible among those who perceive the country as vulnerable, who tend to be authoritarian, who are religious, who have a strong attachment to public commemorations of historical events, and who live in rural areas (ibid.).

Kollár and László found a strong link between trauma-focused self-description and political orientation, between the former and sympathy for authoritarian personality traits, and between religiosity and political orientation (Kollár and László 2022, 2023). They also showed that there is a positive correlation between agency and a narrative focusing on historical trauma. Despite the fact that the literature on trauma (Ataria 2015, Beste 2007, Veronese et al. 2019) might suggest that the relationship is of the opposite nature, network analysis between the variables revealed that trauma-centred national identity is associated with a higher sense of agency (at least for the Hungarian sample analysed), especially among those who define themselves as right-wing in political orientation (Kollár and László 2022, 2023). All of this indicates that the awareness of historical woundedness does not necessarily lead to a kind of 'paralysis'; instead, social discourses allow for the reframing of an emotionally charged self-understanding, which can become a necessary driving force for action.<sup>4</sup>

### **Research Methodology**

The statistics and their interpretations published in this paper are the result of a longer research process, including the formulation and selection of the appropriate questionnaire questions. The authors of the present paper started to work together on the topic of wounded collective identity following the presentations on religiousness at the annual conference of the Hungarian Sociological Association in 2020. Cooperation between the MTA–SZTE "Convivence" Research Group on Religious Pluralism<sup>5</sup> and the Institute for Social Processes of the Századvég Foundation made it possible to examine two

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the theoretical considerations of wounded collective identity model see Máté-Tóth and Balassa (2022).

<sup>4</sup> We cannot, however, exclude the possibility that the 'minor' wounds of collective identity are associated with a kind of resentment habit, nor that the 'major' wounds and traumas lead to 'explosions', triggering anger and possibly aggressive actions.

<sup>5</sup> Following the establishment of the Hungarian Research Network, the name of the research group was also changed to HUN-REN–SZTE Convivence Religious Pluralism Research Group.

further sub-dimensions: the narrative focusing on failure<sup>6</sup> and historical trauma<sup>7</sup> (Cf. Kollár and László 2022, 28).

After long preliminary work, which was still based exclusively on Hungarian data, we reached the point where we wanted to further investigate the phenomenon which has already been studied from several angles in Hungary by including it in a multinational survey. The 2022 large-scale European survey by the Századvég Consortium provided an opportunity to include some statements measuring WCI.

### ***Measuring Wounded Collective Identity in ‘Project Europe’ Research***

The Századvég Consortium (Budapest, Hungary) has been conducting surveys in several countries across the European continent since 2016 as part of a series of research projects called Project Europe.<sup>8</sup> The aim of the project, conducted in the second half of 2022, was to find out about the opinions of the populations of countries with different socio-cultural, historical and economic development paths on current issues such as the general economic climate, migration, climate change, the energy crisis, or the war between Russia and Ukraine.

This study reports on the results of a data survey conducted by the professional polling company Századvég Konjunktúrakutató Zrt. between October 13 and December 7, 2022. The survey was carried out by telephone (CATI)<sup>9</sup> in thirty-eight European countries<sup>10</sup> among one thousand randomly selected adults in each of thirty-eight European countries (N=38.000). The database used in the analysis was weighted by gender, age group, highest level of education, and region of residence of the population in each country. For the interpretation comparing the countries in the study, we used the weight variable based on the above criteria. And for results where we wanted to examine the relationship between wounded collective identity and other variables (for the whole population examined), we also weighted the data according to an additional aspect, the proportion of the population in each country compared to the others.

*Project Europe* is one of the largest regularly conducted international public opinion surveys in Europe. While the database is primarily used by the research team at the Századvég Foundation, secondary analyses such as the present paper are also based on it.<sup>11</sup> The study did not address sensitive topics or vulnerable groups, therefore no additional ethical approval was required.

This was the first internationally comparable empirical application of the theory. In the light of the analyses carried out on the basis of the previous data collection (Máté-Tóth and Balassa 2022, Kollár and László 2022) and in line with the project’s limitations on the number of questions, we narrowed down the questions to the statements that best express the theory.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The relevant statements were as follows: ‘Hungarians are considered second-class citizens in the EU’; ‘Hungary is in a vulnerable position in world politics’; ‘Hungarians always stand on the side that loses in the end’.

<sup>7</sup> The relevant statements were as follows: ‘Hungarians are endlessly fighting for their independence’; ‘Hungarian culture must be protected from foreign influences’; ‘Society must remember the frowns of fortune of our history’; ‘The vicissitudes of history have forged Hungarians into a strong nation’; ‘Hungarians have suffered unjustly throughout history’.

<sup>8</sup> For more about the research see: <https://szazadveg.hu/en/project-europe-2024/>

<sup>9</sup> Computer-assisted telephone interviewing.

<sup>10</sup> Countries participating in the survey (two-letter country codes used in the study are in brackets): Albania (AL), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Kosovo (XK), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Moldova (MD), Montenegro (ME), Netherlands (NL), Northern Macedonia (MK), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Serbia (RS), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Switzerland (CH), Turkey (TR), United Kingdom (GB).

<sup>11</sup> For further publications see among others: Stefkovics & Zenovitz, 2023; Stefkovics et al., 2024.

<sup>12</sup> In a survey on wounded collective identity and religious securitization, also conducted by Tárfi in 2022, only four relevant statements were included: ‘We Hungarians have suffered a lot in history’; ‘Hungary is in a vulnerable position in world politics’; ‘Society must remember the frowns of fortune of our history’; ‘Hungary does not really belong to the West or the East’ (The latter specifically focused on the perception of regional in-betweenness.) (Balassa et al. 2022).



The questionnaire thus included three statements expressing slightly different aspects of the wounded collective identity:

- ‘Your nation has suffered unjustly throughout history.’ (~ perception of historical injustice);
- ‘Society needs to remember the frowns of fortune of our history.’ (~ trauma-focused collective memory);
- ‘Your country is in a vulnerable position in world politics.’ (~ lack of international capacity to act).<sup>13</sup>

Respondents had to express their views on the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a four-point Likert scale.<sup>14</sup> From the three resulting variables, an index (hereafter referred to as the WCI index) was created using principal component analysis<sup>15</sup> to improve interpretability. In interpreting the research results, we rely primarily on this standardized variable.<sup>16</sup>

In the present study, we seek first of all to answer the question as to what extent the wounded collective identity – defined on the basis of previous Hungarian data surveys – is typical in Hungary and in other European countries, and to *what extent the theory has some kind of region-specific relevance* (either as a regional feature of Central and Eastern Europe or along other demarcations). In addition, we examine *the relationships between traumatized social consciousness, religiosity and securitization, various sociodemographic characteristics, public attitudes and values, indicators of modernization, and other variables*.<sup>17</sup>

## Results

### *National Identities and Traumas in Europe – Regional Specificities*

To answer our main research question, we chose a relatively simple method of analysis: we compared the average values of the WCI index for each country. Deviations in the negative direction from the mean of the standardized variable indicate a smaller presence of a wounded collective identity, while deviations in the positive direction indicate a stronger presence of a wounded collective identity for the country. In order to make the results more transparent and at the same time to remove the emphasis on the subjective component of categorization, we grouped the countries using a statistical procedure called ‘Visual Binning’<sup>18</sup> (cf. Fig. 1).

<sup>13</sup> In all cases, the questions were asked in the official language of the country.

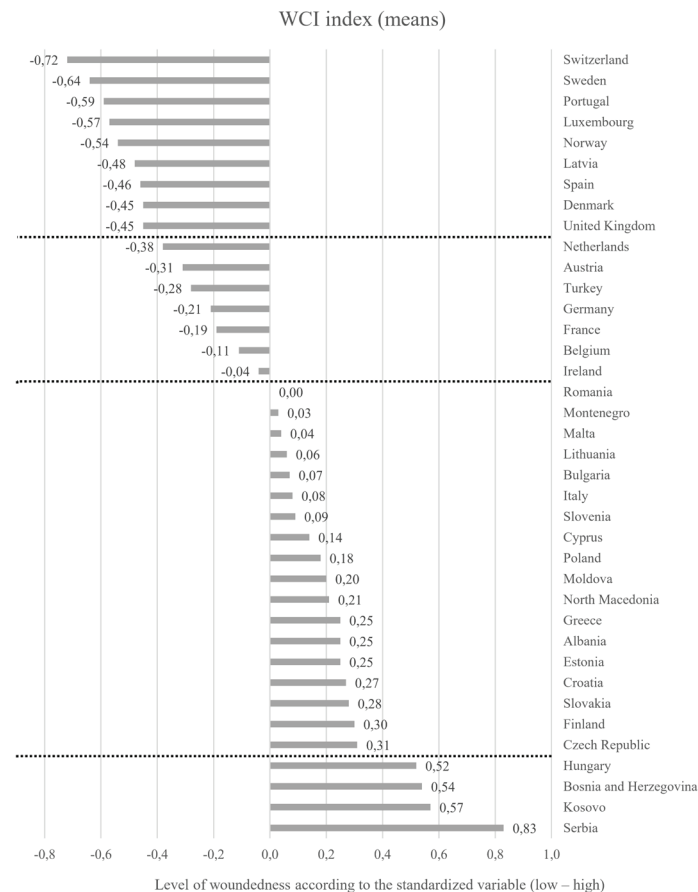
<sup>14</sup> In addition to ‘I don’t know’ and ‘no answer’, the options were as follows: ‘not at all’; ‘rather not’; ‘rather yes’; ‘totally’.

<sup>15</sup> We estimated a one-factor solution for the full sample using principal components analysis (PCA) on the inter-item correlation matrix. Missing data were handled with listwise deletion. Country-by-country exploratory PCAs conducted beforehand consistently indicated a dominant general factor (all three items loading positively and typically  $\geq .55$ ), with the first component explaining approximately 45–71% of the variance across countries. This pattern supports the assumption of an approximately invariant latent structure. Based on these results and theoretical interpretability, we retained a single-factor solution for the pooled analysis.

<sup>16</sup> As we included a weight variable that takes into account the population share aspect in analyses that do not aim at cross-country comparisons but focus on the relationships between variables, we also used a modified version of the WCI index for this type of analysis. The distribution of the standardized variable created in this way both preserved the distributional properties of the original WCI index and became meaningful in terms of the correlations of wounded collective identity with other factors for the whole population studied.

<sup>17</sup> We note that resentment is not measured as a separate variable in this study; it is used as a theoretical-interpretive lens for reading WCI patterns, and we make no causal claims based on it.

<sup>18</sup> The number of breakpoints and the classification were performed by the SPSS statistical software, based on the mean of the standardized variable and the adjusted standard deviation plus or minus one.



**Figure 1.** The woundedness of collective identity and the country groups formed along it.<sup>19</sup> Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

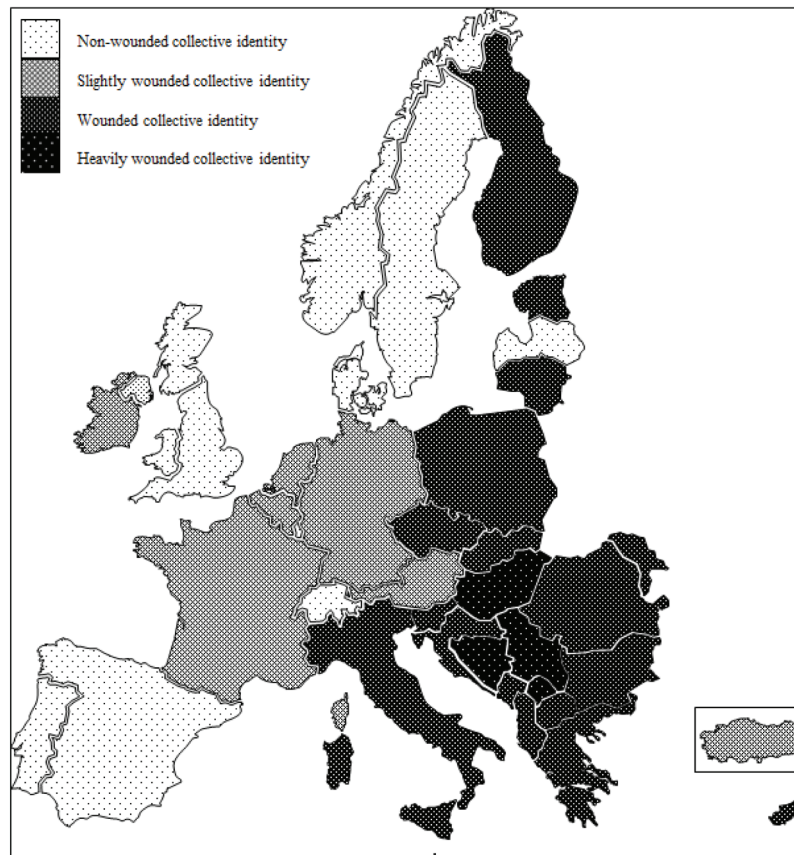
The existence vs. absence of a traumatized social consciousness is vividly illustrated by the examples of Serbia, which has suffered territorial losses in recent decades, and traditionally neutral Switzerland, which has always stayed out of European wars. At first glance, the differences in the perceived woundedness of the countries in between are not easy to interpret, especially for the less traumatized countries and regions. In any case, the data suggest that the Iberian peninsula, which has largely escaped the world wars, Scandinavia, which has had little exposure to the ravages of war (with the exception of Finland), and the United Kingdom, which is considered the most important European ally of the United States ('the winner' of the last hundred years), are in a different category than those countries (France, Germany, and Turkey) which, although currently highly developed economically and sometimes considered to be middle powers, were the staging grounds for enemy armies in the world wars.

Deciding the region-specificity of a wounded collective identity is similarly not a simple issue. On the one hand, Serbia stands out in terms of overall traumatization, but it is not far behind the two neighbouring countries involved in the Balkan wars, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and another neighbour, Hungary (Fig. 2). This group of countries can be considered particularly wounded in terms of their collective identity. In a broader context, one region is emerging on the map of the continent that does not coincide with the borders of either East Central Europe or the countries of the former socialist bloc but is largely characterized by a wounded collective identity. The region in question includes Finland and the Baltic states in the north,<sup>20</sup> not only the Balkans but also Italy (and Malta and Cyprus)

<sup>19</sup> Legend: the intersection points of the categories are indicated by dotted lines in the diagram – unwounded collective identity (the group of countries at the top of the figure); slightly wounded collective identity (the second group of countries from the top); wounded collective identity (the second group of countries from the bottom); and highly wounded collective identity (the group of countries from the bottom).

<sup>20</sup> An interesting exception in this respect is Latvia, whose diversity needs further research and explanation.

in the south, and all the states in continental Central and Eastern Europe between the German-speaking areas and Ukraine. In this sense, but at least geographically, *we can consider regional in-betweenness as a determining factor of wounded collective identity.*<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 2.** Wounded collective identity in some regions of Europe.<sup>22</sup> Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

### ***Wounded Collective Identity, Religiosity and Securitization***

Religion is a central part of the theory of WCI, not primarily as an actual practice of religion, but as an empty marker of religion (in the European context, primarily Christianity). Two variables can be highlighted in the questionnaire of the Project Europe: on the one hand, a question on the frequency of attendance at religious events,<sup>23</sup> which is a way of capturing the thesis of secularization<sup>24</sup> in classical modernity theories; on the other hand, a question that could be interpreted as a securitization attitude (Cf. Máté-Tóth and Szilárdi 2022) in the discourse-theoretical framework, through which we asked respondents to what extent they considered the Christian traditions of the continent to be a value to be preserved and defended.<sup>25</sup> It can be clearly seen that the populations of the typically more developed, mainly Western European countries are relatively less religious (according to the indicator used) and

<sup>21</sup> The present survey did not include a direct question on the perception of regional in-betweenness.

<sup>22</sup> Legend: highly wounded collective identity (black background, rare white dotting); wounded collective identity (black background, dense white dotting); slightly wounded collective identity (white background, black square mesh); and non-wounded collective identity (white background, black dotting).

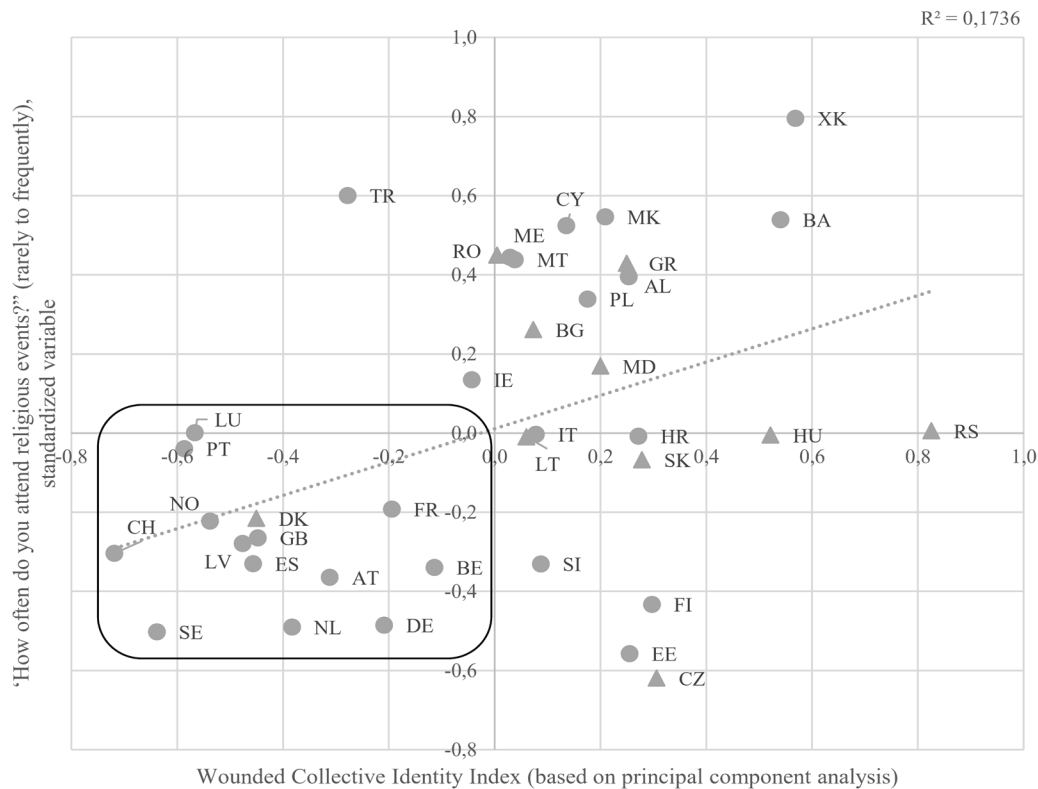
<sup>23</sup> ‘How often do you attend religious events?’, answer options: daily; several times a week; weekly; once or twice a month; a few times a year; almost never; never; don’t know / no answer.

<sup>24</sup> Máté-Tóth highlights above all the work of Wilson and Berger (1999, cited in Máté-Tóth 2011), who saw ‘secularization as a natural consequence of the processes of modernity, in the sense that the traditionally religious legitimation of the world is constantly losing its plausibility for modern man’ (Máté-Tóth 2011, 732).

<sup>25</sup> ‘Do you think that Europe should preserve its Christian culture and traditions or promote a secular culture that goes beyond Christian traditions?’, answer options: ‘Europe should preserve its Christian culture and traditions’; ‘Europe should go beyond Christian traditions towards a more secular culture’; ‘don’t know’ / ‘no answer’.



at the same time have a less wounded collective identity, while in the case of the more traumatized countries and regions, the ‘average’ religious practice is more divergent and differentiated (Fig. 3). The results therefore suggest that in countries such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom or the Netherlands, secularization is primarily prominent, but in regions with a historical experience of ‘in-betweenness’, where a wounded collective identity is more prominent, the role of religion is relevant in a different way, more as an ‘empty marker’.<sup>26</sup> This can be seen reflected in the fact that groups wishing to preserve Europe’s Christian culture and traditions are more prevalent in countries of the region with a traumatized social consciousness, regardless of the ‘actual’ level of religious practice.



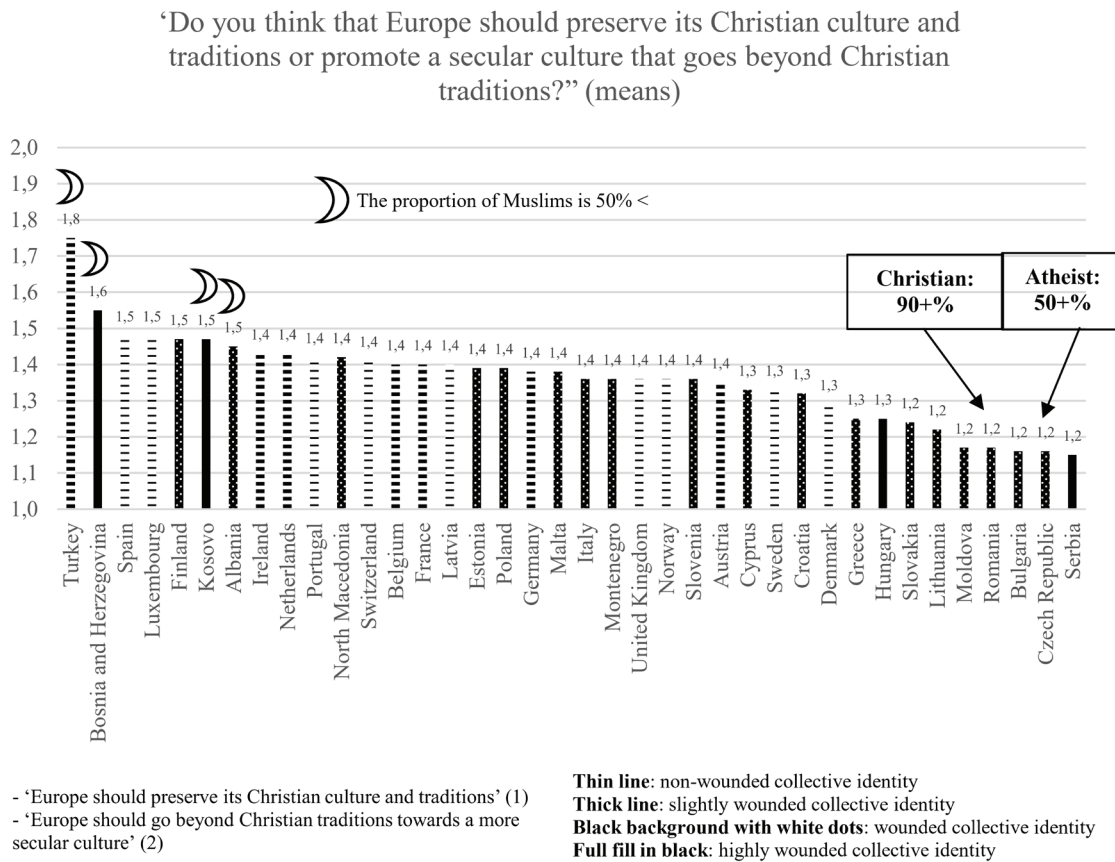
**Figure 3.** Relations between wounded collective identity, religiosity and securitization attitudes.<sup>27</sup>  
Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

Perhaps an even more striking correlation is shown in Fig. 4 below, which shows the countries whose populations are more inclined to preserve Christian culture. Denmark, Sweden and Austria are the three countries with relatively less wounded collective identities where the population is still the most conservative, but in this respect only Denmark is in the top ten. The opposite is typically the case in secularized, Western European societies, alongside Muslim-majority states. However, the ‘empty marker’ nature of religion and its securitizing significance in the ‘in-between’ region of wounded collective identity is vividly expressed by the fact that among the ‘defenders of Christianity’, the highly religious Romania and the predominantly atheist (or at least non-religious) Czech Republic are almost side by side. These cross-national patterns indicate a dual role of religion in the WCI framework: as

<sup>26</sup> In his earlier study, Máté-Tóth (2011) raised the usefulness of the concept in religious studies, and László (2020) used it to theoretically ground the empirical definition of different groups of people with malleable religiosity.

<sup>27</sup> Countries are indicated in the figure by two-letter country codes. Of the thirty-eight countries, the ten with the highest proportion of respondents who said that the continent’s Christian traditions and culture should be preserved are highlighted using a triangular marker. These countries are, in order of overall prevalence of this attitude, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, and Denmark. The  $R^2$  value changes from 0.1736 to 0.3038 when the European sample is considered without the ten countries above that are most representative of securitization. If we remove from the original sample (only) the data of the Czech Republic, Turkey, Estonia and Finland (the countries which can also be considered outliers), the value of  $R^2$  changes to 0.4094.

observance, it may align with higher WCI in some Catholic/Orthodox contexts, while as a cultural marker it can remain salient even in highly secular settings (e.g., Czechia). We therefore treat religion as ambivalent and context-dependent, consistent with the “empty marker” reading rather than a single-direction effect.

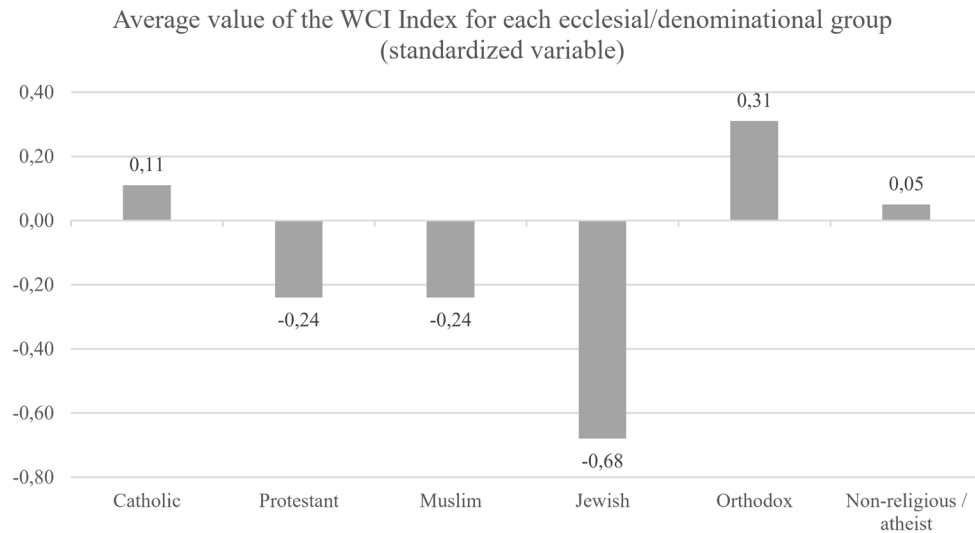


**Figure 4.** Views on the role of Christian culture in some European countries.<sup>28</sup> Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

We analysed the significance of religion for the theory of WCI in one more way with the help of the database, namely the relationship with church, denominational affiliation and self-classification (Fig. 5). By far the least likely to have a wounded collective identity are those who identify as Jewish,<sup>29</sup> followed by Protestants and Muslims. At the other extreme are the Orthodox and, to a lesser extent, the Catholics.

<sup>28</sup> Note: Fig. 4 summarizes country-level distributions, whereas Fig. 5 reports individual-level associations. Taken together, they indicate heterogeneity rather than a uniform religious effect; the relationships shown are descriptive.

<sup>29</sup> This data has not been plotted due to the low number of elements and the related bias along some of the criteria distributions. The number of Jews in the total sample is also very low: only 283 respondents were available. Within the Jewish religious group, younger people are strongly overrepresented (46 per cent of the sample aged 18–29), with men making up 69 per cent of the sample and students also being overrepresented (13 per cent).



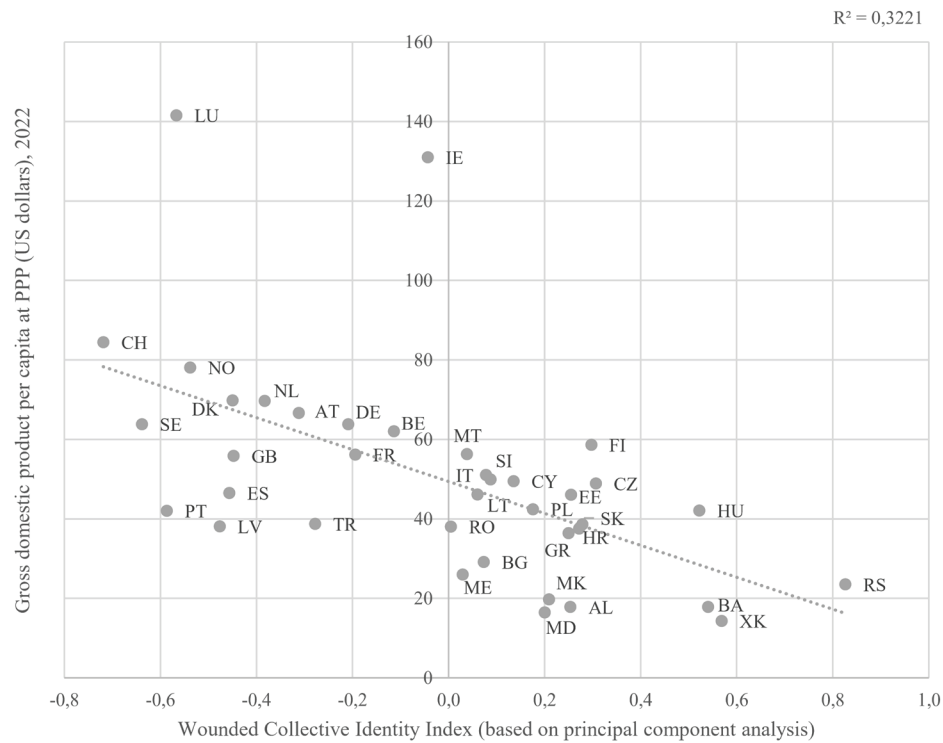
**Figure 5.** The ecclesial/denominational aspects of a wounded collective identity.<sup>30</sup> Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

### ***Vulnerability, Development, Vision***

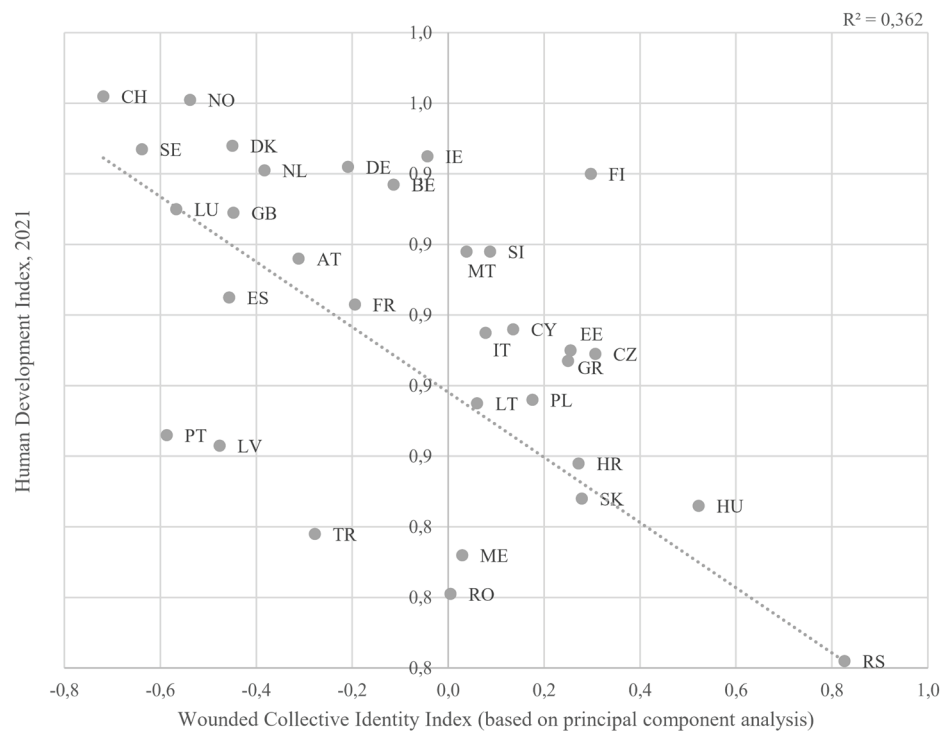
In the context of the theory of wounded collective identity, it is possible to conclude that the group of countries with a ‘more fortunate historical development’ is associated with a lower degree of woundedness, and, at the same time, to explain, or at least to associate, the greater presence of a wounded collective identity with a lower degree of development. These correlations are well captured statistically by two widely used indicators, GDP (Fig. 6) and HDI<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 7). Both comparisons show that there is some statistical correlation between the variables, consistent with the above assumption, which is even more significant if we exclude countries with particularly high values (Ireland and Luxembourg are clearly such countries in terms of GDP). The trend lines drawn based on the linear correlation also show that in the case of Hungary the woundedness is greater than the relevant indicators of modernization would suggest if the correlation between the two variables is compared with the thirty-seven and thirty-eight countries included in the analysis.

<sup>30</sup> For this question, we used a population proportional version of the weight variable and, in order to perform this type of analysis, a standardized WCI index variable, which means that the correlations are for the total population of the thirty-eight countries represented in the full sample.

<sup>31</sup> The Human Development Index (HDI) is another widely used indicator which, unlike the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), does not focus solely on material dimensions but also on a number of sociological aspects (life expectancy at birth, living standards, etc.), allowing international comparisons between countries (and changes over time).



**Figure 6.** Correlation between gross domestic product and wounded collective identity.<sup>32</sup> Source: IMF; Századvég (2022) own ed.



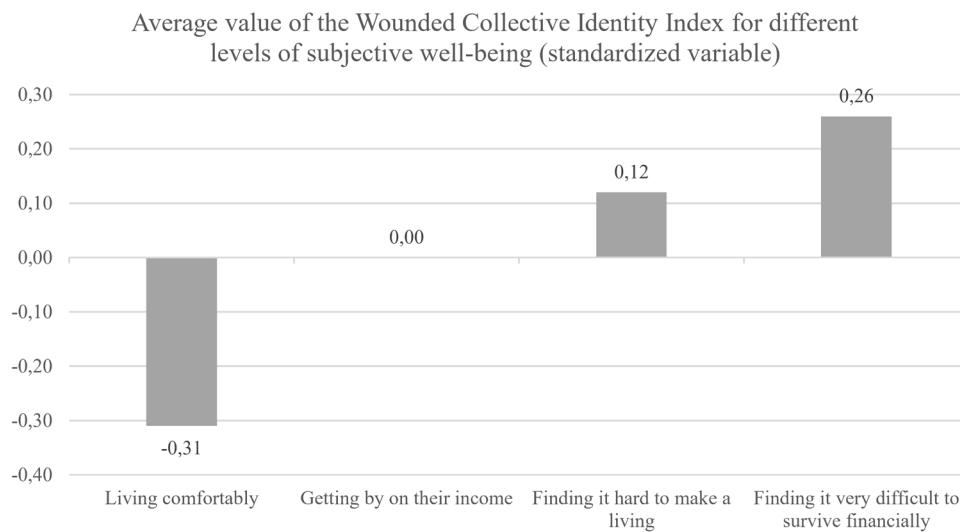
**Figure 7.** Correlation between the human development index and wounded collective identity.<sup>33</sup> Source: UNDP; Századvég (2022) own ed.

<sup>32</sup> Countries are indicated in the figure by two-letter country codes. The  $R^2$  value is changed from 0.3221 to 0.4608 after removing the data for Luxembourg and Ireland, which are also considered outliers.

<sup>33</sup> Countries are indicated in the figure by two-letter country codes. No data were found for Kosovo. The  $R^2$  value changes from 0.362 to 0.5635 after removing data for Portugal, Latvia, Turkey, Montenegro, Romania and Finland, which are also considered outliers.

Based on the Századvég Project Europe survey, further links between wounded collective identity and other factors can be explored<sup>34</sup>; some of the more significant of these statistical correlations are highlighted.<sup>35</sup> Among the sociodemographic variables, age is worth mentioning first and foremost, along which we can see that the older a person is, the more the traces of collective trauma are typically visible in their responses. It is interesting to note that, based on our data, no significant correlation can be found between the type of settlement and the rurality of the area.<sup>36</sup>

The question regarding subjective well-being leads us to the more general pattern that emerges from the answers to the attitude questions, which suggests a close intertwining of wounded collective identity and *ressentiment* (Fig. 8). Just as those for whom livelihoods are a problem appear to be more wounded in terms of collective identity, a similar pattern can be observed in terms of feelings and attitudes towards their own country, or even more distant entities such as the European Union<sup>37</sup> (Fig. 9).



**Figure 8.** The relationship between wounded collective identity and subjective well-being. Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

Descriptively, the negative association between WCI and positive feelings about one's country (Fig. 9) is consistent with a pattern that could be described as partial civic de-integration: respondents perceiving historical wrongs may be less inclined to affirm the present value order of the nation-as-community. Read together with the higher distrust toward political elites (Fig. 10), this suggests that heightened WCI can coincide with critical stances without entailing authoritarian-chauvinist dispositions.

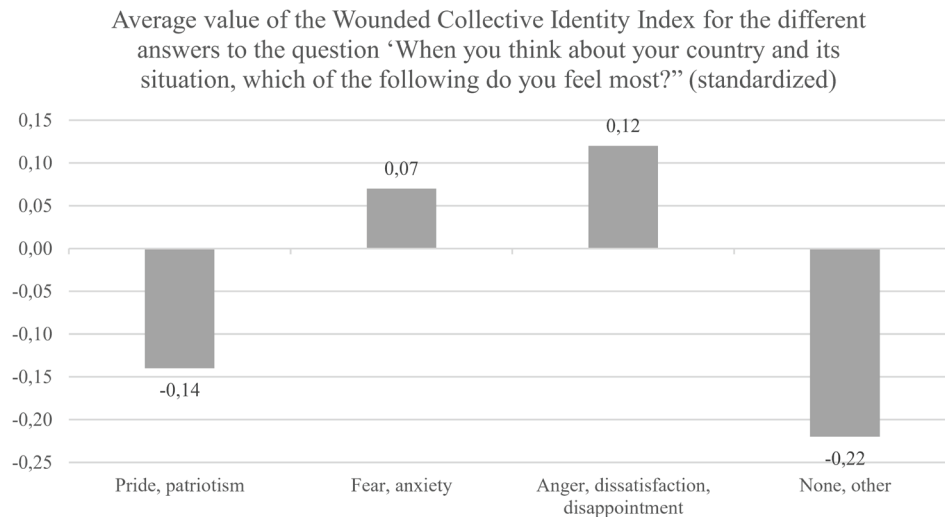
<sup>34</sup> For the following analyses, due to their different nature from cross-country comparisons, we have used a weight variable that takes into account the population share and a standardized CIP index along it.

<sup>35</sup> For an extended list of the relationships between the relevant variables, see the Appendix.

<sup>36</sup> This seems to contradict somewhat our previous research results, which were exclusively Hungarian (Máté-Tóth and Balassa 2022). Based on data from thirty-eight countries, it cannot be claimed that the wounded collective identity is primarily a right-wing phenomenon (see Appendix).

<sup>37</sup> But the same can be observed with politicians, for example Putin and Zelensky (see Appendix).





**Figure 9.** Relationship between wounded collective identity and feelings about the country.<sup>38</sup> Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

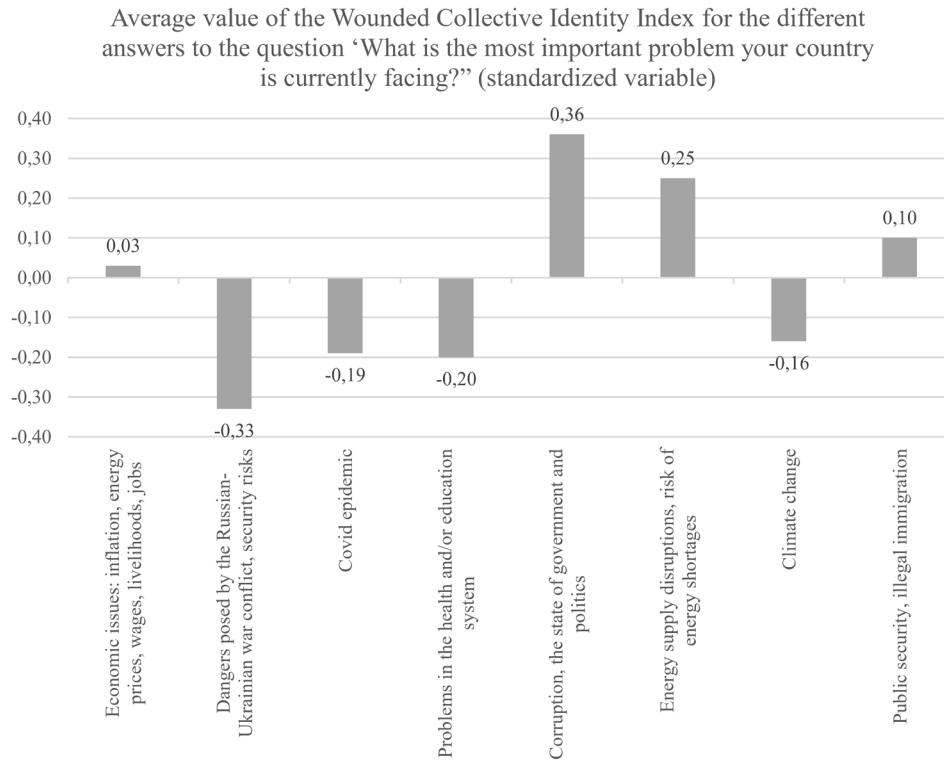
Based on the above, the wounded collective identity, which can also be understood as *ressentiment* in terms of the general attitude system, can be seen not only in the darker, subjective painting of past events and current life situations and circumstances, but its scope also seems to be spread over expectations about the future. Traumatized national identities show, in Max Weber's terms, an (elective) affinity<sup>39</sup> with a wide variety of fears (fear of climate change, migration, or war), economic and quality of life expectations, in other words, a gloomy vision of the future in general.<sup>40</sup> In a European context, collective vulnerability is particularly linked to distrust of political elites<sup>41</sup> (Fig. 10).

<sup>38</sup> Note: Fig. 9 reports population-weighted estimates for the pooled cross-country sample (see Methodology); more populous countries thus exert proportionally greater influence. The association is descriptive, not causal.

<sup>39</sup> In the social sciences, the concept of affinity became pivotal in the work of Max Weber. Affinity describes a kind of utility relation. (Kollár 2021).

<sup>40</sup> See in Appendix.

<sup>41</sup> The book *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2019) deals with similar issues, the connections between insecurity and (susceptibility to) populism, not only in material but also in cultural and social dimensions. One of their central claims is that there seems to be a ‘backlash’ towards conservative values: they suggest that members of older generations increasingly feel their social status is under threat, which makes them more susceptible to populist political rhetoric. Other researchers (such as Schäfer 2022), however, question the validity of their conclusions, pointing out that members of younger generations are overrepresented among those who support political forces that can be described as populist.



**Figure 10.** Correlation between wounded collective identity and different perceptions of problems.  
Source: Századvég (2022) own ed.

## Summary and Conclusions

To conclude our study, we briefly summarize the correlations we have found along the lines of our research questions on wounded collective identity using data from thirty-eight countries, and the conclusions we draw from these in relation to theory.

### *Correlations Between the WCI Index and Other Variables*

In an international comparison, the various shades of the presence of traumatized social consciousness are well expressed between the two end-point countries, traditionally neutral Switzerland on the one hand, and Serbia, which has recently suffered significant territorial losses, on the other. The historical context of the specificities of the groups of countries, which are characterized by different degrees of wounded collective identity, outlines an explanation in which war involvement, fighting on the territory of the country and the losses of national communities, are of particular importance. More than one hundred years after the Treaty of Trianon (under which, following World War I, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory and one-third of its Hungarian speaking population), it is partly this kind of habitus, kept alive by intergenerational memory, that may explain why the collective identity of Hungarians appears to be highly wounded, beyond what would be statistically expected on the basis of modernization as well as its current level of economic and social development.

The dimension of regional in-betweenness seems to be crucial for the theory of wounded collective identity. This in-betweenness, although it has similarities, is not identical either with the narrower region of East-Central Europe, where the ‘misery of small states’ (Bibó 1946) prevails, or with the ‘two-tieredness’ of a continent divided in two by the Iron Curtain. Rather, it concerns a group of countries, wedged between the Eastern and Western worlds (its great powers, the ‘jaws of pincers’), stretching from Italy and Greece in the south to Finland in the north, where the threat of war and the contingency of national existence are a constant reality, based on historical experience – a collectively internalized insecurity. This is a European region where the significance of the Christian religion goes

well beyond its ecclesiastical aspects and influences evaluations and attitudes from a more general, cultural-identificational point of view. This is what makes it possible to mention, among the countries which are committed to preserving Christian cultural traditions, the highly religious Romania and the predominantly secular Czech Republic.

The wounded collective identity itself is statistically more prevalent among members of older generations, as a proportion of the adult population in the countries surveyed. However, we did not find any significant correlation along variables such as type of settlement, rurality or even political orientation (right-wing or left-wing). However, as far as well-being and prosperity are concerned, we have found traces of an overall determination that is reflected not only in the degree of modernization and development of each country (itself a result of historical processes), but also in the microcosm of individual respondents. The collective identity of those who are more often confronted with daily challenges and worries about their livelihood tends to be more traumatized. For them, not only the historical past but also current circumstances appear darker, as does the outlook for the future. Fears and anger are reflected in their responses to a wide variety of attitudinal issues (institutions, elites, etc.) – which, overall, we see as indicative of an elective affinity between a wounded collective identity and a habitus of *ressentiment*.

### ***Discussion and Conclusion – and a Possible Research Direction: the Culture of Mercy***

‘Woundedness’, the collective trauma, is thus a basic historical and cultural experience that is at the heart of the self-understanding of the entire Central and Eastern European region, or more broadly, of the ‘in-between European’ region discussed in this paper. Religion, especially Christianity, plays a special role in (re)building the identity of these societies and individuals. Hence our conclusion that a collective internalization and practice of a ‘culture of mercy’ (Máté-Tóth 2013, Juhász 2019) can be an opportunity to respond to their own woundedness, going beyond the logic of revenge. Our proposal is to develop a line of research based on the key concepts of ‘mercy’ and ‘forgiveness’, which moves from the notion of ‘wounded collective identity’ to the subject of a ‘culture of mercy’, or at least views the two in light of each other.

It is our assumption that the presence or absence of a capacity for mercy can influence the collective identity of a region and, to a certain extent, help it come to terms with past historical grievances and deal with current conflicts (Máté-Tóth 2025). It may therefore be desirable to examine the social manifestations of the concepts of ‘mercy’ and ‘forgiveness’ in social attitudes and modes of action, in literary and artistic works that frame social attitudes and actions, in historical events that still have an impact, in religious practices, in broadly understood political discourse, and in everyday life. Exploration of this theme can help develop reconciliation initiatives, educational programmes, cultural events and policy measures, contributing to the resolution of mutual differences.

### **Reference**

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Ataria, Yochai. 2015. ‘Sense of Ownership and Sense of Agency During Trauma’. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14(1): 199–212. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-013-9334-y>.
- Balassa, Bernadett, Miklós Gyorgyovich, and András Máté-Tóth. 2022. ‘A vallási szekuritizáció és a sebzett kollektív identitás modellje a magyar társadalomban empirikus adatok alapján’. *Replika* 127: 131–147. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.32564/127.6>.
- Bauer, Béla, Tamás László, Áron Máthé, Gerda Megyery, and Viktor Vandróczki. 2021. *A kommunista diktatúra emlékezete a magyar társadalomban*. Budapest: Századvég Kiadó.
- Berger, Peter L. (ed.) 1999. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

- Beste, Jennifer E. 2007. *God and the Victim: Traumatic Intrusions on Grace and Freedom*, AAR Academy Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195311099.001.0001>.
- Bibó, István 1946. *A keleteurópai kisállamok nyomorúsága*. Budapest: Új Magyarország.
- Boatcă, Manuela, and Anca Parvulescu. 2020. 'Creolizing Transylvania: Notes on Coloniality and Inter-Imperiality'. *History of the Present* 10(1): 9–27. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1215/21599785-8221398>.
- Boatcă, Manuela, and Willfried Spohn. (eds.). 2010. *Globale, Multiple Und Postkoloniale Modernen*. Augsburg: Rainer Hampp Verlag.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 1998. 'Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism'. In *National Self-Determination and Secession* edited by Margaret Moore, 233–265. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198293844.003.0011>.
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685853808>.
- Calhoun, Craig. 1993. 'Nationalism and Ethnicity'. *Annual Review of Sociology* 19:211–239. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.19.080193.001235>.
- Delanty, Gerard. 2008. 'The Foundations of Social Theory'. In *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory* edited by Bryan S. Turner, 19–37. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444304992.ch1>.
- IMF (International Monetary Fund). (2022, October). *WEO Data (World Economic Outlook Database)*. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/October/>. (Date of retrieval 21 February 2023).
- Juhász, Zoltán András. 2019. '„Az irgalom kultúrájának követői vagyunk...”' [„We are Followers of a Culture of Mercy..."]. *ELTEonline.hu*. <https://elteonline.hu/tudomany/2019/04/03/az-irgalom-kultura-janak-kovetoi-vagyunk/>. (Date of retrieval 24 November 2025).
- Kiss, Balázs. 2022. 'Kettős ressentiment: A kultúrharc Magyarországon, 2018–2020'. In *Studies in Political Science – Politikatudományi tanulmányok* edited by Gabriella Szabó and Dániel Oross. Budapest: TK PTI. [https://politikatudomany.tk.hu/uploads/files/Kettos\\_ressentiment.pdf](https://politikatudomany.tk.hu/uploads/files/Kettos_ressentiment.pdf). (Date of retrieval 24 November 2025).
- Kollár, Dávid. 2021. 'Max Weber and the chemistry of the Protestant ethic'. *Social Science Information* 60(4): 504–521. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1177/05390184211052874>.
- Kollár, Dávid, and Tamás László. 2022. 'Megfogyva bár, de törve nem?: Sebzett kollektív identitás – egy magyarországi felmérés tükrében'. *Erdélyi Társadalom* 20(1): 23–37. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.17177/77171.265>.
- Kollár, Dávid, and Tamás László. 2023. 'Long Torn by Ill Fate?: Wounded Collective Identity in Light of a Survey in Hungary'. *Politics in Central Europe* 19(2): 265–281. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2023-0012>.
- Kollár, Dávid, Tamás László, and Petra Szilágyi. 2025. 'Status quo és ressentiment: A politikai stabilitás és változás igénye Európa országaiban'. In *Századvég Riport 2025: Tanulmányok gazdaságról, politikáról, társadalomról* edited by Ádám Stefkovics and Péter Pillók, 439–457. Budapest: Századvég Kiadó.
- László, Tamás. 2020. 'A „közteslét” árnyalatai: Vallási képlekenység és képlekeny vallásosságuk'. In *Vallásosság Magyarországon: Társadalomtudományi tanulmányok* edited by Miklós Györgyovich, 119–180. Budapest: Századvég Kiadó.
- Martin, David. 1978. *A General Theory of Secularization*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2011. 'Vallásértelmezések'. *Vigilia* 76(10): 731–740. [https://vigilia.hu/pdfs/Vigilia\\_2011\\_10\\_facsimile.pdf#page=13](https://vigilia.hu/pdfs/Vigilia_2011_10_facsimile.pdf#page=13). (Date of retrieval 24 November 2025).
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2013. 'Az irgalom kultúrája: Keresztény értelmiségi lét Kelet-Közép-Európában'. *Egyház és társadalom*. <https://www.egyhazestarsadalom.hu/2013/05/23/mate-toth-andras-az-irgalomkultura-ja/>. (Date of retrieval 24 November 2025).
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2014. *Vallásnézet: A kelet-közép-európai átmenet vallástudományi értelmezése*. Kolozsvár: Korunk – Komp-Press.
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2015. 'Sebzett identitás Kelet-Közép-Európában'. *Vigilia* 80(6): 409–415. [http://epa.oszk.hu/02900/02970/00898/pdf/EPA02970\\_vigilia\\_2015\\_06\\_409-415.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/02900/02970/00898/pdf/EPA02970_vigilia_2015_06_409-415.pdf). (Date of retrieval 24 November 2025).
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2019. *Freiheit und Populismus: Verwundete Identitäten in Ostmitteleuropa*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-25485-8>.

- Máté-Tóth, András. 2022. 'Sebzett kollektív identitás és vallásértelmezés'. *Erdélyi Társadalom* 20(1): 11–22. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.17177/77171.264>.
- Máté-Tóth, András, and Bernadett Balassa. 2022. 'A traumatizált társadalmi tudat dimenziói: Adatok a sebzett kollektív identitás elméletéhez'. *Szociológiai Szemle* 32(2): 57–77. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.51624/SzocSzemle.2022.2.3>.
- Máté-Tóth, András, and Réka Szilárdi. 2022. 'Szekuritizáció és vallás Kelet-Közép-Európában: Elméleti felvetés'. *Regio* 30(1): 26–43. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.17355/rkkpt.v30i1.26>.
- Máté-Tóth, András. 2025. 'Grief, Resilience and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe: A Theoretical Approach'. In *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion. Change and Its Discontents. Religious Organizations and Religious Life in Central and Eastern Europe 15* edited by Olga Breskaya and Siniša Zrinščak, 76–100. Leiden: Brill. doi.: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004713802\\_005](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004713802_005).
- Mälksoo, Maria. 2019. 'The Normative Threat of Subtle Subversion: The Return of "Eastern Europe" as an Ontological Insecurity Trope'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32(3): 365–383. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1590314>.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108595841>.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1967. *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*. New York: The Free Press.
- Parvulescu, Anca, and Manuela Boatacă. 2021. 'The Inter-Imperial Dowry Plot: Modernist Naturalism in the Periphery of European Empires'. *Interventions* 23(4): 570–595. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2020.1762693>.
- Ramet, Sabrina P., and Christine M. Hassenstab. 2019. *Central and Southeast European Politics Since 1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108752466>.
- Reginster, Bernard. 1997. 'Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 57(2): 281–305. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2953719>.
- Schäfer, Armin. 2022. 'Cultural Backlash?: How (Not) to Explain the Rise of Authoritarian Populism'. *British Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 1977–1993. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123421000363>.
- Spohn, Willfried. 2015. 'Europäisierung, Nation und Religion: Zur Transformation kollektiver Identitäten in einem sich erweiternden Europa'. In *Prozesse: Formen, Dynamiken, Erklärungen* edited by Rainer Schützeichel and Stefan Jordan, 435–461. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. doi.: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93458-7\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93458-7_19).
- Stefkovich, Ádám, and Lili Zenovitz. 2023. 'Global Warming vs. Climate Change Frames: Revisiting Framing Effects Based on New Experimental Evidence Collected in 30 European Countries'. *Climatic Change* 176(12): 159. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-023-03633-x>.
- Stefkovich, Ádám, Csilla Ágoston, Emőke Bukovenszki, Andrea Dúll, Olivér Hortay, and Attila Varga. 2024. 'Climate Change Worry in the Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from Two Large-Scale European Surveys'. *Climate Risk Management* 44: 100599. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2024.100599>.
- Smith, Anthony D. 2004. 'A nacionalizmus és a történetek'. In *Nacionalizmuselméletek: Szöveggyűjtemény* edited by Zoltán Kántor, 21–44. Budapest: Rejtjel.
- Subotić, Jelena. 2018. 'Political Memory, Ontological Security, and Holocaust Remembrance in Post-Communist Europe'. *European Security* 27(3): 296–313. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2018.1497980>.
- Subotić, Jelena. 2019. *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance After Communism*. Ithaca [New York]: Cornell University Press. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501742415>.
- Századvég Konzorcium. 2022. *Project Europe. Database of the second research wave of 2022*.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2022. *Human Development Report 2021–22. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*. United Nations.
- Veronese, Guido, Alessandro Pepe, Federica Cavazzoni, Hania Obaid, and Jesus Perez. 2019. 'Agency via Life Satisfaction as a Protective Factor from Cumulative Trauma and Emotional Distress Among Bedouin Children in Palestine'. *Frontiers in Psychology* 10: 1674. doi.: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01674>.
- Weber, Max. 1967. *Gazdaság és társadalom*. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.



# Appendix

Sex								
Male				Female				
-0.11				0.11				
Age group								
18–29 years old	30–39 years old	40–49 years old	50–59 years old	60–69 years old	70+ years old			
-0.24	-0.10	0.01	0.12	0.16	0.13			
Size of settlement (number of inhabitants)								
Under 10.000	10.000–49.999	50.000–249.999	250.000–499.000	500.000+				
-0.06	0.06	-0.01	-0.09	0.02				
Type of settlement								
Large city	Suburb of a large city	City or small town	Village	Farm				
0.04	-0.01	0.02	-0.06	-0.08				
Education level								
ISCED 0	ISCED 1	ISCED 2	ISCED 3	ISCED 4	ISCED 5	ISCED 6	ISCED 7	ISCED 8
-0.07	-0.44	-0.04	0.09	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.11	-0.15
Economic status								
Working full time	Working part-time	Student	Domestic, at home with children	Pensioner	Living on social assistance	Unemployed		
0.05	-0.23	-0.17	-0.25	0.15	-0.05	-0.06		
Subjective well-being								
Live comfortably		Income is just enough		Find it difficult to live		Find it very difficult to live		
-0.31		-0.00		0.12		0.26		
In the last 12 months, have you ever been unable to pay a utility bill on time due to lack of funds?								
Did not happen			Happened once			Happened two or more times		
0.01			-0.11			0.06		
What is your religion?								
Catholic	Protestant	Muslim	Jewish	Orthodox	Non-religious / atheist			
0.11	-0.24	-0.24	-0.68	0.31	0.05			
How often do you attend religious events?								
Several times a week	Weekly	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Almost never	Never			
-0.21	-0.05	-0.07	0.27	0.06	-0.04			
Do you think that Europe should preserve its Christian culture and traditions or promote a secular culture that goes beyond Christian traditions?								
Europe should preserve its Christian culture and traditions				It should move beyond the Christian tradition towards a more secular culture				
0.07				-0.09				
Do you consider yourself primarily a member of your own country or a European?								
I consider myself to belong primarily to my own country				I consider myself primarily European				
0.02				-0.04				
When you think about your country and the situation in your country, which of the following do you feel most?								
Pride, patriotism	Fear, anxiety	Anger, dissatisfaction, disappointment			None of these, but other			
-0.14	0.07	0.12			-0.22			
Overall, do you think things are going in the right or the wrong direction in your country today?								
Definitely in the right direction	More in the right direction	Both good and bad in some respects		More in the wrong direction	Definitely in the wrong direction			
-0.54	-0.15	0.00		0.01	0.26			
Do you think the economic situation in your country in the next year or two will be...?								
much better		better		the same		worse		much worse
-0.65		-0.18		-0.01		0.13		0.31

Do you think your children or future generations will...?							
live better than they do today		live in the same way		live worse than today			
-0.16		-0.12		0.12			
Where do you get your information when you want the most credible news about public life and politics?							
TV	Radio	Internet portals	Social media	Printed press	From elsewhere		
0.02	-0.45	0.11	0.01	-0.05	0.10		
Which of the following would you classify yourself as?							
Left		Centre		Right			
0.01		-0.04		-0.01			
Please tell us whether you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of the European Union.							
Favourable		Unfavourable		No opinion			
-0.04		0.07		0.01			
				Do not know			
				-0.29			
How much confidence do you have in the European Union?							
Full confidence		Some		None			
-0.22		0.01		0.12			
Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion?							
The EU should have more power over member states			Member states should have more power over the EU				
-0.09			0.05				
How would you vote in a referendum on your country's membership of the EU?							
Your country should stay in the EU			Your country should leave the EU				
-0.01			0.02				
Do you think the economic situation in the European Union will get stronger or weaker in the coming years?							
It will get stronger		It will not change		It will get weaker			
-0.23		0.00		0.11			
Do you think the European Union will still exist in ten years' time?							
Yes			No				
-0.06			0.04				
Which of the following is the most important problem your country is currently facing?							
Economic issues: inflation, energy prices, wages, livelihoods, jobs	Dangers posed by the Russian-Ukrainian war conflict, security risks	Coronavirus pandemic	Problems in the health and/or education system	Corruption, the state of government and politics	Energy supply disruptions, risk of energy shortages	Climate change	Public security, illegal immigration
0.03	-0.33	-0.19	-0.20	0.36	0.25	-0.16	0.10
How afraid are you of climate change?							
Extremely afraid		Very afraid		Somewhat afraid		Not very afraid	
0.09		0.02		-0.02		-0.16	
						Not afraid at all	
						-0.06	
How concerned are you about the problem of illegal immigrants flowing into your country?							
Very concerned		Rather concerned		Rather not concerned		Not concerned at all	
0.11		-0.08		-0.17		-0.13	
How concerned are you about the problem of the spread of the coronavirus epidemic?							
Very concerned		Rather concerned		Rather not concerned		Not concerned at all	
-0.03		0.03		-0.05		0.05	
How concerned are you about the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine?							
Very concerned		Rather concerned		Rather not concerned		Not concerned at all	
0.03		-0.01		-0.02		-0.01	
How concerned are you that the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine could escalate into a major war in the near future, and that your country could be involved?							
Very concerned		Rather concerned		Rather not concerned		Not concerned at all	
0.05		-0.03		-0.01		-0.10	

If a war broke out that affected your country, would you fight for your country?			
Yes		No	
-0.02		0.04	
Please tell us whether you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Vladimir Putin.			
Favourable	Unfavourable	No opinion	Do not know
-0.19	0.03	0.04	-0.15
Please tell us whether you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Volodymyr Zelensky.			
Favourable	Unfavourable	No opinion	Do not know
-0.05	0.06	0.05	-0.08

**Table 1.** WCI index averages for each respondent group.<sup>42</sup> Source: Századvég (2022), own ed.

<sup>42</sup> In the analysis of the relationship between wounded collective identity and the individual variables, the weight variable for the population was used, so that the results can be applied to the entire population under study (the combined population of the thirty-eight countries). The WCI index variable, which was originally created for the cross-country comparison and which included another (non-population) weight variable, was (re)standardized to the current analytical criteria. The average value for the entire sample is therefore zero in all cases.