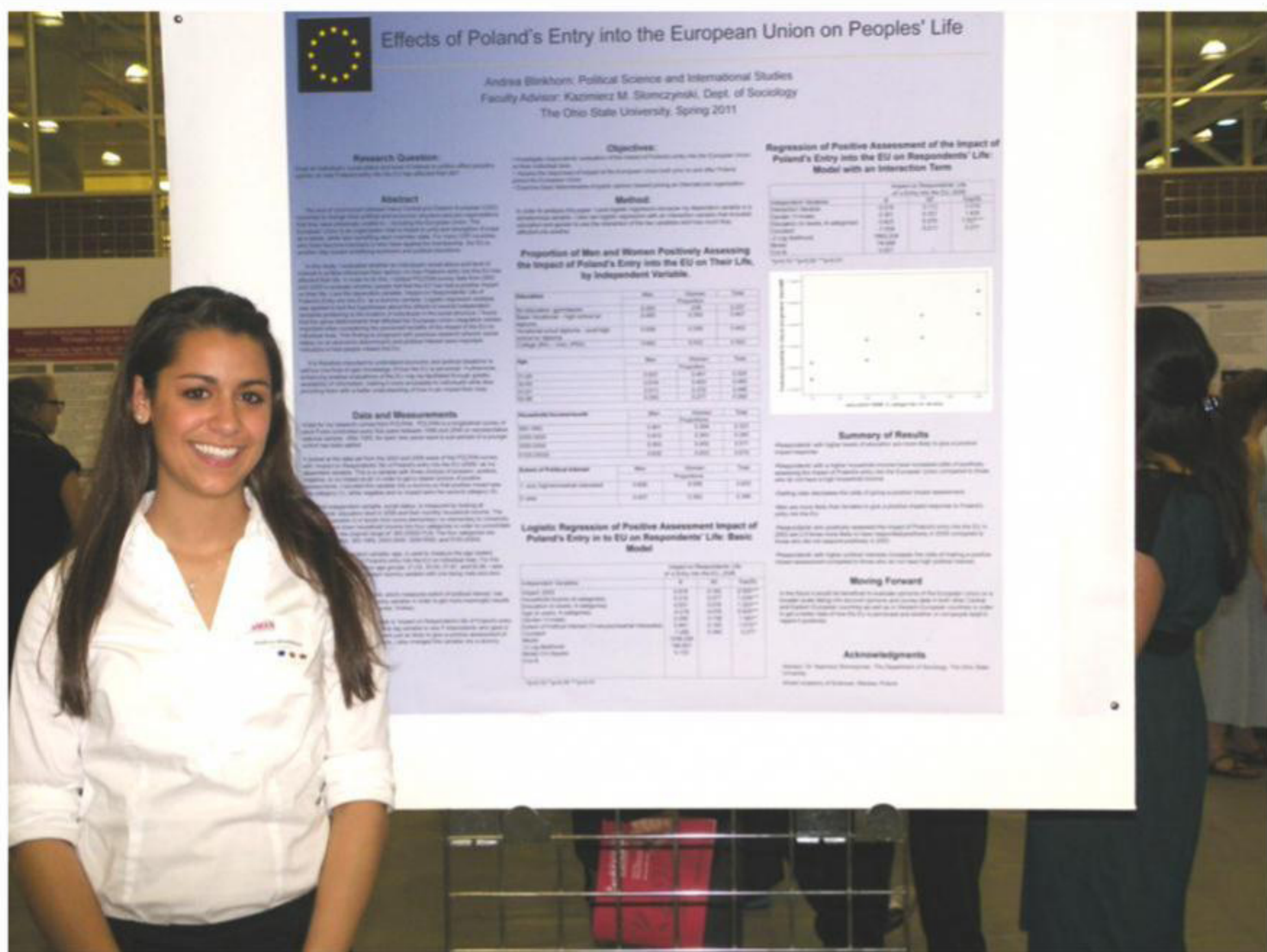


Effects of Poland's Entry into the European Union on Peoples' Life

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The end of communism allowed many Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to change their political and economic structures and join organizations that they were previously unable to – including the European Union. The European Union is an organization that is meant to unify and strengthen Europe as a whole, while also benefiting each member state. For many CEE countries who have become members or who have applied for membership, the EU is another step toward solidifying economic and political transitions. In this

study, I evaluated whether an individual's social status and level of interest in politics influenced their opinion on how Poland's entry into the EU has affected their life. In order to do this, I utilized POLPAN survey data from 2003 and 2008 to evaluate whether people felt that the EU has had a positive impact on their life. Logistic regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses about the effects of several independent variables pertaining to the location of individuals in the social structure. I recoded the dependent variable, Impact on Respondents' Life of Poland's Entry into the EU, into a dummy variable. I found that the same determinants that affected the European Union integration remain important when considering the perceived benefits of the im-

pact of the EU on individual lives. This finding is congruent with previous research wherein social status (or an economic determinant) and political interest were important indicators in how people viewed the EU. It is therefore important to understand economic and political situations in various countries to gain knowledge of how the EU is perceived. Furthermore, enhancing positive evaluations of the EU may be facilitated through greater availability of information, making it more accessible to individuals while also providing them with a better understanding of how it can impact their lives.