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# Nationalism and anti-EU mobilization in postsocialist Europe

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*Abstract*: In this paper, anti-EU mobilization in post-socialist EU accession states is treated as a relevant phenomenon both on attitude and parliamentary level. It is argued that Euro-skepticism is not an isolated phenomenon but has to be interpreted as an issue in party competition which is rooted in socio-cultural and socio-economic conflict. Two party families are bound to rely on the EU issue in their efforts to attract voters: nationalist and post-communist parties. Whereas nationalist forces tend to reject the whole idea of integration for ideological reasons, post-communist forces throw an eye on the redistributive effect of Brussels' structural funds and therefore are somewhat contradictory as to the scope of EU rejection.

## 1. Introduction

The presence of anti-EU parties in the parliaments of postsocialist Europe is a relatively new phenomenon. Beginning about twenty years ago, the "common house of Europe" was not only an abstract vision by Mikhail Gorbachev but was also proposed by intellectuals of Central Europe who were striving for a "European solution" to remove the iron curtain running through Europe (Konrád 1985). After the fall of communism, almost all political elites of Central Europe envisaged integration into the European in order to make the rupture with the Soviet Union, or later the Russian Federation, irreversible. Moreover, despite some talking about third ways between socialism and capitalism, the access to the West European market as a cornerstone of developing dynamic economies was closely linked to EU accession. Therefore, both in public opinion and in the view of national elites of postsocialist Europe, general support for the idea European integration was easily explainable.

In the second half of the last decade, the notion of Euro-skepticism entered the debate in a new meaning. Before, the term had been used to identify adversaries to European integration within the Union (Taggart 1998). Then, the population of postsocialist Europe started giving more and more critical answers to survey questions on their approval of the European Union and the slowly moving enlargement process (see, for example, the Central and Eastern Eurobarometers, 1990-1997). Consequently, it was argued that increasingly EU-sceptical publics did not correspond to the behavior and attitudes of pro-EU national elites (Hughes/Sasse/Gordon 2002: 327).

In the meantime, however, some authors diagnosed rising levels of EU-scepticism not only among the populations, but also among political elites. As part of the Opposing Europe Research Network at the Sussex European Institute, Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart spotted remarkable levels of EU-scepticism within the party systems of most EU accession candidates (Szczerbiak/Taggart 2000; Taggart/Szczerbiak 2001). The authors made a distinction between "soft" and "hard" Euro-skepticism, classified parties accordingly, and put forward several propositions which marked the starting point in a thorough discussion of Euro-skepticism as a phenomenon bringing "new insights into party systems in central and Eastern Europe as well as offering clues to some future effects of EU enlargement" (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2001: 3).

The findings of Szczerbiak and Taggart which will be partly discussed in this paper were substantially criticized by Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde about a year later. The authors stated that the distinction between soft and hard Euro-skepticism had been incorrectly ascribed to accession candidates who "are in essence pro-European" which "may result in the over- and underestimation of

the strength of the phenomenon in any (party) political system and lead us to see either more or less Euro-skepticism than there actually is" (Kopecký/Mudde 2002: 300).

In this paper, I intend to enter into that discussion in two dimensions. First, in analogy to the approach by Kopecký/Mudde, I will try to restrict the identification of anti-EU political forces to parties outrightly rejecting European integration. While the cases Kopecký/Mudde covered, the four Vy□egrad countries, host most of these forces, some parties from the other six candidate countries not included into their study will be discussed.

Second, I will try to delve deeper into the discussion for what reasons anti-EU parties are able to mobilize voters in specific countries. Here, two positions can be discerned. On the one side, Euro-skepticism is seen as a product of party strategies (Taggart 1998; Taggart/Szczerbiak 2001; Sitter 2002) implying that parties develop their positions towards European integration and European policies mainly in answer to domestic party system structures. On the other side, another position is again taken by Kopecký/Mudde. They argue that "ideology is the crucial factor" in explaining Euro-skepticist party positions (Kopecký/Mudde 2002: 321), and again I am more sympathetic to the latter argument. More in-depth, I will try to lead anti-EU positions back to two party families which rely on the protest against the hardships of postsocialist transformation: nationalist and (unreformed) postcommunist parties.

## 2. Anti-EU forces in parliament: an overview

Identifying anti-EU parties is not difficult. In most cases, the party program, their representation on the internet, or other official documents show the opposition to European integration and to the result of the integration process – the European Union – without disguise. By choosing the notion of "anti-EU" forces, some parties of the broader "Euro-skepticist" category can be excluded. Anti-EU forces bear similar signs as the group of "hard Euro-skepticists" which according to Szczerbiak and Taggart "involves outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU" (Szczerbiak/Taggart 2000: 6).

However, when is a rejection "outright"? The authors included country experts into their judgment, but the empirical findings are somewhat surprising. For example, the authors don't classify the Czech *Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia* (SPR-RS□) as hard Euro-skepticist (Taggart/Szczerbiak 2001: 16) despite that party's "nationalistic and racist"

character (Bugajski 2002: 257).[1] In the case of the SPR-RS∪, the opposition to European integration is not at the center of the party's program. However, implicitly the party followed aims incompatible with the core of the idea and practice of European integration. Thus, Taggart/Szczerbiak have to deal with the contradiction that a party is not listed as "hard Euro-skepticist" despite its rigorous denial of some of the most important principles underlying the integration of Europe.

Kopecký and Mudde therefore proposed a different way of classifying opposition to Europe by differentiating between diffuse and specific (party) support for European integration. In their model, diffuse support is linked with approval or disapproval to the general *idea* of European integration, whereas specific support is attributed to its *practice* (Kopecký/Mudde 2002: 300). Consequently, no party or other political force denouncing the idea of European integration can be excluded from the category of Europhobes.

The most important difference between the concepts by Szczerbiak/Taggart and Kopecký/Mudde concerns the disputed classification of some important parties. In the cited papers by Szczerbiak and Taggart, the Czech *Civic Democratic Party* (ODS), the Hungarian *Association of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Party* (FIDESZ), the *Latvian Social Democratic Alliance* (SDS), the *Polish Peasant Party* (PSL) and the Slovak *Christian Democratic Movement* (KDH) appear as soft Euro-skepticist forces because they voiced "contingent or qualified opposition" (the criterion for 'soft' eurosecpticism, see Szczerbiak/Taggart 2000: 6). However, it does not seem right to see these parties in the same category as the Czech *Republicans* (Taggart Szczerbiak 2001: 16), and it becomes even less convincing when we take into consideration that some of the parties just named – FIDESZ, PSL, KDH – were (or are) parts of government coalitions which negotiated and successfully concluded EU accession agreements.

By introducing the distinction between diffuse and specific opposition Kopecký and Mudde gain the possibility to sort Europhile from Europhobe actors. Europhobes are against the idea of European integration altogether, whereas Europhiles can still be divided into Euroenthusiasts and Euro-skeptics (Kopecký/Mudde 2002: 303). This opens a more adequate way of judging those politicians and parties voicing criticism of the way the European Union is functioning and/or steering the enlargement process: they are Euro-skeptic not because they do not like the whole direction of giving up sovereignty, letting western values into the national cultures and so on, but because they are pessimistic about the outcomes of the political system of the European Union.

However, Kopecký's and Mudde's suggestion doesn't solve all problems, either. In their typology, it is hard to understand how political forces can be expected

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[1] A classification which is widely shared, see (Hollis 1999: 288-289; Havelková 2002).

to be at the same time Europhobe, that is opposing the idea of European integration, and EU-optimist, in the sense that they actually support the European Union. The authors place two parties into that category which they call "for want of a better term" Europragmatists: the Hungarian *Independent Party of Small Farmers* (FKgP) and the Slovak *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia* (HZDS) (Kopecký/Mudde 2002: 303).

I would rather argue that both parties can be classified as Euro-skeptic, that is Europhile but pessimistic about the actual shape of the European Union. In both cases, it should not be forgotten that the parties were part of government coalitions at a time when the country ultimately pushed for EU accession.[2] Also, both parties have turned towards more pro-European rhetoric, although for different reasons. Whereas Mečiar's HZDS was knocked out in the elections of 1998 and afterwards remained in the background, the FKgP toed the coalition line and called for European integration for economic reasons (Baer 2001; Batory 2001: 15-16).

On the basis of the relevant literature, this leaves us with a rather clear list of anti-EU parties, namely either those parties which openly reject the European Union, or those parties which in their program or rhetoric are in contradiction with the underlying principles of the idea of European integration. These parties will now be discussed in alphabetical order of their countries of origin.

In *Bulgaria*, the idea of completely rejecting European integration is not present in political life. The only group possibly coming into mind is George Ganchev's *Bulgarian Business Bloc* (BBB) which took in around five percent of the votes in both 1994 and 1997. The BBB's party program included some nationalist issues. For example, in the economic sphere, the state was supposed to protect national business: "selling national capital to foreign countries, beyond certain limits to preserve sovereignty, should be precluded"' (cited from Bugajski 2002: 798). Experts, however, do not go as far as characterizing this populist party as outright Europhobe (Crampton 1997; Schliewenz 1997; Karasimeonov 1999).

In the *Czech Republic*, two parties have to be named. First, the *Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia* (KS∪M) has included several points in their program that show strong incompatibility with the principles of the European Union, for example, the strengthening of state control over banks, or the protection of domestic markets from foreign competition. Moreover the party officially "denounced both EU and NATO membership" (Bugajski 2002: 256). The second anti-EU party, already discussed shortly above, the *Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia* (SPR-RS∪). In that party's

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[2] The FKgP held about 23% of the FIDESZ-led coalition from 1994-1998, the HZDS was the biggest party and provided the prime minister – Vladimír Mečiar – of two governments between 1992 and 1998.

case, classification can only partly rely on the party program. We can find the rejection of "all forms of transnationalism" (Havelková 2002: 231), but on the whole the party program is judged to be quite inconsistent and mainly dominated by protest motions. The party leader Miroslav Sládek has on many occasions expressed xenophobic, notably anti-German and anti-Roma, sentiments. It is this clearly racist component, the dreams of an "ethnically pure greater Czechoslovakia" (Minkenberg/Beichelt 2001) which puts the party in contradiction to the underlying ideas of European integration.

In the three Baltic states *Estonia*, *Latvia* and *Lithuania*, EU opposition is not relevant on the elite level. Taggart/Szczerbiak (2001: 16) list some parties in Estonia, but none of them has gained parliamentary seats in the 1999 elections.

In *Hungary*, the *Hungarian Justice and Life Party* (MIéP) is another party representing the right-wing radicalist party family. The MiéP is an ultranationalist formation which supports state protection over the national economy in order to keep it 'purely Hungarian' and to prevent an alleged takeover by foreign capital and 'alien' business interests" (Bugajski 2002: 360). A part of the party's biological-nativist views of the Hungarian nation is the anti-Semitism characterizing the public remarks of the party leader Istvan Czurka in particular (see Karsai 1999). EU enlargement itself was characterized by Czurka as colonization "due to the pressure from global financial interests" (cited from Batory 2001: 15).

Since the parliamentary elections of 2001, *Poland* is the early accession candidate with the strongest hold of anti-EU parties in parliament. Before 2001, the *Christian National Union* (ZChN) had unsuccessfully tried to convince its fellow member organizations of the *Electoral Action Solidarność* (AWS) to stay away from the European Union (Freudenstein/Czyrny 2001: 30). Then, the AWS failed to get reelected to parliament, but the *League of Polish Families* (LPR) and the peasant party *Samoobrona* – literally: self-defense – together gained about 18% of the electorate. Both parties combine a strong sense of nationalism with the conviction that EU accession in the current form would ruin the Polish economy, especially the agrarian sector. The founding document of the LPR explicitly asks for renegotiation of the accession treaty and (awkwardly) demands the stop of all talks with the EU "until a new treaty is negotiated" (cited from Nalewajko 2003: 167). In any case, the perception of EU enlargement as "economic colonialism" (cited from Szczerbiak 2002: 13) is a clear message.

*Samoobrona* is more and less radical at the same time. It is more radical because of its leader, Andrzej Lepper. He is always ready to be very outspoken on the role of foreign capital and cosmopolitan influence in Poland, for example for speaking of the transformation as "economic genocide" (cited from the German weekly DIE ZEIT, 15.8.2002: 2). On the other hand, the party insists that its position represents "Eurorealism" rather than Europhobia. Unlike the LPR, *Samoobrona* concedes that EU accession will bring some advantages

which, however, will be outweighed by the negative effects. Therefore, Lepper stated in 2001 that "we say no to today's Union because we don't see a basis for partnership. What we see is kneeling down and toadying" (cited from Nalewajko 2003: 170).

In *Romania*, the postsocialist *Party of Social Democracy of Romania* (PDSR) had the image of entering the course of European integration very ambiguously in the first half of the last decade. The party, however, ended this uncertainty by stating in its 1997 program that EU and NATO integration were the only solution to protect Romania's "vulnerability" (see Nève 2002b: 69). This vulnerability as the "Latin island in the Slavonic sea", as Romanian nationalists see it, makes the whole political elite sympathetic to European and transatlantic integration (Nève 2002a: 8).

That is why hostility to European integration again has to be spotted via incompatibility of the underlying values of European integration. The *Greater Romanian Party* (PRM) clearly notes that it is in favor of European integration as long as the national interests of Romania are preserved.[3] On the other hand, the party leader Cordneliu Vadim Tudor is known for his anti-Semitic and antidemocratic remarks. Although the party is not a one-man-show as some right-wing radicalist parties are in other neighboring countries, Tudor is the main representative of the party's ideology. On various occasions, he argued that it would be best to govern Romania with a machine gun, he praised concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele as a "gentleman" in comparison to Romanian President Emil Constantiniescu, and he characterized the authoritarian pre-war leader Marshall Ion Antonescu as a "holy anti-bolshevist warrior" (see Shafir 2000; citations in Grün 2002: 298). In short, the xenophobic and antidemocratic party ideology cannot be brought into line with several underlying ideas of the European Union, and therefore the party has to be characterized anti-European.

Besides the PRM, two other formation with Euro-skeptic ideology have influenced Romanian politics. One is the nationalist *Party of National Unity* (PUNR) which until 1997 was led by Gheorghe Funar, today's nationalist mayor of Cluj-Napoca in Western Romania. When Funar left the party in order to join the PRM, the party lost its weight and did not reach more than 1.4% of the parliamentary vote in 2000. The other is the *Socialist Worker's Party* (PSM), a left-wing-extremist party which strongly opposed any form of international cooperation (Gabanyi 1997). Both parties were important as parts of a PDSR-led governing coalition from 1992 until 1995/1996 but have almost completely disappeared today.

*Slovakia* is another country where anti-EU sentiments find representation both on the left and on the right of the political spectrum. On the right, the *Slovak*

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[3] http://www.romare.ro/partid/progext/c4.html, 24.2.2003.

*National Party* (SNS) strongly opposes the country's membership in international organizations, a position which was peculiar between 1992 and 1998, when the SNS was present in various Slovak governments. The period was seen as the "triumph of national populism" (Carpenter 1997), and the SNS was the governments' most radical nationalist force. After the elections of 1998, the party leadership went over to a more moderate chairperson, Anna Malíková, which turned the party's ideology as a whole into a more pro-European direction (Bugajski 2002: 315). The more radical Ján Slota founded the *Real Slovak National Party* (PSNS) which is a radical version of the old SNS. In its program,[4] the PSNS just as the polish *Samoobrona* uses the term "eurorealism" to justify its opposition of EU enlargement under the current conditions.

On the left, the *Association of Slovak Workers* (ZRS) opposed Slovakia's membership in the EU and especially in NATO (Bugajski 2002: 311). The party only gained 1.3% in the 1998 elections and has since then lost relevance. Ideologically, it was followed by the *Communist Party of Slovakia* (KSS). The party which has the goal of (re)building a socialist society strongly criticizes that Slovak national interests are not being met in the current enlargement process; in the party's view Slovakia is not ready for accession.[5] Consequently, the KSS demands the same level of social security for Slovakia's citizens as in the other member countries before being ready to enter the EU.[6]

In *Slovenia*, the most important anti-EU party is the "ultra-nationalist" (Bugajski 2002: 664) *Slovenian National Party* (SNS). One of the party's main issues is the prohibition of non-citizens purchasing land in Slovenia; a position clearly in opposition to European Community principles. According to Rudolf Rizman, the SNS and its leader Zmago Jelinčič fall in line with several other forces and leaders making Slovenia a playing field for "demagogic populism" (Rizman 1999: 159).

Besides the SNS, the *New Party* (NS) has been named as a strong Euroskepticist Party by Szczerbiak/Taggart (2001). On its homepage,[7] the party declares neutrality of Slovenia a major policy goal and indeed refuses EU accession. However, since the party received less than one percent in the elections of 2000, it is not more than a marginal organization.

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[4] http://www.prava-sns.sk/, 24.2.2003.

[5] http://www.kss.sk/program.php, 24.2.2003.

[6] Again, see http://www.kss.sk/program.php, 24.2.2003, page 8 of the program.

[7] http://www.nova-stranka.si/volitve2000/pismapodpore_s.htm, 24.2.2003.

## 3. Attitudes and parliamentary seats: dimensions of anti-EU mobilization

The parties briefly discussed in part 2 have been successful to various degrees. In four countries, namely in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, parties with strong opposition to the European Union have not been able to get into parliament at all. In Hungary and Slovenia, existing anti-EU parties have had some success at the polls and have been able to overcome electoral thresholds. However, with vote and seat percentages of around three to five percent, the MiéP and the Slovenian SNS have remained marginal political powers.

In party politics, a party's influence depends heavily on its blackmail potential which naturally rises with the percentage of parliamentary seats (see Sartori 1976). In four EU accession candidates, one or several parties with an anti-EU ideology were able to acquire between about ten and twenty percent of the vote in national parliamentary elections.

In the Czech Republic, the political home of the anti-EU forces moved from the far right to the far left of the political spectrum. In the 1992 and 1996 elections, the Republicans were able to garner the support of about 6% of the voters in 1992 and about 8% in 1996. In the early elections of 1998, the party did not manage to get over the electoral threshold and recently was only able to obtain a mere 1.0% of the votes in the 2002 parliamentary elections. In these elections, however, the Communists had a big success in gathering 18.5% of the votes and more than 20% of the seats in parliament. With these results, the KS∪M was able to consolidate its role as the most important non-reformed communist party in Central Europe – the party never fell below 10% of the vote and was able to use its blackmail potential many times, especially during the minority government of 1998 to 2002.

In Poland, the political right has not succeeded in forming stable representative structures yet. From 1993 to 1997, the right stayed out of parliament because of it extreme fragmentation which meant that the anti-EU forces within the right were not represented either. In the 1997 elections, a broad AWS coalition obtained about a third of the votes. With the ZChN, only a relatively small faction within the AWS was openly Euro-skeptic. Still, government policies towards the European Union were heavily influenced by the ruptures within the government coalition, of which the ZChN (within the AWS) formed a part (Bachmann 2001). The 2001 elections were interpreted as the "moment of populism" (Freudenstein/Czyrny 2001) when the LPR reached about 8% and *Samoobrona* even more than 10% of the vote. Both parties in today's *Sejm* make up almost 20% of the mandates and form a decisive blackmail potential against the traditionally pro-European political elites.

In Romania, parties with a reluctant position to give up state sovereignty have

been present in every parliament since the first elections in 1990. In 1992, the ruling *Democratic Front of National Salvation* – a movement later followed by the PDSR – went into a radical left-right coalition with the PRM, the PUNR and the PSM (see Ishiyama 1998). From 1992 to 1996, these three parties comprised more than 17% of the mandates; that percentage fell to about 11% after the 1996 elections because the PSM failed to surmount the electoral threshold of 3%. In 2000, the PRM was able to gain 19.5% of the vote and 24.2% of the parliamentary mandates and became the anti-EU party with the strongest blackmail potential in any parliament of a EU accession state. The party's chairman Tudor gained additional legitimacy when he gained 28.3% in the first round and 33.2% in the run-up to the presidential elections of 2000.

*Table 1*: Anti-EU attitudes and electoral success of anti-EU parties during the last years

| | *Anti-EU sentiment among population* | | | *Percentage of votes for anti-EU parties* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1997** | *2002** | *2002*** | *Next-to-last election* | *Last election* |
| *Bulgaria* | 4 | 8 | 5 | None | None |
| *Czech Republic* | 13 | 13 | 14 | SPR-RSČ: 3.9<br>KSČM: 11.0 | SPR-RSČ: 1.0<br>KSČM: 18.5 |
| *Estonia* | 14 | 18 | 16 | none | None |
| *Latvia* | 13 | 7 | 21 | none | None |
| *Lithuania* | 13 | 13 | 12 | none | None |
| *Hungary* | 9 | 8 | 5 | MiéP: 5.6 | MiéP: 4.4 |
| *Poland* | 6 | 9 | 11 | No parties with an explicit anti EU program in parliament; parts of AWS (33.8) strongly skeptical of EU | LPR: 7.9<br>Samoobrona: 10.2 |
| *Romania* | 6 | 4 | 2 | PRM: 4.5<br>PUNR: 4.7<br>PSM: 2.2 | PRM: 19.5 |
| *Slovakia* | 8 | 8 | 5 | ZRS: 1.3<br>SNS: 9.1 | KSS: 6.3<br>SNS: 3.3<br>PSNS: 3.7 |
| *Slovenia* | 18 | 7 | 14 | SNS: 3.2 | SNS: 4.4 |

* Numbers refer to percentage of the population which would vote "no" in an accession referendum. Sources: Central and Eastern Eurobarometer 1997, Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002.

** Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002. Numbers are percentages of the population which see EU membership as "a bad thing".

In Slovakia, a similar situation evolved as in Romania. After the elections of

1994, a left-right radical government with participation of the ZRS and the SNS took power. In the 1998 elections, the ZRS fell to 1.3% of the vote, but the SNS was able to increase its share of votes to 9.1%. As described above, the SNS then lost its political leadership to the PSNS. Both parties obtained about 7% of the vote, but due to the split none of them cleared the 5% electoral threshold. Instead, anti-EU votes were now represented by the Communists which gained 6.3% of the vote in 2002. Despite their relatively low presence in parliament, anti-EU forces were thus able to aquire about 13% of the vote.

In addition to the data about the parliamentary presence of anti-EU, table 1 presents some information about population attitudes towards EU membership. From various official statements, e.g. by the European Commission or national governments of accession states, we now have the general picture that in all candidate countries there are more supporters than opponents of EU accession in all countries (for example, see the Candidate country barometers on the EU Public opinion homepage).[8] Looking more closely at the polls, however, reveals quite low levels of some support in some countries, where the hypothesis of majority support can only be upheld because of the larger number of undecided persons. Especially in the Baltic states and in Malta, the success of the EU accession referendums is far from certain (Beichelt 2003).

Taking a different perspective, table 1 shows that there also is outspoken objection to EU accession in post-socialist Europe. Not counting the large numbers of those undecided (everywhere about a third of the population), considerable percentages between 11% and 21% in 2002 saw EU membership as a "bad thing". This same item was not asked in the earlier Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, but the comparison of another question – "how would you vote in an accession referendum?" – gives mores insight into the development of anti-EU sentiments. Altogether, objection to EU membership seems to be quite stable in most of the countries. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia levels of EU opposition stayed below ten percent, whereas the opposition seems to be stronger in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Lithuania (see table 1).

Major changes only took place in a few countries. In Latvia, the number who would vote "no" in a referendum fell to 7% in 2002. On the other hand, 21% of the population see EU membership as a bad thing. A solution to this puzzle could be the insecure citizen and resident status of a large part of the population: members of the Russian (and Ukrainian) minority may have well anticipated the ambiguous nature of their vote in the accession referendum. Slovenia is another case where answers on the intention of voting in a referendum and the actual evaluation of EU membership diverge.

In any case, the levels of EU opposition in public and parliament vary significantly in several countries. If we draw a symbolic line between publics and

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[8] See http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/cceb_en.htm.

party systems with less or more than 10% opposition to the European Union, we arrive at four country groups (table 2). Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovenia then could be labeled "euroenthusiast" because both on the population and the political elite level the opposition to the European Union remains marginal. On the other side, the Czech Republic stands out as a country where stable opposition to the EU has been transferred into the presence of an adequate number of "Euro-skepticist" mandates in parliament.

A third group of Poland, Romania and Slovakia is characterized by overmobilization: anti-EU political forces have had more electoral success than the distribution of anti-EU sentiments in the population implies. An explanation for this first has to bear in mind that the differences between attitudes and electoral support are obvious, but not extreme. In Poland, anti-EU forces were overrepresented only after the 2001 elections. Since Poland has not managed to overcome its growth crisis which began in the last half of the last decade, the election result can also be interpreted as a mere protest vote. Romania fits into that explanation pattern as well. The country probably has to be counted as the worst governed of all accession countries, with very limited success in the field of economic reform.

*Table 2*: Correlation of anti-EU attitudes and parliamentary presence of anti-EU parties

| | | *Presence of anti-EU parties in parliament* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Less than 10% of votes* | *More than 10% of votes* |
| *Attitudes* | *Less than 10% of population sharing anti-EU sentiments* | **Euroenthusiasm**<br>Bulgaria<br>Hungary<br>Slovenia* | <br>Poland*<br>Romania<br>Slovakia |
| | *More than 10% of population sharing anti-EU sentiments* | Estonia<br>Latvia*<br>Lithuania | **Euro-skeptism**<br>Czech Republic |

* These countries do not fall completely into one of the categories (see data in table 1).

Undermobilization of anti-EU is characteristic of the fourth group. In all three Baltic states, relatively high levels of Euro-skeptic attitudes do not correspond with the existence anti-EU parties. As seen above, the Baltic states are (with Bulgaria) those states where EU opposition is virtually non-existent within the political elites. As already briefly mentioned, the high distribution of anti-EU attitudes is often explained with the separate attitude profile of the ethnic mi-

norities in the Baltic states.[9] This argument implies that the members of the Russian (including the Russianized Ukrainian) minority is hostile to EU enlargement because it bears several disadvantages. For example, the introduction of a visa regime will separate the Russians from their home country, and doing business with Russian partners will become much more cost-intensive once the Common Market is established in the Baltic states. Another explanation recently presented is the economic crisis and the fast speed of accession negotiations overtaxing the public's capability to cope with political and economic changes (Juchler 2002: 927).

Turning to possible explanations of the mismatch of attitude and political mobilization, we have to take into account that position towards the EU represents the issue level, not the cleavage level. Even if EU accession has broad consequences for the candidate countries, the issue is not important enough to structure party competition on its own. That means that the EU issue is likely to be relevant in several cleavages. Therefore, a correspondance of attitudes and political mobilization cannot be expected from the perspective of the cleavage model. In that sense, the overmobilization of anti-EU forces in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, and their undermobilization in the Baltic states seems to go back to a dominance of issues in Central European party politics (Beyme 1997: 51).

How, then, is the EU issue anchored in the cleavage system? Paul Lewis has made the suggestion to look at EU issues as imbedded in a wider set of Euro-Atlantic structures (cited after Szczerbiak/Taggart 2000: 11). A second hypothesis is that the European Union with its complex structures is a very good symbol for the alienation of citizens from political structures. Seen in this context, voting for anti-EU parties could express the will for less complex structures of reliability in politics. Third, because of its multi-dimensional character attitudes towards the EU may have different faces. For example, peasants may be much more worried about accession consequences in agrarian policy than about enlargement as a whole. Clever politicians can find ways of exploiting policy Euro-skepticism even if parts of the electorate would not see themselves as strong EU opponents. In any case, all these hypotheses could explain why the level of EU opposition in attitudes may well be lower than the presence of anti-EU forces in parliament.

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[9] Unfortunately, I am not aware of any scholarly works supporting this assumption. The hypothesis cited here is the one usually brought up by opinion leaders in the Baltics as I could observe in two stays in Tallinn (1999) and Vilnius (2003). The interpretation of the Eurobarometer data is complicated by the fact that in Estonia all permanent residents were included into the sample whereas in Latvia the polls were limited to citizens (see Annex of Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2001: 88 at http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/cceb_en.htm).

## 4. Interpreting anti-EU mobilization in accession countries: protest against transnationalism and socio-economic modernization

In section 3, some preliminary remarks have been made about the reasons for incompatible levels of anti-EU mobilization in the public sphere and on the (parliamentary) elite level. Now, these hypotheses shall be worked into a broader interpretative frame for the emergence of political forces which have included anti-EU positions in their agendas.

If we agree that the European Union represents an issue in party politics rather than a cleavage, we have to investigate the relationship of the EU issue to the main conflicts structuring party competition. That means national party systems have to be used as the starting point of analysis. Several suggestions have been made how to conceptualize the structure of the party systems of post-socialist Europe. The traditional approach of dealing with cleavages (Lipset/Rokkan 1967) has been used frequently. For example, Klaus von Beyme identified eight cleavages in post-socialist Europe, each of them able to explain the emergence of some parties in the first years of democratization and consolidation (Beyme 1994; Beyme 1997). Another approach, among others used by Herbert Kitschelt, analyses the post-socialist party systems via historical legacies and types of party organization (Kitschelt 1995). In any case, with respect also to the party systems of post-socialist Europe, conflicts within the political systems are seen as main references of party competition.

I want to argue that there are two types of conflict in which the European Union issue plays a major role. The first is placed on the socio-cultural "national-cosmopolitan divide" in which we have to distinguish between nationalist and authoritarian attitudes on the one side and cosmopolitan and social-libertarian orientations on the other side (Kitschelt u.a. 1999: 67). Those members of societies which feel threatened by Western individualism may turn to their national communities as authorities to hold up or slow down the scope of societal change. The European Union is both symbolically and in real a threat to the orientation patterns of post-socialist societies: it stands for the free movement of ideas possibly endangering socio-cultural traditions within a transnational Europe.

The second conflict with strong interdependance to the European Union is the socio-economic divide. In post-socialist Europe, that divide cannot be limited to the conflict market liberalism versus social protectionism that we know from West European societies. In the aftermath of the fall of socialism, the conflict (in the accession countries) also contains a dynamic element. The speed of transition to a market economy has been, and partly still is, the most basic socio-economic conflict in post-socialist party systems (Beichelt 2001: 190-212). Again, the idea of free trade rooted in the European integration process makes the European Union a major issue in that conflict. Those forces wanting

to reach a slow transition to market liberalism can hardly be fond of EU accession.

*Table 3*: Anti-EU parties in post-socialist EU accession countries and time of presence in parliament

| | *Nationalist* | *Post-Communist* |
|---|---|---|
| *Bulgaria* | None | None |
| *Czech Republic* | Republicans (SPR-RS), 1992-1998 | Communist Party (KSČM), since 1992 |
| *Estonia* | None | None |
| *Hungary* | Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP), 1998-2002 | None |
| *Latvia* | None | None |
| *Lithuania* | None | None |
| *Poland* | Christian National Union (ZChN) as a part of Electoral Action Solidarność (AWS), 1997-2001<br>Samoobrona, since 2001<br>League of Polish Families (LPR), since 2001 | None |
| *Romania* | Party of National Unity (PUNR), 1990-2000<br>Party of Greater Romania (PRM), since 1992 | Socialist Worker's Party (PSM), 1992-1996 |
| *Slovakia* | Slovak National Party (SNS), 1990-2002 | Worker's Union of Slovakia (ZRS), 1994-1998<br>Communist Party (KSS), since 2002 |
| *Slovenia* | Slovenian National Party (SNS), since 1992 | None |

When parties relate to the EU issue in a rejectionist sense, it is most likely that two party families will play a major role. On the socio-cultural cleavage, nationalist parties will find many areas of friction with the idea and conduct of European integration. On the socio-economic cleavage, any party opposing the ideology of market democracy have to be sceptic of EU integration. The party family mainly representing this position is the post-communist one. In table 3, the parties discussed in section 2 are classified accordingly. The Czech SPR-RSČ, the Hungarian MiéP, the Polish ZChN, *Samoobrona*, and LPR, the Romanian PUNR and PRM, and both the Slovakian and Slovenian SNS belong to the party family of nationalist parties. In turn, the Czech KSČM, the Romanian

PSM, and the Slovak ZRS and KSS are post-communist parties.

*4.1. Nationalist parties and EU opposition*

Inhowfar is the national-cosmopolitain divide linked to the issue of European integration? Nationalist parties (and their voters) adhere to a romantic vision of the nation or, as Kitschelt and others formulate, to a "communitarian conception of identity" (Kitschelt u.a. 1999: 67). In doing this, they always refer to "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), that is to an object which came into being through the construction of its members. The building up of a national community often went along with violence, which makes the evaluation of national symbols – e.g. (lost) territories, (hostile) population groups, (heroic) persons, (anti occupation) institutions – an important matter.

In opposition to many cases of Western nation-building, most Central European nations did not emerge in conjunction with a bourgeois revolution, a strong liberal movement or the establishment of liberal democracy. The Central European type of nation cannot be characterized as a political nation, but as an ethnic nation although it contains also elements of a cultural nation (the distinction of nation types goes back to Meinecke 1908; see Minkenberg/Beichelt 2001). Bearing this mind, we can identify various issues on the nationalist agenda which are sensitive to the European Union:

- *Territory*: Many post-socialist nations can be characterized by a "triadic" configuration of nations between nation-building processes, the existence of national minorities within the new states, and the existence of "external homelands" (Brubaker 1997). In Hungary, the Czech and Slovak republics, nationalist forces may claim that the shape of today's states does not correspond to the size it historically should be. Membership in the EU implies mutual consent of all members that existing borders are not questioned. Therefore, the demands of the Czech SPR-RS∪ and KS∪M of a reunification of Chechoslovakia (Kipke 2002: 74-75) are thwarted by EU accession.
- *Minorities*: The vision of a national community mostly comprises ethnically homogeneous adherence. As shown extensively (Brubaker 1997; Hobsbawm 1998: chapter 3), historical developments in the 20th century have turned Central and Southeastern Europe into an ethnically heterogeneous region. As a consequence, the myth of a homogeneous nation state is obsolete in many countries. In Romania and Slovakia, large Hungarian minorities have to be included politically, socially, and economically. The Euroepan Union, on the other side, has made minority inclusion one of the Copenhagen criteria (see, among others, Kreile 2002). With that respect, EU policy is in full contradiction with the

aims of nationalist forces.

- *Democracy*: In Central Europe, the main period of national independence was between the World Wars. Most states started with democracy around 1918/1920, but turned into autocratic regimes within a few years. In Hungary and Poland, but also in the Baltics, the autocratic leaders embodied the fight against surrounding hostile powers.[10] In many accession countries, references to the achievement of independence have an autocratic touch. Although the democracy deficit within the European Union is largely discussed, the organization of course consists of consolidated democratic nation states. The valuation of symbolic "national heroes" by nationalist forces is thus in contradiction to the impetus of the EU mainstream of condemning any form of autocratic rule.
- *Institutions*: In most accession states, democratization has taken place from within. Not exterior powers like in West Germany or Italy, but national elites and the population have fought for democracy by insisting on the right of national self-determination within an undivided Europe (Rupnik 1990). The process of liberalization often culminated in establishing a national assembly or parliament which took over power from the institutions of the autocratic regime. Therefore, national parliaments are an important part of the idea of self-determination. European integration, however, means the partial dissolution of parliamentary sovereignty to a supranational institutional system. Almost all nationalist parties in post-socialist Europe therefore tend to see European integration as a betrayal of the ideals of post-communist democratization.

Altogether, nationalist forces have many reasons to feel threatened by European integration and therefore see strong incentives to enrich their nationalist ideology by Euro-skeptic elements. The European Union is both symbolically and in reality a threat to the orientation patterns of post-socialist societies: it stands for the free movement of ideas possibly endangering socio-cultural traditions within a transnational Europe. Therefore, nationalist parties rather reject the whole idea of European integration. They may be additionally bothered by certain issues as abortion or the role of religion in public life, but mainly the underlying principles of European integration are incompatible with the pursuit of the political aims nationalists.

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[10] In Poland, national independence was largely ascribed to war hero Marshal Jozef Pi≥sudski. In Hungary, Guyla Gombos and Admiral Horty became popular because of their strong rejection of the Treaty of Trianon.

*4.2. Post-communist parties and EU opposition*

The term post-communism is used in a variety of meanings: historical, ideological, geographic. In its broadest meaning post-communism marks an approach by which most social phenomena in the countries of the former Soviet bloc are seen as influenced by the communist past (Sakwa 1999). Specifically, the "legacies" of leninism in this view constitute a bundle of obstacles in the development of democracy and full-fledged market liberalism (Jowitt 1992).

With respect to party families, however, the term is not used in this broad sense. In the earlier stages of party system analysis, post-communist parties simply were the successor parties of the old central communist organizations (Kitschelt 1995). With the consolidation of democracy and the party systems, it became clear that the successor parties developed into different directions. In Eastern Europe, the Communist parties largely did not distance themselves from leninist-marxist ideology. On the other side, successor parties in almost all Central European countries underwent a radical change and turned into social-democratic parties (Lewis 2000: 21-59). With some delay, this also concerns the successor parties in Bulgaria and Romania (Nève 2002b).

In our context, the post-communist party family is formed by a third group, namely those parties with an orthodox leninist-marxist ideology which exist in the EU accession states. Because of the ideological transformation of the historic successor parties, most of these parties do not have historic roots in the socialist period. Ideologically, however, they are closely related to the post-communist parties of Eastern Europe. They oppose the extension of market liberalism in many, if not in all sectors of the economy. They have a tendency to question the border changes which have taken place after 1989/1991. And, last but not least, they do only partly support democracy as the best political regime (Ishiyama 1999; Ishiyama 2001). All of these programmatic elements interfer with EU accession:

- *Economic competition*: Not all members of the post-communist party family are completely hostile to market economy. However, they oppose economic competition in various fields. First, they are interested in keeping certain "strategic" sectors in the hand of the state. These comprise transport, energy, telecommunication, in short all sectors where infrastructure is concerned. For example, the Slovak KSS states in its program that the state should own at least 50% of the stakes in these areas.[11] It can easily be seen from the structure of the European Commission that most of these matters have a European dimension in today's Europe. Moreover, the general development of European internal market policy is liberalization and the extension of competition to

[11] See party program at http://www.kss.sk/program.php.

formerly protected sectors. Therefore, post-communist parties can only dislike the extension of the European market to post-socialist Europe.

- *Ownership of production means*: Closely related is the question of ownership in the economic system. Of course, when state ownership is prefered in some sectors private ownership – one of the foundations of market economy – is refused. Additionally, though, all forms of non-national ownership are seen with special suspicion by post-communist parties. For example, the KSČM in its program expresses mistrust of "the imperial character of the capitalist concept of globalization".[12] Again, the structure of the internal market and its freedoms for capital and labour do not match well with that position. When we take into consideration that Western Europe is much wealthier than the enlargement area, it is clear that many asymmetric opportunities of foreign investment exist – another point for post-communist parties to reject EU accession.

Still, post-communist parties do not reject the whole idea of European integration to the same extent as nationalist parties. Ideologically, the preference for a different economic system than that of the internal market is obvious. Pragmatically, however, also post-communist forces have to admit that funding from Brussels will help to smoothen the tough social consequences of the transformation period. Consequently, the Czech KSČM as well as the Slovak KSS have a role for the European Union in ensuring social welfare. Thus, both parties have a dialectic approach towards EU accession: the ideational rejection may be outweighed by advantageous prospects if only the advantages to be expected are great enough. Since the accession agreements contain several asymmetrical elements (i.e. in the form of transitional periods), the demands of equal levels of social welfare, as formulated in the program of the KSS, can also be seen as deliberate arguments to postpone EU accession.

Another area where outright rejection of the EU is not as strong among post-communists as among nationalists is the perception of democracy. Of course, traditional marxism does not favor democracy because (in the ideology's words) its presents a façade for the real distribution of power which in capitalist societies is always in favor of the capital owners. However, the post-communist parties of Central Europe do not follow that orthodox doctrine. Both the Czech and Slovak *Communists* opt for democracy and pluralism. Although largely marginalized in parliament, the Czech KSČM helped saving the state budget several time and thus can be characterized as a partly cooperative opposition. In a way, the existing post-communist parties thus follow the path of "eurocommunism" (Timmermann 1978), that is the striving for a moderate and democratic form of socialism. Post-communist parties thus do not question

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[12] See the party homepage at http://www.kscm.cz/showeng.php?english_congress1aj.htm.

the fact that democracy is the proper regime in today's Europe but rather hint at the democratic deficits of the existing Union; one of them being that the states of post-socialist Europe are not met on equal terms in the European institutions.

Altogether, due to the contradictory nature of its programs, the anti-EU position of post-communist parties is not as consequent as in the case of nationalist parties. Still, if parties officially do not reject EU membership as such, they still are effect anti-EU parties as long as they object to "membership of the EU in any form which will ever realistically be on offer" (Henderson 2001: 22).

## 5. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I treated anti-EU mobilization in post-socialist EU accession states as a relevant phenomenon both on the attitude and parliamentary level. I have argued that Euro-skepticism is not an isolated phenomenon but has to be interpreted as an issue in party competition which is rooted in socio-cultural and socio-economic conflict. Two party families are bound to rely heavily on the EU issue in their efforts to attract voters: nationalist and post-communist parties. In fact, strong Euro-skepticism is present only in parties of that type. Whereas nationalist forces tend to reject the whole idea of integration for ideological reasons, post-communist forces throw an eye on the redistributive effect of Brussels' structural funds and therefore are somewhat contradictory as to the scope of EU rejection.

Three matters have not been treated due to the space restriction but deserve a short note. First, empirically the programs and rhetorics of nationalist and post-communist parties are not far apart in the region. The phenomenon of "strange bedfellowship" of radical left and right wing forces in the region has been discussed for some time (Ishiyama 1998; Kemp 1999). As a consequence, some of the anti-EU argumentation in one camp is taken over in the other. For example, both nationalists and post-communists are suspicious of foreigners getting even greater access to the national economies or receiving the right to own land on the enlargement territory. This does not spoil the argument that anti-EU mobilization rests on the ideology of two different party families, but highlights the common ideological basis of two party families which are much further apart in Western Europe.

Second, the identification of conflicts which are able to integrate the EU issue leaves open the question under which circumstances the EU issue is able to mobilize nationalist or post-communist voters. To get a better understanding in this respect, an inquiry into the opportunity structures of anti-EU forces needs to be undertaken. The incentives provided by "consistent (...) dimensions of the political environment" (Tarrow 1994: 85) are of a complex nature since they include, among others, the circumstances of nation building, the mode of

democratization, and the level of "transformation costs" (Minkenberg/Beichelt 2001). Additionally, the distribution of anti-EU parties "cannot be understood outside the context of the party system" (Sitter 2002: 23). Thus, if we want to explain the intensity of EU rejection in the parliaments of post-socialist Europe, we have to take into account not only party ideology (as has been done in this paper), but also history and characteristics of national party systems.

Third, despite the fuss about anti-EU mobilization, notably in those countries with relatively strong Euro-skeptic parties opinion polls at the moment indicate no real danger for the EU referenda. In all likelihood, EU accession will take place in countries like the Czech Republic or Poland in 2004. What will happen to anti-EU politics after that? The development of nationalist parties in the accession process indicates already now a certain turn to more moderate positions. For example, the Hungarian MiéP in september 2000 signed a formal six-party declaration expressing support for EU accession (Batory 2001: 15), and the Slovak SNS had to face internal struggle because of a more EU-friendly policy. Thus, possible positive effects of EU enlargement will probably absorb some support for anti-EU positions. On the other hand, the remaining nationalist and post-communist forces will incorporate themselves into a growing all-European group of parties employing any kind of protest as a successful formula for electoral success (Evans/Ivaldi 2002; Sitter 2002).

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