LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING: EXPLAINING EUROSCEPTICISM IN CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPE

by

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In this dissertation I ask: What accounts for the emergence and electoral performance of Eurosceptic political parties in the domestic party systems of Central and East Europe (CEE)? Related to this question, I explore how the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism differ from those of genuine, value-based Euroscepticism in CEE. In explaining what drives political parties to adopt a Eurosceptic agenda, two potential causal factors can be identified. Eurosceptic parties can try to capture genuine anti-EU sentiments among voters *or* they can aim to strategically challenge mainstream political elites on a core issue – EU accession - that had grown to define mainstream policies. In the second case, opposition to the EU serves only as a signal to voters and is instrumental in capturing the segments of the population that have become dissatisfied with mainstream governments.

Yet, a perception of "sameness" of the mainstream political parties does not automatically need to result in a protest vote. If citizens felt that the core political parties are performing satisfactorily, their convergence on a variety of issues might not have resulted in disenchantment with the political process. In Central and East Europe, however, mainstream political elites have continuously been charged with engaging in corrupt and dishonest behavior with disastrous consequences for the political system. Perceptions of widespread political corruption can thus serve as a trigger which, coupled with viewing mainstream parties as "all the

same", intensifies the likelihood that voters would choose a Eurosceptic party as a form of electoral protest.

I test my theory through a combination of statistical analysis and comparative case studies. I use an original random representative survey conducted in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic to test this dissertation's individual level hypotheses. At the country level, I use a longitudinal analysis of election results from all countries in Central and East Europe. Finally, I conduct in-depth case studies of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Estonia. Results support the main propositions of this study and confirm that perceptions of mainstream party similarity and political corruption are associated with a Eurosceptic vote.

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I ask: *What accounts for the emergence and electoral performance of Eurosceptic political parties in the domestic party systems of Central and East Europe (CEE)*? Related to this question, I explore *how the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism differ from those of genuine, ideology-based Euroscepticism in CEE*. In 2002 approximately 21% of parties participating in government had a negative position on European integration and in 2006 the number was about 25%. For those two time points, about 16% of governing parties held a skeptical view of European integration in Western Europe in 2002 and about 18% in 2006.[1]

While these differences between the new and the old member states are not substantial, they become more unusual when one compares the overall attitudes towards the European Union displayed by public opinion. In 2002, for example, more than 6 out of 10 people (62%) in the candidate countries tended to trust the EU – a number much higher than the average 30% satisfaction with domestic institutions across Central and East Europe. Trust in the European Union in the West was at an average of 46%.[2] In the same year, every 6 out of 10 people in the EU-15 were satisfied with the way democracy works in their country while satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU averaged approximately 47%. Eurosceptics, therefore, tend to

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[1] Liesbet Hooghe, Ryan Bakker, Anna Brigevich, Catherine de Vries, Erica Edwards, Gary Marks, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen (2008), "Reliability and Validity of Measuring Party Positions: The Chapel Hill Expert Surveys of 2002 and 2006", unpublished ms

[2] Standard Eurobarometer 57 and 58 (Spring and Autumn 2002) and Candidates Eurobarometer 2002.

do better and grow at a faster rate in Central and East Europe despite the fact that East Europeans on average trust the EU more than their West European counterparts.

In addition, many Eurosceptic parties, while not in the governing coalition, have gained access to national parliaments across CEE and have established themselves as an oppositional force. Parties with moderate or high Eurosceptic agenda gained 50% of the vote in Hungary, 46% in Poland, 31% in the Czech Republic in the last parliamentary election. At the same time, there are important regional differences present with Eurosceptic parties gaining only about 20% of the vote in Estonia and only 6% of the vote share in Slovenia. Almost all of the Eurosceptic parties in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia have a clear populist basis as well, and virtually every country in the region has had at least one strong populist party in recent elections, thus adding to the spread of protest politics.

A paradox, however, arises from the fact that the distribution of Eurosceptic parties in a country does not always mirror the distribution of public opinion. Instances where public opinion polls reveal a population that expresses significant disapproval of European integration or EU membership also exhibit few or weak Eurosceptic parties in the political system (e.g. Estonia), and vice versa (e.g. Poland). This raises two important questions: first, if it is not the public attitudes towards European integration that explain the electoral success (or lack thereof) of these political parties, what does? And second, if Eurosceptic parties are gaining support for reasons unrelated to their opinions on Europe, then why engage the Eurosceptic dimension?

In my dissertation I explore these questions through a cross-national and individual-level analysis of the determinants of Euroscepticism, and protest politics in general, in the political systems of Central and East European countries. My project will contribute to the growing literature on political parties and electoral behavior in Central and East Europe and, more

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specifically, to the study of Euroscepticism and populism in the region. In addition, by looking at the effect of the EU on CEE party systems, this study will add to our understanding of the international effects on domestic politics. The idea that Europeanization has affected the nature of party systems in the candidate states supplements current Europeanization studies by exploring an issue area - party politics - which is rarely considered susceptible to international effects and thus often excluded from studies of Europeanization. This omission needs to be addressed in order to fully grasp the range of EU effects in the societies of candidate states.

1.1 THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

In this dissertation I argue that Euroscepticism in Central and East Europe is a strategic response to various degrees of mainstream party convergence and its electoral success is largely due to the disenchantment of the population with *domestic* elites and political processes rather than the EU per se. Political parties in the new member states adopt a Eurosceptic agenda as a means of differentiating themselves from the mainstream consensus and offering voters an electoral alternative. Citizens who choose these parties do so largely as a form of protest against what they see as the hollow mainstream party competition and the lack of choice on substantive issues. Many of these Eurosceptic parties lack clearly defined and stable positions on substantive issues but their main appeal consists of opposing the mainstream establishment. Picking on the EU issue often represents a shortcut to get their message of protest politics across to the voters.

In explaining what drives political parties to adopt a Eurosceptic agenda, two potential causal factors can be identified. Eurosceptic parties can try to capture genuine anti-EU sentiments among voters *or* they can aim to strategically challenge mainstream political elites on

the core issue – EU accession - that had grown to define mainstream policies. In the second case, opposition to the EU serves only as a signal to voters and is instrumental in capturing the segments of the population that have become dissatisfied with mainstream governments. The classic way to study Euroscepticism generally assumes the first, while in my project I argue that the second scenario would better fit the empirical reality in Central and East Europe and reconcile the paradoxes surrounding the success of these anti-EU parties in a largely pro-EU population.

Yet, a perception of "sameness" of the mainstream political parties does not automatically need to result in a protest vote. If citizens felt that the core political parties are performing satisfactorily, their convergence on a variety of issues might not have resulted in disenchantment with the political process. In Central and East Europe, however, mainstream political elites have continuously been charged with engaging in corrupt and dishonest behavior with disastrous consequences for the political system. Perceptions of widespread political corruption can thus serve as a trigger which, coupled with viewing mainstream parties as "all the same", intensifies the likelihood that voters would choose a Eurosceptic party as a form of electoral protest.

For the sake of capturing this larger sense of disenchantment with the mainstream elite, Eurosceptic parties in CEE often have heavy populist undertones in their rhetoric and utilize the corruption issue to their benefit. Thus, I will analyze Eurosceptic parties as a subset of the larger category of protest parties and attempt to disentangle the link between populism and Euroscepticism. According to my argument, the domestic electoral success of protest parties that mix Euroscepticism with populism is largely due to the populist anti-elite and anti-corruption element in them rather than their anti-EU positions.

1.2   OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of five additional chapters. In the current chapter I have presented the research question and briefly outlined my theory. In Chapter 2 I discuss the existing literature on Euroscepticism, populism and Europeanization in more detail and explain how my study complements and expands previous research.

In Chapter 3 I present my theory of the sources and determinants of Euroscepticism in Central and East Europe. I begin with a discussion on the many conceptions of Euroscepticism and populism and the link between the two. The definitional problem with such broad concepts requires a more in-depth explanation of the particular framework utilized in this dissertation. Next, I lay out my theory in greater detail and derive testable hypotheses about the manifestations of types of Euroscepticism in the region under study.

Chapter 4 presents the results of a series of statistical tests of the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 3. The first part of the chapter consists of an individual-level analysis of attitudes and voting behavior of citizens from the region. I use original surveys conducted in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic for the purposes of this project. The second part of the chapter consists of a country-level analysis of Euroscepticism's determinants in the ten countries of Central and East Europe that joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007. I begin by discussing the coding and operationalization procedures, followed by a description of the models specification. Finally, I present the results of these tests and discuss their implications for the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 presents in-depth comparative case studies of the development of Euroscepticism in three countries from the sample under consideration. This chapter aims to supplement the findings from the statistical tests with more contextual and historical information and thus clarify the causal mechanisms linking the EU to CEE political parties and ultimately

voters. The cases analyzed include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Estonia. These three countries display variation in terms of the relationship between party based and public Euroscepticism. While the Czech Republic has traditionally contained strong strands of Euroscepticism in its party system, its public is much more favorable to the EU. The opposite is the case in Estonia which is often regarded as the most Eurosceptic CEE country in terms of popular attitudes, yet Eurosceptic political parties are barely in existence. Finally, Bulgaria presents a case where for a long time period both party-based and public-based Euroscepticism was relatively low, only to become more prominent in recent elections.

The last chapter concludes the dissertation with a summary of the theory and empirical findings and a discussion of their implications for both academic research and policy makers. I also discuss the limitations of this study and the possible ways in which the project can be extended in the future in order to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the phenomena in question.

2.0   OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

This dissertation explores the determinants of Euroscepticism in Central and East Europe and attempts to disentangle the relationship between Euroscepticism and populism. The current chapter provides the theoretical context within which the current study is situated and outlines the gaps in the literature that chapter 3 will subsequently address.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of the prior work on Euroscepticism and populism in the region. The Eurosceptic research agenda has grown substantially in recent years but different subsets of it do not always speak to each other. Most studies focus exclusive on either party-based or public Euroscepticism without investigating the link between the two. The necessity to explore this link in more detail arises from the paradox mentioned earlier where levels of party-based and population based Euroscepticism do not overlap in any given country. The theory developed in the next chapter attempts to rectify this omission and provide the missing link between people, parties and the European issue in the new member states.

Next, the chapter reviews the existing literature on the Europeanization of party politics in the new member states and outlines how this study supplements and extends the research agenda. There exists a near universal agreement among Europeanization scholars that Europe has had little *direct* impact on the party systems, party competition and the political parties themselves in the new member states.   While previous work acknowledges that *indirect* effects are likely to be present, there has been little research into their electoral implications. The theory

presented in this study illustrates how it is the consequences of Europeanization's indirect effects on party systems that are partially responsible for electoral outcomes in Central and East Europe.

2.1   THE EUROSCEPTIC AND POPULIST PARADOX IN CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPE

Studies of Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe have either focused on accounting for the type and electoral strength of party-based Euroscepticism (Marks and Wilson, 2000; Kopecky and Mudde, 2002) or on exploring the individual-level determinants of Eurosceptic attitudes among ordinary citizens. Most research on party Euroscepticism aims to build typologies of Eurosceptic parties and to answer the questions of when and why a political party adopts a Eurosceptic agenda. The seminal work of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) laid the foundation for this research agenda by proposing a dichotomy between 'hard' and 'soft' party Euroscepticism. Hard Eurosceptics are distinguished by an "outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one's country joining or remaining a member of the EU" (p.3) while the soft variation of the sentiment involves only "contingent or qualified opposition to European integration" (p.4).

This typology has been widely used in further studies, but it has not remained without its critics. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) propose an alternative to the hard-soft Euroscepticism divide. They apply Easton's (1964) concept of diffuse and specific system support to the European Union and arrive at four types of Eurosceptics – the Euroenthusiasts who support both the idea and practice of European integration, the Eurorejects who do not support either of the two; the Eurosceptics who support the general idea of European integration but disagree with the

general practice of integration and the Euro pragmatists who are against the idea of European integration but support the practice of it. Vasilopoulou (2009) takes the categorization one step further by distinguishing between parties on the basis of three criteria – the principle, practice and future of European integration. She arrives at three main categories – rejecting Euroscepticism is practiced by parties "that are wholeheartedly against all aspects of European integration" (p.7); conditional Euroscepticism refers to parties that accept the principle of European integration, but are skeptical of the current practice of integration and any future extensions of EU level policy-making; compromising Euroscepticism is practiced by parties who accept the principle and current practice of European integration but oppose any future political integration.

Approaching the definitional issue from a different angle, another set of studies examines which general party families are more likely to subsume the Eurosceptic brand. In this case Euroscepticism is seen as one manifestation of a general political ideology. Most studies locate party Euroscepticism at the extremes of political life. Ray (2007) concludes that Euroscepticism, with a few exceptions, is "still a distinctly marginal phenomenon, rarely encountered in the political mainstream" (p. 170). Similarly, De Vries and Edwards (2009) provide evidence that "Eurosceptic cues are found at both extremes of the political spectrum but for different reasons" (p. 22). Other scholars agree that Euroscepticism is a fringe phenomenon but tend to locate Eurosceptic parties predominantly on the right of the political system (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001; Henderson, 2002). Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2006) look at the nature of the entire party system instead and propose that party systems where competition is structured at programmatic rather than clientelistic competition "are more likely to be polarized on integration and enlargement" since programmatic parties are generally based upon values.

Markowski and Tucker (2010), on the other hand, investigate party Euroscepticism in Poland and argue that Eurosceptic parties emerge naturally whenever a portion of the electorate is underrepresented. This conception of party-based Euroscepticism as a response to pre-existing Eurosceptic sentiments in the population, however, fails to explain the disjuncture between party-level and public Euroscepticism. A parallel debate within the Euroscepticism literature focuses around the question of whether party Euroscepticism is the result of ideology or strategy. Some authors contend that ideology plays a dominant part in determining parties' positioning on the European issue (Taggart, 1998; Kopecky and Mudde, 2002) while others perceive Euroscepticism as largely a strategic tool used by parties for short-term electoral goals (Mikkel and Kasekamp, 2008; Vermeersch, 2008; Sitter, 2001; Neumayer, 2008). Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008) sum up and clarify the conceptual underpinnings of this debate by theorizing that parties are likely to have broad underlying positions on European integration but whether they choose to use the issue "as an element of inter-party competition and how much prominence they give to it is, on the other hand, determined by a combination of electoral (strategic) and (coalition) tactical factors" (p. 257). This approach allows for greater conceptual clarity, although, of course it is often difficult to empirically distinguish a party's underlying (ideological) position from the short-term electoral uses of Euroscepticism.

The strategy vs. ideology debate also fails to take into account the disconnect mentioned earlier between party-level and public Euroscepticism. If strategy is indeed the driving force of Euroscepticism, for reasons of electoral appeal, then we would expect to see more parties using the Eurosceptic label in countries with documented large portions of Eurosceptic electorate, such as Estonia. If, on the other hand, the underlying ideology of a party was the key determinant, then we would observe relative consistency over time. Moreover, the type of political parties that

have gained ground in a lot of CEE countries in recent years are largely devoid of value-based, programmatic content and rely on populist messages and charismatic leaders. The theory developed in the next chapter will explain how Euroscepticism is indeed primarily used as a domestic electoral strategy but for rather different reasons than capturing an underrepresented Eurosceptic segment of the population.

2.1.1 The Determinants of Mass Level Euroscepticism

As the popular consensus on accession was partially weakened with approaching EU membership of the Central and East European countries, more attention began to also be devoted to exploring the nature and determinants of population-based Euroscepticism and attitudes towards EU membership. Much like the original literature on Euroscepticism developed from Western Europe, studies in the then candidate member states revolved around exploring the significance of three sets of factors: utilitarian, cultural and political. Utilitarian considerations are often found to drive some of the variation in support for the EU among citizens (de Vries and van Kersbergen, 2007; McLaren, 2006). Much attention has also been devoted to explanations stemming from cultural predispositions and identification with either Europe or the nation-state (Bruter, 2008; Wessels, 2007; Vetik et. al, 2006). Recent studies have shown that both utilitarian and identity-based considerations are major determinants of support for the EU (Hooghe, Huo and Marks, 2007; Luedke, 2005; De Vries, Steenbergen and Edwards, 2007). A third strand of research which is of particular interest to this project focuses on political factors – such as the assessment of the domestic political system and/or EU level institutions.

Recent studies of CEE voting behavior have begun to empirically explore the link between views of the domestic political system and Eurosceptic voting preferences. Jasiewicz

(2004) finds that an anti-EU vote in the Polish accession referendum was associated much more with a perception that "things are going in the wrong direction" domestically rather than with structural socio-economic factors or cultural predispositions. In a later piece in 2008, he looks at the nature of Polish populism and argues that the major contributing factors to the surge of populism in the country are the failed government policies, the sense of economic and social crisis and the corruption scandals plaguing politicians. Putting the conclusions from these two studies together, it seems that both the anti-EU vote and the populist vote a few years later were caused by similar factors having to do with perceptions about domestic problems. This helps illustrate the close overlap between Euroscepticism and populism in the region and the tendency of the populist Eurosceptics to gain votes by capitalizing on disenchantment with the domestic political system.

Of course, it is fully possible that the majority of people who voted against EU membership in the Polish referendum perceive membership as part of the reasons why "thing are going in the wrong direction" domestically. Alternatively, they may be voters who either don't care much about membership one way or the other, or they realize from preliminary polls that the referendum is about to pass in any case, so they vote "no" in order to 'punish' domestic governments for their perceived inadequacies in handling the country's problems. It is the relative importance of each of these seemingly similar sentiments that this study will attempt to disentangle in order to be able to evaluate whether the anti-EU votes are mostly due to underlying Eurosceptic attitudes among the population or to domestic considerations.

Moreover, if the failure of specific government policies is one of the primary sources of popular discontent, why aren't mainstream oppositional parties succeeding electorally rather than the protest-based parties? The perception that mainstream parties, whether governing or

oppositional, are too similar can provide the missing link in the causal process. When coupled with widespread corruption perceptions, it leaves citizens with "a feeling of having been betrayed by the politicians" and leads them into the domain of protest politics as a "quest for a new purity" (Tismaneanu, 2007).

Perceptions of domestic governments and political actors have been found to matter in the Baltic states as well. Mikkel and Pridham (2004) argue that "public opinion on the European issue tended to be related to the role and popularity of the government" during the Latvian and Estonian accession referendums. Vetik (2003) finds through an examination of Estonian public opinion that a decreased trust in national institutions leads to a greater degree of Euroscepticism. McLaren (2007) finds the same relationship EU-wide. However, the idea that trust in domestic institutions affects levels of support for the EU has not remained uncontested. Lust (2006) argues that such relatively fixed characteristics as income and ethnicity predict the anti-EU vote better than trust in government. Ilonszki (2009), on the other hand, contends that "the more critical respondents are about their national polity, the more positive they seem to be about strengthening the unification process, at least in the CEE context".

Moreover, studies of public opinion sometimes produce conflicting findings due to the two distinctive ways they measure "public" Euroscepticism. While the majority of studies use responses to survey questions about EU support as a dependent variable, others look at the vote gains of Eurosceptic political parties. Underlying attitudes, however, do not automatically translate into voting preferences as factors like salience and strategic use of the EU issue by voters can create a disjuncture. Voters, for whom the EU issue is not that salient, for example, may use a seemingly anti-EU vote as a punishment strategy for mainstream elites with which they are dissatisfied. This disjuncture is best exemplified by the paradoxes reported continuously

across the region regarding the number and strength of Eurosceptic parties and the distribution of public opinion on the issue of integration.

Linking the two levels of analysis is a difficult empirical task since the area of overlap between them does not seem large enough, but initial attempts have been made to uncover some patterns and provide explanations for the discrepancies found between population-based levels of Euroscepticism and the number and strength of Eurosceptic political parties (Linden and Pohlman, 2003; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004; Bielasiak, 2004). Findings, however, have so far been inconclusive and have focused more on the question of why parties adopt an Eurosceptic agenda. Most authors agree that the Eurosceptic brand is used strategically by parties but a causal mechanism that accounts for *both* the motivation of voters to choose these parties *and* the electoral disjuncture between strength of Euroscepticism at the party and mass levels remains missing.

2.1.2   The Manifestations of Populism in Central and East Europe

Populism, much like Euroscepticism, is a contested concept. Definitions of populism have often been criticized as being so broad they can include anything or so specific that you need a separate category for each case. Taggart (2000, 2002) offers a set of core characteristics that can help us distinguish populist movements. First, populists are inherently hostile to representative politics since they portray it as corrupt and unresponsive to the needs of the common people. Second, populist movements are characterized by an idealized conception of the country's 'heartland' – a notion intentionally ambiguous and romanticized so that to capture a larger constituency. Third, populism has an ideological "empty heart" – that is, it can adopt views and ideas from the entire range of the political spectrum depending on contextual and strategic

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necessities since it lacks its own value system. Fourth, populism emerges as a reaction to a sense

of crisis in society and builds its platform around the notion that mainstream politics cannot

adequately handle the pressing problems of the time. Using this analytical framework makes it

possible to identify populist movements based upon a set of generic criteria while also examining

the contextual manifestations of each of these criteria and a possible link to Euroscepticism.

Cas Mudde (2004) when writing on populism in Europe arrives at very similar core

characteristics of populism: lack of well-defined ideological underpinnings, personalistic

leadership, anti-elite rhetoric and the juxtaposition of "the pure people" versus the "corrupt

elite". Populist supporters are most often those segments of the population who feel "excluded or

marginalized from national political life" (Weyland, 2001). This disadvantaged segment of the

population is assumed to harbor intense disenchantment and distrust of traditional political elites

and the populists appeal to this sentiment through their markedly anti-elite discourse (De la

Torre, 2000). Thus, it often seems clearer who and what populists are a*gainst* than what they are

for. They are against established elites and mainstream politics, and/or against groups in society

targeted as the "others" – the ones who do not fit in the carefully constructed ideal of the

heartland.

Studies of populism in Central and East Europe have proliferated recently following the

region-wide rise to power of populist political parties. Authors have asserted that the populist

resurgence is not merely a symptom of transition, nor is it a pre- or post-accession phenomenon,

but a lasting political development that is not confined to the fringes of party systems anymore

(Rajacic, 2007; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2007; Krastev and Smilov, 2008). Most studies also

acknowledge that populism has varying manifestations and comes in degrees. Krastev and

Smilov (2008) distinguish between "soft" and "hard" populism depending on whether it

challenges mainly the existing party system or the entire principles of liberal democracy. Meseznikov et. al (2008) come up with as many as 6 categories of populism observed in CEE – far-right nationalistic; agrarian; anti-capitalist; moderate social; nationalist-conservative, and centrist. Shafir (2008) analyzes the different degrees of populism found within political parties in the party system of Romania. Smilov (2008) finds that populism has incorporated a nationalistic discourse into mainstream politics, at least in the case of Bulgaria, while Ucen (2007) argues that CEE has become the playground of a new "centrist" type of populism which is "largely free from nationalist mobilization".

The causes of populism have also garnered the attention of scholars in the field. Most analyses agree that there seem to be some common pre-conditions for the emergence of populism such as the spread of corruption among political elites in the region, the constrained mainstreamed party competition before accession and economic dissatisfaction. Others go as far as to suggest leftover authoritarian values from the communist time period are behind the populist surge (Mungiu-Pippidi and Mindruta, 2002) or to link populist rhetoric to an attempt to discredit the post-communist political mainstream (Ucen, 2007). While all these studies make important analytical contributions to conceptualizing and approaching the study of populism in the region, very few of them have conducted a rigorous empirical analysis of voting preferences and populism. Linking underlying attitudes to voting preferences will remedy this gap and provide insight into the political systems of Centrals and East Europe.

2.1.3   Linking Euroscepticism and Populism

With the parallel increase in the electoral salience of both Euroscepticism and populism in Central and East Europe, it is surprising that few studies have explicitly addressed the link

between the two. Most of the works referred to in the previous sections of this chapter focus on one or the other as the major target of analysis. Some of this omission is due to a sometimes explicit, but more often implicit, assumption that Euroscepticism and populism are the two sides of the same coin, or, in other words, Euroscepticism is merely a subset of populism. While that is, indeed, the case for a number of political parties, the Western European experience has demonstrated that Euroscepticism can and does occasionally exist in mainstream political discourse and is not necessarily the domain of anti-establishment and/or populist parties. In addition, whenever the varying degree of opposition to the EU does in fact go hand in hand with populism, it remains unclear whether it is the populist anti-elite element of a party that drives voters to support it or whether the Eurosceptic strand plays a more significant role.

Hooghe et.al (2007) present one of the few studies that explore the above-mentioned link. The authors find that populist parties on the right use Euroscepticism as a tool to activate anti-immigrant attitudes on the part of the population. If one focuses exclusively on Central and East Europe, however, the immigrant issue is still barely in existence. Nonetheless, what the authors find to be due to anti-immigrant sentiment may well be translated into the CEE context when one uses attitudes towards traditional minorities instead. Krouwel and Abts (2007), on the other hand, argue that populists are able to influence political attitudes and transform "mild Euroscepticism" into a more stringent negative orientation dubbed Eurocynicism. While this is an analytically appealing proposition, empirical evidence from Central and East Europe does not seem to confirm their propositions. Populist parties grew in numbers and increased their electoral successes at a much higher rate than any recorded increase in cynical attitudes towards Europe. Cynical attitudes have, instead, been directed predominantly towards the national political elites of the post-communist mainstream.

As the above sections have illustrated, there is a growing compilation of scholarly work on populism and Euroscepticism in the region. The initial research contributions, however, have largely focused on conceptual issues and party-level developments; and – in the case of Euroscepticism – have treated attitudinal and electoral Euroscepticism at the mass level as inherently the same. The next chapter of this dissertation puts forth a comprehensive theory addressing these gaps in the theoretical and empirical work on Euroscepticism, populism and the link between the two in the societies of Central and East Europe.

2.2   EUROPEANIZATION AND THE PARTY SYSTEMS OF CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPE

The theory developed in this dissertation contends that the indirect effects of the Europeanization process have important electoral consequences. The EU accession process in Central and East Europe presented governments in the region with a set of extensive requirements under close monitoring by the European Commission. Mainstream political parties competed as to who can faster implement the needed reforms and gradually moved closer in the political issue-space since the only legitimate political direction was becoming an EU member. When increasing corruption scandals and a disillusioned electorate, however, created the pre-conditions for the emergence of anti-mainstream protest parties, the EU issue became an easy target for these new parties to distinguish themselves from the established elite and signal to voters that "politics can

be different"[3]. Europeanization of the mainstream political parties, therefore, indirectly facilitated the ability of protest politics to gain grounds in varying degrees across the region.

While there have been two distinct strands of theoretical work focusing on either the "top down" or "bottom up" Europeanization processes, this study is concerned exclusively with the former. Radaelli (2000) defines Europeanization as a set of processes through which EU policies, rules, norms and procedures become "incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies". Similarly, Ladrech (2002) defines it as the responses by actors to the impact of European integration. Theoretical approaches designed to explain Europeanization were initially developed in Western Europe to account for the political systems of the EU 15 but they seem to be well suited to account for Europeanization patterns in the East as well. Due to the extensive conditionality imposed upon candidate states, Europeanization studies on CEE have contended that the institutional and policy effects of the EU have been even more immediate and comprehensive than in the old member states (Grabbe, 2001).

While Europeanization processes and outcomes have been more extensively studied in the context of the West European member states, expanding the research agenda to include CEE has opened up opportunities for additional insights into the empirical manifestation of the Europeanization phenomenon. The seminal work of Shimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) charts several possible directions for studying Europeanization in the CEE – from explaining variation in the success of EU conditionality to comparing Europeanization responses in the "new" and "old" EU member-states. By means of a comparative analysis of selected EU candidate states in the issue-area of minority protection, they are able to conclude that the

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[3] Politics Can Be Different is the name of a newly formed Hungarian political party with a strong anti-corruption element.

combination of high EU credibility and low governmental costs is the key to successful EU conditionality.

Consistent with these propositions and suggestions for directions of future research, studies of Europeanization in the CEE countries can be categorized as focusing on one of two major lines of analysis – explaining different degrees of rule adoption in the candidate countries, or in other words the variation in Europeanization outcomes, and testing the causal mechanisms that lead to these outcomes. Adoption of EU conditionality has been hypothesized to be a function of either external or internal incentives, often a combination of both. These models have been applied to a variety of issue areas in CEE – minority rights (Schwellnus, 2005), administrative reform (Goetz, 2001; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, 2004; Dimitrova & Steunenberg, 2005), regional governance (O'dwyer, 2006), legislatures (Agh, 1998).

While Europeanization is, therefore, a broad concept that encompasses a wide variety of social, political and economic phenomena, its impact on policy has been much stronger than on polities or politics (Borzel, 2006). Mair's (2000) assessment of Europeanization's effects on the format and mechanics of national party system similarly leads him to conclude that "there is very little evidence of any direct impact on these features of party systems." However, it is the indirect effects of Europe on national political systems that may be the most causally significant ones. In his analysis Mair acknowledges that "European integration increasingly operates to constrain the freedom of movement of national governments, and hence encourages a hollowing out of competitions among these parties with governing aspiration. As such, it promotes a degree of consensus across the mainstream and an inevitable reduction in the range of policy alternatives available to voters".

Mair's study is concerned with West European party systems but subsequent works on pre- and post-accession states in CEE largely confirm these propositions. Ladrech's (2002) seminal work on the Europeanization of parties and party systems charted out a useful research agenda for Europeanization scholars. Employing Ladrech's framework, studies of the CEE region or individual countries have generally found that there is little, if any, evidence of direct impact of Europeanization on parties and party systems (Szczerbiak and Bil, 2009; Lewis, 2008; Hlousek and Pseja, 2009; Sikk, 2009; Fink-Hafner and Krasovec, 2006, Ikstens, 2006; Duvold and Jurkynas, 2006; Grecu, 2006). We have not witnessed significant organizational or programmatic changes in political parties whose effect can be ascribed to Europe, nor have we seen the emergence of new parties built exclusively around the EU issue.

Studies have, however, largely acknowledged the presence of the previously mentioned indirect effects of the Europeanization process. Haughton and Rybar (2009) find that the only discernible roles of the EU in the party systems of CEE have been to serve as a source of agreement, a reference point and a measure of competence. In other words, the goal of EU membership and its wide resonance across society meant a consensus at the elite level as well – a consensus that no mainstream political party aspiring for a place in government would dare break. For a long period of time Europe functioned as "an all embracing concept, which united the political elites and the masses in their burning desire to join the European Union" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002). Given the approaching membership deadlines and the competitive pressures to be among the front-runners, national legislation implementing the EU *acquis communautaire* was subject to little modification or debate in CEE parliaments. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that decision-making within parties has also become more centralized due to Europeanization effects since party leaders participating in negotiations with Brussels have an

informational and agenda-setting advantage (Raunio, 2002). Thus, the avenues for meaningful political debate on the EU-promoted reforms were heavily constrained for mainstream political parties participating or hoping to participate in government.

The asymmetric power relationship between the applicant countries and the EU, moreover, provided little opportunity for disputing the substance of the reforms, only their pace (Grabbe, 2003). While some of the candidate countries were able to secure more concessions than others through the use of bargaining strategies, one could hardly call into the question the dominant position that the EU held in the negotiations process. The CEE states were confined to being the "consumers" of Europeanization rather than also its "producers" (Papadimitriou, 2002). Parties would thus rarely question or open to public debate the substance of the EU-desired reforms. This reduced the range of ideological and policy alternatives available to mainstream political actors and resulted in parties competing mainly on the basis of their ability to achieve the membership goal the fastest (Grzymala-Busse and Innes, 2003). Elections would change the governing party but most key policies would remain the same.

Similarly, Rupnik (2007) draws attention to the tendency towards "emptying party competition and politics more generally of their substance" throughout Europe. Krastev (2007) examines Central and East Europe in particular and concludes that the post-communist mainstream consensus on EU accession left publics with no acceptable means to express dissatisfaction. "Elections no longer offer a grand choice between competing worldviews; instead they more and more take the form of referenda on the elites – the "ritual killing" of the governments in power" (p.63). Mike (2007) develops a formal model of party collusion in Hungary and lends additional support to the idea of constrained party competition due to the overarching membership consensus and the "strong norm of euroenthusiasm" established in the

region. Other scholars have nonetheless argued that party transformation in post-communist CEE remains a function of domestic forces. Ishiyama (2006) concludes that "although in the future one might observe a direct relationship between Europeanization and the transformation of the successors to the communist parties, at this point, such an empirical relationship does not appear to exist". His study, however, looks at only one type of mainstream political parties.

The literature on Europeanization of parties and party systems has begun to include the new candidate states from the Western Balkans in recent years. Preliminary evidence from the region shows that the processes witnessed in Central and East Europe seem to be occurring in the next round of prospective EU members as well, since a consensus around the goal of EU membership is rapidly becoming the norm at both public and party level (Orlovic, 2007; Vujovic and Komar, 2008; Lajh and Krasovec, 2007). Expanding the knowledge of political and electoral consequences of the Europeanization process in Central and East Europe, therefore, will provide further insight into the oncoming phases of the accession process in the current candidate states.

Studies of party system Europeanization have overall made significant progress in exploring the impact of the EU in the ten new member states from Central and East Europe. Relative consensus has emerged among scholars in the field that, while direct impact has been limited, indirect effects are indeed observed across the region. The narrowing down of party competition has resulted in varying degrees of mainstream party convergence and constrained the position-taking capabilities of these parties. However, it is the consequences of these developments for electoral outcomes and voting behavior that have not been the subject of a systematic analysis and this is what this project seeks to remedy.

2.3   CONCLUSION

As noted previously, the purpose of this project is to develop a generalizable theory of the determinants of Euroscepticism and, by extension, populism in Central and East Europe. This chapter reviewed the relevant literature and laid out the shortcomings that need to be addressed. In the following chapter, I will present a theory of what drives citizens to choose Eurosceptic parties and in what ways is electoral Euroscepticism a different phenomenon than genuine, attitudinal one. I will also put forth a set of hypotheses derived from that theory and tested in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

3.0   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I lay out a theory to answer the following question: *what accounts for the emergence and electoral performance of Eurosceptic political parties in the domestic party systems of Central and East Europe?* In Chapter 2, I discussed the previous literature that informs my theory and provides a starting point for analysis. I argue for a move away from treating electoral and value-based Euroscepticism as a manifestation of the same underlying sentiment as citizens who have genuine anti-EU feelings and citizens who vote for Eurosceptic parties do not form a simple, cohesive category. By treating these two groups separately, this study also attempts to account for the Eurosceptic puzzle in Central and East Europe. Across countries, this puzzle is best displayed in the discrepancy between the number and strength of Eurosceptic political parties and the aggregate support for the EU found at the mass level by public opinion polls. Within countries, the paradox relates to the sometimes high electoral results for a Eurosceptic party in a largely pro-EU population and vice versa.

In addition, the review of existing literature identified a gap in terms of our knowledge of the link between Euroscepticism and populism, two seemingly similar phenomena that may, however, have different underlying causes. Since the majority of studies treat Euroscepticism as a subset of populism, the possibility of such different causal mechanism at the level of the voter is not adequately addressed. This study remedies this omission by elucidating the mechanisms that connect Euroscepticism to populism and, ultimately, to vote choice.

With respect to the literature on Europeanization, the analysis presented here addresses the consequences of a long-noted but rarely examined in a rigorous empirical manner process – namely the narrowing down of party competition and the shrinking policy options of mainstream political parties as a result of the societal consensus over EU membership. Essentially, I argue that the gradual move of mainstream political actors closer to one another has had electoral consequences by instilling in voters the perception that mainstream political parties are all the same. Coupled with the notorious increase in corruption perceptions in the last decade, this sentiment has become the key culprit for the Eurosceptic and populist wave that has spread across the region.

A theory of the determinants of Euroscepticism must necessarily begin by defining the main concepts discussed in the rest of the chapter. In the first section, therefore, I explain how Euroscepticism, and its close competitor, populism are to be understood, and I lay out the theorized link between the two. After establishing what the concepts mean for this study and how they relate to each other, I discuss the process of mainstream party convergence at the elite level and the opportunities it created for the emergence of Eurosceptic and populist parties. Next, I discuss the theory of voting behavior in terms of why citizens vote for these types of parties and why we need to distinguish between electoral and value-based Euroscepticism. I explain the link between Europeanization and the electoral manifestations of Euroscepticism and populism. This section also puts forth a set of testable hypotheses deduced from the theory.

3.1 EUROSCEPTICS, POPULISTS OR BOTH? EXPLAINING THE LINK BETWEEN TWO INTERRELATED PHENOMENA

While the literal definition of Euroscepticism refers to opposition to and suspicion of Europe or European integration, political parties that subscribe to Eurosceptic beliefs may have additional agendas that do not place the highest priority on anti-Europe sentiments. Taggart (1998) categorizes three types of Eurosceptic parties. *Single issue Eurosceptic parties* can be viewed to represent the purest anti-EU sentiment since their entire platform is based upon opposition to European integration. Occasionally, mainstream parties can adopt a Eurosceptic agenda for strategic reasons – thus forming the second category of *Established parties with a Eurosceptic position*. Finally, the third category of *Protest-based Eurosceptic parties* is the one that has the most relevance to Central in East Europe. Euroscepticism in the region, as I will argue in more detail in the further section, is largely a form of protest against developments in the domestic political system.

The predominant type of populism, on the other hand, that has gained electoral ground in Central and East Europe is embedded in a rhetoric of anti-corruption and unworthiness of the mainstream political parties. It is "a political style that builds upon a rigid dichotomy of "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite" (Cas Mudde, 2004) and it is on its way to becoming a powerful political phenomenon in post-communist Europe. This contrasts with the outsider status granted to populist parties in most of Western Europe (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002). Vermeersch (2008) similarly draws our attention to the fact that nationalist and moderately Eurosceptic rhetoric have been observed in the otherwise centrist parties.

Populism and protest-based Euroscepticism share the same principle at their core: protest against mainstream parties and aspects of the domestic political system. The overlap of these

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political strategies in Central and East Europe raises the question: Is party based Euroscepticism largely a subset of populism and are voters, therefore, casting their vote for these type of mixed parties based on their anti-Europe or their populist dimension? Breaking down the broader category of protest parties into "purely populist", "purely Eurosceptic" and "mixed" as shown in Table 3.1 sets up the framework for analysis and establishes some expectations. Populist parties are clearly a subtype of protest parties whose discontent is directed at the domestic political system namely corrupt and incompetent elites, and/or targeted minority groups. Purely Eurosceptic parties, on the other hand, engage exclusively the anti-Europe dimension and do not fit the populist criteria.

Table 3.1 Dimensions of Protest

Type of Party	Type of Protest
Purely Populist	Against Domestic Political System
Purely Eurosceptic	Against the EU and European integration
Mixed	Against Domestic Political System

The final (and largest in CEE) category of protest parties, the "mixed" group, poses a puzzle that I am exploring in this dissertation: Is it the domestic or European protest dimension that is dominant? Mixed parties are an embodiment of the "chameleonic" (Taggart, 2002) nature of populism since they mix the traditional populist rhetoric with an attack on European integration or at least certain aspects of it. They tend to become the "anti-establishment something-for-everyone party in a milieu where most of the other parties have crowded into the pro-Western, pro-market center" (Ghodsee, 2008). My proposed answer is that, despite the

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Eurosceptic streak in them, mixed parties succeed electorally largely by appealing to the dissatisfaction of citizens with domestic political developments rather than capitalizing on direct anti-EU sentiments.

While the mixed category of protest parties is of greatest interest to my study, the distinction between the three different types is a useful analytical tool. One might assume that all protest parties in Europe would fall under the "Eurosceptic populists" umbrella of mixed parties. However, empirical evidence indicates that this is not necessarily the case. First, Eastern Europe in particular can provide examples of populist parties that fit Taggart's four criteria discussed above without expressing an opposition to the European Union. The National Movement of Simeon the Second (NMSS) in Bulgaria, for example, was created no more than 6 months before it won the elections on a platform promising a change from the corrupt governing style of the other parties. Counting on a charismatic leader, devoid of coherent ideology, appealing to national salvation and emerging during a time of perceived crisis, the NMSS "was modeled loosely on Berlusconi's Forza Italia" (Jones, 2007). Yet, the party was strongly supportive of European integration and it was during its term that Bulgaria joined the EU.

The presence of populist non-Eurosceptics in CEE is one manifestation of the wide variety of populism found in the political systems in the region. Heinisch (2008) draws attention to some core similarities and differences between West European and East European populists. While the Austrian Freedom Party, for example, runs on a chameleonic agenda than covers all ranges of the political spectrum, "the greater number of populist movements in the transition countries yields a greater variety of populist choices". Populists in CEE need to not only compete with the mainstream parties, but also to distinguish themselves from fellow protest parties.

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Similarly, the category of pure Eurosceptic parties is not only a hypothetical dimension of protest. Pure Euroscepticism, as a party platform, does not conform to all of the characteristics of populist movements. The UK is often considered the birthplace of modern Euroscepticism and in its inception it was an ideology directed specifically against European integration, rather than domestic corruption or targeted minority groups. Euroscepticism, in its non-populist form, thus does not have an ideological "empty heart" and is not at odds with the notion of representative politics. The Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic is a prominent example of a CEE Eurosceptic party that defies categorization as populist. Its prominent leader Vaclav Klaus has progressively subscribed to an increasingly vocal Eurosceptic agenda by contesting certain aspects of European integration and doubting the benefits of further integration. Yet, the Civic Democratic Party has been a part of the mainstream political space and, as far as forms of protests are concerned, it lacks a domestic anti-establishment element (Hanley, 2002).

Of course, the "pure" categories of populism and Euroscepticism are, as mentioned above, much less widespread than the mixed one. They can, however, provide a useful means of comparison both in terms of institutional characteristics and popular appeal. Merely lumping together these various types of political actors as Eurosceptic can obscure the relationships between Europe, domestic political systems and citizens. Moreover, one loses important contextual information by collapsing all types under the same concepts of either populism or Euroscepticism. As part of my empirical work for this study, I will be able to test the usefulness of these categories through the statistical analysis and the comparative case studies.

3.2   EUROPEANIZATION'S INDIRECT EFFECTS ON CEE PARTY SYSTEMS

As noted in the previous chapter, there is a fairly wide consensus among scholars that Europeanization has had little direct effect on the parties and party systems across Europe. However, it is the *indirect* effects of Europeanization that are of interest to this study. As mainstream political parties built a consensus around the issue of European integration and proceeded to implement the accession criteria, the number of viable policy positions diminished and so did the ability of parties to differentiate themselves. It should be noted that this dissertation does not assert that these developments have been observed only in the new member states. The arguments made here are likely extendable to Western Europe as well. De Wilde (2009), for example, finds that mainstream political parties in the Netherlands "are restricted in offering voters substantially different policies, creating the image that they are all similar and that it doesn't make a difference which of the traditional parties is in power". Keman and Krouwel (2006) also consider the possibility that it has become easier for new parties to enter the political space in Western Europe because mainstream parties have moved closer to one another since the 1990s.

These studies suggest that the phenomenon of mainstream party convergence and the consequences it carries are a Europe-wide occurrence. Nonetheless, it is the countries from Central and East Europe that are the subject of this study because there are ample reasons to expect these processes to be even stronger and more consequential in the region. The accession criteria that had to be fulfilled by all EU candidate states restrained the policy options of mainstream parties. In addition, the environment of overarching consensus on the necessity and desirability of membership among elites and publics alike, made it fairly difficult for mainstream

political actors to formulate issue positions that diverged from what the accession criteria called for.

After the end of the Cold War, the Central and East European countries embarked on a long process of democratization and liberalization. Applying for EU membership in the very beginning of the 1990s was viewed as a symbolic act expressing a final break with the past and a statement of the ultimate goal of the post-communist transition. A "return to Europe" meant for CEE societies getting closer to the economic and social security their West European neighbors enjoyed but it also symbolized the struggle for re-defining their national identity and embracing the European values of freedom and democracy that had been denied to them under the socialist regime. Membership in the European Union thus had both far-reaching practical and symbolic importance for CEE countries. It was the ultimate form of legitimizing their belonging to the European family and the final reward for the difficulties suffered during the democratic transition. As established in the previous section, mainstream political parties in Central and East Europe thus had little competitive leeway except to question each other's competence in implementing the accession criteria within the requested deadline (Grzymala-Busse and Innes, 2003). Membership became a valence issue (Riishoj, 2007) where real disagreement only "encompassed different ways to reach the common goal".

The broader rationalist institutionalist framework aimed at explaining domestic change suggests that the more new opportunities and constraints Europeanization provides, the more likely it is that the domestic distribution of power may be altered and new domestic actors empowered in the process (Borzel and Risse, 2000). These new actors could take advantage of the opportunity unintentionally created by the Europeanization process and the path they often chose was the path of a protest party as this was the electoral strategy that could simultaneously

differentiate their message from the mainstream consensus and capture the citizens disenchanted with the established political elite. As predicted by Evans and Whitefield (1993) early in the post-communist transition, countries dominated by valence issues in CEE became likely to produce candidates competing "along lines of competence and charismatic appeal". Evans and Whitefield, however, expected these types of political processes to be more pronounced in only a subgroup of the post-communist states while the past decade has witnessed a region-wide trend in this direction.

The opportunities provided by Europeanization for the emergence of these new actors can be expected to vary over time. Early in their post-communist transitions, CEE countries witnessed few parties of the Eurosceptic or populist kind, and the major electoral cleavage was still centered around whether the party is a formerly communist one or not. Moreover, EU accession, while accepted as a long-term policy goal, was still too distant and EU conditionality was still in its nascent stage. The mainstream consensus on EU accession can be hypothesized as becoming consequential for the political system in the late 90s as by that time EU conditionality had become much more coherent and detailed, and monitoring mechanisms were in place. The Central and East European countries were given regular appraisals and target accession dates which created competitive pressures within the region to comply with EU conditionality and gain entrance to the EU faster. This is when initial Euroscepticism and later populism started to creep into the political systems of CEE states on a regular basis.

As accession approached, mainstream political parties grew ideologically closer and thus opened up more space for the new Eurosceptics and populists. Adopting a Eurosceptic position was a more viable option for newly formed parties, but re-defining their positions along those lines was not a strategy so readily available to mainstream parties who had been or were

currently part of the governing coalition. As more directly involved in negotiations with Brussels, mainstream parties were de facto responsible for carrying out and popularizing the integration project. This imposed heavier policy constraints on these parties and prevented them from taking advantage of the emerging electoral trend. The competition among those parties continued to revolve around *who* can do it better rather than *what* each one of them can offer that is a better alternative.

After accession some observers hoped that, as EU constraints are lifted, political life would return "back to normal". However, this has certainly not been the case with new populist and/or Eurosceptic parties still coming and going, and fairing well in elections. Krastev and Smilov (2008) suggest that the new populism has "almost made the concept 'party program' devoid of meaning" as many of the established mainstream political parties have been severely weakened. Shafir (2008) explores the progression of Romanian president Traian Basescu who was elected in 2004 under a mainstream platform but grew progressively more populist by 2008.

Romania's case illustrates an important point about where the main difference post-accession possibly lies – mainstream parties need no longer be severely constrained by EU conditionality but instead of rebuilding their ideological platforms in opposing ends of the political spectrum, they often choose to resort to the language and tactics once reserved for populists and Eurosceptics. Thus, the effects of mainstream party convergence on political life in the region are not only consequential for the period of pre-accession but are likely to be long lasting once the electorate has become accustomed to the populist political style.

In addition to variation over time, mainstream party convergence can be expected to vary across countries. While there has been a general trend of mainstream party convergence within the region, different institutional and cultural circumstances can influence the degree to which

mainstream political actors are able to differentiate themselves electorally. For example, if an otherwise mainstream political party such as the ODS in the Czech Republic incorporates a moderately Eurosceptic rhetoric without endangering membership prospects, this could diminish the policy space available for new parties of the protest type to successfully mobilize voters. Additionally, early front-runners in the process of European integration may behave more freely in the domestic arena as they come to believe they have already secured membership while the enhanced monitoring and scrutiny directed at the slackers can bring political parties even closer in the policy space in the final rush to implement EU-desired policies in a timely manner.

Finally, the arguments developed above notwithstanding, this study does not wish to claim that the accession process has been the only factor affecting the distance between political parties. Country-specific developments – such as institutional or cultural pre-conditions encouraging polarization and mitigating the effect of EU constraints – can and probably do affect the degree to which political parties become similar or stay apart. Due to any of the hereby discussed factors, I expect that mainstream party convergence will be a region-wide systematic trend but it will not necessarily be of the same intensity across countries.

3.3   RESPONSE OF THE VOTERS: EXPLAINING THE ELECTORAL PARADOX

Linking Europeanization to individual-level attitudes about Europe or national systems may not at first seem to be a natural fit. Europeanization and individual voting behavior operate at two different levels of explanation – Europeanization is a process that affects institutions and policies much more directly than individuals. However, since individuals' political behavior is, in part, a response to the institutional and contextual setting, it is also indirectly a response to Europe's

influence. Is the narrowing down of the political issue space among mainstream parties related in any notable way to citizens' vote choices? Can it help explain why many people in these countries favor Eurosceptic parties while the aggregate public opinion consensus is largely in favor of EU membership? The theory developed here argues that electoral support for Eurosceptic parties is in part a function of the narrowed party competition and not merely an outgrowth of citizens' attitudes towards Europe.

The study contributes to debates about the determinants of Euroscepticism by asking whether it is the populist (domestic) agenda of these mixed parties that drives citizens to support them or whether the direct anti-EU sentiments are dominant. An assumption that votes cast for parties labeled Eurosceptic are a reflection of anti-EU sentiments ignores the possibility that by voting for these parties, individuals may be actually voting based on the populist agenda rather than the anti-EU rhetoric. In this sense, votes casts for these parties are "protest" votes – voters who fail to see any noteworthy distinctions between mainstream political parties, can cast their vote for a Eurosceptic party either based on a limited set of issues these parties have managed to capitalize on or as a form of protest against the rest of the political parties being "all the same".

While the narrowing down of the political space in CEE has been noted by other authors as well (Grzymala-Busse and Innes, 2003; Rupnik, 2007; Krastev and Smilov, 2008), there are no systematic investigations of its consequences, nor clear conclusions on these matters. This study offers a theoretical model linking Europeanization to mainstream party convergence on one hand, and mainstream party convergence to electoral outcomes on the other. In addition, by empirically testing these propositions with country level and individual level data from the region, it is possible to parse out the relative importance of these factors compared to rival

explanations for the electoral success of Eurosceptic and populist parties in Central and East Europe.

Attitudes towards the EU may indeed have an effect in determining vote choice, but it is of only secondary importance compared to the impact of domestic perceptions. If we were to eliminate the sources of domestic discontent (e.g. corruption, mistrust of domestic politicians, "sameness" of mainstream parties), Eurosceptics will still be in existence but in much smaller numbers and of different type - the genuine opponents of European integration or aspects of their country's membership in the EU whose ideological values would most closely match the platforms of purely Eurosceptic political parties. *Electoral* Euroscepticism thus needs to be analytically distinguished from *value-based* Euroscepticism where values concerning the European Union directly shape citizens' political behavior. It should be noted that the concept of "value-based" Euroscepticism as used throughout this dissertation differs from the conceptualization used by Leconte (2008). In her study, she conceptualizes "value-based" Euroscepticism as the possible relationship between the EU and the "moral corruption" corroding societies of EU members. In the current study, value-based Euroscepticism simply refers to "Euroscepticism as an attitude" as compared to "Euroscepticism as a vote choice".

Electoral Euroscepticism, defined by the electoral performance of Eurosceptic political parties, can be the product of a different set of factors such as the ones proposed in this study. Thus, even individuals who have a favorable opinion of the EU might be casting votes for the type of populist/Eurosceptic political parties prevalent in Central and East Europe if their dissatisfaction with the domestic political elite is sufficiently high. This study is attempting to disentangle the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism and demonstrate that the electoral

performance of Eurosceptic parties in CEE tells us more about voters' assessment of the domestic political process rather than the European Union.

While the theory developed here concerns the most recent member states of the EU, it should be re-iterated that evidence has shown mainstream political parties in the established member states in Western Europe have also moved closer to each other in the political space – a development usually explored as a potential contributing factor to the popularity of extreme right parties (Kitschelt, 1995; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006). There are two key factors, however, that make this development much more consequential for political life in Central and East Europe. First, the EU-generated reform requirements in CEE were much "broader and deeper in scope" (Grabbe, 2003). Countries had little more than a decade to approximate the level of European integration achieved over the course of 40 years in Western Europe.

In addition, a pervasive cultural norm that permeated the societies of CEE countries was a desire to move away from the communist legacy and EU membership represented the ultimate achievement of that ideal. Even though surveys showed mass publics had little factual knowledge of the European Union and its policies, support for membership was disproportionately high across the region. Since political elites shared this sentiment, European Union membership quickly became the single most prominent unifying goal for elites and mass publics. The combination of extensive accession requirements, a short time span to fulfill those and a region-wide consensus on the necessity of membership was thus likely to cause a stronger and more visible convergence of mainstream political parties in the East.

It should be noted that mainstream party convergence does not always equal compliance with EU requirements. For the most part, convergence is indeed the result of following strict EU conditionality in order to gain access to membership. As parties adopt the EU-desired policy

positions, they automatically move closer to each other. However, convergence is possible when compliance with conditionality is uniformly low rather than uniformly high. The Estonian case developed in chapter 5 illustrates this. The European Commission has always promoted a policy line of expanding minority rights in the candidate states. Estonian political parties, however, were uniformly slow and reluctant in implementing reforms to accommodate the large Russian minority. Party convergence in this case occurred around an anti-EU norm, at least on one of the salient domestic issues. The manifestations of conditionality-induced party similarity in CEE are thus not equivalent across country contexts and the interplay between party convergence and other domestic factors influencing vote choice needs to be considered.

According to the spatial model of electoral choice, individuals choose the party whose position on an issue or issues of interest is the closest to their own (Downs, 1967; Enelow and Hinich, 1984). This model is likely to fit well in Eastern Europe since partisan attachments are still weakly developed and issue positioning is more likely to capture electoral shares. Moreover, the unstable party systems, the proliferation of new parties and the demise of old ones suggests a much greater volatility on the supply side of the electoral process which is reflected among the electorate in unstable party attachments and dissatisfaction with partisanship as a whole (Birch 2001, 2003; Lewis, 2001; Mair, 1997).

As parties are more likely to be evaluated on issues, rather than ideology, a major electoral strategy becomes unavailable to mainstream political parties if they are constrained to express similar, if not overlapping, issue positions on the variety of economic, political and social reform areas covered by EU conditionality. Citizens who support EU membership and European integration, but are largely dissatisfied with mainstream political parties, can thus cast a protest vote if perceptions about the performance of domestic politicians are more salient to

them than their beliefs about the EU. The saliency of the EU issue in both party platforms and voters' minds has, moreover, been found to vary in different elections (Haughton, 2009; Szczerbiak and Bil, 2009; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008).

The dynamic concerning saliency can also be visually represented through elliptical indifference curves. Indifference curves illustrate graphically the distance between a voter's ideal point and the different policy alternatives. Circular indifference curves imply that voters would choose the alternative that is closer to their ideal point. Elliptical indifference curves, however, are often considered to be the more realistic and prevalent way of modeling voters' choices (e.g. Stewart, 2001). In this type of preference representation, the importance that voters place on different sets of considerations plays a larger role in determining the final outcome. Even if the distance between a person's ideal point and two indifference curves is the same, the policy dimension that has the greater salience falls closer to the ideal point.

In the figure below, the vertical axis represents one's level of support for the EU while the horizontal axis is the level of domestic dissatisfaction which I have argued manifests itself though the perception that mainstream parties are too similar and too corrupt. If a voter has relatively high support for the EU and relatively high level of domestic dissatisfaction, the salience of preferences becomes crucial. Party A and B are equally spaced from the voter's ideal point. All else being equal, this individual should be indifferent between voting for either one of those. However, since a higher salience is placed on the beliefs about the domestic system, party B is preferred because it falls within the indifference curve while party A falls outside of the curve. This demonstrates how a seemingly pro-EU individual may become lumped together with the Eurosceptic group on the basis of their vote for a party that mixes populism with Euroscepticism.
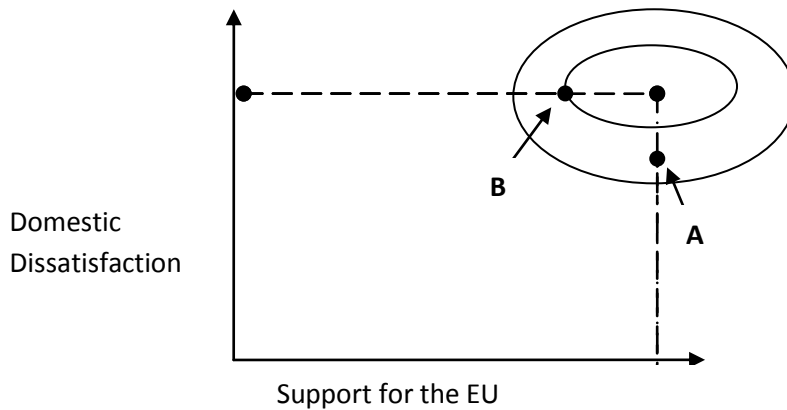
Figure 3.1 Dynamics of Issue Salience

In addition to the relatively low salience of the EU issue, the theory developed here posits a higher than average salience of domestic issues – corruption perceptions in particular. The overall trust in political parties has progressively reached low levels in Central and East Europe, with problems of corruption being high on the public agenda. Over the past decade, corruption has become an issue dominating political discourse in Central and East Europe. Corruption scandals ranging from public servants to highest level government officials have permeated the media space. Some notorious examples include Stanislav Gross (Czech prime minister 2004-2005), Ludovit Kanik (Slovakia employment minister 2002-2006), Peter Medgyessy (Hungarian prime minister 2002-2004), Miron Mitrea (Romanian minister of transport 2000-2004) who have all faced serious corruption charges. These individuals, moreover, represent only a small subset of the corruption-related resignations, cabinet re-shuffles and media scandals that have taken place in Central and East Europe in the past decade. Politicians as well as representatives of

intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations are increasingly blaming corruption for many of the economic and social problems faced by CEE.

Grigorescu (2006) develops a measure of the salience of corruption in the media by calculating the proportion of news reports or articles mentioning the word 'corruption' over a period of 9 years (1996-2004). The results reveal a substantial increase (approximately seven times) in the media coverage of corruption in CEE countries. The trend is, moreover, not a result of developments in one or two particularly problematic countries. "Even though there are cases such as Romania where the coverage of the issue increased "only" approximately four times and others such as the Czech Republic where the topic is approximately ten times more present in the news"(Grigoresku, 2009), the corruption issue has become more salient over the past decade in all of Central and East Europe. Grigoresku's findings cover the period up to 2004 but any close inspection of the region's news media and scholarly articles reveals that the trend has not subsided since then.

Survey data also strongly suggests that corruption perceptions matter for CEE politics. Trends in the 2005 New Democracies Barometer indicate that nearly two-thirds of the voters complain of corruption and weak rule of law in their respective countries. Miller, Grodeland and Koshechkina (2001) analyze the existence of a habitual "culture of corruption" in the new democracies of Central and East Europe and its cross-country variation in scope. According to some of their findings, 84 % of Slovakians, 80% of Czechs and 68% of Bulgarians believe that politicians are mostly interested in "gaining special privileges". Moreover, 50% or more or the citizens of Slovakia and the Czech republic believed that politicians now behave worse than before and a majority in each surveyed country is convinced that the media actually *underreports* incidents of corruption. In addition, the authors found that corruption at "top government

officials" was what angered the public the most despite perceptions that low level public servants may also be corrupt.

The above study was done about 10 years ago, but survey data collected for this dissertation indicates that corruption perceptions are just as salient. Nearly half of the sample surveyed here (44%) believed that "most public officials" are corrupt while another 15 % stated that "almost all" of them are corrupt. These findings nearly a decade apart but nonetheless so alike indicate that the saliency of the corruption issue was not a fleeting phenomenon. At the same time, there is variation at the country level over time. Bulgarians in the 2001 study expressed less dissatisfaction with their politicians than Czechs and Slovaks as mentioned previously. In the survey I conducted in 2009, however, the Bulgarian part of the sample exhibited higher corruption perceptions and higher institutional distrust than their counterparts in the Czech Republic. These findings demonstrate than, while corruption remains salient, there is over time and cross country variation that also merits exploration. This is what the second part of this project does by examining country level factors influencing Euroscepticism and populism.

The increase in frequency and media coverage of corruption in the region since the late 90s coincides with the initial rise of Eurosceptic and populist parties in the region. The progressive increase in corruption perceptions and the decreased trust in domestic politicians and political parties can serve as a trigger for making citizens susceptible to the appeal of protest parties. It is in this political environment that mainstream party convergence becomes more strongly linked to electoral behavior. Political corruption can act as an intervening variable which, once unleashed in a setting where mainstream party convergence has been on the way, can lead to changes in the dynamics of inter-party competition and electoral behavior. Moreover, empirical evidence indicates that even in cases where corruption has actually declined in

absolute terms, news reports and citizens' perceptions paint a picture of corruption either remaining "intolerably high" or having worsened over time (Andreev, 2008; Holmes, 2003; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006; Grigoresku, 2009). Karklins (2002) offers a good summary of this trend:

> "Strike up a conversation with anyone in the post-communist region and the topic of governmental corruption will invariably come up. People are convinced that corruption is widespread, and they all have stories to tell, either from their own experience or heard from others, including the media. They are frustrated because so little is being done about the situation and because they feel helpless and see themselves as being played for fools. Many cynically believe that in order to get along they have to "play the game" – that "the System" compels them to do so."

One of the most troubling effects of this development for the quality of democracy in CEE is the increasing popular distrust of public institutions and their representatives. It is important to point out that this effect is, in fact, one of perceptions of corruption, rather than its actual levels. Public trust in politicians or, more broadly, in the political elite, is the result of the perceived degree of corruption in a country. Recent studies have acknowledged this analytical distinction and argued that "it is the corruption we know about, and not the actual level of corruption that governs public sentiments" (Krastev, 2002; Wallace and Latcheva, 2006; Littway, 2007). In addition to trust in government institutions, corruption seems to reduce interpersonal trust as well (Seligson, 2002; Rothstein and Eek, 2006), thus contributing to a general sentiment of cynicism and suspicion of leaders and fellow-citizens alike.

For the purposes of investigating the factors that drive disenchanted citizens to vote for a range of protest parties, therefore, corruption perceptions need to be thoroughly examined as a key contributing factor to a populist or Eurosceptic vote. For purely populist parties the corruption issue is at the very core of their platforms but perceptions of corruption should play a key role in explaining support for the mixed category of populist/Eurosceptic parties as well. This effect should be the strongest when coupled with perceptions of increasing mainstream

party similarity. In addition, as outlined above, it is possible that the effect of mainstream party similarity is conditional on corruption perceptions and has the strongest effect on voting behavior when an individual perceives a high degree of political corruption in the country. The possibility of a relationship with the pure Eurosceptic parties, also needs to be taken into consideration. Citizens from candidate countries may tend to attribute blame for unfavorable domestic conditions to their national governments and view the European Union as a potential alternative that is likely to succeed where domestic politicians have failed. The EU in this sense is seen as a preferred alternative to an incompetent or corrupt domestic elite.

Table 3.2 summarizes the expectations for relationships discussed in this section. The rows represent citizens' perception about the nature of party competition, the extent of political corruption, and European integration respectively. The columns represent the types of protest parties. The types are based upon the party positions on the relevant issues rather than voter perceptions. A 'yes' cell indicates that beliefs about the issue in question are directly related to the likelihood of voting for the respective type of protest party. The mixed types, as mentioned before, have the highest frequency across the region and are the main subject of the subsequent analysis as the motivations of their supporters can tell us more about whether Euroscepticism or domestic populism is the dominant determinant of vote choice. The pure categories, while rarer, provide a useful point of comparison.

Table 3.2 Expected Effect of Citizens' Attitudes on Likelihood of Voting for Party Types.

Citizens' Views	Likelihood of Voting for Party Types		
	Purely Populist	**Purely Eurosceptic**	**Mixed**
Views that all mainstream parties are too similar.	High/conditional on perceptions of corruption	?	High
Views that political corruption is high.	High	?	High
Negative views of the EU and European integration.	Low	High	Low

To summarize the relationships presented in the above table, beliefs about domestic issues (corruption and mainstream party similarity) are expected to affect the likelihood of voting for populist or mixed political parties. Beliefs about the European Union and European integration are expected to affect the likelihood of voting for purely Eurosceptic political parties. Mixed parties, of course, consist of a Eurosceptic element as well by nature of their categorization. However, as the saliency of the EU issue is expected to be lower, I argue that voters will be likely to base their vote choice on domestic considerations rather than attitudes towards the EU. It is precisely because of the "mixed" nature of these parties that the presence of electoral Euroscepticism may be overestimated by previous studies. While proclaiming an anti-EU stance or behaving contrary to basic EU principles may be part of a party's repertoire, voters who are frustrated with their domestic politicians may vote for this party *despite* of its anti-EU stance not *because* of it.

In accordance with the theory about individual voting behavior developed above, the following propositions can be deduced:

H1: Citizens who perceive a higher degree of similarity between mainstream political parties will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.

H2: Citizens who perceive a higher degree of political corruption in the country will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.

H3: Citizens who have a less favorable view of EU membership and European integration will be more likely to vote for purely Eurosceptic political parties.

While proposition H1 predicts an independent effect of mainstream party convergence, it is also possible that low levels of mainstream party convergence would not be that consequential yet as to color citizens' vote choice. Therefore, an alternative proposition considers the conditional effect of this process – namely, mainstream party convergence can become an important determinant of vote choice when an individual's corruption perceptions have reached a certain higher than average level. In other words, the idea that "parties are all the same" begins to matter only when "sameness" implies a negative evaluation such as corruption.

*H4: Citizens who perceive a higher degree of similarity between mainstream political parties **and** perceive a higher level of corruption in the country will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.*

As explained in this and the previous chapter, I expect that the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism and those of value-based Euroscepticism to differ substantially. What is meant here by "value-based" Euroscepticism is simply the genuine feelings of suspicions of and opposition to the EU or European integration as measured by direct polls. Some electoral Eurosceptics may, in fact, be potentially *more* likely to support the EU as an alternative to corrupt and disliked political elite domestically. However, as there is no justification to expect

this to happen on a systematic basis, this study expects that perceptions of corruption and mainstream party similarity will not be related to individuals' genuine attitudes towards the European Union.

H5: There is no systematic relationship between perceptions of mainstream party similarity and attitudes towards the European Union.

H6: There is no systematic relationship between perceptions of political corruption and attitudes towards the European Union.

The hypotheses deduced so far concern the level of the individual. In order to account for cross-national variation, however, the study will also test some of these propositions at the country level. I argue that mainstream political parties have come closer to each other in the policy space as a result of pressures from the EU. This conceptualization differs from Bielasiak's (2004) idea of the relationship between effective number of parties and Eurosceptic electoral success. He finds that, despite theoretical propositions, data from CEE does not seem to confirm the existence of a relationship between a crowded political space and the success of Eurosceptic parties.

Rather than looking at the number of effective competitors, however, I am proposing we need to look at the distance between them. The political space may consist of only 2 parties, yet if they are sufficiently polarized, the electoral results should be less favorable to protest parties. A crowded political space, if also characterized by increasing party similarity, can nevertheless provide structural predispositions for the emergence and success of protest-based political parties. Euroscepticism as an electoral strategy succeeds precisely by presenting an alternative to the established consensus. As theorized in this chapter, mainstream party convergence is expected to also vary in scope in different countries. Levels of corruption also exhibit overtime

and across case variation. The following country-level hypotheses will, therefore, be tested in the

next chapter:

H7: The higher the similarity of mainstream political parties, the greater the electoral success of populist and mixed (populist/Eurosceptic) parties.
H8: The higher the level of corruption, the greater the electoral success of populist and mixed political parties.

Again, it is possible that it is the interaction of these two factors, or the conditional effect

of one on the other, that ultimately generates a protest vote. The following proposition accounts

for this possibility:

H9: Mainstream party similarity results in a greater electoral success for populist and mixed political parties when corruption levels are high.

As far as vote share for the third category of protest parties is concerned, the country-

level hypothesis is also expected to mirror the individual level one:

H10: The smaller the aggregate approval of the European Union and European integration, the greater the electoral success of purely Eurosceptic political parties.

In the following chapter I will discuss and conduct a set of empirical analyses to test the

above hypotheses.

3.4   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have put forth a theory of the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism. I argue

that when using the term Euroscepticism and when studying the phenomenon analytically, we

are sometimes conflating two different political processes. The first one relates to vote choice

while the second is a function of the genuine attitudes of a person towards the EU. I refer to the

second type of Euroscepticism as "value-based" and contend that most of it is the result of entirely different underlying motivations.

The chapter outlined what I regard as the key causes of electoral Euroscepticism. The perceptions that all mainstream are "the same" or too similar and the associated belief that corruption is widespread act as a catalyst for the Eurosceptic vote. By choosing these parties, voters are casting a protest vote against their domestic governments rather than the EU. Moreover, by virtue of lower saliency of the EU issue, it is likely that a large portion of the Eurosceptic voters are, in fact, otherwise supportive of the EU and European integration. Thus, electoral results claimed by Eurosceptic parties in CEE are largely a reflection of domestic developments such as the mainstream party convergence and perceptions of ubiquitous corruption.

The manner in which the EU comes to play in the causal process leading to a Eurosceptic vote choice is by means of the indirect influence of the Europeanization process. During the pre-accession period, CEE candidate-states were faced with a wide-range of criteria to fulfill and legislation to adopt. The near-complete consensus on membership resulted in mainstream political parties having few distinctive policy options to offer to voters. Thus, they moved closer in the policy space and competition began to revolve over lines of competence and charisma.

The theory presented here also aims to disentangle the relationship between Eurosceptic and populist political parties. As one category is often, but not always, a subset of the other it has remained unclear whether it is the populist, anti-corruption, anti-elite aspect or the anti-EU one that has the greatest appeal to these parties' supporters. By classifying protest parties as either Eurosceptic, populist or mixed it becomes analytically and empirically feasible to answer this question.

It should be noted that while the theory in this chapter has argued that domestic considerations are the key determinants of electoral Euroscepticism, I do not wish to claim that there are no truly Eurosceptic citizens who would vote for parties of this type. If the issue has indeed a high saliency for them, a Eurosceptic party would be the logical option. What this dissertation argues is that this would be a comparatively smaller portion of the party supporters and that there will be no systematic relationship between attitudes to the European Union and vote choice in the general population.

The rest of the dissertation is devoted to testing the theory presented here. In the following chapter I will describe and perform a series of empirical tests of the hypotheses outlined above. The first part of Chapter 4 will present the individual-level analysis while the second will focus on the country-level evidence. In Chapter 5, I will trace contextual developments more thoroughly by conducting three case studies of selected countries in the region.

4.0   TESTING THE THEORY

In Chapter 3 I developed a theory about the determinants of Euroscepticism and populism in the countries of Central and East Europe. I argued that electoral Euroscepticism is often caused by dissatisfaction with domestic governments rather than the EU and that a seemingly Eurosceptic vote can be related to negative feelings towards mainstream parties – especially since these parties are often perceived to have become too similar and too corrupt. Drawing from this general framework, I outlined a number of key hypotheses that summarize the main relationships proposed in the theory. In this chapter I will present a series of statistical models, their results and implications for the study. The first half of the chapter focuses on the individual level manifestations of Euroscepticism and its related attitudes. Through survey data from representative countries, I try to gauge the underlying citizens' motivations when it comes to their vote choice. The second half of the chapter extends the study to the country level and offers some supplementary evidence that the relationships found at the individual level in the surveyed counties do in fact hold across the region.

Table **4.1** List of Main Hypotheses

Label	Hypothesis (Individual Level)
H1	Citizens who perceive a higher degree of similarity between mainstream political parties will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.
H2	Citizens who perceive a higher degree of political corruption in the country will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.
H3	Citizens who have a less favorable view of EU membership and European integration will be more likely to vote for purely Eurosceptic political parties.
H4	Citizens who perceive a higher degree of similarity between mainstream political parties **and** perceive a higher level of corruption in the country will be more likely to vote for populist and mixed political parties.
H5	There is no systematic relationship between perceptions of mainstream party similarity and attitudes towards the European Union.
H6	There is no systematic relationship between perceptions of political corruption and attitudes towards the European Union.
Label	Hypothesis (Country Level)
H7	The higher the similarity of mainstream political parties, the greater the electoral success of populist and mixed (populist/Eurosceptic) parties.
H8	The higher the level of corruption, the greater the electoral success of populist and mixed political parties.
H9	Mainstream party similarity results in a greater electoral success for populist and mixed political parties when corruption levels are high.
H10	The smaller the aggregate approval of the European Union and European integration, the greater the electoral success of purely Eurosceptic political parties.

4.1   INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF EUROSCEPTICISM AND POPULISM

For the purposes of testing the theory developed in this study I conducted a survey of public opinion in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. These two countries were chosen for a variety of reasons. One of them entered the European Union in 2004 as one of the front-runners, the other one was delayed until 2007 due to deficiencies in terms of curbing corruption and organized crime and reforming the judicial system. Thus, the survey ensures that results will not be biased on the basis of the timing of EU accession and, by extension, the degree of progress in fulfilling the accession criteria. Secondly, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic provide the necessary range of types of protest parties. Bulgaria has experienced the rise of populist parties in the last few elections and a lower degree of Euroscepticism. The Check Republic, on the other hand, has encountered less populism but one of its two major parties has an explicit Eurosceptic bent in its ideology. Therefore, by combining the surveys from these two countries, one can acquire a comprehensive range of Euroscepticism and populism.

The surveys consisted of a random sample of 700 individuals of voting age per country for a total of 1400 respondents. Of the respondents who agreed to complete the survey, 53% are female and 47% are male, the mean age of the sample is 37 years old. 64% of respondents have a post-secondary education and 91% of the whole sample identify with the majority ethnic group (e.g. Bulgarian, Czech). 4% of the Bulgarian sample identified as Turkish and less than 1% identified as Armenian, Roma or other. 3% of the Czech sample identified as Moravian, Slovak, Roma or other. 46% of the sample identified as Orthodox Christians, 26% as Catholics, 23% as non-believers and 7% identified as Muslim, Jewish, Protestant or other. Most of these distributions are representative of Bulgarian and Czech society. Both societies have a high rate of

post-secondary education. Orthodox Christianity is the religious norm in Bulgaria and Catholicism in the Czech Republic but the Czech Republic is also known to have one of the least religious populations in Europe. The survey oversamples respondents from the dominant ethnic group but it is not within the purposes of this study to examine differences in Eurosceptic views on the basis of ethnicity.

Comparing self-reported votes or vote preferences with actual results from elections in the two countries indicates that the sample is indeed representative of the actual voting behavior. Percentage totals from the surveyed individuals differ by no more than 6% from actual election results in the country. An exception in the Bulgarian case concerns the Movement for Rights and Freedoms party which gained 14.4% of the vote in the actual election while only 4.5% of the Bulgarian sample indicated an MRF vote. As the MRF is closely associated with the ethnic Turkish population within the country, the discrepancy is probably due to the low frequency of respondents of Turkish ethnicity mentioned above. Alternatively, it is possible that some supporters of this party did not accurately report their vote as the electoral campaign of all remaining parties for this particular election included a vocal anti-MRF element and accusations directed at Turkey for allegedly attempting to influence the election results by questionable means. Even if some MRF supporters did not accurately report their votes, though, the close overlap between actual and self-reported votes for the rest of the political groups indicates that there is not a consistent bias towards falsely overestimating the vote share of a particular party.

Prior to having the actual surveys carried out, I conducted a dozen cognitive interviews in each country. Cognitive interviews are becoming a widespread pre-survey tactic for improving the validity of the proposed questions. Beatty and Willis (2007) define them as "the administration of draft survey questions while collecting additional verbal information about the

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survey responses, which is used to evaluate the quality of the response or to help determine whether the question is generating the information that its author intends". Respondents are, in essence, asked to share their thoughts at each step of the cognitive process from reading the assigned question to selecting an answer. Also known as the "think aloud method" , these one-on-one interviews become particularly necessary in the context of translating survey questions into a different language as there always exists the possibility of translated concepts being understood differently in the local political culture. Cognitive interviews can eliminate or reduce this potential bias, as well as help correct for general survey threats to validity – such as too complex or misleading questions and social desirability bias. Information collected from all pre-survey respondents is then carefully examined for common trends and the final survey questions[4] are modified to take into account potential confounding factors.

4.1.1   Models and Variable Description

In order to test citizens' motivations for picking Eurosceptic and populist parties, I will conduct a series of statistical tests on the likelihood of voting for a type of protest party. The main dependent variable, therefore, will be a standard vote choice measure about whether the respondent voted for a Eurosceptic party or not; and whether he/she voted for a populist/mixed party in the other set of hypotheses. Given the dichotomous nature of these variables, I will use logistical regressions to estimate the models.

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[4] The list of final survey questions is available in the Appendix.

Key Independent Variables:

Perceived Similarity of Mainstream Parties. This will be a measure aimed to capture the degree to which citizens perceive mainstream parties to be all the same. It is measured by the following survey question:

Here are some commonly cited distinctions between political parties in this country. Please place each of the following political parties on a scale from 1 to 10.

1. Views on the Communist regime

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-communist   Moderate   Anti-communist

2. Market versus Government-managed economy

Politicians from some parties argue that leaving the market alone is best for the economy while others claim that government intervention to guide the economy is necessary in our society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-market   Moderate   Government-managed

3. Urban versus Rural

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Catering to the urban electorate   Catering to the rural electorate

4. Pro versus Against European integration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In favor of integration   Moderate   Opposed to integration

5. Ethnic lines

Some parties call for defending our country from the growing influence of ethnic minorities while others ask for encouraging diversity and improving the integration of ethnic minorities in society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Defending the interests of the   Neutral/Moderate   Defending the interests of
ethnic majority   ethnic minorities

6. Other distinction lines (please name)

The largest distance between a respondent's placements is then taken on each issue and then averaged across the issue to arrive at the final estimator of perceived party similarity. The final scale ranges from 1 to 10 where 10 equals the highest similarity. This survey question was asked fairly early in the survey due to its somewhat more complex nature to ensure that respondents are more likely to pay attention to their choices.

In addition to this measure, the survey also utilizes a split-sample technique to gauge citizens' perceptions of how similar parties are to one another. At the beginning of the interview, respondents in half of the sample were asked a more direct question aimed to capture the notion of mainstream party similarity:

Consider the following political parties (list mainstream parties). To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Political parties like this are all the same.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The second half of the sample was asked an identical question, with the exception that this time the list of parties included all non-mainstream parties as well. The goal of this technique is to compare the means from the two samples. If the respondents who were given

mainstream parties only tend to perceive a higher level of similarity than the respondents who were given a full list of the parties, we can infer that the difference is due to the effect of different perceptions towards non-mainstream parties. This experimental tactic is often referred to as the list experiment (Sniderman, Tetlock and Piazza, 1992; Kuklinski, Cobb and Gilens, 1997) and is recommended by social psychologists for unobtrusively obtaining valid results from respondents by comparing the properties of the two sub-samples. If all respondents were asked both of these very similar question, there is a chance they would have automatically given the same answer or would have realized what the questions are designed to measure and possibly given the desired answer.

Perceptions of Political Corruption. A standard straightforward way of measuring perceptions of political corruption in the comparative context involves the answers to the following question:

> How widespread do you think bribe-taking and corruption is in this country?
>
> 1. Almost no public officials are engaged in it.
>
> 2. A few public officials are engaged in it.
>
> 3. Most public officials are engaged in it.
>
> 4. Almost all public officials are engaged in it.

This question does not differentiate between the political parties that are involved in corruption and thus aims to capture the general beliefs of the respondents about the state of political life in their country. The expectation is that people who believe that most or almost all public officials are involved in corruption would tend to vote for protest parties since protest parties, particularly of the mixed and populist type, are often formed not long before the election and thus have not been "tarnished" by corruption scandals yet.

A subsequent question will directly relate corruption perceptions to specific political parties:

In thinking about political corruption in this country, please place each of the following political parties on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 equals the least corrupt and 10 equals the most corrupt. (list all country-specific parties)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This question is designed to provide more in-depth information on the possible distinctions between political parties as to the extent to which they are perceived as corrupt by the general public.

Attitudes towards Europe. This variable aims to capture the European dimension of a protest vote. As Abts, Heerwegh and Swyngedouw (2009) have pointed out, attitude-based Euroscepticism is frequently theorized about as a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon, while at the same time measured by a single indicator. This disjuncture creates the potential for measurement error through the simplistic measurement of support/opposition to the EU. In order to avoid this pitfall, the current study constructs a multi-dimensional index of attitudes towards the EU based upon four dimensions: membership, image, trust and identity. The following four survey questions were used to construct the index:

1. On a scale of 1-10, would you say that your country's membership in the EU is a:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bad thing								Good thing	

2. On a scale of 1-10, does the EU invoke for you a positive or negative image?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Very negative   Moderate   Very positive

3. With which of the following do you most closely identify yourself? And which do you identify with secondly?

a. My ethnic group
b. Local community or city in which I live
c. Region
d. Country:
e. Europe
f. Other

4. To what extent do you trust each of the following institutions to look after your interests? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 for no trust at all and 10 great trust.

1. Courts 2. Political Parties 3. Army 4. Parliament 4. Police 5. President 6. Trade Unions 7. Church 8. Media 9. Most people in this country 10. Most people you know. **11. European Union**

The first two of these questions have both been used by previous Eurobarometer surveys and are commonly used for studying attitudes towards the EU. I used both of them in the survey because support for membership has been criticized to underestimate degree of Euroscepticism as individuals can generally support their country's membership but nonetheless feel strongly dissatisfied with the direction of European integration or specific policies of the EU. Therefore, asking about the general "image" of the EU can provide a more nuanced picture. The results from these questions, however, indicated that at least in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic EU's image is generally highly related to support for membership (the two variables were correlated at

0.7) which is why I have grouped them together for most of the analyses as a combined measure of attitudes towards European integration.

The third question is a more conservative measure of identification with Europe as polls have consistently shown that national identity is, for the time being, still more important for the majority of Europeans. Only 12% of the current sample identified with Europe as their first choice. However, identification with Europe does often come as a close second, even more so in the new member states, some of whose citizens have been eager to join the European Union for practical and symbolic reasons for nearly a decade. To make sure the measure reflects this, people who select Europe as their first identification will have this factor more heavily weighted in the index than people who select Europe as their second identification and, in turn, the latter will have the identity factor weighted more heavily in their index that people who did not list Europe among their top two choices. Including the identity measure in the index without the weightings reduces the reliability of the index as it is not sufficiently correlated with the other indicators of attitudes towards the European Union. By reducing the relative importance of the identity variable in combining their scores, therefore, a more trustworthy scale of attitudes towards the EU can be achieved. For example, many respondents who scored above average on positive attitudes towards the EU on all other indicators nonetheless selected their nationality as the foremost identification. Giving the identity factor equal importance in the final scale thus risks biasing the results towards overestimating the level of Euroscepticism in the sample.

Finally, the fourth question looks at an additional dimension – the extent to which the respondent trusts the European Union. Again, while trust is highly correlated with having a positive image of the EU and supporting EU membership, employing these four dimensions of attitudes towards the European Union enriches the construct and is likely to provide a more

reliable measure of attitudes towards the EU than any of these four measures separately. The final index ranges from 1 to 10 where 1 indicates the least support and 10 indicates that highest.

EU Saliency. In addition to general attitudes towards the EU, I have also included an estimator of the saliency of the EU issue as compared to other national problems. The saliency factor can have a conditioning effect on general attitudes towards the EU. The analysis will, therefore, interact saliency of the EU issue with the appropriate independent variables to check for conditional effects. The following survey question was used for constructing the measure:

In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the country at present? And what is the second most important problem facing the country at present?

1. The poor economic situation.
2. The spread of corruption in society.
3. The spread of crime in society.
4. The loss of decision-making power and erosion of national identity after entry into the EU.
5. Increasing influence of minority groups.
6. Rise of radical religious movements.
7. The poor condition of the environment.
8. Decay of moral values in society.
9. Other (please name).

Only 2% of the respondents chose the last option and named a different problem which is reason to believe that the list was indeed representative of the key societal problems perceived by citizens. The "other" problems named were also quite varied and there was no systematic issue that arose in that category. One respondent, for example, lamented about the demise of communism while another claimed that "the biggest problem is that communists are still in power" referring to the Socialist party in Bulgaria.

Knowledge of the EU. Finally, the study also uses a measure of self-reported level of knowledge of the EU to capture the possibility that a Eurosceptic vote is a function of the distant and complex nature of the EU and the difficulty for common citizens to understand its

institutions and policies. Studies have theorized that "since the EU's institutions and agendas are neither easily understood nor easily embraced by the media, national leaders and communities in the new EU member states, the people face serious problems if they want to identify themselves with the European project"(Butora, 2007). Respondents' perceptions of how well they know the EU will thus be used in the analysis to control for these effects.

On a scale of 1 to 10 how much do you feel you know about the European Union?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Nothing at all   A great deal

Control Variables:

Attitudes towards Minorities. Policies with respect to minority rights have been a point of contention between the EU and many candidate states in CEE since the strict EU requirements often clash with more or less widespread negative attitudes towards minority groups in the region. Instituting stricter minority rights protection laws has been a key aspect of EU conditionality. Studies have shown that European institutions "have been significant, active participants in shaping domestic policy on ethnic issues" (Kelley, 2004). While the incentive of EU membership has been linked to inducing compliance from candidate states' governments in the minority rights issue area, the resurgent nationalist sentiment among CEE publics after the collapse of communism (Greenfeld, 1995; Minkenberg, 2002; Lowell, 2002) is at odds with the highly EU-compliant behavior of governments. Consequently, many of the mixed Eurosceptic-populist movements subscribe to a nationalist anti-minority agenda. The analysis presented here needs to, therefore, control for the possibility that a protest vote is the result of perceptions that the EU and the governing mainstream parties are conceding too much to minorities. As government compliance with minority rights criteria has been a visible and politically

contentious issue, voters are likely to conceive the extension of extra benefits to allegedly

undeserving minorities as an EU-imposed reform.

The following three survey questions are used to measure citizens' attitudes towards

minorities:

1. Do you think any of these pose a real threat to peace and security in this society?

1. National minorities in our society
2. Immigrants from other societies.
3. Neighboring countries.
4. Other countries (ask "which one(s)" if respondent picks this option)
4. Terrorist groups.

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, please indicate your position on the following issues:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ethnic diversity   Ethnic diversity enriches life
erodes a country's unity

3. In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the country at present?

And what is the second most important problem facing the country at present?

10. The poor economic situation.
11. The spread of corruption in society.
12. The spread of crime in society.
13. The loss of decision-making power and erosion of national identity after entry into the EU.
14. Increasing influence of minority groups.
15. Rise of radical religious movements.
16. The poor condition of the environment.
17. Decay of moral values in society.
18. Other (please name).

As far as the first question is concerned, respondents are coded 1 if they selected national

minorities as a source of threat for the country and 0 otherwise. The second question is a

straightforward scale ranging from 1 to 10 as to respondents' general sentiments on ethnic

diversity. In the case of the third question, respondents are coded 1 if they picked "increasing influence of minority groups" as either their first or second choice of the biggest problem facing the country. Since these 3 questions all provide ways to get at individuals' perceptions of and attitudes towards minorities, the variables are aggregated into an additive scale of minority attitudes for the rest of the analysis.

Democratic Values. Another possible explanation for voting for a Eurosceptic party can be based upon values such as authoritarianism. People who posses these values would be much more likely to oppose the European Union on principled grounds. Thus, opposition to democratic norms may be the driving force of explaining the outcome of interest. Respondents were presented with two questions related to authoritarian values. These are: "Some people say that we would be better off if we get rid of Parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can decide everything. What do you think" and "With which of the following statements do you agree the most? 1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government 2. Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one 3. For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic regime". Following previous studies (Ehin, 2001) an index was created to capture the effect of authoritarian values.

Political Ideology. The question presents respondents with 7 choices: pro-market, social democratic, communist, national traditions, environmentalist, other, or none. People who subscribe to either communist or "national traditions" type of self-described ideology could be more likely to vote Eurosceptic since EU values are in complete contradiction with the former ideology and somewhat incompatible with the latter. Moreover, Eurosceptic parties frequently

have a nationalist dimension as well and call for stronger representation of the national interest in negotiations with Brussels.

Media exposure. This measure aims to capture the possible influence that the news media has on political views of citizens. As previously discussed, the salience of the corruption problem in the media has increased over the last decade at a faster rate than the actual corruption levels as measured by official statistic. The mass media's preoccupation with corruption issues is likely to induce a "priming" effect upon individuals receiving the message. The concept of priming describes the mechanism through which the media has often been found to have an effect on attitudes. As an individual is more recently or more frequently exposed to a certain issue, information about that issue becomes more easily accessible in that individual's memory (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Valentino, 1999; Mendelberg, 2001).

At the same time, however, it is unlikely that priming effects will be observable for those individuals who do not trust the media. Recent evidence has shown that priming seems to be moderated primarily by trust in the media rather than exposure (Miller and Krosnick, 2000). In addition, in Central and East Europe in particular, the media enjoys higher levels of trust among citizens than a lot of other institutions, including organizations like trade unions, political parties and police forces (Mair et al, 2004; New Europe Barometer, 2001). This relatively high trust can explain the tendency of citizens to perceive higher levels of corruption than their actual experience may suggest. In order to control for media effects, therefore, the study will use a measure of both trust in the media and exposure to media sources. Respondents were asked about the frequency with which they watch news and/or political programs on TV, read a major newspaper and visit news websites on the internet. Overall trust in the media was also recorded.

Religion. While there are no immediate reasons to assume religion may be associated with higher or lower support for populist parties, a few studies have explored the connection between religious denomination and Euroscepticism. Boomgaarden and Freire (2009)'s comprehensive analysis concludes that religion matters for explaining Euroscepticism at the macro-level but has little, if any, impact at the individual level. In addition to simply subscribing to a given denomination, it is possible that the level of one's involvement with religious activities has a greater influence on their views towards the EU. In these cases, higher religiosity may be related to anti-immigrant or anti-minority views which could indirectly affect views on the European Union. In order to control for these effects, a measure of religious denomination and religiosity is included in the analysis. For the sake of parsimony, the results reported in the tables further below will only include the religiosity control variable. However, all the models have additionally been estimated substituting religiosity with religious denomination. Whether one is an Orthodox Christina, Catholic or non-believer did not have a significant impact on any of the outcomes analyzed in this study.

Institutional and social trust. The institutional trust measure averages the levels of trust indicated by respondents in the key institutions of the political system – courts, political parties, army, parliament and president. These are the main political bodies comprising the political system of a modern democracy and an indication of low overall trust in those could imply a greater disillusionment with the political process. The social trust variable has a similar function when it comes to people instead of institutions. Respondents were asked the extent to which they trust "most people in this country" and "most people you know". There does not seem to be a straightforward reasons why social trust should be related to either Euroscepticism or populism but it is possible that people who extend their trust to strangers in their own country would be

more likely to extend this trust to strangers outside of their country and thus be more open to the idea of European integration. Alternatively, however, a strong trust in one's fellow citizens may indicate the opposite trend – that the respondent identifies with, and is attached to, his or her nationality and is more likely to be suspicious of anyone falling outside of the national in-group.

Socioeconomic factors (Age, Gender, Income, Education). Previous studies have hypothesized that younger people, as well as more educated ones are more likely to express support for their country's membership in the EU since they possess more pronounced post-materialist values (De Graaf, 1996; McLaren, 2002). Therefore, if support for the EU is a predictor of both purely Eurosceptic and mixed vote, we should see age and education being positively related to these categories. Other work has highlighted the existence of a "gender gap" in support for the EU (Nelsen and Guth 2000), and a dummy variable for gender will be included.

Controlling for level of income, on the other hand, is designed to capture a more utilitarian aspect of attitudes towards EU membership. Theories explaining individual-level variation in attitudes towards the EU have argued that people who are worse off under the current political conditions are more likely to be doubtful about EU membership. Most existing studies have used standard socio-economic characteristics, such as income and education, as proxies for individual competitiveness (Anderson and Reichert 1996, Gabel 1998). This effect should manifest itself through a significant relationship between individual economic situation and voting Eurosceptic. While the study does include a self-reported measure of how the respondents perceive their personal economic situation and the state of the national economy, controlling for income accounts for objective effects of class differences.

4.1.2 Findings

Before describing the results from testing the aforementioned hypotheses, I will present some of the more interesting descriptive information gained from the survey. This will help illustrate some general political and social trends and provide the first glimpse into citizens' attitudes.

<u>Who Are the Protest Voters?</u>

The typical protest voter is dissatisfied with domestic political and economic performance; does not trust the institutions of the state; worries about crime, corruption and the economy; watches a lot of news programs; is not a proponent of ethnic diversity in principle but does not disproportionately blame minorities and/or immigrants for society's problems. He/she is supportive of EU membership and sees the EU in a positive light, but does not claim to know a lot about the European Union. He/she tends to place a lot of importance on the personality of a party leader. He or she tends to be fairly interested in politics but does not believe that he/she can have much influence on government policies. This is a simple snapshot of the average protest voter but more nuanced information will be provided below.

Cross-tabs of key variables from the survey indicate protest voters tend to be more dissatisfied with both political and economic developments in their country. 68% of protest voters find the economic situation in their country to be unsatisfactory[5], as compared to 46% of mainstream voters. Interestingly, however, there is no major difference between the number of mainstream and protest voters unhappy with their personal economic situation – 67% of protest voters and 64% of mainstream one gave their household economic situation a score of 5 or lower. Protest voters are more pessimistic about the future, with only 34% of them predicting an

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[5] For the purposes of the cross-tabs, the economic satisfaction scales have been dichotomized where satisfactory = a score of 6 or higher and unsatisfactory equal a score of 5 or lower.

improvement in their personal economic situation in 5 years, while 49% of mainstream voters predicted a slight improvement.

There was no difference in terms of age, education, income or gender for the basic cross-tabs. Protest-voters are both male and female, 56% of them have post-secondary education (similarly, 59% of mainstream voters have one), their self-reported income distribution does not exhibit any major differences from the general sample. These demographic characteristics coupled with the economic indicators discussed above suggest that while protest and mainstream voters have similar economic and educational backgrounds, protest voters are more likely to be pessimistic about the future and about the state of the national economy.

This pessimism manifests itself when it comes to the political arena as well. While level of trust in the major institutions of the regime (courts, parties, parliament, president, police, army) was low throughout the sample (mean of 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 10), it was twice lower for the protest voters than for the mainstream ones. In addition, 76% of protest voters claimed that "almost all public officials" engage in corruption compared to 46% of mainstream voters. Respondents were also asked to rate each political party in terms of perceived corruption which yielded interesting results. The mean for both groups of parties is similar – 6.5 for mainstream ones, 7 for non-mainstream ones. However, 57% of protest voters tend to give mainstream parties a corruption score of 6 or higher, while only 37% of mainstream voters do so. Similarly, 52% of mainstream voters tend to give protest parties an average corruption score of 6 or higher as compared to 32% of protest voters. Corruption perceptions, therefore, may be an influencing factor for mainstream voters as well.

Protest voters are also slightly more prone to engage in corruption-related activities since they have less faith in their ability to influence government policies. 67% of protest voters gave a

score of 4 or lower to the question "Under our present system, how much influence do you think people like yourself can have on government". 51% of mainstream voters expressed similar levels of low personal efficacy. Respondents were also asked "What should a person who needs a government permit do if an official says: just be patient, wait". 22% of protest voters claimed they would "use connections", 15% said they would "offer a tip to the official" to get a prompt reply and 8% said they would "do what you want without a permit". A staggering 34% said that they would "give up the project as the permit will never come". 11% said they would write a letter to the head office and only 10% agreed that they should just "wait; it will come". Moreover, this question is likely to be subject to some bias as respondents may feel unwilling to divulge to the interviewer that they would offer a "tip" to the official or do what they want without the permit. The percentages could, if anything, be underestimating the nature of the phenomenon. In terms of mainstream voters, 22% said they would write a letter, 12% expressed confidence that the permit will come, 21% said they would give up the project, 11% decided to offer a tip and 9% claimed they would do what they want without the permit. Interestingly, 25% of mainstream voters claimed they would use connections if possible which is slightly larger than the equivalent group of protest voters.

A more positive picture emerges from the items measuring general support for democracy. According to cross-tabs, the dissatisfaction and sense of inefficacy that seems widespread among protest voters does not translate into opposition for democracy. 79% of protest voters and 66% of mainstream ones have scores of 4 or lower on the authoritarianism scale. This slightly higher frequency of more authoritarian predispositions among mainstream voters could be due to remnants of communist nostalgia as socialist parties (which are the

successors of former communist ones) are nowadays part of the political mainstream. Some of their long-term supporters though have been found to still express support for the old regime.

The salience of corruption perceptions is also manifested by the responses to the "biggest problem facing the country" question. 72% of respondents named corruption as either their first or second choice of biggest problem. The economic situation was most frequently cited as problem number 1, while the spread of corruption in society was most frequently cited as problem 2, followed closely by the spread of crime. This question was also one of the few places in the survey where more notable differences emerged between the two country samples. 23% of Bulgarians named the "increasing influence of minority groups" as one of the two biggest problems, while only about 3% of Czechs did. As the survey was conducted during the summer of a very ethnically polarized election in Bulgaria, these results should not be surprising. 12% of the Bulgarian sample also cited "national minorities in our society" as posing a threat to peace and security in the country while 8% cited neighboring countries, usually referring to Turkey. Protest voters are also more likely to cite minorities as one of the key problems in the country when it comes to the Bulgarian sample.

Protest voters are, on average, more interested in politics. 63% of them scored 6 or higher on the "interest in politics" scale as compared to 43% of mainstream voters. The majority of both protest and mainstream voters seem to get their information on politics from television programs rather than newspapers or the internet. More than half of each sub-group watches news or political programs on TV daily, while the majority in each case reads the newspaper "a couple of times a week "and visits news websites on the internet "once in a while". There seems to be a connection between the news media and corruption perceptions as well. 54% of the people who either watch the news or read a newspaper daily tend to respond that "almost all government

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officials are corrupt" while only 37% of the more infrequent "once in a while" readers and viewers have similar views.

When it comes to party similarity, there is evidence to suggest that there are differences in terms of the two groups of parties and voters. Protest voters have higher averages on the party similarity index. 57% of these respondents had a mainstream party similarity score of 6 or higher, while only 23% of them scored that high on the similarity of non-mainstream parties. Of all respondents in the sample who scored 6 or higher on the mainstream similarity measure, 65% also had above average corruption perceptions. People who had scored high on the mainstream party similarity scale also have lower institutional trust than people who perceive parties as more distinct. However, low scorers on the mainstream similarity scale exhibit higher social trust on one of the indicators. 67% of their group tends to trust "most people you know" but only 36% tend to trust "most people in this country". Respondents who scored lower than average on the mainstream party similarity measure also have low institutional trust (mean of 3.8).

Results from the split-sample experiment are supportive of the theory presented in this study. Respondents who were presented with a list of mainstream political parties only and asked about the extent to which they agree with the statement "these political parties are all the same" averaged 7.5 on a 10 point scale. Their counterparts in the other half of the sample were presented with a list of mainstream and protest parties and asked the same question. The average score in their case was 4.5. A simple intuitive responsive to a non-invasive question thus shows that when thinking about protest-based parties, voters tend to automatically see greater differences than when thinking about the political mainstream only. This finding confirms the existence of the party similarity phenomenon when it comes to citizens' perceptions.

In addition to aggregate measures of party similarity, more information on citizens' perceptions of political parties can be derived from the question on major distinction lines around which parties compete. As described previously, citizens were asked to place parties on a scale of 1-10 on five dimensions. Table 4.2 presents the perceptions of protest voters when it comes to the two groups of parties. The average score of mainstream and non-mainstream parties on each issue dimension is given, as well the perceived similarity of each group broken down by issue dimension.

Table 4.2 Protest Voters' Views of Parties' Positions

	Pro/Anti-Communist		Market/ Gvmt-managed Economy		Urban/Rural		Ethnic Lines		Pro/Anti-EU	
	Av. Score	Party Sim	Av	Party Sim	Av	Party Sim	Av	Party Sim	Av	Party Sim
Mainstr. Parties	6.8	5.1	4.5	7.8	2.5	7.5	5.5	7.3	2.6	8.4
Non-Mainstr. Parties	5.3	3.5	6.2	3.7	3.8	6.3	2.4	7.1	6.4	6.5

People who vote for Eurosceptic and populist parties overall tend to perceive mainstream parties as more similar to one another than non-mainstream ones. This is particularly evident when it comes to views on the economy and communist regime, both of which are among the more salient dimensions of competition in East European societies. Substantively, the average locations of the parties on the 1-10 issue scale are not too far from each other, but their distribution is different for the mainstream versus non-mainstream subgroup. Respondents are much more likely to place mainstream parties within the moderate 4-6 category on economic

views, while non-mainstream parties fall across the scale. For the same protest party, for example, 23% of respondents gave it a placement of 3 or lower (thus indicating it is strongly market-oriented) while a comparable 31% thought it deserves a score of 7 or higher (in favor of more government intervention).[6] For the mainstream sub-group, less than 10% of respondents would place parties at the extreme ends of the economic views scale.

This type of distribution is observed when it comes to views on the communist regime as well, and is even more pronounced for the urban/rural divide where respondents placed non-mainstream party all over the spectrum. The very nature of Eurosceptic and populist parties can help explain this phenomenon. Their undefined or vague positions on many substantive issues likely result in voters either not knowing or not caring about these parties' issue positions. When we compare self-reported ideology to the placement of non-mainstream parties, we see that there is no noteworthy overlap. For example, 62% of the subsample that voted for a protest party and identified with pro-market ideology also placed protest parties in the pro-government intervention end of the economic scale. An even greater percentage of 74% of the sub-sample that identified as social democrat and reported a vote for a non-mainstream party placed these types of parties in the pro-market end of the scale (4 or lower).

The lack of overlap between self-reported ideology and placement of parties on issue positions persists as far as views on the communist regime, European integration and the urban/rural divide are concerned. The only category that exhibits overlap is the perception of the extent to which parties defend the interests of the ethnic majority versus minority. In that case, non-mainstream voters who reported feeling most closely identified with an ideology that favors "national traditions" also tended to place protest parties as representing primarily the ethnic

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[6] These percentages are calculated for the Ataka political party in Bulgaria.

majority. Non-mainstream parties have, in this case, a very high score of similarity as well, but it means substantively the opposite than mainstream parties. Since attitudes towards minorities are a consequential factor, they have of course been incorporated in the rest of the analysis.

Thus, except for the category discussed above, non-mainstream voters do not seem to be picking protest parties for the sake of their substantive positions, either because these positions are too vaguely defined and constantly shifting for the voters to clearly see them, or because despite being able to discern them, voters do not care about those as much as about the way these parties present themselves as a last resort alternative to incompetent and corrupt political elites. It should also be noted that 29 respondents did write in something in the open-ended option of the question where they could name their own additional category according to which parties differ. While this is a very small and statistically inconsequential part of the sample, 26 of those 29 additional categories had to do with corruption and to what extent parties or their leaders can be trusted.

Finally, in terms of their attitudes towards the European Union, protest voters do not differ substantially from mainstream ones. 65% of protest voters have a higher than average view of EU's image and 68% of mainstream voters feel the same way. Mainstream voters have slightly higher scores on identification with Europe – 12% mention it as their first choice and 53% as their second; for protest voters the respective percentages are 7% and 46%. Less than 10% in each subgroup see unwanted consequences of EU membership as the biggest or second biggest problem facing the country at present. From the group of people who do not support EU membership or have a negative image of the EU, 67% say they know little about the EU (score of 5 or lower). Respondents opposing membership also tend to evaluate their economic situation

in more negative terms than supporters, they support ethnic diversity to a smaller extent and, in the Bulgarian sub-sample, they tend to have more negative views of national minorities.

Testing H1-H4

In this section I will present the findings from directly testing the first four hypotheses. These have been grouped together, as they all attempt to measure the determinants of electoral Euroscepticism, while the last 3 individual-level hypotheses are concerned with value-based Euroscepticism.

Table 4.3 presents the results from the first two models designed to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 4. The dependent variable is a dichotomous measure of whether or not the respondent voted for populist or mixed party and estimations have been conducted using a logistical regression. As indicated by Model 1, there is strong support for hypotheses 1 and 2. The coefficients for mainstream party similarity and perceived corruption are statistically significant and in the expected direction. Citizens who perceive a higher degree of similarity between mainstream political parties are more likely to cast a vote for populist or mixed political parties. Similarly, the likelihood of voting for these types of parties increases as people perceive a higher degree of corruption among public officials in their country. Attitudes towards the EU, as measured by the composite scale, are not significantly correlated with the dependent variable, thus lending support to the theoretical proposition that voting for parties that have both populist and Eurosceptic strands in them is equivalent to voting for purely populist parties *and* caused largely by dissatisfaction with the domestic political system rather than a particular sentiment towards the European Union.

Table 4.3 Determinants of Voting for Populist and Mixed Parties

	Model 1	Model 2
Mainstream Party Similarity	**0.799 *** **(0.347)**	**0.078 *** **(0. 082)**
Corruption Perceptions	**0.832***** **(0.206)**	**0.748 *** **(0.439)**
EU Attitudes	0.281 (0.185)	0.251 (0.164)
Democratic Values	0.133 (0.176)	0.139 (0.173)
Minority Attitudes	- 0.028 (0.042)	- 0.009 (0.047)
Ideology	-0.113 (0.235)	-0.121 (0.243)
Media Exposure	**0.385 **** **(0.132)**	**0.385**** **(0.134)**
Religiosity	0.162 (0.358)	0.162 (0.358)
Institutional Trust	**-0.262 *** **(0.108)**	**-0.258 *** **(0.103)**
Social Trust	**-0.682 *** **(0.259)**	**-0.683 *** **(0.259)**
Age	0.183 (0.191)	0.183 (0.191)
Gender	-0.046 (0.043)	-0.047 (0.046)
Education	0.056 (0.082)	0.054 (0.082)
Income	0.533 (0.488)	0.534 (0.488)
Party Similarity x Corruption Perceptions		**0.028 ***** **(0.009)**
Constant	6.454 (3.858)	5.985 (1.558)
N	1208	1208
Prob> chi2	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R^2	0.1873	0. 1546
Log Likelihood	-132.24	-140.64

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*indicates statistical significance with 90% or greater confidence
**indicates statistical significance with 95% or greater confidence
***indicates statistical significance with 99% or greater confidence

A few of the control variables also achieve statistical significance in Model 1. Institutional trust is negatively correlated with the dependent variable. As individuals tend to trust their domestic political institutions less, they are also more likely to vote for protest parties of the populist and mixed type. This finding is largely consistent with the theoretical expectations outlined in this study. Interestingly, social trust – measured by the degree to which a respondent trusts their friends and other people in the country – is also statistically significant suggesting that people who trust their fellow citizens are less likely to cast a protest vote. This result indicates that, while factors directly related to the political system, are a determinant of protest voting, so seem to be social psychological factors as well. Trust in other people may be a product of cultural factors based on one's background or it could also be a product of personality traits. The specific causes of this attitude are not the subject of this study, but they point to the need of acknowledging the complex nature of vote choice and the inability of one set of determinants only – whether political, economic or cultural to tell the whole story.

Finally, media effects seem also to be influencing the protest vote. The media exposure variable is a scale achieved by multiplying exposure to the media by trust in the media in order to capture a more comprehensive media effect. Results indicate that as media exposure increases, so does the likelihood of voting for a populist or mixed party. A possible way to account for this relationship is that the news media often tends to have sensationalist overtones and thus stresses the flaws of the system. Corruption stories abound in both print and television outlets. Therefore, it is possible that being exposed to a lot of this information increases one's belief that the political class is corrupt and incompetent .

Since logit models do not allow for substantive interpretation of the size of the coefficients, I have also estimated predicted probabilities for key variables. The probabilities for

Model 1 are presented in Table 4.4 below. As we can see, both mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions have a strong effect on the odds of voting for populist or mixed party, all else being held constant. An individual who claims that "almost all public officials" are corrupt would, for example, have a nearly twice higher likelihood of choosing a protest party than an individual who chooses the previous category - "a few public officials" engage in corruption. Similarly, one standard deviation increase in the perception of mainstream party similarly raises the likelihood of voting for populist or mixed parties by 41%. When mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions are held at their minimum values, the likelihood of a protest vote falls to 3 and 5% respectively.

Table 4.4 Predicted Probabilities for Key Variables in Model 1

Situation[a]	% Probability of Voting for Populist or Mixed Parties		
	Min Value	Mean Value	Max Value
Mainstream Party Similarity	3%	41%	52%
Corruption Perceptions	5%	49%	63%
Media Exposure	12%	35%	44%
Institutional Trust	9%	23%	37%
Social Trust	12%	16%	21%
Media Exposure[b]	2%	12%	16%
Social Trust[c]	19%	43%	49%

a- All the variables are held at their means except the variables listed.
b- Corruption perceptions held at 1 or2, institutional trust held at 6 or higher.
c- Corruption perceptions held at 1 or 2, institutional trust held at 6 or higher, mainstream party similarity held at 4 or lower.

From the control variables which achieve significance, it should be noted that media exposure does seem to be a stronger than expected predictor of voting for a protest party. A one point increase in level of media exposure raises the likelihood of voting for a protest party by 35%. In order to better understand this effect, I estimated the predicted probability of media exposure when holding corruption perceptions at Low (variable = 1 or 2) and institutional trust at

High (variable = 6 or higher). The predicted probability of voting for a protest party as a result of media exposure drops to 16% at the maximum which lends some support to the idea that the media's focus on the negative "news-making" items has some priming effect on individuals' perceptions of the political system.

Also, in order to explore the nature of the social trust factor in a bit more detail, I estimated its predicted probability when holding corruption perceptions at Low, institutional trust at High and mainstream party similarity at Low (variable = 4 or lower). In this case, raising one's social trust seems to reduce the likelihood of voting for a protest party by 43%. This suggests that if one was to eliminate or substantially reduce systemic problems such as corruption and low institutional trust, the baseline support for non-mainstream parties will be largely determined by these more personality-based or culturally-specific traits.

The second model in Table 4.3 creates an interaction term between mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions. For a more straightforward interpretation of the findings, I have collapsed these variables into fewer categories. Both Corruption Perceptions and Mainstream Party Similarity are divided into High and Low. Results from the model are, in general, similar to the ones from Model 1. However, the magnitude of the substantive effects differs. Mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions have an effect on the dependent variable both independently and as a joint factor. The predicted probabilities presented in Table 4.5 show a slightly more nuanced picture. We see than when corruption perceptions are low, mainstream party similarity has a much smaller substantive effect. It increases the likelihood of voting for a populist or mixed party by 11%, or at its high levels to 17%. When mainstream party similarity is held at low levels, however, corruption perceptions still raise the odds of choosing a protest party by 39%. This suggests that the effect of mainstream party similarity is

somewhat dependent on how citizens perceive these parties' behavior. If corruption perceptions and lack of trust were reduced to a lower level, the narrowing down of the political issue space as a result of mainstream party convergence would likely not be nearly as influential on vote choice. In terms of control variables, there are no notable differences between Model 1 and Model 2.

Table 4.5 Predicted Probabilities for Key Variables in Model 2

Situation[a]	% Probability of Voting for Populist or Mixed Parties		
	Min Value	Mean Value	Max Value
Mainstream Party Similarity [b]	4%	11%	17%
Corruption Perceptions [c]	28%	39%	48%
Corruption Perceptions when Mainstream Party Similarity set at High	33%	58%	71%
Mainstream Party Similarity when Corruption Perceptions set at High	36%	53%	62%
Media Exposure	16%	32%	39%
Institutional Trust	9%	25%	31%
Social Trust	6%	14%	19%

a- All the variables are held at their means except the variables listed.
b- Corruption perceptions held at Low (1 or 2)
c- Party Similarity held at Low (4 or smaller)

Given the evidence that corruption perceptions play a strong role in shaping voting behavior, another factor needs to be considered. Incumbents have been shown to be more likely to suffer from allegations of corruption (Welch and Hibing 1997; Chang and Golden, 2004). Incumbents have more governing responsibility, are under greater media scrutiny and are often subjected to justified or rhetorical accusations of corruption by opposition parties. The saliency of the corruption issue in Central and East Europe makes such tactics on the part of the opposition particularly appealing.

Data from the survey indicates that there are some country differences as far as this factor is concerned. Incumbents were indeed more likely to be perceived as corrupt than non-incumbents in the Czech Republic, though not by much. Incumbents had an average corruption score of 5.44 (out of 10) while non-incumbents scored an average of 4.25. In Bulgaria, however, the results are less straightforward. Parties in government there averaged a corruption perception score of 3.14 while non-incumbents had a much higher average of 7.34.

These results, while seemingly surprising at first glance, become clearer when one takes the election cycle into consideration. The Bulgarian election had just occurred and the favorable corruption rating of the winning party (GERB) is thus not unexpected. GERB had, moreover, campaigned on the standard populist messages of cleaning up corruption and organized crime. If we were to instead look at the corruption scores of the previous incumbent (a mainstream socialist party), they fare much worse at 6.74. In the Czech Republic the incumbents had been in power for 3 years, thus acquiring a higher corruption score. In the subsequent election in 2010, the incumbents from the Civic Democratic Party lost but only by 2 percentage points margin to the major opposition party. A recently formed populist party (of a predictably stellar corruption rating) came in as a close third.

Incumbency thus does matter for corruption perceptions, and hence for electoral outcomes. Protest parties set themselves somewhat of a trap by often campaigning heavily on the issue of corruption and later on being perceived as not having done enough to fulfill their promises. By their very nature, these political formations flourish in opposition, but face difficulties governing. The relationship between corruption perceptions and protest voting, however, persists as the niche left by a failed protest party is often quickly replaced by a seemingly more capable equivalent.

<u>Testing H3</u>

The next set of tests aims to test the likelihood of voting for a Eurosceptic party. The dependent variable is again a dichotomous estimator of whether an individual voted for this type of party or not. The exact same set of explanatory factors is used to model the determinants of a Eurosceptic vote. Model 1 indicates that there is support for this hypothesis as attitudes towards the EU are this time statistically significant and negatively correlated with the dependent variable. The higher an individual's support for the EU and European integration, the lower the probability that they would cast a vote for a purely Eurosceptic party.

The other key independent variables – Mainstream Party Similarity and Corruption Perceptions also achieve statistical significance and, much like in the previous set of models, are positively correlated with a protest vote. Attitudes towards the European Union are thus not exclusively determinative of vote choice even when it comes to genuinely Eurosceptic parties. Domestic considerations seem to be systematically related to voting behavior for all three types of protest parties discussed in the theoretical chapter.

From the predicted probabilities reported in Table 4.7, however, we can see that their effect is much smaller than before. A one point increase in corruption perceptions decreases the likelihood of voting Eurosceptic by 17% while the same increase in mainstream party similarity raises the odds by 13%. A person whose support for the EU goes up by 1 point, on the other hand, becomes 38% less likely to pick a purely Eurosceptic party. This effect is further boosted when one holds corruption perceptions and mainstream party similarity at their low levels. In this case, a one unit increase in negative evaluations of the EU raises the likelihood of voting Eurosceptic by 59%. This suggests that the underlying motivations of voting for a purely

Eurosceptic party are indeed based upon views of the EU, but their effect is often muted by domestic considerations.

Table 4.6 Determinants of Voting for a Eurosceptic Party

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**
Mainstream Party Similarity	**0.308 ***	0.589	0.580
	(0.154)	(0.491)	(0.467)
Corruption Perceptions	**-0.723 ***	-0. 456	-0.436
	(0.349)	(0.392)	(0.390)
EU Attitudes	**-0.540 ***	**-0.543 ***	-0.430
	(0.234)	**(0.232)**	(0.442)
Democratic Values	0.348	0.347	0.329
	(0.312)	(0.312)	(0.330)
Minority Attitudes	-0.289	-0.287	-0.289
	(0.392)	(0.392)	(0.392)
Ideology	0.219	0.223	0.210
	(0.199)	(0.205)	(0.193)
Media Exposure	**-0.448 ***	**-0.442 ***	**-0.489 ***
	(0.212)	**(0.210)**	**(0.233)**
Religiosity	-0.674	-0.675	-0.498
	(0.529)	(0.532)	(0.490)
Institutional Trust	0.763	0.763	0.634
	(0.734)	(0.734)	(0.539)
Social Trust	**-0.873 ***	**-0.846 ***	**-0.847 ***
	(0.432)	**(0.421)**	**(0.412)**
Age	0.092	0.101	0.124
	(0.073)	(0.094)	(0.110)
Gender	0.274	0.274	-023
	(0.166)	(0.167)	(0.233)
Education	0.983	0.992	0.993
	(0.901)	(0.902)	(0.902)
Income	0.737	0.736	0.712
	(0.623)	(0.640)	(0.723)
Party Similarity x Corruption		**0.757***	**0.764 ***
		(0.320)	**(0.314)**
Perceptions			
Salience of EU Issue			**0.892*****
			(0.023)
EU Attitudes x Salience			0.034
			(0.029)

Table 4.6 (continued)			
Constant	12.345 (3.448)	13.231 (5.693)	9.847 (2.447)
N	1208	1208	1208
Prob> chi2	0.0000	0.0048	0.0048
Pseudo R^2	0.1006	0.2226	0.2241
Log Likelihood	-765.243	-734.355	-645.453

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*indicates statistical significance with 90% or greater confidence
**indicates statistical significance with 95% or greater confidence
***indicates statistical significance with 99% or greater confidence

Table 4.7 Predicted Probabilities for Key Variables in Model 1

Situation[a]	% Probability of Voting for Eurosceptic Parties		
	Min Value	Mean Value	Max Value
Mainstream Party Similarity	4%	13%	22%
Corruption Perceptions	5%	17%	21%
EU Attitudes	47%	38%	23%
Media Exposure	7%	29%	36%
EU Attitudes[b]	69%	59%	23%
Social Trust[c]	36%	24%	11%

    a- All the variables are held at their means except the variables listed.
    b- Corruption perceptions held at Low, Mainstream Party Similarity held at Low

The control variables in this model also produce some interesting results. Similar to before, social trust reduces the likelihood of a protest vote. Institutional trust, however, loses statistical significance – an expected result given that institutional trust is a variable measuring attitudes towards national institutions. Media effects again seem to have an influence on vote choice, but in the opposite direction. Increasing one's media exposure by 1 point *reduces* the likelihood of voting Eurosceptic by 29% for average media viewers and by 36% for those who have the highest exposure to the media. While I do not have a detailed explanation of this effect,

one possibility is that the European Union is, on the whole, much more positively portrayed in the media than domestic institutions. The negative effect that the media has on how you view your domestic government may automatically translate into support for the EU as citizens need an alternative to what they may perceive as inadequate national political class.

Model 2 in the Table 4.6 adds some additional clarity to the picture. Here I have included the interaction variable between mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions. Through this model specification, we see that the independent effects of each of these two factors disappear. In other words, when corruption levels are held at Low, mainstream party similarity does not systematically affect a Eurosceptic vote. When mainstream party similarity is held at Low, corruption perceptions are not a significant determinant of a Eurosceptic vote either. However, from this model and its associated predicted probabilities in Table 4.8, we see that each of these variables preserves its effect when the other is set at high levels. Thus, when mainstream party similarity is seen as high, corruption perceptions increase the likelihood of a Eurosceptic vote by 23%. When corruption perceptions are high, mainstream party similarity raises the odds of voting Eurosceptic by 17%. The effect of EU attitudes remains almost the same as in the previously discussed model.

Table 4.8 Predicted Probabilities for Key Variables in Model 2

Situation[a]	% Probability of Voting for Eurosceptic Parties		
	Min Value	Mean Value	Max Value
EU Attitudes	53%	40%	12%
Media Exposure	9%	30%	38%
Corruption Perceptions when Mainstream Party Similarity set at High	4%	23%	31%
Mainstream Party Similarity when Corruption Perceptions set at High	6%	17%	23%
EU Attitudes[b]	71%	59%	9%
Social Trust	38%	25%	11%

    a- All the variables are held at their means except the variables listed.
    b- Corruption perceptions held at Low, Mainstream Party Similarity held at Low

Finally, in order to explore the issue of *salience,* I ran a third model which includes an interaction term between EU attitudes and the salience of the EU issue. The salience variable was created based on the question asking about the biggest problem facing the country at present. Individuals who named the consequences of EU membership as either their first or second choice were coded as High Salience (salience =1) and those who did not were coded as Low Salience (salience = 0). The findings listed in Table 4.6 reveal that for Low Salience individuals, EU attitudes are indeed not a significant factor in determining their vote, even in the case of a purely Eurosceptic party. On the other hand, when one has a low level of support for the EU, the effect of the salience variable is statistically significant and High Salience individuals are more likely to vote for a Eurosceptic party. As evident by the predicted probabilities in Table 4.9, the effect of EU attitudes for High Salience individuals consists of a 57% increase in the likelihood of a Eurosceptic vote. For the most Eurosceptic individuals, this effect increases to 75% and for the most pro-EU ones the likelihood of voting for a Eurosceptic party drops to 14%.

Table 4.9 Predicted Probabilities for Key Variables in Model 3

Situation[a]	% Probability of Voting for Eurosceptic Parties		
	Min Value	Mean Value	Max Value
EU Attitudes when Salience set at High	75%	57%	14%
Media Exposure	19%	33%	44%
Corruption Perceptions when Mainstream Party Similarity Set at High	10%	21%	29%
Mainstream Party Similarity when Corruption Perceptions Set at High	6%	13%	22%
Social Trust	30%	23%	15%

a- All the variables are held at their means except the variables listed.

What these results suggest is that when it comes to electoral Euroscepticism and populism, domestic considerations are indeed a key explanatory factory. Both of the key independent variables were found influential, to various degrees, on vote choice for protest parties. Nonetheless, the findings also demonstrate that this effect is sometimes conditional – mainstream party similarity, in particular, seems to increase the odds of a protest vote to a much greater extent when combined with high corruption perceptions. Results also point to the existence of underlying views on the EU whose effect becomes much stronger when domestic dissatisfaction is reduced to a lower level. Finally, social and institutional trust, as well as exposure to the media, were all found to be among the determinants of a protest vote.

Testing H5 and H6

While the previous models were concerned with electoral Euroscepticism, the final part of the individual-level section looks at value-based Euroscepticism. The theory developed here argues that these two will not operate in the same way and will have different determinants. The dependent variable in this case is support for the EU, ranging from 1 to 10. Given the nature of this variable, a standard OLS model can be used. Findings are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Determinants of Attitudes towards the European Union

Independent Variable	OLS Estimates
Mainstream Party Similarity	0.033
	(0.027)
Corruption Perceptions	**0.243 ***
	(0.111)
Knowledge of the EU	**0.523 ***
	(0.234)
Democratic Values	-0.052
	(0.157)
Minority Attitudes	-0.250
	(0.204)
Ideology	0.049
	(0.107)
Media Exposure	**0.102***
	(0.049)
Religiosity	-0.003
	(0.007)
Institutional Trust	0.214
	(0.165)
Social Trust	**0.094 ***
	(0.043)
Age	**-0.036 ***
	(0.012)
Gender	0.354
	(0.344)
Education	**0.202 ***
	(0.099)
Income	0.119
	(0.121)
Economic Satisfaction	**0.156 ***
	(0.073)
Nationalist	**-0.289 ****
	(0.103)
Constant	12.934 **
	(2.213)
N	1208
Adjusted R^2	0.0000
F	17.06

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*indicates statistical significance with 90% or greater confidence
**indicates statistical significance with 95% or greater confidence
***indicates statistical significance with 99% or greater confidence
Breusch-Pagan test = 6.03 (critical value for 95% = 10.14)

Hypotheses 5 and 6 predicted that citizens' perceptions of mainstream party similarity and political corruption will not be systematically related to the existence (or absence) or Eurosceptic views. Mainstream party similarity is indeed not significantly related to the explanatory variable. This result suggests that value-based Euroscepticism and electoral Euroscepticism are largely a product of different underlying causes and that voters do not tend to attribute to the EU the faults that they find in domestic political parties. In the case of H6, however, we see that corruption perceptions actually reduce one's Eurosceptic views. As individuals tend to perceive domestic politicians as more dishonest and blame-worthy, they evaluate the EU alternative more positively. A one unit increase in perceived corruption domestically increases one's support for the EU by 0.23 points.

Given the newcomer status of the CEE member states, they are still closely monitored to one extent or another by the European Commission, but this effect is likely to subside overtime as domestic and European elites become more inter-wined. Moreover, it should be noted that for this relationship splitting the sample revealed that the substantive effect of corruption perceptions on EU attitudes is much smaller in the Czech Republic which joined in 2004 than in Bulgaria which joined in 2007 and is still regularly monitored. The more vocal the EU is as a corruption "watch-dog", the more citizens tend to see it as an alternative to the inefficiencies of domestic governments.

A number of the other potential explanatory variables achieve statistical significance. Unlike the electoral models, socioeconomic factors seem to matter for one's level of support for the EU. Each additional year of education raises one's evaluation of the EU by 0.2. Age is negatively correlated with support suggesting that older citizens may tend to be more Eurosceptic. Economic satisfaction plays a major role in determining views on the EU. With

each additional unit of being economically satisfied, one's support for the EU increases by 0.16 points. While it is unclear to what extent citizens attribute their financial situation to domestic or EU-related developments, it is likely that as one's satisfaction with their financial situation increases, they are more likely to want to preserve the status quo – which in this case includes integration in the European Union.

Nationalist sentiments are another key predictor of EU attitudes. This variable was created by using the question on self-reported ideology and coding the people who picked the "national traditions" as 1, while the rest as 0. As expected, subscribing to this mindset tends to reduce support for a supranational structure like the European Union. Self-reported knowledge of the EU also has a strong effect on the dependent variable. A person who claims to know the EU at one unit higher than another will tend to support the EU by 0.52 additional points. It should be noted that it is possible that this variable exaggerates to some extent the effect of self-reported knowledge as people who otherwise support the EU may be embarrassed to admit they don't actually know a lot about it.

The only two control variables that achieve statistical significance in both sets of models (electoral and value-based Euroscepticism) are Media Exposure and Social Trust. Media exposure is positively correlated with the dependent variable. This means that as one absorbs more media information, they are actually going to support the EU to a greater extent. This result mirrors some of the findings above as it seems that media exposure has the opposite effect on one's perceptions of domestic governments and European institutions. The effect of social trust is also similar to the previous models. As a person trusts their fellow-citizens more, they are going to exhibit greater support for the EU suggesting either an underlying "trusting" trait or maybe a degree of cosmopolitanism.

These findings clearly paint a picture where value-based Euroscepticism is a different phenomenon that electoral one. Socioeconomics, cost-benefit analysis, attachment to the nation-state are all factors found to be unrelated to electoral Euroscepticism but as the above tests demonstrate, they are all predictors of value-based Euroscepticism. On the other hand, factors related to the domestic political system such as corruption perceptions, mainstream party similarity, institutional trust all have much stronger and more systematic effects on vote choice but not necessarily on support for the EU.

4.1.3   European Parliament Elections

While this dissertation focuses on domestic elections, a brief overview of the European Parliament elections can provide some additional insights. These elections took place in June 2009 and the survey I conducted was able to, therefore, record the self-reported votes of the respondents shortly after the actual election. First, comparing the aggregate vote percentages reported by respondents to those recorded in the actual elections helps confirm the validity of the survey data. In the case of the Czech Republic, for example, 35% of respondents indicated a vote for the CDP, 19% for the SDP, 11% for the Communist Party, 9% for the People's Party and 6% for Sovereignty. The actual vote percentages from the election were 31%, 22%, 14%, 8% and 4% respectively, indicating that the sample was representative of the voting population. The Bulgarian percentages from the survey sample are similarly close to the actual election results, with the exception again of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms whose supporters are underrepresented in the survey.

In the Bulgarian case the European and domestic elections happened within a month of each other so it is possible to compare underlying trends. The European election preceded the

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domestic one and there was already a strong showing for protest parties such as the newly-formed populist GERB and the mixed Ataka. Ranking parties by the vote share captured yields the same order for both EP and domestic elections. Nonetheless, while GERB won the most votes for the EP election, they fared even better in the domestic arena gaining an additional 15%. The now smaller NMSS, on the other hand, managed to pass the entry threshold in the EP elections but failed to do so in the domestic ones. These results are largely consistent with the second-order model of European Parliament elections which holds that turnout would be lower than in national elections, smaller parties would do better and so would oppositional parties (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Marsh and Franklin, 1996).

The proximity of the elections, however, may also be credited with a notably higher reported turnout in the survey sample when it comes to EP elections. About 55% of Bulgarians surveyed indicated that they have voted in the European election while the actual turnout was 37%. Reported and actual survey rates were much similar for the domestic election – 64% versus 60% respectively. This discrepancy when it comes to the European Parliament elections possibly results from cases where respondents only voted in the domestic election but nonetheless reported having cast a vote in both. Only about 11% of the sample reported voting for a different party in the two elections and, of those who did, a vast majority switched from a smaller to a larger party during the month between the European and the subsequent domestic election. In the Czech case, where there was no domestic election in summer 2009, no notable discrepancy between actual turnout in the EP election (28%) and the one estimated in the survey (33%) exists. Therefore, the proximity of the two elections in the Bulgarian case has probably resulted in some respondents being reluctant to admit they voted domestically but not in the EP election.

4.2   COUNTRY-LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF EUROSCEPTICISM AND POPULISM

The second half of this chapter extends the study from individuals to countries and asks the question of whether the main relationships found among individuals hold at the country level. This approach also allows for more temporal flexibility as both Euroscepticism and corruption perceptions have fluctuated over the years. According to regional trends, for example, Euroscepticism was much less pronounced in the political systems of CEE countries in the early and mid nineties when EU accession was still a distant goal. Eurosceptic parties or Eurosceptic strands within existing parties became much more common in the late nineties and the past decade. Similarly, corruption levels, while generally high in the post-communist economies of the CEE countries, did not produce nearly as much outrage among the public in the initial years of transition. The country-level analysis allows for exploring some of these trends in more detail.

In addition, while Bulgaria and the Czech Republic were selected for the surveys based on their representativeness of the region, country-specific factors almost invariably have an effect on general political developments. Extending the study to include the entire group of new member states bolsters the generalizability of the findings and also helps control for the country-specific variation that is likely to be present. The Baltic states, for example, despite having many similar features to other post-communist societies, also have a distinctive set of political characteristics due to their troubled relationship with Russia and the large Russian minorities within their borders. The country-level analysis is better equipped to control for this variation and will allow for the creation of a more complete picture of regional trends and causal relationships.

4.2.1 Models and Variable Description

For this part of the statistical analysis, I am going to use a fixed effects model as it accounts for the country-specific variation that is likely to be present. The unit of analysis is election-year and the time period covered ranges from 1990 to 2008 and covers the ten recently joined member states of the European Union: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. All parliamentary, presidential, and local elections were included in the dataset for a total of 154 observations. It should be noted, however, that data for all election-years is not available on all variables which is why some models contain a lower number of observations.

<u>Dependent Variable</u>

The dependent variables are constructed by using the percentage of vote share won by Eurosceptic, populist and mixed parties in each of the countries under consideration. Depending on the particular hypothesis, these percentages are combined to produce the dependent variable of interest.

While both populism and Euroscepticism tend to fall under the "you know it when you see" category, a coding scheme has been created to ensure consistency across countries. A party was coded as populist if it has not existed for more than two election cycles. A party was coded as Eurosceptic if it proclaims its opposition to major aspects of European integration or behaves in ways that are incompatible with European integration. Scholars have noted that some of the complexities in measuring Euroscepticism arise from parties which do not directly express anti-EU views but are "non-EU compatible" (Lewis, 2007). An example of this is the Greater Romania Party which has often been characterized as far-right, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, irredentist fringe party while at the same time refraining from direct criticism of the EU.

<u>Key Independent Variables</u>

Mainstream party similarity. Operationalizing the proximity of the mainstream political parties was conducted by using two types of measures. First of all, I use the Comparative Manifestos project which contains information on the positioning of political parties over a couple of dimensions. The different categories in Comparative Manifestos project are grouped into 7 major policy domains – External Relations, Freedom and Democracy, Political System, Fabric and Society and Social Groups. The broad range of issues covered by this coding scheme ensures a valid estimation of relative proximity of political parties in a country. Secondly, I use data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) which provides scores on the perceived positioning of all political parties on the standard ideological left-right dimension. While the Comparative Manifesto project provides a more information-rich measure of party positioning, it is not consistently available so I will the CSES scores whenever necessary. I will use the scores of solely the mainstream (non protest-based) political parties to arrive at a measure of mainstream polarization.

Using information on party positioning provided from these two sources, I have constructed a scale (ranging from 1-10) of mainstream party similarity by averaging the distance between parties on each dimension and across dimensions. In addition to calculating values for mainstream parties, I have constructed a second scale which measures party similarity when all parties are taken into consideration – mainstream and protest-based ones. This could provide a helpful descriptive illustration of how the means of the two groups are similar or different from each other.

Corruption Levels. As theorized in the previous section the effect of mainstream party similarity may be conditional on, or strengthened by, corruption levels. The measure used is

based on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which aggregates corruption perceptions every year as seen by business circles, risk analysts, investigative journalists and the general public. Respondents in the CPI index thus range from experts to regular citizens. This is a continuous variable within the range of 2-8.

Attitudes towards the European Union. The most likely alternative explanation for the overall success of Eurosceptic parties in a country centers around opposition to European integration. In order to capture this factor, I will use aggregate data on overall support/opposition to European integration and EU membership which is available in the Eurobarometers (and the Candidate Countries Eurobarometers prior to accession). It should be noted that this variable is much less nuanced than the individual-level one as Eurobarometer surveys have not consistently asked all four questions on membership, image, trust and identity in the conducted polls.

Control Variables

Economic Indicators (GDP, Unemployment, Inflation). The utilitarian framework for evaluating the European Union holds that citizens evaluate the integration process in terms of *costs* and *benefits*. For instance, citizens will support integration to the extent that policy outcomes actually result in the welfare gains predicted in the promises of politicians. Several studies have looked at whether citizens evaluate the EU based on macroeconomic performance, including growth, unemployment, and inflation (Eichenberg and Dalton, 1993; Anderson and Reichert, 1996; Gabel and Palmer, 1995). Since these macroeconomic indicators have been found to affect aggregate support for the EU, it is also possible that they influence the likelihood of a Eurosceptic vote. Moreover, populist parties are also likely to do better when citizens are dissatisfied with the economic situation as they can capitalize on this sentiment.

Proximity to Accession. Another possible predictor of Euroscepticism aims to capture the time effects of proximity to accession. It is a linear time trend measuring how many years have passed since 1990 – therefore taking values from 0 to 18. The literature has hypothesized that as accession approaches the general moods and attitudes on EU-related questions in Central and East Europe have shifted and public opinion polls seem to confirm this finding. Support for the EU in East Europe has, thus, declined in the immediate years before accession. Yet, time in itself is not a sufficient explanatory factor, which is why it would be useful to see how key factors – such as corruption perceptions and party similarity – interact with the effect of time and cause shifts in aggregate effects.

4.2.2   Findings

Given the longitudinal nature of the data, the models in this section are estimated using fixed effects. This type of estimation allows to control for country-specific factors which could interfere with the desired predictors. It should be noted, therefore, that in all models listed below country characteristics that are not explicitly modeled can be deemed accounted for by the fixed effects in the model. Table 4.11 presents the results from the two models estimated.

Table 4.11 Determinants of Vote Share Won by Populist and Mixed Parties

	Model 1	Effect of One Standard Deviation Increase	Model 2	Effect of One Standard Deviation Increase
Mainstream Party Similarity	0.092 (0.79)	0.007	0.007 (0.032)	0.003
Corruption Levels	**0.254 * (0.109)**	**0.134**	**0.012 * (0.004)**	**0.013**
Mainstream Party Similarity x Corruption Perceptions			**0.382 ** (0.102)**	**0.165**
Attitudes towards the EU	0.235 (0.220)	0.009	0.265 (0.259)	0.003
GDP	2.324 (2.299)	0.002	2.546 (2.454)	0.010
Inflation	**0.178 * (0.065)**	**0.012**	**0.167 * (0.065)**	**0.009**
Unemployment	0.674 (0.578)	0.003	0.476 (0.449)	0.003
Proximity to Accession	**0.219 * (0.107)**	**0.112**	**0.127 * (0.054)**	**0.011**
Constant	14.69 ** (4.19)		13.42 * (4.15)	
N	134		134	
F test	14.58**		65.27**	
Prop > F	0.00		0.00	
Rho	.34		.49	
Sigma_u	.31		.30	
Sigma_e	.45		.51	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*indicates statistical significance with 90% or greater confidence
**indicates statistical significance with 95% or greater confidence
***indicates statistical significance with 99% or greater confidence

The findings demonstrate that hypotheses 8 and 9 are supported while hypothesis 7 is not. H7 stated the expectation that the higher the similarity of mainstream parties, the greater the electoral share of populist and mixed parties. Results presented in table 4.11, however, show that mainstream party similarity does not seem to have an independent effect on the votes won by protest parties. Corruption levels, on the other hand, are statistically significant and in the expected direction indicating that higher corruption results in a greater share of protest vote. Comparing the substantive effects of the coefficients (presented in the third column of Table 4.11) indicates that corruption perceptions are, in fact, the strongest predictor of a protest vote along with the time trend variable Proximity to Accession.

Attitudes towards the EU do not reach statistical significance, thus adding more credibility to the findings from the individual-level analysis. From the macro-economic indicators, level of inflation seems to be positively related to the dependent variable indicating that there is some sociotropic voting in place in the Central and East European countries. Higher levels of inflation result in a greater vote share won by populist and mixed parties, since citizens become dissatisfied with the performance of mainstream political parties. The other control variable that reaches statistical significance − proximity to accession − confirms observations already made in the literature that the populist/Eurosceptic trends have developed over time and have paradoxically increased as EU accession came close.

Model 2 in Table 4.11 presents an interaction term between mainstream party similarity and corruption levels. As expected, when corruption levels are held at zero, there is no statistically significant effect of mainstream party similarity on the dependent variable. However, when mainstream party similarity is held at zero, there is still a small independent effect of corruption levels on vote share won by populist and mixed parties. The substantive effect for the

coefficient is much smaller in this model, but even a small effect in the absence of any party similarity is theoretically meaningful. The interaction effect between corruption levels and party similarity is also statistically significant and exhibits a strong substantive effect.

For a more visually clear interpretation of the conditional effect in the model, Figure 4.1 presents a graphical version of the underlying dynamics. The coefficients in an interactive model represent the effects of an independent variable on the dependent variable at varying levels of the conditional variable (Friedrich, 1982). In this case, figure 4.1 reports the conditional effect of mainstream party similarity on vote share won by protest parties at varying corruption levels. For a more intuitive interpretation, the continuous corruption category has been divided into three sub-categories corresponding to different degrees of estimated corruption.
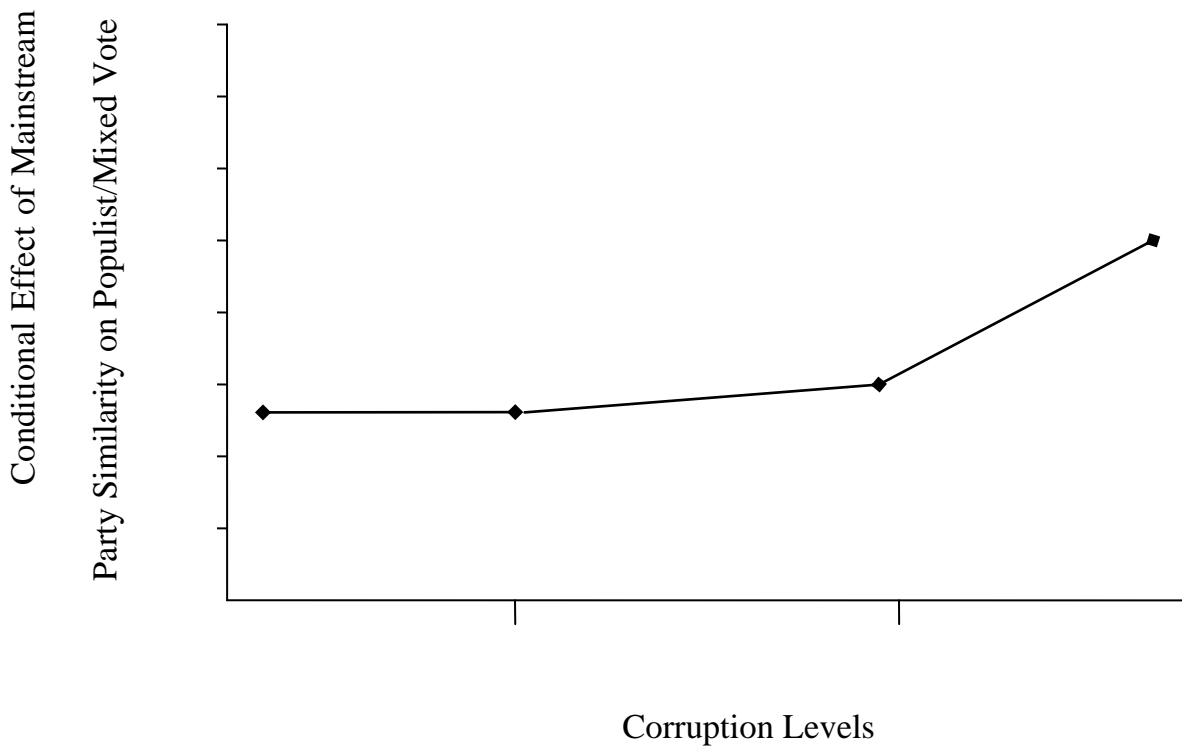

Figure 4.1 Conditional Effect of Mainstream Party Similarity on Vote Share Won by Protest Parties

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The graph demonstrates that at low levels of corruption, mainstream party similarity has, in essence, no impact on the dependent variable. As corruption levels move towards medium-high, however, there is a slight change in the slope. At high levels of corruption, the effect of mainstream party similarity on the dependent variable becomes much more notable. Higher values of mainstream party similarity thus result in a greater vote share won by protest parties when corruption levels are high. This finding lends strong support to H9 as it is clear from the graph that there is what one could call a "tipping point" before the effect of mainstream party similarity becomes consequential at the country level.

For a clearer comparison between the different factors, the relative impact of the each explanatory factor on the dependent variable has been calculated. Table 4.12 reveals that Corruption Perceptions on their own, and in combination with Mainstream Party Similarity, have a high relative impact in both models compared to the rest of the variables. Attitudes towards the EU account for about 10-14 percent of the dependent variable and inflation moves within a similar range. Of course, despite the fact that their relative impact is similar, it should be noted that inflation has been shown to have a statistically significant effect while attitudes towards the EU do not seem systematically related to the vote share of protest parties in either one of the models.

Table 4.12 Relative Impact of Each Factor on the Dependent Variable

Variable	Percentage of Total Impact (Model 1)	Percentage of Total Impact (Model 2)
Mainstream Party Similarity	2.36	3.67
Corruption Levels	21.5	15.23
Corruption Level x Mainstream Party Similarity		37.5
Attitudes towards the EU	10.25	14.5
Inflation	19.3	13.5
Unemployment	9.14	6.4
GDP	5.78	2.27
Proximity to Accession	31.67	22.93

In order to test hypothesis 10, I conducted a similar analysis using a fixed effects estimation technique but utilizing the vote share won by Eurosceptic parties this time. The results presented in Table 4.13 complement and expand the findings from the individual level analysis. Mainstream party similarity is, once again, not statistically significant, while corruption levels have a negative correlation with the dependent variable suggesting that higher domestic corruption may reduce the vote share won by Eurosceptic parties. However, the substantive effect of this variable is quite small, and so is its relative impact on the dependent variable as exhibited by Table 4.14.

Table 4.13 Determinants of Vote Share Won by Eurosceptic Parties

	Model 1	Effect of One Standard Deviation Increase	Model 2	Effect of One Standard Deviation Increase
Mainstream Party Similarity	0.356 (0.349)	0.002	0.345 (0.332)	0.002
Corruption Levels	**-0.043 * (0.016)**	**0.007**	**-0.052 * (0.021)**	**0.009**
Mainstream Party Similarity x Corruption Perceptions			**-0.068 * (0.032)**	**0.064**
Attitudes towards the EU	**-0.268 * (0.112)**	**0.165**	**-0.269 * (0.110)**	**0.174**
GDP	-3.356 (3.034)	0.007	-3.466 (2.986)	0.090
Inflation	0.247 (0.234)	0.004	0.235 (0.365)	0.003
Unemployment	0.553 (0.523)	0.005	0.089 (0.076)	0.002
Proximity to Accession	**0.281 * (0.132)**	**0.154**	**0.235 * (0.109)**	**0.162**
Constant	20.25 ** (6.76)		18.21 ** (4.95)	
N	134		134	
F test	12.26**		15.44**	
Prop > F	0.00		0.00	
Rho	.29		.34	
Sigma_u	.37		.35	
Sigma_e	.39		.43	

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*indicates statistical significance with 90% or greater confidence
**indicates statistical significance with 95% or greater confidence
***indicates statistical significance with 99% or greater confidence

Table 4.14 Relative Impact of Each Factor on the Dependent Variable

Variable	Percentage of Total Impact (Model 1)	Percentage of Total Impact (Model 2)
Mainstream Party Similarity	4.26	3.94
Corruption Levels	12.5	14.10
Corruption Level x Mainstream Party Similarity		13.38
Attitudes towards the EU	31.95	32.64
Inflation	19.25	16.46
Unemployment	10.17	3.9
GDP	7.32	1.34
Proximity to Accession	24.55	15.24

When an interaction term is included (Model 2), results do not change much, with the interaction term having a modest substantive effect. Attitudes towards the EU, on the other hand, do seem to better account for the variation in country-level vote share and their relative impact on the dependent variable is also larger. Time, again, remains a key predictor variable as the vote share won by Eurosceptic parties tends to increase over time. Macro-economic indicators, including inflation, are not systematically related to the dependent variable in this case. Differences in levels of Eurosceptic vote share across countries are, therefore, mostly due to differing attitudes towards the EU and country-specific factors absorbed by the fixed effects. Corruption perceptions do play some, though more minor, role in determining vote share.

While the individual level analysis was also able to test the determinants of value-based Euroscepticism, this kind of undertaking would likely not produce reliable results at the country level. Eurobarometer surveys, while consistently including questions on EU attitudes, do not

always include the necessary items to create country-level indicators for variables such as corruption perceptions, EU knowledge, democratic values, media exposure, social trust, etc. However, in the next chapter, more space will be devoted to evaluating general country-level trends in terms of EU attitudes and how those relate to the Eurosceptic and populist vote shares.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter tested a series of hypotheses regarding the individual-level and country-level determinants of two varieties of Euroscepticism. The first type of Euroscepticism manifests itself electorally in the platforms of either mixed or purely Eurosceptic parties. The second one is simply the genuine views and attitudes of citizens towards the EU and European integration. The findings at the individual level are largely supportive of the hypothesized relationships. The country-level analysis yielded mixed results as to the determinants of country-level Euroscepticism and populism. In addition, the findings of this chapter have provided some interesting questions for future research.

The survey analysis revealed a lot about the nature and motivations of protest voters. I was able to confirm my key prediction that electoral Euroscepticism is, to a large extent, a factor of attitudes towards the domestic political system. These factors include primarily a dissatisfaction with widespread corruption, with the convergence of mainstream political parties to the point of being too alike, and with the main political institutions. At the same time, the findings also demonstrated that attitudes towards the European Union are an explanatory factor only when it comes to voting for purely Eurosceptic parties. The analysis also revealed some

interesting relationship between social trust and protest voting as well as the presence of media effects.

Value-based Euroscepticism, on the other hand, is primarily determined by a different set of factors. When exploring what makes people support or oppose the EU, I found that corruption perceptions do matter to some extent, but in the opposite direction as compared to their effect on Eurosceptic voting. More perceived corruption seems to lead citizens to negatively evaluate their domestic leaders and institutions while positively evaluating the European Union. Socio-economic characteristics, economic satisfaction, nationalist sentiments, knowledge of the EU, social trust and media exposure were also among the factors found to be related to EU attitudes. While some of these findings are not surprising, what *is* surprising is that the things that make a person dislike the EU are not necessarily the things that make him/her vote for a partially or fully Eurosceptic party.

The country-level part of the analysis confirmed some of these findings, but provided mixed support for others. When it comes to protest voting for populist or mixed parties, findings demonstrate that the relationships found at the individual level do, in fact, hold at the country level. Mainstream party similarity and corruption levels were both found to be significant predictors of the vote share. However, while corruption perceptions had an independent effect, the effect of mainstream party similarity was conditional. At low levels of corruption, there was no systematic relationship between party similarity and the vote share of protest parties. However, once corruption levels reached high levels, greater mainstream party similarly resulted in greater vote share for populist and mixed parties.

In terms of the country-level models looking at purely Eurosceptic vote share, results from those were fairly mixed. There was some support for the proposition that corruption

perceptions have an effect, though much weaker one, on vote share. Attitudes towards the EU, however, were the key predictor along with proximity to accession and occasionally inflation. One drawback of the country-level models is that there is not enough reliable information to construct a similar set of variables as the individual-level analysis. This is why a fair amount of the variation in the model is bound to be accounted for by the country-specific fixed effects. The next chapter will try to improve our understanding of the country-level developments by developing case studies of three countries and explaining how they compare to the rest of the region.

5.0   CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, I analyze the evolution of protest parties in three cases: the Czech Republic which has high levels of *party* Euroscepticism, Estonia which possesses high levels of *public* Euroscepticism and Bulgaria which has high levels of populism in its political system. These three countries all share a communist past and similar post-communist trajectories. Nonetheless, as will be explained in more detail below, each of these cases provides rich contextual differences. One is highly homogenous in terms of its ethnic and linguistic composition (the Czech Republic); two have larger minorities (Estonia and Bulgaria). Two were among the first wave of EU enlargement and joined in 2004 (the Czech Republic, Estonia) and one had to wait until 2007 (Bulgaria). One's economy has been deemed stable enough to adopt the common European currency (Estonia); two haven't qualified yet (Bulgaria and the Czech Republic).

The three countries' pre-communist histories, as well as some aspects of the communist period, also point to different historical legacies. It is commonly believed that attitudes and values are often partly influenced by childhood experiences, cultural context and historical legacies (Zaller, 1992; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Hofstede, 2001; Mungiu-Pippidi and Mindruta, 2002). Citizens are part of societies and societies have certain norms, habits and belief systems influenced by the particular interplay of history and politics overtime. These countries provide a useful range of historical and social differences, while nonetheless having experienced

similar overarching political and economic trajectories during the communist and post-communist period.

Of course, in addition to the particular mixture of historical, economic and social characteristics observed in these countries, the major justification for their selection has to do with the distribution of Euroscepticism and populism. Bulgaria, Estonia and the Czech Republic provide the desired variation in terms of distribution of electoral and value-based Euroscepticism. The average vote share won by Eurosceptic and populist parties over the course of the post-communist period comes to 30.6% in the Czech Republic, 53% in Bulgaria and 15.4% in Estonia. These differences suggest that the case selection is suited for examining the effects of the explanatory factors. In terms of value-based Euroscepticism – one's attitudes towards the European Union as reported by survey evidence – the average EU support for the same time period was 65% in Bulgaria, 56% in the Czech Republic and 43% in Estonia[7]. These figures, while closer than the electoral averages, provide as much variation as possible given the generally sizable support for EU membership in the entire region. Table 5.1 below summarizes these statements and the relative position of the countries compared to one another.

Table 5.1 Distribution of Electoral and Value-based Indicators

	Electoral Euroscepticism and Populism	Value-based Euroscepticism
Bulgaria	High	Low
The Czech Republic	Medium	Medium
Estonia	Low	High

[7] The averages are derived from Eurobarometer surveys (or Candidate Countries Barometer when applicable).

The purpose of the chapter is twofold. First of all, as explained in the theory, Europeanization's indirect effects are held responsible for the constrained inter-party competition in the region. Since EU accession was, however, the key long-term goal for all of the CEE countries, this chapter attempts to account for the varying levels of mainstream party convergence. I trace the process of EU accession by focusing on the degree of pressure exercised by the EU on the candidate countries under investigation. The analysis seeks to demonstrate that, while membership conditions were the same across the region, the politicization of the negotiations and the interplay of domestic-EU factors resulted in varying degrees of pressure to comply with EU conditionality. Contextual characteristics of the 3 cases can help clarify these differences overtime and across countries.

Secondly, the chapter provides a closer within-country inspection of the main trends in the evolution of Euroscepticism and populism. While these trends were also explored in the second half of the previous chapter, the case studies can help illustrate the general trends by identifying aspects that fit or do not fit the theory. The analysis of each case focuses on the key independent variables – mainstream party convergence and corruption – and explores to what extent their levels across time and across cases correspond to increases in electoral gains for Eurosceptic and populist parties. For example, the findings so far demonstrate that mainstream party convergence is particularly consequential for vote choice whenever corruption perceptions are high. By identifying moments in time where particular events increased the saliency of the corruption issue in voters' minds, however, we could better understand the mechanism that activates a dormant protest vote. Corruption levels as measured by objective (to the extent possible) international indicators were also high in certain places in the early and mid-nineties

but parties formed around an anti-corruption platform were rare. The case studies are useful for examining this transformation from low to high saliency of the corruption issue.

The evidence presented in this chapter is based upon the analysis of primary and secondary sources and semi-structured interviews. More than 30 elite interviews were conducted in the summer of 2008 in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. I interviewed politicians, analysts and some former civil servants involved in the EU accession negotiations. The analysis of each case study includes assessing the scope of mainstream party convergence as influenced by Europeanization, followed by an examination of the extent of corruption in the country and finally a description of the type and evolution of key protest parties.

The next part of the chapter provides a snapshot of each country by describing key indicators such as population, ethnic and linguistic composition, economic development. After the country snapshots, a brief historical background of each case is presented. The third part of the chapter examines the manifestations of mainstream party convergence, corruption, Euroscepticism and populism within the political context.

5.1   COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

5.1.1   The Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is located in Central Europe and borders upon Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Austria. Its population, according to the most recent estimates, accounts to 10.2 million

people presiding over a territory of 78,867 sq km.[8] The country is ethnically and linguistically largely homogenous with 94% (9.6 million) of the population made up of Czechs. The Roma and Slovak minorities represent the largest minority groups at respectively 200,000 and 193,000 people. Smaller minorities include the Silesian (11,000), Polish (52,000), German (39,000), Ukrainian (22,000), and Vietnamese (40,000) ones. The major religious denomination in the country is Roman Catholic (26.8%) but the Czech Republic is known for having one of the largest non-religious populations in Europe. 40% of Czech citizens describe themselves as atheists and another 16% are uncertain. Protestants represent around 2.1% of the population.

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary republic subdivided into two main regions – Bohemia and Moravia. Since 2004, the country is a full member of the European Union. Its GDP is approximately $256.6 billion (2009 estimate) which places it at the 43rd place relative to all other countries in the world. The majority of the labor force is employed in the services (56.2%) and industry (40.2%) sectors while a smaller proportion is employed in agriculture (3.6%). The Czech Republic has a high literacy rate of 99% and its urban inhabitants comprise 73% of the population.

5.1.2   Bulgaria

Bulgaria is situated in Southeastern Europe, bordering on the Black Sea, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Romania. Its land area is 110,879 sq km and its population is 7,148,785 as of 2010 estimates. The dominant ethnic and linguistic group – Bulgarians – comprises 83.9%

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[8] The country facts presented in section 5.1 of the chapter have been obtained from the CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/) and the US Department of State Background Notes (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/index.htm).

of the population. The country has a sizable Turkish minority of 9.4% and a Roma minority of 4.7%. The remaining ethnic groups (Macedonia, Armenian, Tatar) together account for only 2% of the population. Bulgarian is spoken by 84.5% of the population, with Turkish and Roma languages coming second and third. The most common religious denomination (82.6%) is Bulgarian Orthodox followed by Muslim (12.2%) and Roman Catholic (0.6%).

Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy subdivided into 28 provinces for administrative purposes. It has been a member of the European Union since January 2007. The country's GDP amounts to $90.51 billion (2009 estimates) which places it at the 72nd place in comparative world rankings. A vast majority of the labor force is employed in the services sector (64.9%) while 27.6% belongs to the industrial sector. Bulgaria has a relatively large agricultural sector employing 7.5% of the working population. The average literacy rate is 98.2% and 71% of the population resides in urban areas.

5.1.3 Estonia

Estonia borders on the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Finland, Latvia and Russia. It is a very small country with a population of 1,291,170 people and a land area of 45,228 sq km. Estonians represent the largest ethnic and linguistic group comprising 67% of the population, but the country also has a significant Russian minority of 25.6%. Other nationalities include Ukrainian (2.1%), Belarusian (1.3%) and Finn (0.9%). While Estonian is the official language of the country nearly 33% of the population speaks a different language (mostly Russian). Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox are the most widespread religious denominations in Estonia espoused by 13.6% and 12.8% of the population respectively. Another 1.4% of the population subscribes to a different Christian denomination (including Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Roman Catholic,

Pentecostal). Estonia has an even greater number of non-religious citizens with 66% describing themselves as unaffiliated or unspecified, and another 6.1% claiming no religion (2000 census). A 2009 Gallup survey[9] of 142 countries placed Estonia as the least religious country in the world as only 14% of respondents answered positively to the question of whether religion plays an important part in their lives.

In terms of government, Estonia is a parliamentary republic subdivided into 15 counties. It is a member of the European Union since January 2004. Estonia is scheduled to be the third CEE country after Slovenia and Slovakia to adopt the Euro as its currency in January 2011. Most recent estimates assess its GDP at $24.36 billion thus granting Estonia the 112th place among countries in the world. The vast majority of the country's labor force is employed in the services sector (74.5%), followed by industry (22.7%) and agriculture (2.8%). It has a high literacy rate of 99.8% and the urban segment of the population represents 69% of the total population.

5.2   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.2.1   The Czech Republic

Czech history contains periods of remarkable progress and influence in Europe punctuated by times of war and foreign domination. The current Czech Republic consists of three historical lands – Bohemia in the West, Moravia in the southeast and small parts of Silesia in the northeast. The earliest Slavic settlers reached these territories at the beginning of the 6th century AD in

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[9] "Estonians – least religious in the world", The Baltic Course, 11.09.2009.
http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_news/?doc=2559

successive migration waves (Harvalik, 2009) and later on, during the 13th century, the Czech lands also became the target of substantial German immigration.

In the late 9th century Bohemia started developing as an independent state under the auspices of the Premyslid dynasty and was an important regional actor during most of the Middle Ages. Despite being part of the Holy Roman Empire, Bohemia remained largely autonomous and influential within the empire. Charles IV, second king of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, even made Prague the seat of the empire and a center of Latin Scholarship. Charles the IV additionally asserted the autonomy of the Czech lands by issuing a constitutional charter on the creation of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown. His reign during the 14th century is considered the Golden Age of Czech history and the Bohemian kingdom would then remain in the same territorial form until 1635 (Teich, 1998).

After being severely afflicted by the Black Plague much like the rest of Europe, the Bohemian lands experienced a period of religious turmoil in the 15th century. Jan Hus, a Czech scholar and preacher started a religious movement aimed at reforming Christianity and was eventually burned for heresy. His ideas, however, lived on through his followers known as Hussites. Hussite beliefs, combined with mounting Czech resentment of German imperialism, resulted in a general rebellion in Bohemia (Halverson, 2007). Despite being defeated in the rebellion, the Hussite movement was granted the right to enact their religious ideas without interference from the papacy or German bishops, thus transforming the Bohemian lands into an area of religious tolerance (Halverson, 2007; Agnew, 2004).

In 1526 Ferdinand I of Habsburg took up the Bohemian throne thus initiating Habsburg rule over the country which was to last until 1918. After a brief period of renewed cultural progress, the Bohemian kingdom became embroiled in the Thirty Years War between Protestant

leaders and the Habsburg Empire. The victory of the Habsburgs resulted in the end of religious freedoms and the banning of all religions except Catholicism. The Czech language, culture and national consciousness were suppressed for the next 150 years and Bohemia's inhabitants forced to adopt German customs in what became known as a "time of darkness" in Czech history (Agnew, 2004; Cornej and Pokorny, 2000).

The subsequent reign of Maria Theresa of Austria and her son Joseph II ended the Dark Age and brought new freedoms and national revival to the Czech lands. It was during that time that the Czech inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia "became a nation both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the outside world" (Auty, 1956). Advances in science, culture and art boosted the developing Czech identity and a distinctive Czech political style began to emerge as well – one characterized by "practicality and rationality, instead of audacity and romanticism" (Rothschild, 1974).

This renewed sense of national identity and social progress spurred a desire among Czechs to achieve greater autonomy and self-rule from their foreign rulers. After the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, Bohemia had become a part of the Austrian empire, and later of the Austria-Hungary one. While Czech discontent did not result in a violent rebellion during the so-called Springtime of Nations – a period of political and revolutionary upheaval in Europe – it spurred persistent attempts by Czech leaders to reform the empire and achieve greater autonomy. Negotiations and passive resistance such as political boycotts finally resulted in a compromise reached in 1879 when Czech representatives returned to the legislature and supported the Austro-Hungarian government while also working towards gaining small concessions for Czech nationhood (Agnew, 2000).

For the remaining time prior to World War I, Czechs remained under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while preserving their sense of national identity and maintaining political representation in the legislature. During the war, exiled and expatriated members of the political elite lobbied among Western powers for their right to post-war self-determination. The defeat of the Central Alliance and the subsequent breakdown of the Austria-Hungarian Empire provided Czechs and Slovaks, among other East European peoples, with the opportunity to proclaim their independence. At the post-war Versailles conference, the principle of self-determination was championed by influential Western politicians, including US President Woodrow Wilson. Self-determination was understood as granting nations statehood "along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality" (Leff, 1997). The settlement was "particularly generous" to Czech and Slovak territorial claims granting them nearly all of the claimed territory. The territorial victory was, however, in retrospect often seen as a double-edged sword since the new lands of independent Czechoslovakia came with large minority populations (Hungarians, Poles, Germans) and potential for future territorial disputes (Leff, 1997).

Politically, the newly formed Czechoslovakian state was a democracy governed by a unicameral national assembly. The system of proportional representation adopted by the republic resulted in an inclusive multi-party system which accommodated ideological and ethnic divisions across the country. Presidents were democratically elected and, despite lacking substantial powers, were often able to enhance their authority through their moral and intellectual prestige – something that contrasted with other Central European leaders of that age who were often military leaders and favored centralized rule (Fawn, 2000). Czechoslovakia succeeded in avoiding the rise of fascist and generally anti-democratic parties within its territory by effective party politics combining repressive strategies towards extremists (party bans) with attempts to

integrate them back into the political system (Capoccia, 2001). The country also possessed a legacy of relative autonomy and self-rule for a large part of its history, despite formal belonging to the Holy Roman and the Habsburg empires. This legacy, coupled with a history of early religious reformation and a move towards secularism, is often credited with the stability of its postwar democracy (Braghiroli, 2007). Czechoslovakia was the only Central or East European country to maintain democracy throughout the entire interwar period and its collapse during WWII has been largely attributed to overwhelming external rather than internal pressures.

Despite its notably strong democratic performance, compared to its counterparts, the Czechoslovak state was not without its problems. The economic depression of the 1920 had severely affected the country. The regions inhabited by Sudeten Germans and the Slovak portion of the republic were particularly afflicted (Fawn, 2000). The Slovak economy had already been lagging in competitiveness to the Czech one and the economic disparities exacerbated the project of creating a common Czechoslovak identity. Slovaks, moreover, feared that centralized rule from Prague was leading towards a much more Czech-oriented national identity (Cohen, 1999). The movement towards creating an independent Czechoslovak nation had been led mostly by Czech and Slovak émigrés and T.G. Masaryk, a Czech philosopher, and leader of the independence movement was not a proponent of Slovak autonomy. He concluded the "Pittsburgh Agreement" with the Slovak League of America where he reluctantly promised Slovaks a certain degree of autonomy but after the formation of the Czechoslovak republic he distanced himself from the agreement (Stolarik, 2003). Combined with the economic disparities that existed between the Czech and Slovak regions of the country, this move towards centralization caused a certain degree of friction between the two nationalities (Cohen, 1999).

Similarly, efforts at integration of the German population in the Sudeten regions were not particularly successful despite invitations to participate in government and the provision to receive education in the German language. Discontent among the German minority persisted and resulted in the pro-Nazi National Front Party winning two thirds of the Sudeten German vote. Its leader advocated for a federal solution to the statehood issue in Czechoslovakia. The Sudeten German minority during the interwar period is thus often considered the greatest challenge to the Czechoslovak state concept (Cornwall and Evans, 2007).

Thanks to its fairly strong democratic record, Czechoslovakia never experienced a serious internal threat but it was nonetheless invaded and occupied by external forces during World War II. The issue of the Sudeten Germans played in the hands of German Chancellor Adolf Hitler who used it as a pretext to target Czechoslovakia (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000). Hitler demanded the cession of the Sudeten region to the Third Reich under the threat of war. Britain and France – unwilling to risk a confrontation with Germany and still believing Hitler's territorial ambitions were not far-reaching - advised the Czechoslovak government to concede. Thus, under pressure from both allies and adversaries, Czechoslovak President Edvard Benes exceeded his constitutional authority and accepted the ultimatum while circumventing parliament (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000).

However, unsatisfied with possession of only Sudetenland, Hitler invaded and occupied the Czech lands in March 1939. The former country became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and was annexed to the Third Reich. Humiliated and unable to defend themselves against the strong German army, Czechs were left with an entrenched sense of betrayal against Western powers (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000). At the same time, the Czech and Slovak experiences during WWII diverged and generated some distrust between the two nationalities.

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While Bohemia and Moravia were annexed as a Protectorate, Hitler used the Slovak bid for independence to his advantage by allowing Slovakia to declare independence while assuring that it remained a servile state. Czechs interpreted Slovak assistance to Germany as 'treason' while Slovaks viewed the Check pragmatic attitude of leading "frugal and frightened but otherwise normal lives" as complacency (Fawn, 2000).

Despite their different experiences during the Nazi occupation, Czechs and Slovaks joined forces again after Hitler's defeat and Czechoslovakia was reestablished with its pre-war borders largely intact. The heavy legacy of the war included approximately 340,000 Czechoslovak citizens killed and hundreds of thousands sent into concentration camps or used as forced labor. The psychological impact, on the other hand, was more devastating for the Slovaks which had assisted the Nazi regime and their war-time leader Josef Tiso was executed for his activities in support of Nazism. Czech sense of national pride, on the other hand, was fairly unscathed with the exception of a disillusionment with their Western allies.

It was not long after it had been liberated from Nazi forces, however, that the Czechoslovak state became subjugated to another dictatorial regime. In 1947 the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) won more votes than any of the other contenders and soon asserted itself as the dominant political force. At that time, the Czechoslovak communist party still enjoyed genuine support among a population already suspicious of the West and grateful to the Soviet forces for their military aid in the fight against Nazi occupation (Fawn, 2000).

For the next 45 years Czechoslovakia would remain under communist control functioning largely as a Soviet puppet state. The limited sovereignty enjoyed by the Czechoslovak state became apparent as early as 1947 when a decision to accept the American offer for economic assistance under the Marshall plan was quickly reversed after receiving orders from the Soviet

delegation (Renner, 1990). The communist puppet regime then engaged in Soviet-inspired practices that were to become common across East Central Europe. The economy was brought under state control and a system of central planning was instituted. Following Soviet policy, a major push toward developing the heavy industry was undertaken. Massive increases in industrial output, however, were paralleled by low labor productivity and poor quality of products. Private property was seized and agriculture was collectivized. Opposition of the kulaks – the richer and more productive farmers – and general resistance from the peasantry, however, resulted in a decline of agricultural production. The Communist leadership embarked on a campaign to penetrate and control all aspects of life, including economy, culture, education, science and art (Wolchik, 1998).

The first and greatest challenge to Soviet rule in Czechoslovakia came in 1968 when sweeping reforms proposed by party reformers and aimed at implementing "socialism with a human face" threatened to undermine the underpinnings of the orthodox communist regime. The practical policies of the reform program would increase political and social freedoms, decrease censorship and party intervention in private life, and finally decentralize the economy in an attempt to foster economic growth. The Czechoslovak economy had severely stagnated in the early 1960s and its industrial growth rate was the lowest in East Europe. Despite Alexander Dubcek's status as a communist party leader and his framing of the reforms as merely improvements towards socialism rather than a regime challenge, Warsaw Pact forces led by the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia and put an end to the reform program (Agnew, 2004; Wolchik, 1998). These events became known as the Prague Spring and had a lasting effect on Czech attitudes towards communism.

The period following the failed Prague Spring was known as 'normalization' – a restoration of the pre-1968 state of the country. This involved renewed political repression, purging of the reformists within the party and increased censorship. Arguably, the Czech intelligentsia was treated harsher than the Slovak one and pushed harder into dissent while the Slovak elites collaborated with Moscow more eagerly (Eyal, 2003). At the level of common citizens, the communist regime emphasized obedience and conformity among the population and, having witnessed the fate of reform attempts, citizens became largely apathetic and distanced themselves to the extent possible from political activity. Some underground dissident groups were still formed, but their reach was limited and members were often captured and imprisoned (Wolchik, 1998).

In the mid and late 1980s the reform policies of 'glasnost' (openness) and 'perestroika' (economic restructuring) initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev brought forth another era in Soviet satellite states, including Czechoslovakia. Realizing the Soviet planned economy and widespread political repression were unsustainable, Gorbachev embarked on an ambitious reform program which ultimately initiated a chain reaction of anti-communist movements in all of Central and East Europe. With Polish and Estonian revolutions already on the way, events in the Czech Republic unfolded fast to bring an end to 45 years of communist rule.

A peaceful demonstration in Prague commemorating International Students' Day and the 50th anniversary of the execution of Czech students by the Nazis was suppressed by government military forces. The uncalled for intervention ignited widespread protests across the nation and Vaclav Havel, a famous playwright and an active opposition leader, established the Civic Forum – a political organization to counteract the Communist party (Dowling 2002; Agnew, 2004). In December 1989 the communist leadership resigned from power and Vaclav Havel was elected

the president of the Czechoslovak Republic. The bloodless regime change conducted through largely peaceful means became known as a 'velvet revolution' and was made possible in part by Gorbachev's pledge to refrain from using military means to suppress resistance movements.

The peaceful dissolution of the communist regime through the means of elite negotiations is often seen by democratization theorists as a promising sign. Higley and Burton (1998) suggest that post-communist countries where regime change happened through a "pact of elites" had greater chances of successful democratic consolidation. The Round Table Talks conducted by Communist parties and the respective oppositional movements in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, for example, can be taken as an indicator of a transformation through an "elite pact" (Stefan-Scalat, 2000). In addition to pro-Western public sentiment, Czechoslovakia thus exhibited favorable conditions for democratization at the elite level as well.

The first free parliamentary election in Czechoslovakia took place in June 1990 with an overwhelmingly high turnout of 95%. The growing unpopularity of the Communist Party ever since the suppression of the Prague Spring and the general enthusiasm for the transition to democracy created the pre-conditions for the outpouring of voter participation – a phenomenon that subsided and brought Czech turnout to the much lower and much more common levels in subsequent elections. Unsurprisingly, anti-communist organizations such as the Civic Forum won a comfortable majority and formed a government. The Communist Party was left with only 13% of the votes indicating that ever since the very first free election citizens in Czechoslovakia embraced democratic and pro-Western values. In contrast, the first free election in Bulgaria was won by the Communist Party, albeit by a slim majority. Czech citizens' apparent support for moving towards a Western-style democracy was reciprocated in the West by highly favorable assessments of foreign analysts, scholars and political leaders. In fact, for a period of time in the

early to mid-nineties, "it was almost impossible to read anything negative about the Czech Republic" (Shepherd, 2000).

However, while effectively bringing down the Communist regime, dissident groups proved unable to effectively govern as they are often unfamiliar with many features of everyday politics (Lomax, 1995; Rose, 1995). Civic Forum thus dissolved in 1991 and several new parties formed in its place, the most prominent of which was the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) led by Vaclav Klaus. The party presided over the so-called 'velvet' divorce just a year later when the Czech Republic and Slovakia peacefully parted ways and became separate states (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000). As noted previously, Czechs and Slovaks never fully succeeded in forming a joint national identity and followed somewhat different paths during WWII and the communist era. These legacies were exacerbated by the political disagreements that arose after the fall of communism. Slovak nationalism gained political grounds through the populist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia which became the dominant party in the Slovak regions. Its leader Vladimir Meciar opposed the fast privatization and liberalization policies favored by Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus.

As a result, despite only lukewarm support from the public (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000; Shepherd, 2000), Klaus and Meciar reached an agreement on the velvet divorce and Czechoslovakia officially ceased to exist on January 1, 1993. The split did not have much effect on the Czech trajectory of rapid pro-market and pro-democratic reforms. The institutions of governance had already been in place in Prague and the country had a legacy of greater self-rule throughout the centuries. The Czechs regions had always been more economically prosperous and its citizens had a well-instilled sense of national identity. In Slovakia, by contrast, the

"ongoing transition to liberal democracy was compromised and held up as a direct consequence of the split" (Shepherd, 2000).

The Czech transition in the 1990s was consequently viewed as more "on track" and the party system, for example, already exhibited by 1996 some characteristics found in consolidated democracies. Much like in Western Europe, a one-dimensional left-right axis was able to successfully predict the structure of party competition and voter preferences (Kitschelt, 1994; Brokl, 1994; Vlachova, 1996). Parties differed largely on their views about socioeconomic policy such as the role of the state in the market economy, the optimal pace of privatization, the scope of welfare benefits. The only party emphasizing issues of cultural and anti-minority nature – the Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSC) – held a fairly marginal spot in the party system. Social cleavages similarly had little effect on the structure of Czech party competition. Parties did not seem to have stable constituencies and none of them were anchored in the divisions of society (Elster, Offe, Preuss, 1997; Karasimeonov et al, 1999). Competition thus revolved largely around an ideological left-right dimension unlike neighboring Slovakia where populist and nationalist political discourse dominated part of the 1990s.

The Czech political system thus began to resemble the "normal" Western European democracies fairly early in the transition process and, despite the inevitable economic and political hurdles, is in retrospect considered to have enjoyed a fairly linear and smooth transition. Czech society during the early transformational period was fairly aware and acceptant of the short term negative consequences of reform such as price shocks. As social and economic inequality grew, the consensus in favor of reforms decreased, but comparatively speaking the

citizens of the Czech Republic withered the shocks of the initial market reforms in a pragmatic and calm manner (Cornej and Pokorny, 2000).

Overall, the history of the Czech Republic has given Czech citizens much to be proud of, such as managing to maintain democratic rule in the interwar years and experiencing long periods of relative or full self-governance throughout the ages. The Soviet period was met with resistance and resentment by Czechs. The failed Prague Spring resulted in a more complacent but alienated relationship with the regime. After the Velvet Revolution, Czechs were quick to turn away from communism and embrace Western values and practices. A final attempt at building a common identity with Slovaks failed due to political disagreements. Historical experiences had left the two nations with different cultural legacies and different socio-economic characteristics leading to the final split.

5.2.2 Bulgaria

Bulgarian history is marked by highly contrasting periods ranging from imperial prosperity, military might and cultural progress to foreign domination, repression and sluggish development. Bulgaria's geographic location on the ethnically, linguistically and culturally very diverse Balkan peninsula and the frequent redrawing of the country's boundaries have been influential factors in the country's experiences throughout the ages. This section will give a concise description of major periods in Bulgarian history and their potential consequences for politics and society.

The territories which now constitute the state of Bulgaria are known to be among the first in Europe to witness the emergence of "organized social life" (Crampton, 2006). These lands were subsequently ruled by the Persian and Roman empires until Khan Kubrat united the disparate Bulgarian tribes and established the Bulgarian state in 681. The origins of current

Bulgarians can be traced to three different tribes inhabiting the Balkan regions – the Indo-European Thracians, the Slavs and the Central Asian Bulgars. Several years later, the First Bulgarian Kingdom under Tsar Simeon I (893-927) emerged. His rule is often known as a golden age when art and literature flourished (Forbes et. al, 2004). At the height of its power, the Bulgarian Kingdom ranged from Budapest to the Black Sea and from the Dnieper River in Ukraine to the Adriatic Sea. During the 9th century, Christianity became the dominant religion in Bulgaria and the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced. Bulgarian culture to the present day treats the fact that the Cyrillic alphabet was developed in Bulgaria as a source of national pride. The successes of the First Bulgarian Kingdom were not enough, however, to forever ward off powerful enemies. Bulgarian tsars and the aristocracy arguably fell into the trap of "folie de grandeur" and assumed that any enemy can be contained (Crampton, 2006).

Bulgaria's chief adversary in the Balkans was the Byzantine Empire. The two fought several wars against each other but also joined forces to fight a united front against outside invaders. Byzantine culture and religion had a strong influence on Bulgarian lands and occasionally Bulgarian rulers would attempt to curb these influences in an effort to preserve a uniquely Bulgarian culture (Crampton, 2006). In 1018 Bulgaria officially fell under the rule of the Byzantine Empire, albeit only for a century. Despite the loss of independence, Bulgaria experienced fairly little interference in its affairs during this period. Successive rebellions against the empire finally succeeded in the re-instatement of the Bulgarian state. Once independent again, the Bulgarian Kingdom promptly engaged in military attacks against Serbia and Hungary successfully expanding Bulgaria's Western borders (Hupchick and Cox, 2001).

The Second Bulgarian Kingdom existed until the early 15th century and was a dominant power in the Balkans. During the rule of Tsars Kaloyan and Ivan Assen II in particular, the

country enjoyed significant military and economic strength and its territorial boundaries were the largest in its history. Throughout the years, Bulgaria expanded to the south and west at the expense of the Latin Empire, undermined Latin influence in the Balkans and won recognition for an independent Bulgarian Patriarchate of Turnovo (Hupchik and Cox, 2001).

Until the 14th century, the Bulgarian lands thus experienced a long period of growth and military might. Historical legacies from these times include a sense of Bulgaria's past greatness and territorial vastness. The Bulgarian kingdoms engaged in frequent conflicts with neighboring countries in what was a typical for the Balkans constant redrawal of boundaries. In the 14th century, however, Bulgarian might started to wane and history took an unfortunate turn for the country. A rising Serbia defeated and subordinated Bulgaria in 1330. Serbian domination, however, was short-lived since the Ottoman Empire was similarly on the rise at the time and in 1393 its forces conquered and subjugated the Bulgarian lands.

From 1393 until 1878 the Bulgarian state did not exist, national progress was paralyzed and "what stood in those days for national consciousness was obliterated" through the forced assimilation into Ottoman culture (Forbes et. al, 2004). Unlike the Byzantine Empire, the Ottomans did not permit much autonomy to the subjugated nations and Bulgarian institutions of governance were dismantled. Bulgarian folklore and culture abounds with stories of suffering, oppression and injustices experienced by the Bulgarian population at the time. Works of art commemorating the heroism and martyrdom of resistance fighters during the Ottoman yoke are often among mandatory school reads up until present day.

The harshest aspects of Ottoman rule involved the many reported cases of forced Islamization of the population, the so-called "blood tax" where every 5th newborn boy was taken and trained to be a soldier in the Sultan's army (Crampton, 1997; Hupchick, 2002). While the

cultural and religious aspects of Ottoman rule were fairly oppressive, the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Bulgarian lands was not entirely negative. During the 19th century, in particular, some Bulgarian towns experienced a period of economic growth and witnessed advances in communication, transportation and trade.

Bulgarian history and culture contain numerous accounts - some historically substantiated, others more in the realm of myths and legends - about attempts at liberation from the Ottomans. The first uprising happened as early as 1408 and sporadic rebellions occurred throughout the ages. The 19th century, however, witnessed an increase in intensity, organizational scope and frequency of revolutionary outbreaks. These developments culminated in what came to be known as the Bulgarian National Revival. The Ottoman Empire was experiencing general decline and was plagued by internal and external problems, resulting in weakening of control over the subordinate nations. In 1876 Bulgarians organized - and were defeated in - the so-called April Uprising. The cruelty of the Ottoman forces in suppressing the revolt, however, resulted in a public outcry among liberal circles in Western Europe. This Europe-wide reaction gave Russia the long-awaited opportunity to embark on a military attack against the Ottomans (Ertl, 2008). The offensive proved successful and the subsequent Treaty of San Stefano re-instated the independent Bulgarian state in a territory roughly coinciding with the nation's ethnic boundaries.

The treaty was, however, revised by the Treaty of Berlin later that year in which Western powers substantially scaled down the size of the proposed Bulgarian state, largely due to fear of rising Russian influence on the Balkans (Forbes et. al, 2004). The Berlin Treaty is often seen in Bulgaria as a betrayal by Western nations for the sake of Great Power politics. Not surprisingly, it is the date of signing the San Stefano Treaty that is commemorated as Bulgaria's national

holiday while the anniversary of signing the Berlin Treaty is rarely acknowledged. Ultimately, the 5 centuries spent under Ottoman rule did not obliterate the Bulgarian nation and culture. However, historical memories of domination and suppression, fueled by legends and folklore, and at times by populist politicians, would play into Bulgarian perceptions of Turkey and the Turkish minority up to the present.

The rest of the 19th century saw an independent Bulgaria achieve a surprising rate of economic progress. Bulgaria's constitution, largely crafted with foreign help, made provisions for an "ultra-democratic" system for which Bulgarians were not prepared after centuries of no self-rule. The initial governance attempts failed miserably, only to be substituted by a brief de facto dictatorship of the President of Parliament Stefan Stambolov (Forbes et.al, 2004). Stambolov's iron-fisted rule did, however, restore order in the fragile state of Bulgaria and he was eventually replaced by a more democratic successor.

The 20th century was a tumultuous time in Bulgarian history, marred by political and social unrest. Bulgaria's territorial ambitions and the attempt to incorporate all ethnic Bulgarians in the type of vast state that existed prior to the Ottoman rule prompted it to become involved in the two Balkans wars of 1912 and 1913. While being on the winning side, Bulgaria suffered the highest number of casualties in the first Balkan war and was fully defeated in the second (Hall, 2000). Territorial expansion thus remained unfulfilled and Balkan boundaries remained disputed by Bulgaria, as well as by most of the countries inhabiting the region.

Bulgaria's participation in the First World War on the side of the Central Powers had everything to do with the "unrealized ideal of national unification" (Ertl, 2008). Germany promised Bulgaria a return to the country's San Stefano borders in exchange for assistance in the war. The first half of the war was fairly propitious for Bulgarians as they achieved military

victories against Serbia and Romania, while also occupying most of Macedonia. Domestic turmoil, however, put a halt on the military expansion. The war had become highly unpopular among the population as it was seen as the cause of severe economic hardship. Moreover, the Russian Revolution of 1917 affected Bulgarian society by instilling a certain dose of anti-monarchist sentiment. The government was forced to resign under public unrest and disobedience in the army. King Ferdinand abdicated in an effort to save the monarchy and was succeeded by his eldest son (Gilbert, 2004). With the end of World War I and the signing of the Versailles Treaty, Bulgaria was punished by having some of the territories acquired since 1912 taken away. As a result, resentment against the treaty became widespread in Bulgaria and Bulgarians refused to consider it final (Hupchick and Cox, 2001).

During the interwar years democratic governance was mostly absent, unlike in the Czech Republic. Bulgarian politics was in a very volatile and tumultuous state and political repression and murders were not uncommon. Initially, a radical agrarian agenda was implemented by Alexander Stamboliiski whose political style was ruthless and authoritarian. He was killed in a coup staged by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) which promoted nationalist agitation and eventually devolved into a racketeering gangster formation resorting to violence and empty slogans (Hupchick and Cox, 2001). Progressive intellectuals organized another coup, ousted the IMRO and established a one year dictatorship in an attempt to restore order. However, the political situation by 1935 had been reduced to near anarchy. Tsar Boris responded by instituting a royal dictatorship, but amongst the permeating communist activity, his rule also proved unpopular.

On the eve of World War II Bulgaria was in a less than favorable political and economic condition. Much like with WWI, the country's decision to ultimately side with Nazi Germany

was the result of territorial ambitions. The Entente had repeatedly refused to accept Boris's requests for revising the post-WWI territorial terms.

During the war, Bulgarian forces invaded and occupied Macedonia which represented the greatest share of their involvement in the war. King Boris refused to declare war on the Soviets unlike Hitler's other allies. He also refused to send Bulgarian Jews to the Nazi concentration camps despite Germany's wishes (Ertl, 2008). When the tide of war turned against the Nazi alliance, Soviet forces invaded and occupied Bulgaria installing a puppet government and declaring a People's Republic. For the next 45 years Bulgaria would be firmly within the Soviet sphere of influence.

The peace treaty following WWII also deprived Bulgaria of most of its wartime territorial gains thus once again shattering unwavering Bulgarian hopes for restoring their former greatness. Saving Bulgarian Jews from deportation and likely death would remain the only act generating uncontested national pride in the future. Bulgaria's experiences in the 20th century from the Balkan wars to its attempts to play alongside Great Powers in the two world wars also solidified the general sense of distrust of the West instilled from the fate of the San Stefano treaty.

The communist regime in Bulgaria is often viewed as having been the most stable and Moscow-friendly one in Europe. Its eventual demise was a factor of mostly external developments such as the general collapse of the Soviet-sponsored regimes across the region (Dimitrov, 2002). The evolution of the communist regime in Bulgaria mirrored to some extent developments across East Europe. Regime consolidation in the late 40s was achieved through massive purges of dissidents, state takeover of the economy and nearly every aspect of life. Stalin's death, however, brought a relaxation of terror policies. The reign of Bulgarian

communist leader Todor Zhivkov, while strictly following Moscow's orders and communist dogma, was not exceedingly oppressive (with the exception of the forced assimilation of the ethnic Turks, see discussion below). Bulgarians benefited from an economic progress that made them one of the more prosperous Soviet satellites and their loyalty to Moscow made them a valuable ally (Gruev, 2008).

Bulgaria never experienced the type of mass public uprisings seen in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In fact, the Bulgarian public seemed to be one of the most favorably inclined towards the Soviet Union and the Zhivkov regime enjoyed relative complacency on the part of the population, if not active support. Some of the reasons for these sentiments include the contrast between Bulgaria's pre-war times and the communist period, as well as distant historical legacies. As described above, Bulgaria post-liberation society had suffered and mostly lost many wars and battles, the economy was drained, the prewar political leadership was in disarray and the country's experience with democracy had been very short. The communist system brought industrial growth, economic security and order in a previously tumultuous society. In addition, historical experiences had instilled a sense of distrust in Bulgarians towards the Western powers while Russians were still regarded with affinity due to their assistance during Bulgaria's Ottoman liberation.

A distinctive feature of Zhivkov's communist regime was its increasingly nationalist rhetoric and policies. Many ethnic Turks and Pomaks (people of Bulgarian origin whose ancestors converted to Islam during the Ottoman age) fled the country after being deprived of their lands. A major assimilation campaign was launched in the 1970s and 1980s when many Pomaks and Turks were forced to take Bulgarian names in the hope of diluting their ethnic identity. When Turks organized peaceful resistance in some villages, the army was sent in and

rebels were either forced to submit, sent to prison or killed (Zhelyazkova, 2001). Many other members of the minority fled the country fearing for their lives or identities.

Soon after the forced assimilation process, the Bulgarian communist regime began to crumble. Zhivkov had not put any real effort into implementing the economic reforms advanced by Gorbachev's perestroika. The Bulgarian economy was stagnant and near the brink of unsustainability. The chain reaction of anti-communist movements in Central and East Europe caught up with Bulgaria and mass demonstrations against the regime were organized by an ecological organization. Like the majority of other regime changes in the region, the Bulgarian transformation was largely peaceful. The Communist party strategically gave up its hold on power and the first free elections were held in June 1990. However, those elections were in fact won by the Communist party signifying the reluctance of a large part of Bulgarian society to part with the familiarity of communism. Forty-five percent of surveyed Bulgarians, for example, agreed in 1994 that it is "best to get rid of Parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can quickly decide things" (Rose and Haepfer, 1994). Bulgaria's transformation thus was only partial and the communists maintained significant influence until 1997 (Crampton, 2006). Society was not fully sold yet on the democratic idea.

Consequently, the political system in the early and mid-nineties revolved around the communist issue cleavage. The major oppositional force – the Union of the Democratic Forces (UDF) won a slim majority in the 1992 elections and governed until 1994. But internal divisions coupled with the difficulty experienced by the UDF in transitioning from an anti-communist pre-political movement into a modern party organization, hindered the effectiveness of the government (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Market reforms were initiated including a large scale privatization program which, however, moved slowly and was plagued by corruption and

inefficiencies. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (the re-named Communist Party) was back in power in 1994 after a popular election but the economic situation in the country had sharply worsened after the disorderly and patchy transformation from communism to market capitalism. Unemployment and inequality skyrocketed in the new democracy and an unprecedented economic crisis in 1996-1997 brought down the Socialist government after widespread demonstrations (Giatzidis, 2002). Since 1997, despite various bumps in the process, Bulgaria's democratic transition assumed a firmly pro-Western, pro-capitalist road; joining NATO and the European Union became key goals.

Ethnic relations in the new Bulgarian society were also a source of tension for a while. Following the attempted assimilation process by Todor Zhivkov, divisive rhetoric and nationalist sentiments had intensified. Shortly after the regime change, there existed tangible danger of ethnic violence in mixed regions and 69% of ethnic Bulgarians believed that minority groups within the country pose a serious threat to the country's unity and territorial integrity (Vassilev, 2001). Nonetheless, both of the two major parties tried to avoid polarizing the issue and included some legal protections for minorities in the new constitution. Another mitigating factor was the formation of an ethnic-based party representing the Turkish minority (the Movement for Rights and Freedoms) which, by means of necessity, became an automatic coalitional partner to successive governments from both right and left. While the Bulgarian constitution explicitly forbids the creations of parties on an ethnic, religious or racial basis, the constitutionality of the MRF survived a court challenge in 1992 and, for all intents and purposes, it preserved its de facto status as the party representing the Turkish minority. For the majority of the post-communist transition onwards, ethnic tensions were kept at bay and despite latent distrust

between Bulgarians and Turks, the issue was not politicized until populist actors began to use it to their advantage in the mid 2000s.

In summary, Bulgarian history has gone through periods of military might and territorial expansion, but it never fully recovered from the five centuries of Ottoman rule. Bulgaria's quest to regain some of the territories it regards as its historical property had disastrous consequences for the country in both world wars. The interwar period was marked by initial democratic rule but the country's lack of self-governance experience hindered democratic consolidation and eventually resulted in a rather chaotic political system. The communist decades brought order and some socio-economic improvements to Bulgarian society which partially explains the slow pace of reform and the continued strength of the communist party in the early years of transition.

Unlike Czechs who were quick to move away from their communist past, Bulgarians had much more favorable historical attitudes towards Russia and the Soviet Union. Russian military assistance for Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire held a special place in Bulgarian national culture and the sense of affinity to Russia reduced the opposition to the communist regime. Thus, Bulgaria embarked on its post-communist period with less pronounced pro-Western orientation than its fellow CEE states and a stronger nostalgia among the population for the safety nets of the communist lifestyle. Bulgaria's explicit commitment to reform and parting with the communist past came as late as 1997 after severe socio-economic shocks that would scar the population and create the pre-conditions for a populist wave.

5.2.3 Estonia

Estonia's strategic geographic location in the Eastern Baltic region near a number of important trade ports has made it an attractive and sought after destination for European powers over the

ages. From the initial settlers in the Estonian lands until the fall of communism, Estonia has been an independent country for only 22 years. Its national consciousness is thus heavily influenced by the idea of independence and the historical legacy of foreign occupation. Estonia's small size and population have contributed to its vulnerability to invaders, but at the same time have enabled its population to cohesively struggle to preserve Estonian identity and culture.

The earliest settlers in Estonian lands lived on the southeastern shores of the Baltic Sea. They lived in agricultural societies composed by self-sufficient clans with little difference in wealth and power. Before German conquest, Estonian lands lacked a centralized hierarchical structure. Political and administrative units began to emerge at the local level only. Thus, despite not being foreign-dominated during the prehistoric period, Estonian lands lacked a major unifying political or social structure that is the basis of statehood (Raun, 2002).

In the 12th century, Estonia remained the only region in medieval Europe that wasn't Christianized. German and Northern European crusaders eventually made their way to Estonian lands, and despite encountering strong resistance, colonized and divided Estonian territories. By the winter of 1220 almost the entire continental Estonia was under German or Danish control (Taagepera, 1993). Tired of the frequent uprisings, Denmark eventually sold its Estonian lands to the Livonian order. Many wars for the control of the Estonian lands followed. Northern Europeans, Germans, Russians and other Baltic states all had chunks of Estonia at various times. In the 16th century, the Estonian lands were still controlled by Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Poland-Lithuania (Frucht, 2004). In 1645, however, a strong and militant Sweden conquered the entire territory of Estonia. Swedish rule came to be known as the "good old Swedish days" as it resulted in a slight improvement in the plight of the peasant population and social progress (Frucht, 2004).

In the early 18th century the Estonians lands experienced war and disaster. Nearly 80% of Tallinn's population died in the course of war, starvation and diseases. A stronger Russia defeated the Swedish empire and conquered the Estonian lands. During Russia's rule, serfdom was abolished and education was improved. However, harsh conditions in the countryside persisted and rebellions were not uncommon. Furthermore, formal emancipation from serfdom did not abolish the de facto subjugation of the peasantry to the, mostly German, nobility (Raun, 2002). Estonia remained under Russian imperial domination for two centuries, albeit retaining a level of local self-governance.

In the mid centuries Estonia was affected by the wave of national awakening that swept across Europe. The ideas of the Enlightenment and the news of the French Revolution had a powerful impact on the Estonian population. A movement demanding the use of Estonian for school instruction gained momentum, and the beginnings of a national literature in Estonian emerged. To counteract this trend, the Russian empire launched a campaign of Russification in the hopes of quenching the rising Estonian nationalism (Taagepera, 1993). After the Russian Revolution of 1905, an internally weakened Russia gave Estonians the chance to pose even greater demands for self-governance. Their attempts came to fruition after the second Russian Revolution unraveled in 1917. The Provisional Government of Russia granted national autonomy to Estonia and in February 1918, despite being occupied by German troops, Estonia issued its Declaration of Independence. After the withdrawal of German forces, Estonians fought Bolshevik troops until a peace treaty was finally signed between Russia and Estonia (Frucht, 2004). The first period of full independence in Estonian history had begun.

Unlike other states that were to become part of the Soviet Union later on, the Baltics not only regained independent statehood in the interwar years, but they managed to consolidate it

(Brubaker, 1992). Consolidated statehood, however, was not equivalent to democratic governance. While the initial period of post-war democracy was characterized by a very liberal constitution specifically designed to avoid the rise of a strong one-man rule, the 1930s saw the emergence of an authoritarian regime (Frucht, 2004). During the so-called "Era of Silence" (1934-1939) political parties were banned and the country was largely ruled by decree.

Regardless of form of government, however, the interwar period saw the development of a genuine national culture. Advances in literature, education and arts moved at a fast pace, despite slower economic progress. Moreover, Estonia's rediscovered nationhood did not take a reactive turn against other nationalities living in the country. The Constitution of 1920 had provisions for education in children's mother tongue irrespective of nationality and a 1925 law gave minorities of more than 3,000 people the right to create state-supported councils to handle their cultural affairs (Raun, 2002).

The greatest concern of Estonian politics of the time remained external security. After having endured centuries of foreign domination, Estonians feared being embroiled in the next Great Power game. The threat of Bolshevik Russia loomed particularly large in the government's considerations. These concerns proved justified after the Hitler-Stalin pact as the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Estonia in 1940 on the eve of World War II. The war had a crippling effect on Estonian society. Occupied by either Soviet or Nazi forces at various points in the war, Estonia is estimated to have lost 18% of its population between 1939-1944 due to executions, deportations and refugee flight (Smith, 2002).

At the end of WWII Estonia remained within the Soviet sphere of influence. Stalin embarked on a campaign of destroying Estonian national identity. More mass deportations to Siberia, accompanied by mass Russian colonization of the Baltics, occurred in the early days of

Estonia's communist period. The total share of ethnic Estonians in the population decreased from 90% in 1941 to 48% in 1952. Despite the heavy human and economic toll, Estonia maintained a strikingly persistent anti-Soviet guerilla movement that survived until the early 1950s (Raun, 2003).

Communist control over Estonia brought forth some of the traditional Soviet policies observed all around East Europe – a push towards industrial development, the collectivization of agriculture, complete state control over private life and the persecution of suspected dissidents. The post-Stalinist years resulted in a certain relaxation of the most oppressive aspects of Soviet rule. A rare advantage of Estonia's communist experience was the possibility of contacts with the outside world, Finland in particular. Finnish television became accessible in Estonia and foreign tourists were allowed to visit the country. Estonians were also permitted, though in smaller numbers, to travel outside the Iron Curtain (Raun, 2003). In addition, the post-Stalinist era saw a re-emergence of Estonian intelligentsia and standards of living increased substantially from the war-torn 1940s.

In the 1970s, however, the Brezhnev era in the USSR caused a severe stagnation of the Estonian economy. Shortages were common, and the rate of economic growth drastically decreased. The limits of the planned economy began to be seen. During this period Estonians also grew increasingly concerned about the Russification of their language and the loss of their national identity. Estonia's historical legacy of foreign domination, its small size and short period of independence, had made its population strikingly sensitive to perceived threats to their culture and language. Thus, once Gorbachev's glasnost provided the possibility for more open debate, the issue of nationality immediately became the dominant basis for interest articulation in Estonia (Smith, 2002).

Estonia's regime change from communism to democracy started with the first mass demonstrations in 1987. A peaceful anti-Soviet movement took form in the country and was dubbed "the Singing Revolution" since it involved spontaneous mass demonstrations where citizens would sing patriotic Estonian songs. After the first organized anti-communist political group – Estonian Popular Front – formed, the next few years saw pro-democratic parties and organizations appearing almost daily. In 1991 Estonia declared its independence and received formal recognition from the West. A hardliner coup in Moscow threatened the viability of Estonian statehood in 1991, but the Yeltsin-backed coalition prevailed and with the final collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia was granted its dream of independence.

Estonia's first post-independence elections occurred in 1992 and, while neither party won a majority of votes, the 3 frontrunners – Fatherland Alliance, Safe Home and People's Front (dominated by the Estonian Centre Party) – formed a centre-right government. The faction of the former communist party that had participated in the election as a reformed left party won only 1.61% of the vote. The hardliners had previously formed a Communist Party of Estonia but the formation was outlawed by the Estonian government in 1991, shortly after the country declared independence.

Estonian distrust and resentment of the Soviet Union thus translated into fast marginalization of the former communist party, unlike in Bulgaria or the Czech Republic. The party system that emerged in Estonia throughout the 1990s also differs from both Bulgaria and the Czech Republic in terms of its level of party fragmentation and electoral volatility. For the period of 1992-1999 Estonia records an average volatility of 25.9 as compared to 12.8 in the

Czech Republic (1990-1998) and 18.0 in Bulgaria (1990-1997) (Bielasiak, 2002)[10]. Similarly, in terms of effective number of parties Estonia scored 7.2 while Bulgaria and the Czech Republic have scores of 3.4 and 5.2 respectively. These characteristics would put Estonia into a category of "extreme pluralism" (Sartori, 1976) during the initial post-communist decade. Estonian elections from the early 90s until present day do not produce an absolute majority for either party and the country is governed by a two or three party coalition.

Despite the high fragmentation, the Estonian party system was, and still is, dominated by right or centre parties. A likely legacy of the Soviet era, the unwillingness of parties to become associated with the defunct ideology of communism is manifested in political actors who "shudder at being labeled 'left'" and media outlets "dominated by centre-right views" (Huang, 2000). This differs from the Czech Republic where a standard left-right dimension soon emerged in the political spectrum and Bulgaria where the mildly reformed former communist party became a top competitor.

The post-communist Estonian political system, however, struggled to accommodate the existence of a large Russian minority comprising 25.6% of the population. Issues related to ethnicity gained salience in the political realm. The Estonian "singing revolution" had its roots in the national awakening of the nation and the fear of "Russification" of Estonian national identity (Hernad, Institute for Cultural Diplomacy Case Study). In Bulgaria, despite stumbling blocks and tension-provoking situations early in the transition, the Turkish minority had at least achieved representation in parliament by means of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms which became a regular coalition partner in successive governments. In Estonia, however, due to a restrictive

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[10] The study utilizes the Pedersen index of electoral volatility which measures net changes in popular vote across consecutive elections. The formula for electoral volatility is V = '/2 X vp,t - vp,t-l I where vp,t stands for the percentage of the vote obtained by a party at election t, and vp,t-l1f or the percentage in the previous election. Mogens N. Pedersen, "The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility," European Journal of Political Research, 7 (March 1979), 4-5.

citizenship law passed earlier in the transition, the Russian population was effectively excluded from participation in the shaping of the new political system (Van Elsuvege, 2004). Russians were not able to vote in the first elections and in the constitutional referendum. They were not able to shape the nature of initial linguistic and minority rights laws that came into effect. While throughout the years, Russian speakers were provided with more rights and legal protections, issues related to citizenship, language laws and national identity remained interwoven in the political reform process.

In summary, Estonia's history has been largely defined by Estonia's small size and vulnerable geographic location. Prior to the current period, the country was only able to sustain independent statehood for 22 years between the two world wars. This has made Estonians particularly sensitive to cultural threats, and suspicious of Russian influence in particular. Partly in response to this legacy, the Estonian post-communist state developed a party system dominated by right-leaning parties and struggled with issues of minority rights.

5.3   PROTEST POLITICS IN THE POST-COMMUNIST CONTEXT

The previous sections of this chapter aimed to familiarize the reader with the past and current context in which politics played out in the countries under investigation. In this section, I focus specifically on country level features and developments that relate to the emergence and electoral performance of Eurosceptic and populist parties. The section on each country begins by examining the extent of Europeanization pressure on the country's party system, followed by the timing and strength of the corruption problem, and the extent to which these correspond to the nature of protest-based parties and voter preferences.

5.3.1   The Czech Republic

The Czech Republic had a relatively smooth accession road to EU membership and was often considered a frontrunner in various stages of the process. In fact, during the early and mid nineties the Czech Republic was considered "the most successful transition economy in Central and East Europe" (World Development Report, 1999) by the international community. The Czech Republic often topped rankings of the post-communist successor states in terms of GDP growth, fiscal stability and curbing inflation, occasionally outperformed only by tiny Slovenia. Its mass privatization program was launched at a faster rate than many of its CEE neighbors and resulted in an observable improvement of market conditions. These developments led international and domestic spectators and analysts to refer to a "Czech miracle" – a transformation from planned to market economy with minimum unemployment and no shocks of hyperinflation.

Non-economic indicators also placed the Czech Republic at the front of the line as far as post-communist countries were concerned. The Nations in Transit (NIT) database developed by the Freedom House ranked the candidate states throughout the accession process in a democratization index comprised of items such as judicial and media independence, corruption, electoral transparency. The Czech Republic, along with Hungary and Poland started its post-communist transition with the best comparative scores, although each of these countries suffered a downgrade at various times during the negotiation process. While it is, of course, possible that the high initial scores were the result of analysts overestimating the democratic performance at the start (Mungiu, 2007), the fact remains that during most of the 90s the Czech Republic was treated as a forerunner in the long road towards EU membership. In 1997 this was confirmed by the European Commission's Agenda 2000. The document was an action programme which

identified six candidate states as frontrunners and stipulated they should be able to join the EU in 2002.[11] The Czech Republic was among these countries, as were Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus.

The slightly more favorable position of the Czech Republic earlier in the accession process can help explain why the country experienced only a moderate degree of mainstream party convergence and why this fact may not even have been an electoral factor until corruption problems became more salient. As a frontrunner, the Czech Republic was exposed to a lower degree of political pressure to comply with EU conditionality. In the early 90s the European Union formulated a set of conditions known as the Copenhagen criteria which each candidate state had to fulfill. These were broad overarching conditions while the *acquis communautaire* – the body of EU rules and regulations – translated the general criteria into specific measurable benchmarks. The European Commission would then assess in detail each candidate state's progress in annual reports and make recommendations for future action.[12]

While the Copenhagen criteria covered a wide span of issue areas from democratization to market reforms to administrative, judicial and legal reforms, they were also not applied objectively and uniformly at all times. Grabbe (2003) compares them to the standard conditionality employed by international financial institutions and concludes that the accession process is "highly politicized, especially on the EU side. The linkage between fulfilling particular tasks and receiving particular benefits is much less clear than in IFI conditionality because the tasks are complex, and many of them are not amenable to quantitative targets that show explicitly when they have been fulfilled". This widely-accepted view of the conditionality

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[11] "Agenda 2000 : For a stronger and wider Union" [COM(97) 2000]
For more information on Agenda 2000, see: http://ec.europa.eu/agenda2000/index_en.htm
[12] For more information on the enlargement process see: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/index_en.htm

process points to the likelihood of different countries experiencing different degrees of political pressure from the EU to comply with the requirements. The more pressure the Commission exerts, the less leeway left for national governments to debate and decide these policies domestically.

Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007) estimate the degree of this pressure and the salience of the conditions from year to year. Their results demonstrate that the "intensity of conditionality" varies from country to country and "some countries have been pressed more than others and on a wider range of issues". The Czech Republic scores a 0.19 on the intensity of conditionality index (averaged 1997-2003) placing it in the lower middle range. Slovenia and Estonia achieve an even lower score, while Bulgaria, Romania and Poland have experienced the most intense conditionality in the given time period.

Of course, the less pressure exerted by the EU is partly due to the fact that countries like the Czech Republic already had more favorable political and economic conditions in place. Vachudova (2005) analyzes the domestic costs of compliance with EU conditions and asserts that for the "ruling elites in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the costs were minimal because the thrust of the anticipated requirements overlapped with their political and economic agendas". While this may well hold true in terms of democratization and market reforms, the presence of the Eurosceptic ODS party as either the first or second largest power in parliament provides evidence for a less-than-universal consensus among political parties on EU-demanded reforms. Intensity of conditionality, therefore, is not merely the result of automatic domestic consensus or lack thereof. This chapter does not seek to examine why the EU pressured some countries more than others, but simply to establish the existence of this variation and how it relates to Euroscepticism.

Additionally, the chapter does not aim to suggest that the European Commission never criticized or monitored the Czech Republic. In fact, while the 1999 assessment placed the Czech Republic among the five forerunners to be offered membership within a "first wave", the individual progress report had little praise and much more criticism than, for example, the equivalent report on another "first-wave" candidate – Estonia. The report concluded that the "pace of alignment needs to pick up substantially across the board" and the country's performance in meeting the short-term Accession Partnership goals was "not satisfactory" (European Commission Progress Report, 1999). The critiques, however, were supplemented by an offer for first wave membership, thus sending a mixed message politically. Elite interviews similarly suggest that, while Czech politicians paid close attention to Commission reports and felt pressure to satisfy the membership criteria, there was never much doubt in their minds that the country would be among the first ones to be accepted. Their concern was more with negotiating favorable terms for Czech accession while Bulgarian elites, in comparison, struggled to obtain accession to begin with.

In line with the moderate Europeanization pressure, mainstream party convergence occurred in the Czech Republic, but at a lower rate than countries that had been pressed harder to comply with EU conditionality. The party similarity index used in chapter 4 places the Czech Republic in the midranges at 4.8/10 (averaged 1996-2006) while Estonia scores 3.5 and Bulgaria 7.2. The intensity of conditionality, therefore, seems to roughly correspond to the degree of mainstream party convergence observed in CEE member states.

Similarly to the scope of Europeanization pressures, corruption in the Czech Republic is at a mid-range level compared to the rest of the Central and East European countries. Figure 5.1 illustrates this by averaging the Transparency International corruption perception scores between

1995 and 2009. Slovenia and Estonia do the best in this regard, as high scores equal less corruption in this indicator. Romania and Bulgaria are at the bottom, while the Czech Republic is among the countries with moderate corruption. The control of corruption indicator developed by the World Bank paints a similar picture with the Czech Republic ranked most frequently in the 64th percentile of countries with greatest control of corruption, Estonia at approximately the 80th, and Bulgaria at the 50th. Higher percentiles in the case of the WB indicator indicate a greater control of corruption.
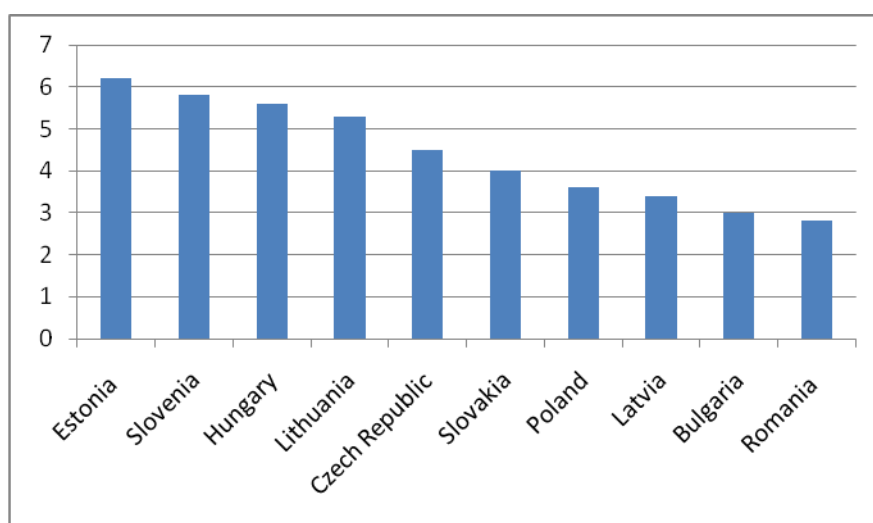
Figure 5.1 Corruption Perceptions Index, 1995-2009[13]

Unlike the cases of Bulgaria and Romania, corruption did not figure prominently in EU's demands on the first wave candidates. Corruption levels were, of course, the highest in Bulgaria and Romania which explains the importance placed on that issue but political considerations also mattered. Since corruption was a problem in some EU member states as well, they were reluctant to bring it higher on the agenda. This resulted in recommendations to combat "even high-level

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[13] The figure has been created using the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) scores.

corruption" often being "watered down for political reasons in the annual Regular Reports" (Vachudova, 2009). In the case of Bulgaria and Romania, however, the EU was often perceived as having toughened its entry requirements and their enforcement. This could be due to "enlargement fatigue", the negative public opinion on Bulgaria and Romania, or a strategy of the EU to use Bulgaria and Romania as a signal to future applicants, Turkey in particular (Linden, 2007; Phinnemore, 2006).

While the EU did not place much salience on corruption problems in the Czech Republic and its fellow first-wave candidates, common citizens did as the evidence presented in chapter 4 indicates. The first major corruption scandal that is likely to have placed the issue on the media's radar and citizens' minds came in 1997 when after years of impressive economic and political performance, the Czech Republic plunged into a recession after a corruption scandal involving then Prime Minister Klaus caused a crisis of legitimacy and forced him to resign. The unexpected political and economic crisis lead spectators to alarmingly declare the coming of a "new phase in Czech politics" and the fight against corruption started to exist prominently in party strategies.

The government that came to power following the crisis won its majority largely on an anti-corruption platform and a promise for the implementation of a "Clean Hands" campaign. Its eventual efforts at curbing corruption were not assessed as sufficiently effective, however, and "if anything, corruption under the Social Democrats, the CPI for the Czech Republic suggests, increased" (Tupy, 2006). Czech citizens were of the same opinion, as a 2001 poll demonstrates – 52% of respondents claimed they consider the Czech Republic to be a corrupt nation.[14] Jordan (2002) draws another parallel to illustrate the newly emerged significance of the problem by

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[14] "Poll shows majority of population consider Czech Republic 'corrupt nation'", Czech News Agency CTK, July 11, 2001

showing that, according to international corruption indices, "in 1997, the Czechs were tied with the Belgians, now they are tied with the Bulgarians".[15] The worsening of the corruption problem, or at least the perception thereof due to its increased saliency, thus can be traced to the late 90s much like in the majority of CEE member states.

Problems with corruption resurfaced throughout the 2000s in various sectors, but it was the high profile cases that provoked the most media attention and citizens' outrage. For example, Stanislav Gross – prime minister 2004-2005 – resigned and left politics after a corruption scandal. Similarly, in 2008 a corruption scandal broke out in the Defense Ministry regarding suspect activity during former defense minister Karel Kuhnl's term of office. The spokesman of the Defense Ministry admitted that "according to many surveys and many concrete cases we can confirm that the Ministry of Defense is highly vulnerable to corruption and defense contracts suffer from corruption".[16] These cases are illustrative that the Czech Republic experienced corruption even at the highest levels of government and the media saliency of these cases can prime voters to place corruption perceptions high on their agenda when evaluating politicians.

Nonetheless, as seen in prior sections, the Czech Republic is not among the worst cases when it comes to corruption perceptions. Its relative rankings within Central and East Europe place it in the mid-ranges of both the corruption problem and party convergence. When it comes to Euroscepticism as a share of the party system, however, the country is at the high end of the spectrum. The theory of protest-based Euroscepticism developed here would expect a rough overlap between the intensity of mainstream party convergence and corruption perceptions on one hand, and electoral Euroscepticism on the other. What explains the misfit is an important

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[15] For more information on 2001 rankings, see Transparency International, "New index highlights worldwide corruption crisis," press release, June 27, 2001
(http://www.transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2001/cpi2001).
[16] Andrej Čírtek, Spokesman for the Defense Ministry on Radio Praha, 04-01-2008 (www.radio.cz/en/article/99269)

contextual characteristic of the Czech Republic – the presence of a genuinely Eurosceptic political party which does not fall under the populist category and is an established actors in the party system.

The Civic Democratic Party (ODS) has been an important player in Czech politics since the start of the democratization process. Formed around a neo-liberal, anti-communist ideology, the party has well-defined positions on economic and political issues unlike the empty platforms of populist parties. It can easily be placed on a standard left-right scale of ideology commonly used in the West. In addition, the Civic Democratic Party, however, began developing a distinct Eurosceptic element in its ideology as early as its 1992-1996 tenure in government. The main proponent and promoter of ODS's Euroscepticism was, and remains, the party's leader Vaclav Klaus. The gradual shift to "greater reliance on the charismatic leadership of Klaus and on his personal agenda" arguably became "the crucial causal mechanism enabling a radicalization in the party's Euroscepticism" (Hanley, 2002).

During its first term in office, the ODS government pursued market oriented and institutional reforms which were largely in line with EU recommendations for the region. At the same time, its leader Klaus expressed continued criticism of Western Europe and delayed the Czech EU application until 1996. This created a paradoxical situation where the Czech Republic was among the membership frontrunners economically and politically while the Klaus government had brought Czech-EU relations to a temporary standstill (Bugge, 2000). Klaus's Euroscepticism coupled with the corruption scandal of 1997 even caused a split in the party and a faction broke away to form the Freedom Union. The newly formed party joined the pro-EU mainstream and frequently criticized the negative effect Klaus' behavior allegedly had on accession prospects.

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Although the ODS never went as far as rejecting Czech membership in the EU, its brand of Euroscepticism intensified somewhat in the early 2000s, possibly due to the increased salience of the EU issue at the time. In its 2002 programme, the party included a separate chapter related to EU matters for the first time in its history. In addition, it referred to the EU often in another chapter intended to cover foreign policy. Within this programme, about two-thirds of all references made to the EU were negative (Hlousek and Pseja, 2009). Around that time, another programmatic document made its appearance – the Manifesto of Czech Eurorealism which warned the government against making a "strategic mistake" (ODS, 2001) by prioritizing speedy entry over negotiating more favorable terms for Czech national interests. Klaus has been known to consistently portray the EU as a "dangerous socialist experiment, and a threat to national identity and sovereignty" (Vachudova, 2008). Given ODS and Klaus's relentless Euroscepticism, it is of no surprise that the Czech Republic was the last member state to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 after a reluctant Klaus agreed to accept the decision of the Czech constitutional court.

Moreover, the party is unapologetic about its Eurosceptic ideology even when it realizes that there is not much electoral advantage to be gained. The majority of the right-wing ODS electorate has positive views on the EU (Hanley, 2002) and the party's public speeches reveal an acknowledgment that engaging in a more persistent battle against the Lisbon treaty would have been futile. "The polls clearly show that the treaty would be endorsed by the public vote and this would grant it far more legitimacy than the parliamentary vote. And I don't want this," said President Vaclav Klaus.[17] The timing of ODS's terms in power also offer a curious coincidence – the ODS lost power in 1997 when negotiations with the EU started and did not regain it until

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[17]President Vaclav Klaus for Mlada Fronta Dnes Daily, 15.12.2007: http://www.ods.cz/en/policy/speech/388

after EU entry. "Since a majority of Czech voters did support EU membership, the ODS's anti-EU stance likely strengthened the hand of the relatively moderate Social Democratic Party (CSSD) which governed in various forms from 1998 until 2006" (Vachudova,2008). If anything, therefore, a genuinely Eurosceptic stance can do more harm than good for electoral gains which suggests citizens do indeed distinguish between genuine and protest-based Euroscepticism.

While being the largest Eurosceptic formation in the Czech Republic, the ODS is by no means the only one. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) embraces a brand of Euroscepticism which used to be more extreme than that of the ODS but has gradually evolved into a strategic protest-based Euroscepticism. Understanding its nature requires understanding the somewhat peculiar nature of the party. The KSCM is often cited as the only unreformed Communist party in Central and East Europe (Agh 1998, Nagle and Mahr, 1999). While the rest of the communist successor parties renamed themselves and reoriented their ideology towards politically acceptable brands, the Czech communists did neither. Of course, there have been gradual steps at moderating the party's programme. Hanley (2002) concludes that the KSCM "in fact contains innovative and democratic elements that have been hitherto overlooked by observers". Similarly, Strmiska (2002) demonstrates that despite having "neo-communist leanings", the party cannot be regarded as the equivalent of an orthodox communist formation.

The party's expressed views on the European Union have similarly undergone a progression from a decidedly anti-membership position to a more moderate type of protest-based Euroscepticism where its criticism of the EU stems mostly from a desire to counteract the mainstream consensus (Linden and Pohlman, 2003; Kopecky and Mudde, 2002). The party acted in a deeply suspicious manner towards the European Union in the early period of its post-1989

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development and announced it opposition to Czech membership on the grounds of avoiding putting the Czech Republic "into a colonial situation, perceived by more powerful countries simply as a market open to their surpluses and a source of cheap labor" (KSCM Election Manifesto, 1996). By 2006, however, the party's positions on European integration and Czech EU membership transformed into much more general and vague critiques and the European dimension of party programmes was somewhat reduced (Havlik and Vykoupilova, 2008). The party still expressed "critical reservations" towards the EU (KSCM Election program, 2006) but its focus had shifted on utilizing the EU issue as a hook for generally disenchanted voters.

This shift to a more vague, protest-based Euroscepticism seemed to carry favorable electoral consequences. The Communist party won 18.5% of the 2002 parliamentary vote and became the third largest party in parliament. In 2004, the party fared even better in the European Parliament elections on the eve of Czech accession, coming in second. In 2006 the KSCM again became the third largest parliamentary-represented party in the national elections. In the most recent election of 2010, the communists came in fourth, after being defeated for the third place by another protest-based party campaigning heavily on an anti-corruption platform. While this fairly consistent electoral performance of the Communist party should be partially attributed to nostalgia for the past among the remaining loyal communist electorate, analysts agree that this is not the entire story. "In the Czech Republic, there is a new generation of young people with iPhones who don't remember Communism and will vote for them as a protest vote"[18]. The KSCM has thus transformed itself from a largely unreformed communist successor party that was harshly Eurosceptic to a more moderate formation trying to appeal to protest voters in addition to the traditional (and shrinking) communist base.

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[18] Anna Matuskova, Partner and Senior Consultant at Campaigns.cz, Assistant Professor at Masaryk University, as cited in the "Communists Could Gain in Czech Vote", New York Times

The KSCM is, however, not alone in figuring out that protest-voting may be a useful phenomenon. The 2010 election witnessed the appearance and good electoral performance of newly a formed populist party under the name of Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09 (TOP 09). The party was formed only a year before the election and its priorities include the fight against corruption, a "genuine" rule of law and the country's "moral revival"[19]. It was formed after a split of the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party and it quickly became the country's second most popular right-wing formation.

Around the same time that TOP 09 came into being, two other protest-based political groups appeared on the Czech political landscape. The Party of Free Citizens was formed after a split from the ODS and, instead of making corruption and morality the centerpiece of its program, subscribed to a vividly Eurosceptic, anti-Lisbon rhetoric coupled with the standard populist vagueness on other substantive issues. Czech analysts have noted that "almost nothing is known about them in regard to other issues"[20]. Similarly, the Sovereignty – Jana Bobošíková Bloc formation, which takes its name after its Eurosceptic leader and former MEP, ran for the first time in the 2009 election after being formed by merging two smaller populist groups (The Party of Common Sense and Politika 21). TOP 09, the Party of Free Citizens and Sovereignty are thus examples of protest parties with each of them choosing a particular issue to emphasize such as the fight against corruption, the deficiencies of the EU/Lisbon Treaty or both.

The populist pattern in CEE points to the uncertainty surrounding the future of these groupings. While the ODS and the KSCM have established a permanent role for themselves in the current Czech political system, newly formed parties may often cease to exist from one

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[19] http://praguemonitor.com/2010/04/28/top-09-launches-election-campaign-promises-moral-revival
[20] Jiri Pehe, Director, New York University in Prague as cited in Witters, Linda (2009) "Euroscepticism's New Face? The Party of Free Citizens"

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election to another or, if existing, fall into irrelevance. This is for example what happened to another populist and Eurosceptic Czech formation - Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSC). The party took a harsh anti-EU line while at the same time vocally criticizing Klaus's privatization program for its purported massive corruption. While initially this strategy proved to be its ticket to parliamentary representation, the party was unable to keep this momentum and declined dramatically in popularity before eventually disbanding. Examples from other CEE countries such as Bulgaria and Poland also point to the dangers posed in front of the new protest-based formations. While riding on a wave of popularity, or at least gaining a respectable percentage of the vote share at one time, they stand a real chance of being reduced to obscurity by the time the next election rolls around.

The Czech Republic exemplifies in some ways a typical CEE political landscape – it has moderate degrees of corruption and mainstream party convergence and its fair share of populist and Eurosceptic parties. However, protest-voting did not reach quite the electoral heights it did in places such as Bulgaria and Poland. The case largely fits the theory developed here linking corruption perceptions, party similarity and vote choice. In addition, contextual factors inevitably affect country-level developments. Probably the most important one in the case of the Czech Republic was the presence of an established ideologically-Eurosceptic party and its outspoken leader Vaclav Klaus. By challenging the pro-EU elite consensus consistently over the years, the ODS and Klaus left less leeway for protest-based formations to use the Eurosceptic tactic as a means of distinguishing themselves. While some still did it, they were not as successful as to win the majority of the vote in any election. The next section of the chapter presents the case of another EU applicant where protest parties fared even better.

5.3.2   Bulgaria

Unlike the Czech Republic, economic and political conditions in Bulgaria at the start of its post-communist transition and for most of the 1990s were far from exemplary. Bulgaria's dependency on economic ties with the Soviet Union and the lack of comprehensive structural reform early in the transition process were the most likely factors responsible for this state of affairs (Nenovsky and Koleva, 2002). By most indicators, the country ranked last or second to last among CEE countries. GDP growth between 1990 and 2000 was marginal at best, unemployment and inflation reached unprecedented levels compared to the "frontrunner" CEE states. In 1997 about 36% of the population was living below the poverty line (World Bank, 1999). Privatization, unlike the Czech "shock therapy", was slow and patchy. Between 1990 and 1997, only about 20% of state assets had been privatized (OECD, 1999).

Politically, Bulgaria was again among the problematic group of CEE countries. Along with Slovakia and Romania, Bulgaria was regarded as an "illiberal" democracy until the late 1990s (Vachudova, 2005). The treatment of ethnic minorities was, for example, below democratic standards and the Nations in Transit's score of 4 on democratization placed the three countries on an equal footing with Russia and nearly twice lower than the frontrunners Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Bulgaria reached its worst moment in the post-communist transition in 1997 when a major economic crisis disrupted the already fragile economy and progressed into a political crisis of legitimacy as people took to the streets and demanded the government to step down from power. Hyperinflation caused the prices to increase by 240% in February of that year. Immediately after the crisis, a currency board was introduced in an attempt to stabilize the economy and help prevent similar occurrences.

Following economic reforms and a change of government, the Bulgarian economic situation improved over the course of the next years. Aggregate economic indicators demonstrate that Bulgaria's performance improved within the past decade. Between 2000 and 2008, GDP more than tripled, foreign investment increased and the country began running a budget surplus. Due to its low starting point, of course, the country's relative wealth and standard of living still remain below the majority of CEE states and at less than half of EU's average GDP.

Parallel to the stabilization of the economic situation came advances in democratization as well and the gap between the country and the frontrunners for EU accession decreased. However, as the economy and the plight of minorities improved, Bulgaria became increasingly plagued by problems of corruption, organized crime and inefficient judiciary. For example, between 1990 and 2006, 100 contract killings had occurred in Bulgaria, but only 3 of those resulted in court proceedings[21]. The problem of enforcement was of particular importance and international observers often concluded that "Killings, frauds and corruption all seem to go unprosecuted and unpunished." (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 2008).

In the previously discussed case of the Czech Republic the generally favorable political and economic conditions resulted in a moderate degree of pressure on the part of the EU. In Bulgaria, however, the opposite effect can be observed. The continuous domestic problems experienced by the country provoked an equivalently stronger response on the part of the EU, particularly after 1997. Prior to the crisis of 1997 and the subsequent changes, Bulgaria's illiberal government hindered EU's efforts at affecting domestic politics in the desired course. "EU leverage was confined to working slowly and indirectly by censuring governments and buttressing domestic opposition" (Vachudova, 2008). The European Commission was still

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[21] Rumen Petkov, Minister of the Interior as quoted in "Crime problems dog Bulgaria as it courts EU", New York Times, March 22, 2006.

learning how to play its new role of de facto democracy promotion in countries like Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia.

After the crisis of 1997 and the coming into power of reformers, EU's pressure intensified and remained strong for the entire period thereafter. According to the intensity of conditionality scale developed by Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007), Bulgaria tops the rankings along with Romania. Both countries receive an average score of 0.34 for the period 1997-2003 while the Czech Republic had a medium score of 0.19. The rush to membership became particularly pronounced in that time period and successive governments "would rapidly respond by presenting revised reform strategies and making pledges for additional measures" (Noutcheva and Bechev, 2008) whenever they were criticized or penalized by the EU.

Moreover, since Bulgaria was not deemed prepared enough to be offered membership in 2004, it experienced 3 additional years of pre-accession conditionality. The EU's leverage was considered stronger in the case of second-wave candidates as they had credible reasons to fear additional delays (Brusis, 2005). Bulgarian governments faced progressively toughening EU conditions as the projected accession date neared but they also faced significant public pressure at home (Nikolova, 2006). Support for EU membership in Bulgaria was running strong, consistently 10% or more above the CEE average. "Consequently, Bulgaria was more eager than the first-wavers to make itself 'appealing' to the EU in areas where formal criteria were not specified" (Nikolova, 2007). The grand consensus on EU membership as the ultimate political goal in Bulgaria and Romania even led some scholars to warn that government officials had developed a tendency to "follow EU instructions despite their sometimes acute negative impact on the structure of domestic political and social relations (Bojkov, 2004; Bruszt and Stark, 2003).

Europeanization thus had stronger effects in Bulgaria comparatively speaking and resulted in greater mainstream party convergence. The European Commission imposed a de facto "political review board" (Smilov, 2008) on successive Bulgarian governments. By virtue of its uncertain timing, EU membership became a more salient issue in campaigns and political platforms of political parties. Ilonszki (2009) finds that the EU cleavage in party systems is most pronounced in Bulgaria and Poland but the "success of anti-EU parties does not inhibit general and above average support for European integration". Almost every political decision by the governing coalition had to be justified as a necessary step towards achieving EU membership while the opposition's common critiques also revolved around the (in)competency of the government to carry out the EU-desired reforms.[22] "Overall, we see that negotiated conditions related to the eventual EU membership of the country resurface as issues of domestic contestation, redefining fault lines between political actors, as well as traditional approaches to policy-making" (Spendzharova, 2003). The issue of compliance with EU conditionality thus dominated domestic agendas for the majority of the post-1997 period.

What's more, even once Bulgaria and Romania were formally granted EU membership, monitoring from the EU still continued. Their membership was granted under an "unprecedented condition: an ongoing 'co-operation and verification mechanism' that the Commission would use to monitor whether they lived up to their outstanding commitments in satisfying the requirements of EU membership" (Vachudova, 2009). Progress was assessed according to 'benchmarks' created by the European Commission and progress reports were published every 6 months. In the case of Bulgaria, the CVM was triggered because of problems in the areas of judicial reform, corruption and organized crime.

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[22] Officials repeatedly stressed during elite interviews the need to justify policy decisions in terms of improving Bulgaria's chances of membership.

The arrangement was not merely an exercise in rhetoric on the part of the Commission as there were tangible punishment provisions such as invoking a "safeguard" clause where decisions made by Bulgarian courts would not be valid in the rest of Europe or putting a halt to some of the financial transfers the country was receiving as a new member. Punishment did indeed materialize as irregularities concerning the use of EU funds surfaced and the Commission temporarily "froze" $800 billion aid to Bulgaria in 2008. As a result, the government that took power in the aftermath declared that "we're going to do everything Brussels asks of us. For a country as poor as Bulgaria, it's vital to get the money from Brussels flowing again."[23] These developments indicate that unlike the first-wave candidates, Bulgaria and Romania experienced stronger EU conditionality that continued after accession and had a greater impact on domestic politics.

The salience of the corruption issue followed a similar trajectory over time. Prior to the late 1990, while corruption was by no means low, its salience in the public realm was less pronounced. Due to the continued presence of the communist successor party in power, the main cleavage in Bulgarian politics still revolved around the communist/anti-communist divide. Major economic troubles in the privatization process, hyperinflation and widespread poverty additionally focused the attention of the majority of citizens. In the late 90s, however, while standards of living remained, and still generally are, the biggest concern of voters, the ability of politicians to deliver the desired results came to be viewed less through the prism of their former affiliation with the communist party and more in terms of how corrupt and dishonest certain individuals and/or political groups may be. The troubled privatization process had been met with a strong public sentiment of unfairness (Miller et. al, 2001) and resulted in a perception that the

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[23] Boyko Borisov, in "Meeting Bulgaria's new Mr. Big" , July 25 2009
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/8166893.stm

new-found wealth of the post-communist political elites had been accumulated at the expense of the population. These sentiments contributed to the salience of the corruption issue (Krastev, 2004 ; Grigoresku, 2006) in the country.

At the same time that EU conditionality had intensified, the first series of high profile corruption scandals occurred under the UDF (Union of democratic Forces) government at the time. The lack of immediate and tangible improvements in standards of living did not serve the government's popularity but what affected it "more profoundly than the stalled reforms" came in the form of a "series of corruption scandals directly implicating UDF politicians that made it appear that the UDF was little better than the BSP" (Vachudova, 2005).[24] The Saxe-Coburg-Gotha government, which came to power in 2001, "fared only slightly better" and was plagued by major scandals surrounding infrastructure and land ownership (Noutcheva and Bechev, 2008).

As shown in a previous chapter, the ongoing political scandals increased the salience of the corruption issue among voters.[25] EU monitoring, both before and after accession, devoted considerable space to the corruption issue. On the eve of Bulgaria's entry in 2007, for example, the progress report pointed to the persistence of "deeply rooted problems, notably organized crime and corruption" (European Commission Progress Report, 2007). The report also stresses that it was not a problem of compliance as the Bulgarian government had exhibited "good will and determination" in producing action plans and setting up the needed structures in all problematic areas. However, it was the implementation and ultimately enforcement of these well-intended measures that was consistently lacking.

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[24] BSP = Bulgarian Socialist Party which had been in power prior to 1997 and had presided over the worst economic crisis.
[25] Evidence to this statement is provided in section 3.3 of the dissertation.

The bi-annual reports by the European Commission were highly publicized and analyzed in Bulgaria and the frequent critiques in the areas of corruption and organized crime had a double effect. Firstly, of course, the assessments of the European Commission strengthened the vigilance of society in terms of keeping politicians accountable but these assessments also can reinforce one's already pre-existing disillusionment with the domestic political class. Bulgarians entered the European Union with one of the lowest levels of trust in their own domestic institutions. A striking majority of 65% believed in 2006 that winners of Bulgaria's transition would be either the "parties, their leaders and their close circles" or the "criminal forces and economic groups" while the biggest losers were either the "ordinary honest people" or the "retired and elderly people"[26] Smilov's (2008) study of Bulgarian populism also finds that citizens are 'generally distrustful, even hateful toward politicians (62%) – an attitude which leads to the criminalization of the political class in the eyes of the public". In a toxic environment like that, when people read that a leaked EU report "slams Bulgaria for failing to deal with corruption"[27], they are likely to see their worst fears about the untrustworthiness of Bulgarian elite confirmed. Noutcheva and Bechev (2008) similarly note that while the regular monitoring has produced more concentrated action on the part of governments, the "anticorruption talk has had less savory effects, too, in that it has prompted a popular disengagement from politics and elections and even played into the hands of populist xenophobes opposed to pro-EU reforms".

Given the strong Europeanization pressures on political parties and the salience of the corruption issue, it is no surprise that Bulgaria experienced high levels of populism of various kinds. While protest-based Euroscepticism appeared later than in many other CEE countries, it

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[26] "State of Society" survey, 2006, Alpha Research.
[27] Bulgaria Awaits Publishing of EC Progress Report, July 22, 2009, novinite.com
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=106049

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obtained good electoral results as well. Unlike in the Czech Republic, however, Bulgaria does not have a purely Eurosceptic party in its party system. The only party to ever come close to ideological Euroscepticism was the pre-1997 Socialist Party, largely unreformed from its communist days, and professing a lukewarm attitude towards the EU. It soon thereafter embraced the pro-EU consensus in favor of membership in order to market itself as a mainstream socialist party.

Populism, on the other hand, seems to thrive well in Bulgarian society. While the major shift to populist politics occurred around 2001, signs of the appeal of this trend to Bulgarian citizens appeared much earlier. In the 1994 and 1997 parliamentary elections, a populist formation under the name Bulgarian Business Block (BBB) managed to gather around 5% of the vote which is sufficient to grant it representation in parliament (albeit finishing last among the parliamentary represented parties).

George Ganchev – the party's flamboyant and unorthodox leader who would address the electorate in his televised speeches with "Bulgarian brothers" and would not shy away from singing and dancing at campaign events – managed to come third in the 1992 and 1996 presidential election. Both times, however, there was a significant gap of around 60% between him and his opponent in the decisive second round of the election. His party lacked substantive positions on the majority of issues and relied mostly on Ganchev's "personal charisma and unconventional political behavior" (Krasteva, 1998). The party had a tangible nationalist bent and mild Eurosceptic leanings. Overall, however, the party was a relatively marginal political phenomenon – barely collecting enough votes to enter parliament, let alone break the dominance of the two major political parties; and the majority of the population viewed Ganchev as somewhat of a comic relief during otherwise dry and serious campaigns.

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The brief political stint of the BBB suggests that, while Bulgarian society had not placed populists at the center stage yet, there may have been a predisposition towards a more personalistic political style based on charisma and a strong leader. By 2001, the explosion of corruption scandals in the UDF government and the intensified EU pressure leading to mainstream party convergence had created the necessary pre-conditions for the emergence of protest-based parties. Mungiu-Pippidi (2007) distinguishes 5 symptoms of the "political malaise" affecting the region: populist electoral gains; political radicalization; weak majorities; factional behavior; and misbehavior of political parties (defined as "occasional acts that violate democratic standards" and "are generally limited in time and impact and end in public scandal"). Bulgaria scores high on this index by possessing 4 of the 5 symptoms. Lewis (2007) similarly observes that in countries like Bulgaria "there seems to be more fluidity and fragmentation now than during the 1990s, and even the role of personalities in these countries seems to have increased recently to the detriment of programmatic parties".

The first one to break the dominance of mainstream parties was the National Movement Simeon II (NMSS) which was created by the former king Simeon II after his return from decade long exile in Spain. NMSS's electoral success was unprecedented given the time constraints and the unknown status of the movement. "Within just weeks, the National Movement for Simeon II emerged as the largest political force in the country and came within just a few percentage points of winning the 2001 parliamentary elections outright" (Jones, 2007). Analysts widely believe that NMSS would have won an absolute majority in that election if it hadn't been for a few small parties which used Simeon II's name on their ballots without authorization – a situation ripe for potential voter confusion.

The NMSS's campaign was not based on a coherent programme but rather on a diffuse populist message exemplified by the now infamous campaign promise that there would be a tangible improvement in people's lives in 800 days. Smilov (2008) dubs the NMSS phenomenon the "first populist wave" and asserts that the main sources of mobilization for the NMSS were the personal charisma of the former king coupled with his historical legacy and the fact that he "portrayed the then-existing political elite as largely politically corrupt. Against this background, he presented his candidacy as the triumph of personal integrity in politics". Ucen (2007) classifies the NMSS as a new type of "centrist" populists which are "non-radical challengers mobilizing disappointed electorates against under-performing and morally failing established parties". The central themes of the campaigns of centrist populists consist of "curbing corruption, improving responsiveness, and promoting economic development". Parties of this type have indeed become quite common in the region and while their attitude towards the EU varies, the NMSS in Bulgaria is a typical case of markedly pro-EU populist party. This indicates the issue of corruption had a sufficient appeal in Bulgarian society to be able to generate a mass wave of protest-voting.

NMSS much like its fellow populists did not ultimately succeed in establishing itself as a consistent force in the Bulgarian party system. In the next election of 2005, the socialists were back in power, but they needed coalitional partners to govern which resulted in another stint in government for the king's party. This was as far as their once stellar popularity could carry them, however, as the party eventually split into factions and did not succeed in passing the electoral threshold for parliamentary representation in the most recent 2009 election. Neither did its offspring, the smaller party Leader despite the attempts of its young leader to re-create some of the charismatic appeal that once won Simeon the elections.

The second major surge of populism was much more radical than the "centrist" undertones of the NMSS. In 2005, two years before EU accession, the newly formed political party Ataka won around 9% of the vote after a vocal anti-establishment campaign. While NMSS focused on a more moderate populist message focusing exclusively on anti-corruption and presenting an alternative to the allegedly incompetent mainstream elite, Ataka's message spanned the whole range of protest politics. It is most accurately described as an "anti-establishment something-for-everyone party in a political milieu where most of the other parties have crowded into a pro-Western, pro-market center" (Ghodsee, 2008). Much like the NMSS, Ataka is personified almost exclusively by its charismatic leader Volen Siderov rather than its party structure or programmatic elements. However, Ataka's campaigns are much more controversial and have caused concern among EU observers at various points. "Under the banner of anti-corruption and 'Bulgaria back to Bulgarians!' the party seeks to reverse post-Communist privatization, withdraw from NATO, expel foreign troops based in the country and impose 'severe sanctions' on anyone 'defaming Bulgaria' (Blaszczynski and Doran, 2009).

Ataka's populist and Eurosceptic message thus spans both extremes of the political spectrum. It can be viewed as a far right nationalist party and it prides itself on having incorporated nationalist rhetoric into the public discourse. It is the first party to openly and vocally question the legitimacy of the ethnic Turkish party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) which had been a coalition partner in all cabinets prior to the latest election. Siderov's verbal attacks on the Turkish and Roma minority are a trademark of the party's speeches and he has consistently called for stopping the "advancing Islamization" of Bulgaria.[28] At the same

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[28] For more information see: http://www.ataka.bg/en/

time, his call for reversal of market-oriented policies and his strident anti-Western rhetoric have been recognized as elements of a radical left agenda (Ghodsee, 2009; Ragaru, 2006).

While ultra-nationalism is a significant part of the party's appeal, so is its fervent anti-corruption and anti-elite rhetoric. Ataka was the first party to openly challenge the pre-existing pro-EU, pro-NATO consensus and thus offered a clear signal to voters who wanted to punish the political establishment. Ataka's popularity peaked in 2006 when Siderov came in second in the presidential election, despite the backing of the third candidate by almost all mainstream formations. However, in the second round of the election, Siderov lost, receiving 24.1% to 75.9% for the mainstream socialist candidate. This suggests that despite the wide popular appeal of the party, voters were not willing to risk putting an anti-establishment president in office on the eve of the long-awaited EU accession. Since then, the party's support has been relatively stable at 6-10 percent of the vote but its future, much like other populist formations, is uncertain. During the election of 2009, for example, Ataka had a harsh competitor – another new protest-based party which attempted to "steal" Ataka's anti-corruption anti-EU nationalist message.

The Order Law and Justice (OLJ) party dared to cross the political niche previously reserved for Ataka in 2009 by building its whole campaign around a flashy anti-corruption and nationalist message. This led even to the two parties attempting to outdo each other in terms of who was more earnest and more competent in bringing forth the desired changes. Ultimately, Ataka survived the challenge by gaining its usual share of votes, but OLJ also passed the electoral threshold necessary for gaining access to parliament and has become a vocal opposition group since then, albeit one prone to splits and factionalization much like Ataka. The emergence of the OLJ party while Ataka was still holding strong suggests that there is more untapped protest-votes than one may have originally expected or that Ataka has indeed succeeded in

radicalizing the Bulgarian political discourse to some extent, as its leader Volen Siderov likes to claim.[29]

During the 2009 election, another populist party of the more moderate NMSS kind made a breakthrough in Bulgarian politics. Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (known as GERB) won both the national and EP elections. In the European election, GERB finished first by winning 24.36% of the vote. A month later – in the national elections - the party fared even better by securing 39.75% of the vote share. This figure was more than twice higher than that of the runner-up Coalition for Bulgaria (lead by the Socialists) which won 17.70% of the vote. GERB's decisive victory gave Borisov enough confidence to announce he would not seek coalition partners to form the cabinet despite falling a few seats short of absolute majority.[30]

The party was built around a charismatic and popular figure as well. A former wrestler, bodyguard and head of the police, Boyko Borisov became known in the media as "Batman" for his alleged abilities to tackle crime and corruption. Borisov's campaign also relied heavily on symbolic, rather than programmatic issues and he soon became a media favorite. Despite its self-proclaimed status of a center right party, GERB developed as a quintessential populist party of the NMSS kind while avoiding the anti-EU undertones of the more extreme Ataka and OLJ. Smilov (2008) summarizes Borisov's image as being "spicier than the ex-tsar, but does not scare the people as much as Siderov does". It is too early to say how long GERB's popularity will last, but one year after the elections, they were holding on to most of their electorate.

GERB and NMSS are thus two examples of populist parties which did not have an anti-EU message but had a strong anti-corruption one and went on to win elections and govern the

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[29] "Ataka" Leader Siderov: Nationalism Not Taboo in Bulgaria after Elections, July 6, 2009
http://www.ataka.bg/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=1
[30] See for example: Bulgaria Next PM Announces New Government: July 23, 2009,
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=106089

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country. Ataka and OLJ are examples of parties with mixed message which did not go quite as far as to be part of the cabinet, but they succeeded in becoming the first extremist parties in Bulgaria to have parliamentary representation. For a country which for many years boasted to be the only one in the region without a Eurosceptic party, the electoral performance of these new political groups is not to be neglected.

Overall, the case of Bulgaria presents strong support for the theory developed in this study. Bulgaria was among the "laggards" of the EU accession process, troubled first by economic and democratization problems, later to be supplanted by corruption and organized crime. It was heavily monitored and pressured by the EU even after its accession. Domestic politics was tangibly affected by Europeanization pressures and mainstream parties rushed to compete as to who can better and faster fulfill the EU requirements. Populism gained grounds in the country after the first few major corruption scandals in the late 90s and has almost become the norm since then. Protest-based voting is widespread and does not show signs of subsiding as some of the formerly dominant mainstream formations have become weak and fragmented. The next section of the chapter presents the mostly opposite case of Estonia where Europeanization pressures and corruption perceptions were lowest in the region, and hence Euroscepticism and populism in its party system fared worse despite an otherwise notably Eurosceptic public.

5.3.3 Estonia

For most of the EU accession process, which also coincided with post-communist transitions in Central and East Europe, Estonia was treated as a definite frontrunner. Much like the Czech Republic, its economic development and speedy transition to a functioning market economy provoked praise in the West. Its institution building and democratization also progressed

relatively painlessly. A major exception that will be further explored below concerns the treatment of the large ethnic minority of Russian origin. Estonians did not quite comply with EU conditionality on that matter but were nonetheless not significantly pressured to do so. While the reasons for this are beyond the scope of this study, the lack of decisive pressure on this issue is consequential for establishing the lower degree of Europeanization of the country's party system.

In terms of its economic progress, Estonia enjoyed until recently "a reputation as an emerging high growth 'tiger economy' and reform pioneer" (Lauristin and Vihalemm, 2009). It reached this point by engaging in fast liberalization in the early 1990s after the fall of the communist regime. After an initial adjustment of the economy to the newly implemented pro-market measures, the Estonian economy began experiencing consistent economic growth since 1995. In fact, its GDP grew by 96% in the next decade (World Development Indicators, World Bank) placing it in a better place than even the Central European frontrunners Czech Republic and Hungary. Its trade with the rest of Europe grew exponentially and by 2002 the EU was the destination of 68% of Estonia's exports (Mikkel and Pridham, 2004). In addition, Estonia's free-market policies far surpassed the more moderate approach of other CEE countries and in 2006 it was ranked the 12th economically freest country in the world (Economic Freedom of the World: 2006 Annual Report).

Politically, as well, Estonia fared relatively well, though it did not duplicate its economic successes. Religious pluralism and media freedom took grounds in the country by the mid 90s and "there were signs that stable and relatively large parties were beginning to emerge" (Dawisha and Parrott, 1997). Organized crime presented somewhat more of a problem much like in the rest of region. The gravest concern from the standpoint of democratization, however, was the treatment of Russian minorities – an issue Estonia has in common with Latvia.

Russians represent the largest minority in Estonia – about 25% of the population (CIA World Factbook). The historical legacies of Soviet rule caused somewhat tense relations between the two ethnic groups especially whenever native Estonians perceived Russia's attempts to lobby for the rights of its minorities as a breach of the country's sovereignty. Since Estonia was among the best performing EU candidate states on all other criteria, the treatment of minorities was one issue area where the extent of EU's impact on domestic politics can be observed. Economic policies initiated by Estonian governments from the very beginning of the transition were fully in line with the EU-promoted model since the policy preferences of domestic actors in power were aligned with EU preferences unlike the case of Bulgaria where a reluctant government stalled the economic reform process. In the case of rights of minorities, however, EU-norms were met with resistance by Estonian political actors.

The Copenhagen criteria have an explicit clause related to minority rights and the EU consistently engaged the issue in negotiations with all post-communist candidates. Countries like Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria significantly improved their national legislation and provisions for minorities, although of course the change was partially due to reformist domestic governments coming in power (Vachudova, 2005). These governments would prefer to satisfy all EU requirements in exchange for membership unlike their predecessors in the early and mid 1990s.

In Estonia, governments were by no means "illiberal" as was initially the case in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. Nonetheless, the historical legacies and the large size of the Russian minority made even strongly pro-EU governments reluctant to make significant compromises (Hughes, 2005). Harsh citizenship laws and linguistic policies resulted in the exclusion of many ethnic Russians from the political process or from equal access to

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employment and educational opportunities (Arnswald, 2000; Amnesty International Report, 2006). In 2001, the number of non-citizen Russians in Estonia was still much higher than that of naturalized Russians (Open Society Institute: EU accession Monitoring Program, 2001) but that did not prevent the European Union from opening accession negotiations with the country in February 2000.

Nonetheless, this is not to say the European Commission failed in bringing forth any changes in that issue area. Legislation favoring minorities' rights was passed after "sustained pressure from the European organizations, notably the OSCE, and then the EU" and the presence of EU conditionality is often found by scholars to have been the "decisive factor" (Muiznieks and Kehris, 2003; Mikkel and Pridham, 2004). For example, after sustained criticism from the European Commission, a new language law was adopted in 2000 and the electoral law was slightly modified to accommodate minorities. Russians in Estonia, despite being disadvantaged compared to the titular population, also have a higher living standard and better economic prospects than their counterparts is most other post-Soviet economies (Minorities at Risk: Assessment for Russians in Estonia, 2006).

The situation of the Russian minority thus improved over the years, with definite assistance from the European Union. However, general legislation remained patchy and not fully compliant with the Copenhagen criteria throughout the accession period which did not prevent the EU from fast-tracking the Estonian membership application. As early as 1997, the EU placed Estonia in the so-called "first wave" candidates to be offered entry in 2004, while its fellow Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania were left out. So was Slovakia, another country that had been criticized heavily on its treatment of ethnic minorities while otherwise exhibiting improvements in economic growth. Only a year later, the 1998 annual progress report on Estonia included

heavy criticism on the country's Citizenship Law (European Commission Progress Report, 1998). Once EU accession came to be considered a certainty in 2002, domestic governments almost entirely abandoned the citizenship issue as it was domestically controversial and it had become clear that it would not be a hurdle towards membership. The reasons for EU's softer approach towards enforcing conditionality in Estonia are not the subject of this dissertation but other studies have argued that the EU adopted a security-oriented approach towards the Baltics largely because of concerns over Russian ambitions and the possible spillover of such tension into the rest of Europe.[31]

Given the favorable economic and political landscape in the country, and the unwillingness of the EU to press the minorities issue to greater length, the Estonian party system experienced less Europeanization pressures than the rest of the Central and East European states. The intensity of conditionality index developed by Steunenberg and Dimitrova (2007) places Estonia at the lowest spot among the rest of the candidate states from the region. Of course, a pro-EU consensus did develop in Estonia at the elite level much like in the rest of the region. The EU issue was not particularly salient in electoral campaigns, at least not to the extent that it was absorbed in domestic party platforms in countries like Bulgaria and Romania. "No mainstream party has seriously questioned EU membership; and even those parliamentary parties that flirted with Euroscepticism, especially when public opposition to EU membership was growing, soon returned to their pro-EU stances" (Mikkel and Pridham, 2004).

Despite the pro-EU consensus, the reluctance of successive governments to comply with every single condition set forth by the EU in the area of minority rights had domestic electoral benefits. Russians remained distrusted despite the fall of communism. Estonian political actors

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[31] Blais, Emilie "Membership without Compliance with Pre-Accession Conditionality: The Case of Estonia and Latvia", unpublished manuscript.

did not shy away from engaging the anti-Russian sentiment in political debates and mainstream media discourse would go as far as freely using ethnic slurs during politically charged moments (Subrenat et. al, 2004; European Network Against Racism Shadow Report, 2008). The domestic political benefits stemming from defying EU minority rights requirements thus included electoral gains from playing the nationalist card against a distrusted segment of the population.

Estonia had the lowest intensity of conditionality which translates into the highest freedom for domestic maneuvering. Parties took advantage of this in the area of minority rights and the debate over ethnicity exemplifies the greater leeway Estonian politicians had in formulating domestic policy. While the Bulgarian population, for example, held largely negative views of the Roma minority and, to a lesser extent, the Turkish one – pre-accession governments refrained from engaging in a minority rights debate and attempted to fulfill EU legal reform requirements in these areas even if enforcement and monitoring were still inadequate. It was only after acquiring EU membership that major political parties became less restrained in engaging the ethnic issue during their campaigns and tenure in office. The consensus on EU membership that developed in the Estonian party system, however, did not prevent political actors from challenging the EU for domestic electoral gains.

The Estonian case demonstrates that convergence does not equal compliance. Major political parties in Estonia were slow and reluctant to implement minority protections, thus they were fairly convergent in their anti-Russian stance (which defies EU norms) *and* they were fairly convergent in their pro-market, pro-Western consensus on any other issue (which is consistent with EU norms). Mainstream party similarity was, therefore, still high in Estonia but it did not produce the same levels of protest voting as it did in other countries. The country's corruption rankings can help explain this phenomenon. As the findings in chapter 4 indicate, perceptions of

party similarity become particularly consequential whenever they are coupled with perceptions of high corruption.

In the Estonian case, the corruption issue was much less of an electoral factor. The country's average score on Transparency International's CPI index places it as the country with the lowest corruption in the post-communist world for the period 1995-2009. Along with Slovenia, Estonia's average rankings "are on par with Western European countries such as Italy and Portugal" (Moller and Skaaning, 2009). While of course, Italy and Portugal are in the higher end of corruption in Western Europe, for a CEE country this accomplishment is much more noteworthy. The second common international indicator measuring "control of corruption" similarly places Estonia at the top spot with more than 30% greater control than Bulgaria (World Bank Governance Indicators, 2008).

The country's distinction with regard to its corruption performance has provoked sustained praise from the international community, including the EU. A corruption study by the EU suggested that "a possible corruption-free culture" may be behind this development and provoked the Estonian Vice-President of the Commission Siim Kallas to ambitiously declare that the country could reach the top of the corruption perception index, currently inhabited by nations such as Sweden and Norway.[32] Estonian politicians have expressed consistent, and justified, satisfaction with the state of affairs in their country as far as corruption is concerned and the beneficial results have been acknowledged by the EU.

The low relative corruption is, in part, responsible for the less negative perceptions of domestic political structures held by the public. Estonia exhibits a smaller degree of political dissatisfaction with parties and the mainstream elite than is evident in the rest of the region. For

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[32] "Estonia could become the world country with lowest corruption level – EU commissioner", Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release, January 23, 2009.

example, only about 12% strongly disagreed with the way democracy is going in their country and only 8.8 strongly disagreed that "those who make decisions in my country are competent people" while in Bulgaria the numbers were respectively 41.8% and 25.1% (Intune Mass Survey as cited in Ilonszki, 2009).

Estonians, therefore, exhibit less systemic dissatisfaction with the political process. While respective governments can provoke substantial criticism on the part of the public, the all-encompassing alienation from the political elite is not pronounced in the country. Interestingly, though, while Estonians have low scores on domestic dissatisfaction, they have frequently been among the most Eurosceptic populations in the European Union (Vetik 2003, 2006; Lust, 2006). Results from the accession referendum confirmed that one-third of the electorate voted against EU membership which, along with Latvia, placed Estonia at the bottom of membership support among CEE countries. Moreover, negative attitudes towards the EU were not a fleeting phenomenon. As early as 1997, when the majority of candidates still enjoyed artificially high levels of support for the EU, only 29% of Estonians viewed membership in a positive light (Central and Eastern Europe Eurobarometer, 1997).

The causes of Estonian Euroscepticism among the public vary and range from basic economic calculations (Lust, 2006) to reasons related to national identity (Vetik, Nimmerfelft and Taru, 2006) and the particular historical legacy of being under foreign dominance for the majority of their recent history. The particular balance of public and party Euroscepticism is somewhat opposite to the situation in the Czech Republic where a large ideologically Eurosceptic party like the ODS co-existed with mostly pro-EU population and its ousting from power for the years prior to accession was partially explained with public concern over its anti-EU positions. In Estonia, on the other hand, the Eurosceptic population co-exists with mostly

pro-EU parties and the occasional soft Euroscepticism exhibited by a major party is an attempted adjustment to popular moods whenever electorally rewarding rather than a manifestation of the protest-voting phenomenon.

The constellation of the factors discussed above – low Europeanization pressure and low corruption resulted in relatively few examples of populism and Euroscepticism in the party system of Estonia. This fits the theory developed here about the relationship between these factors. However, the Estonian case also demonstrates that when mainstream party convergence occurs, but in an environment of lower corruption and lower systemic dissatisfaction, we see less of Euroscepticism and populism in the political system. Much like survey evidence did at the individual level, the country comparisons indicate that mainstream party similarity becomes more consequential for activating protest voting as corruption perceptions increase.

In addition, the theory developed here would have also expected a purely Eurosceptic formation to have emerged in Estonia as there was a real EU cleavage evident among the public throughout most of the accession process. A possible explanation for the high public Euroscepticism compared to low party-based one concerns the ethnic composition of the country. Given the marginalization of the Russian minority from parts of the political process and the somewhat questionable Estonian record at integrating its minorities, it is possible that Estonian Euroscepticism is partially a function of the attitudes of Russians in the country. Support for this supposition is mixed. Based on survey evidence from the Baltics, Ehin (2001) finds that Russians in Latvia are more likely to hold Eurosceptic attitudes but the relationship was not found in Estonia. Estonian Russians were not systematically different in their attitudes towards the EU. A 2003 TNS Emor[33] survey, however, shows a different picture. Respondents

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[33] TNS Emor is the largest market-research and consulting company in the Baltics.

were asked about their satisfaction with the results of the EU membership referendum. 72% of the Estonian respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the positive outcome, while only 49% of non-Estonians were. Thus, evidence on this matter is somewhat contradictory, but there is the possibility that Estonian Euroscepticism is at least partially channeled through the views of the minority ethnic group. In this case, given that the Russian population's views were not sufficiently represented through an electorally strong pro-Russian political party (as opposed to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria which had representation), the non-emergence of a purely Eurosceptic party makes more sense.

Moreover, survey evidence from 2008-2009 suggests that Estonia's position as the most Eurosceptic country among the new member states may become a thing of the past. Whether due to short term public opinion fluctuations, or a more permanent shift in attitudes towards the EU, Estonians have recently recorded a 78% approval level of their EU membership and only 15% of the population claimed that they had not benefited from membership (Eurobarometer survey: Autumn 2008). The shift became notable in spring 2007 when favorable views on the EU jumped by 10 points in the case of Estonia possibly due to perceptions of a more "robust EU stand vis-à-vis Russia" (Eurobarometer: Spring 2007). Moreover, Estonia's good economic performance continued as a member state and the country is due to be the first among the Baltics (and the third among all new members) to adopt the Euro in January 2011. While no breakdown by ethnicity is available, the notably improved standing of the European Union in the Estonian population suggests that Estonia's party system is even less likely to see the formation of a purely Eurosceptic party in the near future.

The Estonian party system's two major parties the Estonian Reform Party and the Estonian Centre Party have been around since the formation of the multi-party system. They are

supplemented by agrarian, conservative and social democratic parties. There are few examples of populist or Eurosceptic tendencies at the elite level. The only populist formation is the Union for the Republic – Res Publica. It was formed in 2003 after absorbing the smaller Fatherland Union formation whose statements declared its ideology to be a combination of Christian democracy and nationalism. Both the Fatherland Union and its successor fared relatively well in elections gathering between 7 and 24% at respective elections between 1995 and 2007.

The type of nationalism subscribed to by the party was, however, far from the extremes of the Ataka coalition in Bulgaria. The party's main campaign message in 2003 – its strongest election year so far - revolved around improving order in the country and suggesting that current governments were too soft on crime. It pledged to bring increased transparency and popular representation in the political process.[34] While the party, much like typical populists, lacked a clear programmatic agenda, its message was more moderate than the anti-establishment agenda of fellow populists in other CEE countries. Res Publica "emerged in an effort to take advantage of political stagnation and the unpopularity of the conservative-led government's economic policies" while also labeling the traditional parties as "outdated" (Ucen, 2007). The party's message was particularly popular with young and urban voters who saw it as more modern and progressive than their competitors.

The Centre Party won the most votes in the election but failed to secure an absolute majority. Res Publica, along with the Estonian Reform Party, were invited to participate in a triple government coalition. However, as their campaign promise was not perceived as having come to fruition, the appeal of the party decreased and it re-oriented itself towards liberal economic policies combined with social conservatism.

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[34] For more information see: http://www.irl.ee/

While the Res Publica party and its predecessor the Fatherland Union are a manifestation of moderate populism in the Estonian party system, the only electorally viable party to exhibit Euroscepticism at times has been the Centre Party. Its mild Euroscepticism has mostly been vocalized whenever the party finds itself in opposition and has subsequently been tempered or fully shifted to a pro-EU position once the party regains office which it did in 1999 and 2003 (Mikkel and Pridham, 2004). During the campaign preceding the referendum on EU membership, the Centre Party attempted a controversial strategy by sending mixed messages in an attempt to appeal to more voters. At one time it recommended to its electorate to vote against membership, while at other points in the campaign prominent party members campaigned strongly for a 'yes' vote. Edgar Savisaar, the party leader took a neutral position and advised citizens to vote according to their own views (Mikkel and Pridham, 2004).

Euroscepticism is much more prevalent on the margins of the political system in Estonia. Small parties like the Constitution Party (formerly the Estonian United People's Party), the Independence Party, the Republican Party, the Russian Party in Estonia, the Estonian Christian People's Party and the Estonian Future Party all subscribe to anti-EU views while some also espouse a far-right nationalist ideology. The electoral performance of these parties up to date, however, has been unimpressive[35] and they have failed to gain parliamentary representation (with the exception of the soft Eurosceptic Estonian United People's Party which gained 6 seats in 1999). This suggests that while "the potential for extreme-right parties exists" (Kasekamp, 2003), it has remained confined to the periphery of the party system for the duration of the country's post-communist transition. Estonian citizens, while fairly Eurosceptic and suspicious

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[35] For example, in 2003 (on the eve of EU accession) the combined vote share of the fringe Eurosceptic parties was 3.06%. In 2007 this number decreased slightly to 3.2%. The largest combined vote share of these parties (or their predecessors, given the frequent name change, merging and splits in Estonian parties) was in 1999 when they captured 10.69%.

of the Russian minority, seem unwilling to resort to the more extreme manifestations of these sentiments by putting charismatic anti-establishment leaders in office, or even in opposition in the parliament.

Overall, most aspects of Estonian Euroscepticism and populism fit the theory developed in this study, but add additional nuances. Estonia experienced low degree of Europeanization pressure from the EU and has had a less pronounced corruption problem. Parties agreed on the necessity of EU membership but resisted compliance with aspects of the Copenhagen criteria when domestic electoral interests were at stake. Given Estonia's otherwise frontrunner status, the EU did not strongly press demands in the area of minority rights thus providing the leeway used by political parties to engage the nationality issue.

Mainstream party similarity was still high on salient issues like minority rights, but ran against the EU-promoted norm. The lower levels of protest voting in Estonia thus can be explained by the interactive effect of party convergence and corruption. Corruption was less widespread in Estonian society, thus reducing in importance an important predictor of protest voting. In line with expectations, the party system exhibited fewer examples of populism and even fewer of Euroscepticism among parliamentary represented parties. It should be noted, however, that even when Estonia topped public Euroscepticism scales among the candidate states, a genuinely Eurosceptic party did not emerge as a viable electoral contender in Estonia. Possible explanations for this include the Russian population's potentially more Eurosceptic views but lack of political representation; or an elite calculation that tangible benefits from membership would eventually reduce Euroscepticism among the public. The latter trend has been empirically observed in the past 3 years.

5.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter presented three case studies from Central and East Europe. The cases were selected in an attempt to maximize variation in terms of the key explanatory factors – levels of Europeanization pressure, mainstream party convergence and corruption. They also exhibit variation in terms of the outcome – electoral performance of Eurosceptic and populist parties. By tracing the country-specific developments and contextual elements that affected political life, the chapter presents a more nuanced picture of how the phenomena under investigation interact with one another and fit or did not fit the theory. In general, the main developments within the 3 countries support the survey findings from chapter 4 and conform to the theoretical expectations laid out in chapter 3. While this dissertation cannot examine in detail each of the 10 countries in the CEE sample, the case studies developed here are representative of the larger sample as they range from 'frontrunners' to 'laggards' in the process of EU accession, from countries with high to low party Euroscepticism, high to low populism, high to low corruption perceptions and high to low public support for the EU.

6.0   CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the dissertation and draws some avenues for future research. The first section of the chapter summarizes the main theoretical arguments and the associated findings. The second section discusses some limitations of the study and their consequences for the findings. Next, I examine the major implications of the results of this project for broader research agendas in comparative politics and political behavior. I outline the key contributions of the study to these fields as well as its significance for real-world political developments. The final section of the chapter and of the dissertation presents potentially useful ways of extending the scope of this research and improving our understanding of the subject.

6.1   OVERVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This dissertation intends to answer the following question: What accounts for the emergence and electoral performance of Eurosceptic political parties in the domestic party systems of Central and East Europe? I argue that electoral Euroscepticism is closely related to the phenomenon of populism and often has different underlying determinants than genuine, value-based Euroscepticism. The dissertation relies on an individual level survey, longitudinal country-data and in-depth case studies for providing the necessary evidence.

A growing number of studies have begun to explore the nature and causes of either Euroscepticism or populism in CEE. They have made valuable contributions regarding the typology of protest parties, their distribution and strength across the region, the role that utilitarian versus identity-based factors play in negative attitudes towards the EU. However, few of those (Hooghe et. Al, 2007; Krowel and Abts, 2007) directly examine the link between populism and Euroscepticism, especially at the level of the individual. I argue that parties that mix Euroscepticism with populism draw voters in large parts due to their populist anti-elite, anti-corruption message rather than their anti-EU views. Voting for these parties becomes a form of protest against the mainstream political class.

When measuring public Euroscepticism, moreover, some studies use electoral vote shares, while others base their findings on survey questionnaires. My argument seeks to demonstrate that these two approaches are not equivalent because the factors that drive a person to vote for a Eurosceptic party are sometimes different from those determining his or her attitude towards the EU. Voters for whom the EU is not as salient as the domestic agenda can cast a Eurosceptic vote in order to punish mainstream parties even if these same voters have an otherwise positive opinion of European integration. This dissertation thus distinguishes between electoral and value-based Euroscepticism. The former is evident in vote choice, while the latter is better captured by public opinion surveys.

Chapter 2 also gives an overview of the Europeanization literature about EU effects on domestic politics. Scholars are generally in agreement that little or no direct effects of the EU on parties and party system are present across Europe. In this study, however, I examine an important indirect effect of Europeanization and argue it has noteworthy electoral consequences. Mainstream party converge is indirectly fueled by EU pressure to comply with conditionality

criteria and the associated race in the CEE region as to how fast each country can secure a membership offer. Of course, while the criteria for membership are identical for all candidates, domestic contextual differences and political calculations on the part of the EU, would result in varying degrees of pressure in different cases. Europeanization's effects on party competition in CEE thus vary in scope.

Chapter 3 elaborates on the theory in more detail. I single out two observable factors – mainstream party convergence and political corruption - that stand out as drivers of the protest vote. When mainstream political parties - united in the single goal of EU membership and rush to comply with membership conditionality – grow closer in the political space over time, voters are likely to be left with little substantive choice. Citizens across the region may feel forced to pick between competing political groups that are often viewed as "all the same". The effects of mainstream party convergence are likely to be reinforced by the second factor – perceptions of political corruption – in affecting voting preferences. Corruption is a common by-product of democratization in post-communist societies, but its saliency in the media and public realm has notably increased since the late 1990s. Individuals who view the political elite as engaged in frequent corrupt activity are much more likely to engage in a protest vote and pick a Eurosceptic or populist party.

Chapter 4 conducts a series of empirical tests of the observable implications developed from the theory. The first part of the chapter is an individual-level study of voter preferences. I use an original random, representative survey conducted in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria in the summer of 2009. Results indicate that there are indeed different underlying motivations driving electoral and value-based Euroscepticism. Citizens who perceive a higher degree of corruption among public officials in their countries are much more likely to vote for mixed

(Eurosceptic/populist) and purely populist parties. Citizens who see a higher degree of mainstream party convergence are also more likely to pick these parties, though the effect appears much stronger when corruption and party similarity views act together as an interaction term. People's attitudes towards the European Union and European integration, on the other hand, were not found to be systematically related to vote choice when it comes to these political parties. The findings indicate that protest voting is indeed taking place in the region and electoral Euroscepticism is, to a large extent, driven by domestic considerations.

When I treat value-based Euroscepticism as the dependent variable in the analysis, a different picture of citizens' considerations emerges. We see that socio-economic characteristics, knowledge of the EU, media exposure and national identity are key determinants of how one views the EU. Corruption perception still played a role, albeit a smaller one and of the opposite direction. More perceived corruption domestically makes people slightly more favorable towards the EU, probably as an alternative to deficient national governments. The findings clearly confirm that value-based Euroscepticism tends to be a factor of the classic determinants examined in the literature but when it comes to voting behavior, pro-EU citizens often choose to vote for Eurosceptic parties under certain conditions. This project pinpoints what these conditions are and when it is that they become consequential for electoral outcomes.

The second part of the chapter presents an analysis of the country-level findings. I conduct a longitudinal study of aggregate Euroscepticism and populism across the CEE region. Findings largely confirm the story from the level of the individual. We see that mainstream party convergence has a more pronounced conditional effect on the vote share of protest-based parties. This effect increases when overall corruption perceptions are at a high level. At low levels of corruption, however, there is no systematic relationship between party similarity and size of the

protest vote. This finding gives us greater confidence that the survey results in the two countries are not driven by the temporal context. While the public opinion survey is set at a particular point in time, after corruption had already become a salient issue, the cross-national analysis covers a range of years when corruption was not quite that salient in the region. Thus, we see that the main relationships found at the individual level are generalizable across the region rather than being a function of idiosyncratic developments from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic at a given point in time.

Chapter 5 sheds more light on the country-level context in which the developments described in this dissertation take place. I choose three case studies offering variation on each of the dependent variables studied – electoral Euroscepticism and value-based Euroscepticism and trace the emergence and nature of protest parties. The chapter gives an overview of the political, social and economic context of these countries by recounting their histories and stressing the particular cultural legacies that have remained consequential for their modern societies. Populist and Eurosceptic movements are a common trend in the region but they come in different degrees and shapes. Identifying important historical legacies that have affected the post-communist societies of the selected cases allows a glimpse into some of the cultural pre-conditions enabling protest politics as well as the conditions under which mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions have the strongest effect.

Estonia's brief historical period of independence, for example, coupled with a troubled relationship with Russia throughout the ages has exacerbated Estonian sensitivities to perceived threats to their national identity. As a result, post-communist Estonian society and government resisted the acceptance and full integration of a large Russian minority. Mainstream Estonian parties thus largely converged around an anti-EU norm of limiting minorities protection, while at

the same time embracing the rest of the EU membership criteria to the extent of gaining a frontrunner status. While mainstream party convergence did occur, it did not provoke the rise of notable Eurosceptic and populist parties due to Estonia's highly publicized low levels of corruption and the associated smaller discontent with political elites on the part of the population. The Estonian case illustrates an important point mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation. Mainstream party convergence does not need to automatically result in public dissatisfaction unless parties are also seen as dishonest or incompetent when it comes to performing their duties.

Bulgaria's much warmer relationship with Russia on the other hand and the more positive public orientation towards socialism, resulted in a belated start of real pro-market reforms since the former communist party remained in power. Once real reforms began in the late 90s, Bulgaria had a lot of catching up to do and successive governments were put under substantial pressure by the EU to fulfill the accession requirements. Since all mainstream parties embraced the goal of EU accession, they had little leeway left for political maneuvering and mainstream party similarity was particularly tangible in the country's party system. At the same time, Bulgaria was among the countries most heavily affected by corruption problems and the salience of the issue in the media and in public attitudes became a useful campaign tool for protest parties aimed at capturing disaffected voters. Thus, Bulgarian voters, while having high rates of approval of the EU, were willing to put populists or Eurosceptics in parliament in successive elections. This case illustrates that, as expected, mainstream party similarity and corruption perceptions have the strongest effect when acting together.

Finally, the Czech Republic's history of relative autonomy, identification with the West and strong anti-communist sentiment led to a quick extrication from communist era policies.

Ever since the suppressed Prague Spring of 1968, Czech society had distanced itself from the communist regime and political formations that came to power after 1989 were quick to implement pro-Western reforms in a largely supportive population. Mainstream party convergence as a rest of the consensus on EU accession did occur in the Czech Republic but it was mitigated by the presence of a key Eurosceptic party from the early periods of Czech post-communist history. Corruption did present a problem in the country following a series of scandals and eventually enabled populist formations to take advantage of it. Comparatively speaking, the country's corruption performance places it ahead of Bulgaria but behind Estonia while its mainstream party similarity is lower than both of these countries. Accordingly, the country takes a middle place when it comes to the electoral gains made by Eurosceptic and populist parties in its most recent history.

By tracing the degree of EU pressure applied on each of the three countries, chapter 5 also clarifies the mechanism and degree to which mainstream party convergence occurred in the region. While membership criteria are identical, strength of enforcement depends additionally on the domestic context and strategic considerations on the part of the EU. Thus, while chapter 4 provides a country-level longitudinal examination of protest voting, chapter 5 illustrates the role of Europeanization in bringing about these developments. As evident by the language of progress reports and measures of intensity of conditionality, the EU put the most pressure on Bulgaria to comply with membership criteria while Estonia experienced the least. Consequently, we see the highest mainstream party similarity in Bulgaria while in Estonia mainstream party similarity does occur but in some cases contrary to EU-promoted norms and policies. Ironically, it is when domestic politicians stick most closely to the EU-promoted policies that protest voting seems to take the strongest hold if society grows distrustful of the political elite.

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6.2   LIMITATIONS

This study uses a carefully planned research design but certain limitations do remain. As with any survey, both the dependent and independent variables were measured at the same time, thus external influences and endogeneity cannot be fully controlled. Longitudinal survey data, on the other hand, allows for examining more precisely the direction of the relationships.

In addition, the timing of the survey may have introduced some bias into the responses since the summer of 2009 followed the global financial crisis and economic considerations were likely to be particularly high on people's minds. People may be more likely to express negative views on economic conditions in their country and in their household. Similarly, more people may be likely to place the economic situation as the number one issue of concern among problems facing the country. However, previous survey evidence has demonstrated that economic considerations tend to have high resonance with voters in Eastern Europe to begin with, so while the timing of the survey could have intensified this effect, its presence is not an idiosyncratic finding. Moreover, even if economic considerations are overrepresented, they have been accounted for in the models and the key relationships of interest remain significant.

Populism is, however, also known to flourish in response to crisis and in that sense the aftermath of the financial crisis may have exacerbated popular sentiments of disenchantment with mainstream political elites. The expectation, if not their implementation yet, of austerity measures and a reduction in living standards coupled with general uncertainty about the future, creates fertile ground for people growing resentful to the political establishment as a whole. Thus, the appeal of populists would be particularly widespread. Regardless of the survey timing, however, previous elections indicate that neither populism nor Euroscepticism is a phenomenon

that appeared in 2009. The global anti-establishment wave of discontent cannot be credited with driving the results.

At the country level, a limitation of the study lies in the inability to include the same vast range of control variables available in the survey. I designed the survey questions for the specific purposes of this project, but longitudinal data on these indicators could not be included. However, at the country level it is at least possible to account for some sources of endogeneity bias. If a third unobserved factor is affecting, for example, both corruption levels and the portion of the vote won by protest parties, the country fixed effects method of estimation aims to correct for that. Findings from the two sections thus complement each other and at least partially compensate for each other's limitations. The individual level analysis is able to include much more nuanced and detailed information on citizens' beliefs and views and the relationships between those. The country level analysis offers a more basic picture of the key relationships of interest but it assuages concerns about generalizability of the results.

6.3   IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This dissertation examines the determinants of Euroscepticism, and protest politics in general, in the political systems of Central and East European countries. My analysis contributes to the growing literature on parties and voting behavior and, more specifically, to the study of Euroscepticism and populism in Europe. With respect to Euroscepticism, the findings here clearly indicate that scholars need to distinguish between its electoral and value-based manifestations. When Eurosceptic parties employ heavy populist messages, it is often their populist message that draws disenchanted voters rather than the anti-EU sentiment. A

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Eurosceptic vote becomes, in this case, merely a signal of protest punishing mainstream elites on the most visible issue of consensus among them.

This finding has implications for both the general literature on voting behavior and for the study and practice of European politics. In terms of electoral behavior, the East European protest voters can be conceived as 'insincere' voters sending a message to their political elites. Insincere voting has been found to occur in three cases – when citizens want to avoid wasting their vote on small parties (Cox, 1997; Duch and Palmer, 2002), when they want to moderate policy outputs through split ticket voting (Fiorina, 1992; Alesina and Rosenthal 1995) and when they want to send a message to candidates by voting insincerely in low-profile elections (Meirowitz and Tucker, 2007). The type of insincere Eurosceptic voters presented here, however, do not fall neatly into these categories. In fact, they are more likely to vote for initially small parties with fringe agendas and their votes are likely to polarize rather than simply moderate policy. This behavior is exhibited in high profile as well as low profile elections and serves as punishment aimed at the whole class of mainstream parties rather than simply a message to the current office-holders.

Insincere Eurosceptics represent both good and bad news for European integration. The Lisbon Treaty referendums, the French and Dutch vote on the Constitution in 2005, the prospective referendums on the next enlargements demonstrate that public opinion has become a major consideration in European Union politics and policy-making. If European integration is to proceed, analysts and politicians need to constantly update their knowledge on what does and what does not indicate a negative view of the EU.

The type of Eurosceptic voters examined here are not actively seeking to undermine the European project and often have favorable views of European integration. They pick protest

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parties because of their populist anti-mainstream appeal rather than the European dimension. As reported in Chapter 4, CEE citizens who do not trust domestic institutions in their countries are actually more likely to approve of the EU, possibly as an alternative to perceived domestic inefficiencies. On the other hand, by placing a lower priority on their views towards the EU, voters are exhibiting signs of the same detachment that often plagues European Parliament elections. Willingness to put Eurosceptic parties in office thus indicates that voters are still not aware of the scope of impact that EU level decisions have on their lives and may regard their Eurosceptic voting choice as a necessary evil given the greater salience of domestic issues.

By looking at the causes of mainstream party convergence, this study adds to our understanding of international influences on domestic politics. Examining the indirect effects of Europeanization on party politics supplements current Europeanization studies by revealing an important electoral consequence of the convergence phenomenon. With new candidate states now aspiring for EU membership and a line of potential candidates waiting their turn, Europeanization effects during the accession process will remain of interest to scholars and policy-makers. This dissertation is the first to provide empirical evidence for the proposition that mainstream party similarity is consequential for voting behavior. Previous studies have also observed that the rush to European integration has constrained the nature of political competition but no survey evidence to date has explored the consequences of this development for citizens' voting behavior.

The findings raise some concerns about the effects of Europeanization. While the mainstream elite consensus on the issue of EU membership undoubtedly facilitated economic and political reforms in post-communist Europe, the lack of debate unintentionally created the pre-conditions for fringe parties to utilize the European issue to their advantage. While

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referendums on membership itself were held in some countries, individual policies or sets of policies were rarely debated – instead they were presented as the next set of conditions to be satisfied. The findings of this study suggest that future enlargements would benefit from a more politicized approach to accession as moderate Euroscepticism among mainstream formations would diminish public perceptions that parties have grown too similar in their race to membership. Ironically, the more EU policies are contested in their nascence, the less likely a future backlash of protest-based Euroscepticism becomes. Contestation brings legitimacy in the political system regardless of the policy eventually enacted and decreases the options of fringe actors for capturing dissatisfied voters. Contestation, of course, comes at a price, as it makes policies more difficult to implement but the appeal of EU membership is still large enough for publics in most (potential) candidate states to be permanently swayed by a hard Eurosceptic stance. The "insincere" Eurosceptics want to be part of European integration but they also want political parties that give them the option to say no to a given policy.

This study sheds light on the determinants of populism as well. While the particular findings refer to Central and East Europe, populist parties have also been known to fare well in various other places such as Western Europe and Latin America. The populist right has attracted attention of scholars in all European countries and in recent years. Parties of this kind use the catch-all philosophy explored here, in which they combine various forms of protest, including anti-elite, anti-EU, anti-immigration messages. By disaggregating these factors and placing them against each other in a model of vote choice, this dissertation is able to provide important new evidence on the relative importance of each of these strands of non-mainstream political slogans in the campaigns of the populist right. The populist vote is seen here as a largely protest vote against mainstream parties being all the same and being perceived as corrupt and unresponsive.

In some cases, such protest-based parties are said to act as correctives to inefficient or unresponsive mainstream political parties and the surge of Euroscepticism and populism is followed by a regrouping of the mainstream actors in order to regain electoral ground (Casullo, 2009). However, while this certainly seems to be happening in some European political systems, it comes at a price. Incorporating populists into political life has resulted in tentative adoption of populist or Eurosceptic rhetoric by mainstream parties in the hope of capturing some of the cherished protest votes. Thus, otherwise mainstream parties can subscribe to a more nationalistic, Eurosceptic or exclusionary agenda even if only for strategic vote-seeking purposes.

Citizens, however, are the ones affected the most by these developments. The populist resurgence creates a vicious cycle in which initial disenchantment with the political process causes voters to put protest parties in parliament. If mainstream parties adapt to the new strategic situation and "borrow" some of the populist or Eurosceptic language, citizens are exposed to a political discourse that moves even farther away from the liberal democratic ideal type. Populism did not disappear in Central and East Europe after accession – instead, it is now growing in the party systems of West European countries as well. The traditional left-right ideological division is being challenged by more extreme populist parties which often have Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant positions. This pushes the party system towards a new dynamic where one large mainstream party is forced to compete with another equally strong protest based party for people's votes. Such re-configuration can be seen in Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Sweden, the Netherlands and Norway. As observers have already noted, one effect of this development is that the political mainstream is beginning to move closer to their populist opponents – what

constitutes "reasonable" immigration policy, for example, becomes reasonable through comparison with the right-wing populists.[36]

This study presents some important clues as to who the populist voters are in Central and East Europe and why they vote the way they do. Perceptions of mainstream political elites are the foremost motivation. Therefore, mainstream parties can take one of two roads in responding to the populist wave. The first is what recent developments seem to show – party platforms are increasingly becoming less 'mainstream' and less programmatic – moving closer to the populists and trying to express similar messages as the more realistic and reasonable alternative. The second road would involve a more long term process of rebuilding citizens' trust in the ability of traditional parties to govern. As the threat of being excluded from the European Union is no longer valid, mainstream parties cannot count on external incentives to affect voting behavior to the same extent as before accession. Thus, the reshaping of the political scene and its future dynamic depend largely on domestic strategies enacted by the political parties themselves.

6.4   FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of ways in which this dissertation can be expanded upon. First, while I focus on the new member states, there are reasons to expect that mainstream party convergence has to some degree occurred across the EU since both old and new members need to comply with EU laws and regulations. Political parties with populist and Eurosceptic messages are also not a phenomenon confined to the CEE region as electoral advances made by populists in Belgium,

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[36] Slavoj Zizek, "Liberal multiculturalism masks an old barbarism with a human face", October 3, 2010

Netherlands, and Sweden demonstrate. An expansion of the current findings to include both new and old member states could tell us more about whether and how the two groups are similar, different, or converging over time.

Populists can be successful because of their anti-establishment rhetoric and their ability to capture citizens' dissatisfaction with the mainstream political elites. As noted, populist mobilization is often the result of perceived deficiencies of the political system and failure of traditional parties to govern successfully or relate their political message to the people. Populists, however, can also be successful when they engage in "symbolic politics" pertaining to issues of identity, nationhood and otherness. They often try to invoke people's fears of or hostility toward immigrants, ethnic or religious minorities, or other groups perceived as foreign to the national culture. In this case populist mobilization is the result of deep rooted personal attitudes and beliefs activated by populist rhetoric. The two related manifestations of populist mobilization have different implications for society and politics and it is, therefore, worth asking under what conditions we see more of one or the other.

In addition, the study's findings on a number of control variables pose some interesting new questions. While they are not the subject of the dissertation, they can provide new avenues for understanding citizen's attitudes. Social trust and media effects are the clearest examples. Understanding whether and why people who have higher interpersonal trust tend to be less susceptible to populist and Eurosceptic messages has important social psychological implications for the study of the relationship between personality and mass political behavior.

Similarly, media effects have recently become the subject of growing interest as people are constantly exposed to a variety of conflicting information. While traditionally viewed as a source of information, the media has the potential to influence citizens' views and political

participation by placing certain items on the agenda or by emphasizing the costs or benefits of a given policy. Given the complex legal and decision-making structure of the European Union, citizens are even more likely to count on media shortcuts for informing their views. This study suggests that media effects are present when it comes to affecting the popularity of non-mainstream parties and this finding deserves further exploration.

In particular, how the European Union is portrayed compared to domestic political actors can be a determining factor in shaping views on Europe. Attitudes towards the two levels of authority present in EU countries may reinforce or rival each other. People may project their views of domestic governments onto the European Union. Or, they may perceive the two as alternative sources of authority, and dissatisfaction with domestic politics would actually increase trust in the EU. How does the media influence these related perceptions? Does exposure to it reduce support for the EU or domestic governments? In my dissertation I found some preliminary evidence that exposure to the media increases one's support for European Integration while reducing support for national governments, at least as far as East European countries are concerned. Examining these questions in detail can strengthen our understanding of the link between citizens and the European Union.

Survey Questionnaire

1) How old are you?

2) Record gender.

3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(If a student, record qualification for which currently studying)

3b) In what field?

4) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the economic situation in this country today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Very unsatisfactory   Very satisfactory

5) And as for your own household, how would you rate its economic situation today?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Very satisfactory   Very unsatisfactory

6) What do you think the economic situation of your household will be in five years time?

1. Much better

2. A little better

3. About the same

4. A little worse

5. A lot worse

7) How often on average do you watch news and/or political programs on television?

1. Daily

2. A couple of times a week.

3. Once in a while

3. Rarely

8) How often do you read a major newspaper?

1. Daily

2. A couple of times a week.

3. Once in a while.

4. Rarely

8b) Which one (if answered 1, 2 or 3)?

9) How often do you visit news websites on the internet?

1. Daily

2. A couple of times a week.

3. Once in a while.

4. Rarely.

5. Never.

{Vote Choice}

10a) Thinking about the last parliamentary election in this country, did you vote or did you not get a chance?

1. Voted

2. Did not get a chance.

10b) (If voted) People we have talked to today have voted for one of the parties on this ballot. Please put a cross by the name of the party that you voted for in the last parliamentary election.

11a) Thinking about the June 2009 European Parliament election, did you vote in that election or did you not get a chance?

1. Voted

2. Did not get a chance.

11b) (if voted) People we have spoken to today have voted for one of the following parties in the European Parliament election. Please put a cross by the name of the party that you voted for in that election.

12a) Thinking about the 2005 (2006 – Czech Republic) parliamentary election, did you vote in that election or did you not get a chance?

1. Voted

2. Did not get a chance.

12b) (If voted) People we have talked to today have voted for ___ different parties in that election. Please put a cross by the name of the party that you voted for in the 2005 (2006 – Czech Republic) parliamentary election.

13a) (Czech Republic only) If an election was to be held next month, would you cast a vote or stay home?

13b) People we have talked to have said they would vote for one of the following parties if an election was taking place next month. Please put a cross by the name of the party that you would vote for if a parliamentary election were to be held next month.

Perceptions of Parties

14) Here are some commonly cited distinctions between political parties in this country. Please place each of the following political parties on a scale from 1 to 10. {List mainstream non-Eurosceptic, non-populist parties only}

1. Views on the Communist regime

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-communist   Moderate   Anti-communist

2. Market versus Government-managed economy.

Politicians from some parties argue that leaving the market alone is best for the economy while others claim that government intervention to guide the economy is necessary in our society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-market   Moderate   Government-managed

3. Urban versus Rural

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Catering to the urban electorate   Catering to the rural electorate

4. Pro versus Against European integration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In favor of integration   Moderate   Opposed to integration

5. Ethnic lines.

Some parties call for defending our country from the growing influence of ethnic minorities while others ask for encouraging diversity and improving the integration of ethnic minorities in society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Defending the interests   Neutral/Moderate   Defending the interests of the
ethnic majority   of ethnic minorities

6. Other distinction lines (please name)

15) On a scale of 1-10, would you say that your country's membership in the EU is a:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Bad thing   Good thing

16) On a scale of 1-10, does the EU invoke for you a positive or negative image?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Very negative   Moderate   Very positive

-Why (open ended)

17) On a scale of 1 to 10 how much do you feel you know about the European Union?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Nothing at all   A great deal

18) How widespread do you think bribe-taking and corruption is in this country?

1. Almost no public officials are engaged in it.
2. A few public officials are engaged in it.
3. Most public officials are engaged in it.
4. Almost all public officials are engaged in it.

19) In thinking about political corruption in this country, please place each of the following political parties on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 equal the least corrupt and 10 equal the most corrupt. (list all parties)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20) Consider the following political parties (list mainstream non-Eurosceptic, non-populist parties in respective country). To what extent do you agree with the following statement: These political parties are all the same.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Strongly disagree   Strongly Agree

21) What should a person who needs a government permit do if an official says: just be patient, wait.

    1 Wait; it will come

    2. Offer a "tip" to the official to get a prompt reply.

    3. Use connections

    4. Write a letter to the head office

    5. Do what you want without a permit.

    6. Give up the project as the permit will never come.

22) Under our present system of government how much influence do you think people like yourself can have on government?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

No influence   A lot of influence

23) On a scale of 1-10, how interested would you say you are in politics?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Not interested at all   Very interested

24) Here are some commonly cited distinctions between political parties in this country. Please place each of the following political parties on a scale from 1 to 10. {List mainstream Eurosceptic and populist parties only}

    1. Views on the Communist regime

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-communist   Moderate   Anti-communist

    2. Market versus Government-managed economy.

Politicians from some parties argue that leaving the market alone is best for the economy while others claim that government intervention to guide the economy is necessary in our society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Pro-market   Moderate   Government-managed

3. Urban versus Rural

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Catering to the urban electorate   Catering to the rural electorate

4. Pro versus Against European integration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In favor of integration   Moderate   Opposed to integration

5. Ethnic lines.

Some parties call for defending our country from the growing influence of ethnic minorities while others ask for encouraging diversity and improving the integration of ethnic minorities in society.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Defending the interests   Neutral/Moderate   Defending the interests of the ethnic
majority   of ethnic minorities

6. Other distinction lines (please name)

25) Some people say that we would be better off if we get rid of Parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can decide everything. What do you think?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

26) How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in our country?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Very unsatisfied   Very satisfied

27) To what extent do you trust each of the following institutions to look after your interests? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 for no trust at all and 10 great trust.

1. Courts 2. Political Parties 3. Army 4. Parliament 4. Police 5. President 6. Trade Unions 7. Church 8. Media 9. Most people in this country 10. Most people you know. 11. European Union

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

No trust   Great trust

28) Consider the following political parties (list mainstream plus Eurosceptic and populist parties in respective country). To what extent do you agree with the following statement: These political parties are all the same.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

29) Some people say that the personality of the party leader is the most important characteristic of a party. To what extent would you say the personalities of the following leaders are the defining feature of their party? [list party leaders + their party]

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Personality very important   Personality unimportant

30) Which broad political outlook are you most inclined to favor? (record two choices if respondent names two)

    1. Pro-market

    2. Social democratic

3. Communist

4. National traditions

5. Environmentalist, green

6. Other

31) With which of the following statements do you agree the most?

1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government.

2. Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a

democratic one.

3. For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a non-

democratic regime

32)　With　which　of　the　following　do　you　most　closely　identify　yourself?

32b. And which do you identify with secondly?

a. My ethnic group

b. Local community or city in which I live

c. Region

d. Country:

e. Europe

f. Other

33) Do you think any of these pose a real threat to peace and security in this society?

1. National minorities in our society

2. Immigrants from other societies.

3. Neighboring countries.

4. Other countries (ask "which one(s)" if respondent picks this option)

4. Terrorist groups.

34) On a scale of 1 to 10, please indicate your position on the following issue:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Ethnic diversity   Ethnic diversity enriches life
erodes a country's unity

35) In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the country at present?

35b) And what is the second most important problem facing the country at present?

19. The poor economic situation.

20. The spread of corruption in society.

21. The spread of crime in society.

22. The loss of decision-making power and erosion of national identity after entry into the

EU.

23. Increasing influence of minority groups.

24. Rise of radical religious movements.

25. The poor condition of the environment.

26. Decay of moral values in society.

27. Other (please name).

We are almost done. Let me ask you some brief final information about your background.

36) What religious group do you belong to?

1. Roman Catholic

2. Protestant

3. Orthodox Church

4. Jewish

5. Muslim

6. Other

7. Not a believer

37) (If names a religion) How often do you go to church or religious services?

1. At least once a week

2. Once or twice a month

3. A few times a year

4. About once a year

5. Less often

6. Never go to church

38) What is your ethnic background?

(for Bulgaria)	(for Czech Republic)
1. Bulgarian	1. Czech
2. Turkish	2. Moravian
3. Roma	3. Slovak
4. Armenian	4. Roma
5. Other	5. Other

39) Looking at this card, what would you say was the total income of your family during the last month from all sources?

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