Lund University
Department of Political Science

MEA
Spring 2007
Professor Magnus Jerneck

Euroscepticism in Central Europe

A comparative analysis at elite and mass level of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia

Michael Toomey

Abstract

Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia all joined the European Union in 2004. Since then, there have been very different trends apparent in all these countries in terms of attitudes to Europe, both at elite and mass level. This thesis examines the nature and level of Euroscepticism in these countries, and discovers a number of reasons for the differences in these trends from country to country. In order to do this, I have examined empirical results from the Eurobarometer polls taken in these countries from the time of accession to the present date. I have also looked at various theories and typologies related to the study of Euroscepticism. This includes Opposition-politics theory, as well as the Kopecky/Mudde and Taggart/Szczerbiak (hard-soft) typologies of Euroscepticism. My findings have been that there is high elite-based scepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic, and low mass-based scepticism in Poland and Slovakia. Furthermore, I have found that the differing levels of scepticism are a result of history and the economic status of the country in question; and the reasons for the differences in levels of elite- and mass-based scepticism include trust for the elites in question, and the extent of elite responsiveness to mass opinions.

Key words: Euroscepticism, Central Europe, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dorota Sobolewski for her assistance and input during the writing of this thesis, and without whose help I probably would not have been able to complete it.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

Following the ratification of the Treaty of Nice by the existing members of the European Union, ten new member states were absorbed into the Union. For many of these countries, membership had arrived after a lengthy and often arduous period of candidacy, lasting in some instances for more than a decade. For some of the new members, accession represented a return to Europe, a break from their former past as members of the Communist Eastern bloc; for others, it was envisaged as a means of actualizing their economic potential; for more, it was a chance to stabilise and strengthen their fledgling democratic credentials.

Opinion polls taken on the eve accession noted certain levels of scepticism in all of the countries. In some, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, there were particularly high levels of scepticism; surveys show large amounts of distrust in both countries (only thirty-three per cent trusted the EU in Poland[1], and just forty-two per cent in the Czech Republic[2]). By contrast, there were some such as Slovakia, which displayed much lower amounts of popular scepticism and greater trust than even a number of the existent member of the Union.[3] Since then, there have been some very interesting and unusual trends in the levels and the character of scepticism in these countries. This is sometimes at odds with what has happened elsewhere in Europe, both in the past and the present.

1.1 Purpose and Method of the Research

It is thus the purpose of this thesis to examine Euro scepticism in three of the 2004 accession countries, specifically Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. I intend to extrapolate what the character of scepticism in these countries is: whether it is elite or mass driven, mainstream or isolated, 'hard' or 'soft' etc. I will also examine the extent to which popular scepticism exists in these countries. From these findings, I will then try to ascertain what the different trends in these countries are, why they exist, and what this can tell us about Euroscepticism in general.

For my research, I intend to examine and present results from the Eurobarometer reports compiled in the relevant case study countries between Spring 2004 and Autumn

[1] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Poland Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p4

[2] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Czech Republic Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p3

[3] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p3

2006. Furthermore, I will draw a lot from prior research in this field, including journal articles, books, and conference papers.

1.1.1 Relevance of the Case Studies

As mentioned above, this thesis is centred on case studies of three new member states: Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. The reasons why I have chosen these countries to look at are numerous. First of all, they represent an economic cross-section of the accession states; the Czech Republic being a more well-off state, with Poland and Slovakia having poorer economies. Secondly, they present a contrast in terms of the territorial and population sizes, Poland being one of the largest states in the Union, while Slovakia is smaller. There are strong cultural and historical connections between these states, and for all of them, EU membership should have strongly symbolised a post-communist return to Europe. I will examine the scepticism in these countries, and will analyse the findings to see what contrasts and comparisons can be made between the nature of scepticism in these countries.

1.1.2 Defining Scepticism- explanation of typology

In order to be able to understand and examine the nature of Euroscepticism in the new countries, we must first explain what we mean when we use the term 'Euroscepticism'. As such, this section is devoted to defining and evaluating certain concepts pertaining to the description of Euroscepticism.

To most students of European integration, the Taggart/Szczerbiak typology, which incorporates the terms 'hard' Euroscepticism and 'soft' Euroscepticism, should seem at least vaguely familiar. This is because when one discusses scepticism, this is the most traditional breakdown and division between its different strands. Hard Euro scepticism means "…a principled objection to the EU and European integration…"[4] In this sense, it means an outright rejection of the ideas involved with, and related to, European integration and the European Union. Those who would adhere to such a point of view would oppose their country's membership of, and participation in, the European Union, or would be against the very idea of European countries integrating in any political or economic form.[5] Such scepticism is not necessarily left-wing or right-wing, as hard Eurosceptic groups often include Communist, Socialist, Conservative, and Neo-Fascist political parties. Hard scepticism is often seen in single-issue anti-EU parties such as the UK Independence Party,

[4] Paul Taggart; Aleks Szczerbiak: (2002) "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU member and candidate states", Sussex European Institute, [online], accessed on 13/11/2006, available at http://www.central.susx.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp51.pdf

[5] Paul Taggart; Aleks Szczerbiak: (2004) "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe" in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 1 p3

which mobilises specifically because they see opposition to Europe as the primary issue facing their societies.[6]

On the other hand, soft Euroscepticism does not entail outright rejection of Europe, but rather means an objection to certain aspects of the integration process. This can mean that a party supports the EU as it stands, but may not be supportive of further integration.[7] There are two further forms of soft scepticism: policy-based and national interest scepticism. The former indicates that while a group may be broadly in favour of the EU and European integration, they may oppose certain new policy initiatives such as the introduction of the Euro, or a specific treaty, or so on.[8] In the case of the accession states, this may have manifested itself in certain objections to some aspects of the acquis communitaire. On the other hand, national-interest scepticism may refer to the use of rhetoric in exerting the importance of the national interest, and the defence of this, within the context of the EU.[9]

However, there are problems with the hard-soft approach to Euroscepticism theory. Although it can be quite useful as a means of understanding elite-driven scepticism, it is rather blunt. As a result, it is not so helpful when trying to explain popular- or mass-driven scepticism. Thenceforth, while I will still use some aspects of the Taggart/Szczerbiak typology in certain parts of this thesis, I will focus more on another theory of evaluating Euro scepticism, one which was proposed by Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde. Although it was likewise intended to explain elite-level positions, I find that their typology is more appropriate for explaining mass-based attitudes towards Europe.

Kopecky and Mudde break down approaches to Europe into two brackets: opinions on the EU, and opinions on European integration. They then split these parts up: those who are contained in the integration axis include Europhiles, who support the base ideas of the EU including pooled sovereignty and a general integrated market economy; and Europhobes, who oppose integration as a result of political affiliation or because of their belief in the incompatibility of European nations.[10] Meanwhile, those whose interests lie in the EU itself can be split into EU-optimists and EU-pessimists. Optimists support the way the EU is currently run and/or how it is developing, while pessimists do not believe the EU is being run well, or is developing in a favourable way.[11]

By then cross-referencing these two brackets, we thus come to an appropriate description of positions on Europe. Most attitudes amongst people entail aspects from both brackets; it is thus necessary to classify them alongside each other. As such, the positions we can identify include Euroenthusiasts (those who aspire to the ideas of integration, and

---

[6] Ibid, p3

[7] Taggart and Szczerbiak: "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU member and candidate states", Sussex European Institute, [online], available at http://www.central.susx.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp51.pdf

[8] Taggart and Szczerbiak: "Contemporary Euroscepticism" in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 1 p4

[9] Ibid, pp4-5

[10] Petr Kopecky; Cas Mudde: (2002) "The Two sides of Euroscepticism: Party positions on European Integration in East Central Europe" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 p301

[11] Ibid, p302

see the EU as fulfilling these goals); Eurosceptics (those who support European integration, but either feel the EU is not the best way of achieving this, or is not the best elaboration of these ideals); Europragmatists (those who support the EU as profitable for their own country/position in the short-term, but do not necessarily support integration); and Euro rejects (those who outright reject the EU and European integration).[12]

As one can see from the above, this approach is much more flexible, and will be used extensively in this thesis to explain and elaborate on the different attitudes towards Europe which are found amongst the Central European masses and elites. I shall not totally discard the hard-soft terms; but rather I will use them to elaborate on the 'Eurosceptic' group, further breaking this down into those who support the EU but have issues with certain areas or policies, and those who do not support the EU, but are not averse to the entire concept of European integration.

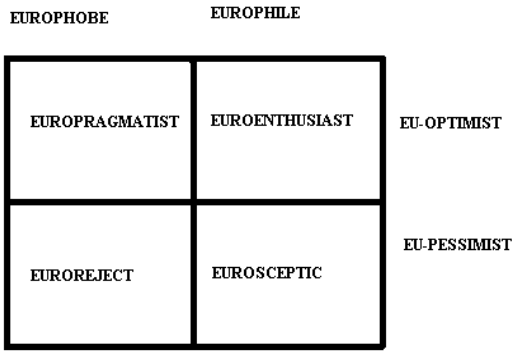

FIGURE 1: GRAPH TAKEN FROM KOPECKY AND MUDDE: "THE TWO SIDES OF EUROSCEPTICISM" IN *EUROPEAN UNION POLITICS*, VOL. 3, NO. 3 p301

[12] Ibid, pp 302-304

2 Empirical evaluation of attitudes in the Case Study countries

2.1 Poland

2.1.1 Mass level

Upon entering the European Union in 2004, Poland was seen as one of the most sceptical new member states. In the most immediate opinion polls after accession, forty-one per cent of Polish people recorded no confidence in the Union.[13] Furthermore, a high percentage (thirty-one per cent) felt that Poland would not benefit from membership, and thirty-six per cent believed that their general lives would disimprove over the coming year.[14] The next polls, taken in autumn of that year, showed increases in the positive perception of Europe: there was more support for membership, as well as in the amount of people who had a good image of the European Union.[15] However, this was tempered by persistently low ratings in terms of trust, and the presence of great suspicion towards the benefits of being part of the EU.[16] Again, the situation improved slightly in early 2005, although the status quo in many of the negative aspects remained. These finding thus far paint a fairly bleak picture of the popular opinion towards the EU in this country. However, the situation changed drastically in many ways in late 2005. A healthy majority (fifty-four per cent) expressed support for membership.[17] This percentage was above average for the Union as a whole. Furthermore, a drastic leap in the perception of benefits was noticed as compared with early 2004. Sixty-three per cent now saw the EU as being beneficial to their country, with a drop of six per cent in people holding the opposite opinion.[18] This opinion was now eleven per cent higher than the EU25 average.

The wave of optimism which began then has carried on to the present time. In early 2006, increases in trust (fifty-eight per cent), satisfaction with membership (fifty-six per

[13] Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Poland Executive Summary" p4
[14] Ibid, p2
[15] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 62- Poland Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p4
[16] Ibid, pp2-3
[17] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 64- Poland Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2005) pp4-5
[18] Ibid, p5

cent), and the perception of benefits (sixty-four per cent) were all noted.[19] These polls were all above the EU-average, leaving Poland as one of the more EU-optimistic countries in terms of popular support. This is not to say that everything is rosy: there was a general level of suspicion towards many of the institutions of the EU, and fifty-three per cent of Polish people felt as if their voices did not count when it came to decisions made in Brussels.[20] Many of the results from this set of surveys were then recreated in Eurobarometer 66, the most recent in the series. There were some raises in the perception of membership benefits (seventy-three per cent) and in satisfaction (sixty-two per cent).[21] The only statistic which has remained relatively static throughout Poland's three years of membership thus far has been the low levels of trust placed in the national government. Further proof of the Polish people's new status as strong backers of the EU is the fact that they consistently record high levels of support both for the widening, and the deepening, of European integration.

2.1.2 Elite level

The popularity of the EU at mass level in Poland presents quite a contrast to the positions of a number of the Polish political parties, and in particular, those currently in the governing coalition. This has sometimes been displayed in a very obvious manner: for example, while celebrations were going on around Europe recently in honour of the fiftieth Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, celebratory and congratulatory speeches were at least absent, at most extremely muted in Warsaw, where a sceptical government presides.[22] Such attitudes have been, and continue to be found in large amounts amongst the parties of the right. This first began to emerge after the 1995 presidential election, while Poland was still in pre-accession status. After the defeat of President Walesa, a realignment of the right occurred, leading to the development of elements in many parties that were hostile to the EU.[23] Furthermore, whilst there was support amongst many important institutions such as the Catholic Church and the Trade Unions for certain ideas about European integration, many of these groups were suspicious (to say the very least) about the nature of the European Union, and how membership of this would affect Polish traditions and culture.[24] The Church's position did, admittedly, sway from anti- to enthusiastically pro-integration following a number of statements by Pope John Paul II in 1997; however, some renegade

[19] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 65- Poland Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) pp3-4
[20] Ibid, p5
[21] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Poland Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) p2
[22] Kjell Albin Abrahamson: "Back to the grey European everyday" in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snallposten*, no. 87, March 31st 2007, p22
[23] Frances Millard: "Polish Domestic Politics and accession to the European Union" in Henderson (eds.): *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union* (UCL Press, Cornwall; 1999) p209
[24] Ibid, pp210-211

factions, including the charismatic Fr. Ryzdzk's Radio Marjya movement, remained sceptical about the secular, liberal nature of the EU. This influenced opinions in many parties of the right.[25]

As a result, Polish elites can be considered to be somewhat more sceptical than those in many other countries, especially in the accession states. This is reflected by the fact that of the fifty-four Polish MEPs, at least twenty-three are members of European parliamentary groups that hold positions which are either implicitly or explicitly Eurosceptic. As was stated above, those parties which oppose the EU tend to be predominantly right-wing or far-right in their outlook. As there is currently a coalition of the right in power in Poland (which includes three of the most sceptical parties, the League of Polish Families (LPR), Law and Justice, and Samoobrona (Self-Defence)), it is thus no surprise that there is a considerably anti-EU focus apparent in Polish elites. The sceptical parties may have differing reasons for their stances, however: the League of Polish Families, with its arch-Catholic outlook, opposes the "…materialist, secular, and 'cosmopolitan'" influence of the EU.[26] Such values supposedly threaten the ideals and traditions of Poland.[27] The Law and Justice party, however, whilst still incorporating aspects of the catholic dogma into their outlook, bears a qualified antipathy to Europe as a result of fears about an influx of cross-border crime.[28] This is reflected in the Eurobarometer, where increased crime is listed consistently as the Polish people's largest fear stemming from membership. However, there is a certain 'German factor' prevalent in the attitudes of Polish parties as well- many of the elites have expressed suspicion over the treatment of Poles by Germany in the EU sphere.[29]

2.2 The Czech Republic

2.2.1 Mass level

Like in Poland, Czech public opinion of the EU was quite negative upon entry. The Spring 2004 Eurobarometer shows that there was below average trust in the EU (forty-two per cent), low support for membership, and little anticipation of benefits arising from membership.[30] Furthermore, there were fears over the economic impact of accession, a lack of a 'European' identity, a degree of opposition to EU enlargement, and hostility

[25] Ibid, p210

[26] Birte Muller-Heidelberg: (2004) "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p6, [online], accessed on 16/4/2007, available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html

[27] Ibid

[28] Bartosz Napieralski: *Party-based Euroscepticism in Poland: Definition, classification, and causality* (Unknown publisher, Warsaw; 2005) p39

[29] Muller-Heidelberg: "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p12, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html

[30] Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Czech Republic Executive Summary" pp3-5

towards certain policies which were intended to deepen integration.[31] The next set of polls, taken in autumn of that year, remained similarly anti-EU. Positive images of the EU were evoked in only forty per cent of respondents.[32] Meanwhile, support for membership remained low (although increasing by four per cent) and those who had experienced benefits from membership was below the average for the EU25 (forty-two per cent).[33]

This point marked a nadir in Czech perceptions of the EU. Following this, support began to gradually increase. The perception of membership benefits increased in early 2005 to fifty-six per cent (up fourteen points), with trust also now above average (although there was considerably less trust for the individual institutions).[34] Although these numbers took a knock in the wake of the French and Dutch rejections of the constitutional treaty, they rebounded again in 2006. Approval of membership bounced up to fifty-two per cent (a gain of eight points, albeit still lower than the EU average.)[35] The belief in the benefits of membership went up to sixty-two per cent, and the EU projected a positive image in fifty per cent of the population.[36] These figures were re-iterated in the autumn polls.

This should not be taken to mean that there is now widespread support for EU policies in the Czech Republic. On the contrary, many of the figures listed above are either low relative to the rest of Europe, or conceal large percentages holding the opposite view. Furthermore, there were constant concerns over how much the EU actually listened and responded to the common voter; for example, in Autumn 2006, only twenty-four per cent of Czechs felt the EU listened to them, and fourteen per cent believed they were involved in the decision-making process.[37] So it should be made clear that there exists a much higher degree of scepticism in the Czech Republic than in many of the other accession countries.

2.2.2 Elite level

In concert with this, political elites in the Czech Republic are classified as holding a high degree of Euro scepticism.[38] There does not seem to be any bias in terms of left-wing or right-wing scepticism, as many of the opponents of Europe dome from across the political spectrum of the country. However, one of the most interesting characteristics of this is that one of the main sceptic parties, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), is also one of the most

[31] Ibid, pp5-7
[32] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 62- Czech Republic Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p2
[33] Ibid, pp3-4
[34] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 63.4- Czech Republic Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2005) pp2-3
[35] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 65- Czech Republic Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) p3
[36] Ibid, pp2-4
[37] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Czech Republic Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) p7
[38] Taggart and Szczerbiak: "Contemporary Euroscepticism" in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 1 p20

prominent mainstream parties in the Czech parliament.[39] As early as 2000, the leader of this party, Vaclav Klaus, had sounded warnings about membership, stating that the country "…should not slide into Brussels' socialism right after getting rid of Moscow's."[40] However, their approach to Europe is not so much one of out-and-out rejection of Europe. Rather, it is characterised by a number of objections to certain aspects of the European integration process. Concern is especially stressed at the ease of access of foreigners to purchasing Czech land.[41] Also, another point of contention for this party is the bureaucratic and regulatory elements of the EU, and the increased politicisation of the integration process: this comes from their neo-liberal economic and political ideals.[42] Furthermore, there are concerns about the perceived German and Austrian influence on Europe, resulting from threats by these countries to veto Czech accession over the issue of property restitution to the families of those who were deported from Czechoslovakia following World War II.[43] By the same token, the ODS does not reject Europe as a concept, is supportive of Czech membership, and draws its support from a voter demographic which is overwhelmingly in favour of the Czech Republic's position in the EU.[44]

Aside from some fringe elements, the other anti-EU party of note is the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM). This party has adopted a more extreme sceptic, even rejectionist, position. Partially this is a simple result of their politics being incompatible with the EU. They view the present trend of integration as being driven by "exploitative multinational capitalism", with the European Union being the physical embodiment of this.[45] However, the KSCM also adopts a position of nationalism, and occasionally opposes EU membership on the grounds that it threatens Czech traditions and cultures.[46] Furthermore, the KSCM have also played the 'German card' in their prior objections to Europe.[47] It should be noted that there is a certain discrepancy in attitudes between the grassroots members of the party and its leaders, the latter having often tried to push the party more towards a conciliatory, pro-membership position. In spite of this, the KSCM ideologically often resembles a rejectionist party; subsequently, it is the only party

[39] Sean Hanley: (2002) "Party Institutionalism and Centre-Right Euroscepticism in East Central Europe: the Case of the Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic", [online], accessed on 17/4/2007, available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/turin/ws25/Hanley.pdf

[40] Birte Muller-Heidelberg: (2004) "To what extent is Euro scepticism a West European phenomenon?", p9, [online], accessed on 17/4/2007, available at http://www.grin.com/en/26871.html

[41] James Hughes; Gwendolyn Sasse; Claire Gordon: (2002) "Saying 'Maybe' to the 'Return to Europe': Elites and the Political Space for Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 p334

[42] Karen Henderson: (2002) "Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe", p14, [online], accessed on 17/4/2007 available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/turin/ws25/Henderson.pdf

[43] Bojan Petrovic; Etel Solingen: (2005) "Europeanization and Internationalisation: The Case of the Czech Republic" in *New Political Economy*, vol. 10, no. 3 p291

[44] Ibid, pp289-290

[45] Kopecky and Mudde: "The two sides of Euroscepticism" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 p307

[46] Petrovic and Solingen: "Europeanization and Internationalisation" in *New Political Economy*, vol. 10, no. 3 p292

[47] Ibid

of this sort in the Czech Parliament who, upon achieving some success, retained and even improved on its position, rather than fading away.[48]

Other parties with Euro sceptic outlooks which achieved some success included the neo-fascist Republican Party, which achieved eight per cent of the national vote due in large part to its Europhobic rhetoric; however, this success was fleeting, and the party was disbanded in 2001 (although it has since re-emerged to very little success under a different guise).

2.3 Slovakia

2.3.1 Mass level

Unlike the previous two case studies, Slovakia entered the EU with one of the most jubilant publics in Europe. Eurobarometer 2004.1 shows that around the time of accession, a higher percentage of people here had confidence in the EU than in any of the other candidate countries.[49] Furthermore, Slovakia had above average support for membership (forty-six per cent), associated the EU less with negative aspects than other countries, and showed great support for EU policies.[50] These figures even increased in the next set of polls. The EU now held the trust of sixty per cent of the population.[51] Furthermore, support for membership increased to fifty-seven per cent, along with a perception of membership benefits of sixty-two per cent, nine per cent above the EU average.[52] Although these numbers dipped somewhat in early 2005 (trust down by one per cent, support for membership down by six per cent) the poll taken in this period also revealed dropping opposition to Slovak participation in Europe.[53] This slide in support for the EU continued throughout the rest of the year, with those in favour of membership decreasing to fifty per cent.[54] By the same token, this slide masked the fact that Slovaks still ranked as the third-most enthusiastic of the new member countries. This trend was reversed in 2006, as those responding positively to membership, and those who felt that being part of the EU had been profitable for their country rebounded to fifty-five per cent and seventy per cent, respectively.[55] Later on in the year, surveys show that the levels of trust had increased to

[48] Ibid, p291
[49] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p3
[50] Ibid, pp6-7
[51] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 62- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2004) p4
[52] Ibid, pp7-8
[53] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 63.4- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2005) p3
[54] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 64- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2005) p6
[55] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 65- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) pp3-4

sixty-two per cent, in concert with slight gains in support for membership etc.[56]

As one can see from this, the Slovak public can definitely be considered one of the most euroenthusiastic of populations not just amongst the new member states, but also in Europe in general. However, it should also be noted that there is somewhat of a discrepancy, geographically speaking: by this, I mean that support for the EU is not uniformly high across the country. On the contrary, those respondents living in rural areas were often found to be decidedly less enthusiastic about the EU than those in urban locations, especially near Bratislava.[57]

2.2.3 Elite level

Given the popular support for the EU, it would amount almost to political suicide for any mainstream party to adopt and overtly anti-European position. As such, almost every important group in Slovakia has more supporters than opponents of integration.[58] However, this should not be taken to mean that elite scepticism does not exist in this country. Parties with larger eurosceptic factions include the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) led by the controversial Vladimir Meciar, and the Slovak National Party. Neither of these political groupings outwardly opposed European membership around the time of the referendums on accession, and at least on paper supported integration. In the case of the Slovak National Party, this position is quite unusual, as it is classified in some quarters as extreme-right and neo-fascist in their outlook. In relation to the HZDS, this party does support Slovak membership of the EU: indeed, it was under their leadership of the country that Slovakia began the accession procedure. However, it does have some concerns. According to surveys, most members of the HZDS have reservations about the actual benefits of joining the EU.[59] Furthermore, there are objections based on nationalist reasons- these relate to the fear of a permeating cosmopolitan influence, and worries over the issues with Hungarian minorities and Hungary itself.[60] Also, there may be some hangover from HZDS policies in the early 1990s. In 1992, they were elected as the leading party in Slovakia (at a time when this country was still part of Czechoslovakia) on a platform of national autonomy.[61] This party thus spearheaded the independence of Slovakia. One could then see how they may be wary of suddenly surrendering their newly-won and hard-fought independence. However, this group, along with its offshoot,

[56] European Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Slovakia Executive Summary" (Commission, Brussels; 2006) p3

[57] Petr Kopecky: (2004) "Mass Attitudes towards the European Union in the Czech and Slovak Republics", p10 Conference Paper, delivered at University of Indiana, Bloomington on April 2nd 2004

[58] Karen Henderson: "Slovakia and the democratic criteria for EU accession" in Henderson (eds.): *Back to Europe* p233

[59] Karen Henderson: (2001) "Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Opposition attitudes to the EU in the Slovak Republic" in *Opposing Europe- Sussex European Institute*, vol. 50, no. 5 p11

[60] Ibid, pp14-15

[61] Ronald Linden; Lisa Pohlman: (2003) "Now you see it, now you don't: anti-EU politics in Central and Southeast Europe" in *Journal of European Integration*, vol.25, no. 4 p316

the People's Union (which broke away in 2002, but remains closely connected) also stress economic issues, advocating that EU membership could involve too many changes to the country in too short a time, leaving Slovakia unable to cope.[62]

Of the other sceptical groupings, of primary interest is the afore-mentioned Slovak National Party. This party, currently in government, is useful for examination because in spite of its hard-line nationalism and sometimes xenophobic (usually anti-Hungarian) sentiment[63], it does not out rightly reject EU membership. Once again, it has raised objections based on the issues of Slovak economic readiness and sovereignty.[64] It has been much more extreme in its rhetoric than the HZDS, and continues to criticise the EU and European integration for a supposed 'influx' of foreign influence. Other groups include the unreformed Communist Party of Slovakia, which rejected the EU due to its incompatibility with their ideological position; the Union of Slovak Workers, which saw membership as unnecessary, arguing that "…Slovakia can be self-sustainable and does not need to import EU surplus produce"[65]; and the Christian Democratic Movement, a more mainstream party, which has been identified by some as a sceptic party (although its objections are so mild that it can only be classified as the softest of Eurosceptic parties, if at all). Both the Communists and the Union of Slovak Workers are admittedly isolated fringe parties, and do not contribute much to Slovak politics in general

[62] Jan Rovny: (2004) "Conceptualising Party-based Euroscepticism: Magnitude and Motivations" in *Collegium*, vol. 29, no. 4 p43

[63] A prime example of this being a time in 1999 when the then leader of the party, Jan Slota, exclaimed at a public meeting "…we will jump in our tanks, and go and flatten Budapest…we will not leave a square centimetre to those Hungarian assholes"

[64] Rovny: "Conceptualising Party-based Euroscepticism: Magnitude and Motivations" in *Collegium*, vol. 29, no. 4 p42

[65] Ibid

3 Analysis of the Case Studies

The above case studies have introduced the countries in question. They have presented the level to which scepticism exists. Over the course of the next two chapters, I intend to analyse these findings in closer detail. First, I will explore the above findings on a country-by-country basis, in order to find the nature of scepticism in these countries.

3.1 Poland

As was shown above, Poland has a very enthusiastic public when it comes to Europe, but a much more wary elite. We shall first examine the popular approach to Europe.

Through my statistical examination of various Eurobarometer polls, I have shown that Polish people have gone from being one of the most sceptical in the EU, to one of the most supportive. This can be reflected by the previously documented changes from the pre-accession expectation of benefits (which showed low confidence, thirty-one per cent believing the EU would harm Poland), and the perception of actual benefits, which increased steadily as enthusiasm went up. However, not everything is perfectly rosy. Polish trust in many of the EU institutions has been generally low, only reaching a (barely) above-average rating in 2006. In fact, for the first two years of membership, trust remained consistently low, reaching a nadir in late 2005, when the EU Parliament and the Commission had the trust of just an absolute minority (forty-nine and forty-six percent, respectively).[66] Furthermore, high levels of distrust were often recorded.

This brings us to the question: how can we classify the Polish masses in terms of scepticism? Using the Kopecky/Mudde typology, we can see that in general, the Polish tend to be Euroenthusiastic. By the same token, there is a certain qualification to this, in that (as documented above) there are reservations amongst a significant amount of people about how the EU is managed, indicating a degree of Euroscepticism. So it can be said that a majority of Polish are enthusiastic towards Europe, with a small (but significant) soft to moderate Eurosceptic minority, and very little Eurorejectionist sentiment.

On the other hand, the elites in Poland are clearly far more sceptical than this. As was detailed earlier, the three parties in the governing coalition at present show varying degrees of suspicion towards Europe. These findings confound prior research into the field by scholars such as Taggart and Szczerbiak, who claimed early on in Poland's membership that it was a country with low party-based Euroscepticism.[67] It is possible that the Polish

[66] Commission: "Eurobarometer 64- Poland Executive Summary" p6

[67] Taggart and Szczerbiak: "Contemporary Euroscepticism" in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.

elites have become hardened in their attitudes since Taggart and Szczerbiak made their assumption: evidence of this is given by the characterization of the Law and Justice Party by Kopecky and Mudde in 2002 as a 'moderately Europhile party'[68]; since then, the party has taken a much more critical stance. So it may be the case that sceptical positions are becoming more mainstream amongst Polish parties. Either way, the presence of one soft Eurosceptic and two hard Eurosceptic parties in government clearly shows that there is a rather high level of elite-based scepticism in Poland; and that its character is at least moderately sceptical, at worst Eurorejectionist.

Given that we have established that public scepticism in Poland is low, but elite scepticism more widespread, how can this be explained? It would stand to reason that, if Eurosceptic parties were 'electable' and mainstream, then there would be a significant groundswell of grassroots anti-EU opinion as well; the United Kingdom being a prime example. However, Poland turns this conventional wisdom on its head. One possibility may be the declining influence of the Catholic Church. A number of Polish parties (such as the LPR) are heavily influenced by the Church.[69] As was noted before, the Church in Poland originally objected to the Union on the grounds that its secular influence would destroy the character of Poland.[70] It is then possible that they may have been right; that accession brought with it a number of people rejecting these traditional ideologies, leaving groups such as the LPR as staunch opponents of Europe. However, this explanation is not totally satisfactory. Such a decline in support would surely be reflected in declining electoral strength for fundamentalist Catholic parties. Furthermore, there has not been a mass rejection of the Church, as there remain very few atheists in Poland, and with the vast majority being practicing Catholics.[71] Although I do not disregard secularism completely as a cause, it is much more likely that the elites simply do not represent the views of the people, or are so distrusted that people are taking their positions on Europe from the *opposite* of what they are told by the government. This will be dealt with in greater detail later on in this thesis.

3.2 Czech Republic

In contrast to Poland, Czech people seem to be a lot more critical, and a lot less enthusiastic about membership of the EU. As has been shown, support for the EU has rarely been anything other than average or sub-average. This is borne out by the fact that even at its most positive time, in spring 2006, just fifty-two per cent of people supported membership, a figure which was three points below average, and those who had a positive image of the

---

43, no. 1 p20

[68] Kopecky and Mudde: "The Two sides of Euroscepticism" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3 p312

[69] Muller-Heidelberg: "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", pp5-6, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html

[70] Ibid, p6

[71] Carles Vilar: "Real International Statistics in Religion", [online], accessed on 7/5/2007, available at http://www.religionstatistics.net/statofrel.htm

EU accounted for only fifty per cent of the population, equalling the EU25 average.[72] There were often a large number of objections to membership, as well as people who saw there being no benefits to being a part of the European project. Finally, a majority of Czechs felt somewhat distanced from Europe, seeing as being unresponsive to them. This is highlighted by the Autumn 2006 polls, whereby, only twenty four percent of Czechs felt their opinions were listened to in Europe, and even fewer, fourteen per cent, felt actively involved in the decision making process.[73] As a result of this, one can see that the character of Czech attitudes to Europe is considerably different to those of Polish people.

According to the definitions of Kopecky and Mudde, about forty-five to fifty percent of Czech people are Euroenthusiasts; about the same amount are Eurosceptics, and the remainder seem to be Eurorejectionist. There does not seem to be any Europragmatists, as people are either in favour of the EU and European integration, or not. While those who subscribe to Eurosceptic positions might not all be anti-EU (in fact, most of them probably are not), they all have certain qualifications to their support, whether it is that they are isolated from Europe, do not see membership as providing the benefits they expected, or that they cannot fully trust their European (German?) cohorts.[74]

In line with this, as was detailed earlier, elite-based scepticism in the Czech Republic is also widely acknowledged to be widespread and mainstream, and is spearheaded by the largest conservative party in Parliament, the ODS. Although it has been, and continues to be, supportive of Czech membership of the EU, it has in the past been highly critical over the terms of entry, and is concerned with any possible losses of sovereignty, especially fearing a European super-state.[75] In many ways, the ODS resembles the British Conservative Party, given its following, its political alignment, and its highly qualified support for Europe; indeed, it has previously likened itself to this party.[76] As was noted before, the other party of note in the Czech Republic is the Communist Party; although their own leadership has tried to push them towards a more pre-European position, much of the grassroots support remains firmly Eurorejectionist. As such, it is somewhat more difficult to classify. While one can place the ODS quite easily in the Kopecky/Mudde sphere as a soft Eurosceptic party, the KSCM seems to span Eurosceptic, Europragmatic[77], and Eurorejectionist positions.

On a side note, it is interesting to note that the ODS hardened their position on Europe at a time when they were in opposition the Czech parliament.[78] Now that they have

---

[72] Commission: "Eurobarometer 65- Czech Republic Executive Summary" pp3-4

[73] Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Czech Republic Executive Summary" p7

[74] Muller-Heidelberg: "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p12, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html

[75] Linden and Pohlman: "Now you see it, now you don't" in *European Integration*, vol. 25, no. 4 pp317-318

[76] Ibid, p318

[77] It is Europragmatic, in that many of its members' objections are in relation to European integration, rather than the EU itself.

[78] Petr Kopecky: "An Awkward Newcomer? EU Enlargement and Euroscepticism in the Czech Republic" in Harmsen and Spiering (eds.): *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity, and European Integration* (Rodopi press, New York: 2004) pp239-241

returned to power, their stance has been softened to an extent. Likewise, the KSCM have softened their approach in an attempt to become more attractive as a coalition partner. As a result, it is possible that a certain amount of these parties' opposition to Europe may be a manifestation of their opposition to the government in power. This is supported by Nick Sitter's assertion that "…because European integration remains…a project driven largely by member state governments, opposition to specific (European) measures tends to be the privilege of the opposition."[79]

It is interesting that mass attitudes to Europe are so closely reflected by elite positions: general support for integration, but with a number of strong qualifications to this, and an element of rejectionism. It is possible that this is again related to trust; although low, and below the EU25 average, support for political parties and the government is higher in this country than is the average for the new member states.[80] Also, the position of a respected leader, Vaclav Klaus, as the figurehead of opposition to Europe would probably influence many people in their attitudes to Europe.[81]

3.3 Slovakia

The Slovak people continue to be amongst the most satisfied in Europe, with trust in the EU, the perception of actual benefits, and general positivity towards membership all rising since accession. They have displayed support both for the deepening of integration in many policy fields and enlargement of the Union. Although there is some differentiation geographically, with somewhat less support for the Union in rural areas than in the cities, there is still a high degree of acceptance in the country of the EU in general. There have been some concerns over the access of the everyday citizen to the decision-making procedure, and over the issue of whether or not their voices are taken into consideration (or even listened to); but these fears are nowhere near as prevalent as in the Czech Republic. Nonetheless, this is a bigger issue amongst Slovaks (at present, only ten per cent feel involved in the decision making process, and sixty-two per cent feel their voice doesn't count).[82] In all, it is possible to classify Slovak people as predominantly Euroenthusiastic, with a much smaller Eurosceptic group.

While it would virtually amount to political suicide for a mainstream party to outright reject the EU, there is certainly a higher amount of scepticism amongst the political elites. As was stated earlier, the two main sceptic parties of note are the Slovak National Party and the HZDS, both of whom are member parties of the current government. We shall look at the former first. Although the Slovak National Party has not attempted to extricate Slovakia from the EU, and has never unequivocally opposed

[79] Nick Sitter: (2002) "Opposing Europe: Euro-scepticism, Opposition, and Party Competition" in *Opposing Europe- Sussex European Institute*, vol. 56, no. 9 p12

[80] Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Czech Republic Executive Summary" p3; see also "Eurobarometer 66- Czech Republic Executive Summary" p2

[81] Kopecky: "An Awkward Newcomer?" in Harmsen and Spiering (eds.): *Euroscepticism* pp238-239

[82] Commission: "Eurobarometer 66-Slovakia Executive Summary" p8

membership, its support for the EU is so qualified as to be non-existent.[83] As a result, this group should be classified as hard Eurosceptic, bordering on Eurorejectionist.

The HZDS is much more difficult to classify. While it has been a strong critic of the accession procedure, and nearly caused the rejection of Slovakia's application, it was also the party which made the application in the first place, and has routinely declared its support for the EU.[84] It has been described as a 'phoney Europhile', a party which pretends to support Europe in order to garner votes, and as a Europragmatist party by Kopecky and Mudde. [85] Although I am using their typology, I do not fully agree with the Kopecky/Mudde definition of the HZDS: while they may contain elements of Europragmatism, it is more likely that they are a Eurosceptic party dressed as Euroenthusiasts: a wolf in sheep's clothing, if you will.

As a result of this, it is clear to see that in spite of the fact that there is more elite scepticism than mass scepticism in Slovakia, it is not very well-developed, and the enthusiasm of the Slovak people towards Europe forces the hands of the main parties. When one considers that two of the most critical parties in Slovakia are coalitionable to some extent, but that these attitudes are somewhat controlled by the voices of the electorate, it is possible to say that there is a moderate level of party-based Euroscepticism (with tinges of Eurorejectionism and Europragmatism) visible in the Slovak elites.

[83] Henderson: "Euroscepticism or Europhobia?" in *Opposing Europe- Sussex European Institute*, vol. 50, no. 5 p22

[84] Ibid, pp10-11

[85] Tim Haughton: (2004) "What Role has Europe Played in Party Politics in Slovakia" in *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 1 p38

4 Comparative Analysis: what does this tell us about scepticism?

Thus far, I have established the character of Euroscepticism in the case study countries. In Poland, there is a great differentiation between elite and mass attitudes. Whilst the public is generally euroenthusiastic, with a certain level of soft Euroscepticism and very little rejectionist rhetoric, the elites tend to be less enthusiastic, displaying higher amounts of hard Euroscepticism and Eurorejectionism. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, there is much more parity between the views of the public and the elite. There is a generally large amount of public Euroscepticism, probably nearly on a par with the amount of Euroenthusiasm, and Eurorejectionism exists to a considerable extent. This is matched at elite level, with the ODS, a Eurosceptic party, being one of the largest mainstream parties in the country, and the KSCM, a hot-pot of Europragmatism, Euroscepticism, and Eurorejectionism, also occupying a large segment of parliament (although it is not a coalitionable option). Finally, between these two countries, is Slovakia. The public opinion is very much Euroenthusiastic, with only a small amount of Euroscepticism, and virtually no Eurorejectionism worth speaking of. The elites are constrained by this, because while some of them may not be wildly supportive of membership, it seems that for political reasons, they cannot come out and damn the EU altogether. Still, although, not a completely mainstream attitude, it is obvious that there is a more critical atmosphere amongst the elites, with two members of the governing coalition holding various degrees of sceptical viewpoints, and a number of fringe parties also being anti-Europe.

I will now cross-reference these findings. This will be done in order to find out why trends in these countries are so different, and thus, what we can learn about Euroscepticism from this thesis. To do this, I will look at three things:

1) why there are different levels of Euroscepticism in each country;
2) the nature of the sceptical rhetoric in each country; and
3) why there are differences between the attitudes at elite and mass level in some countries, but not in others.

4.1 Why there are different levels of scepticism

4.1.1 Historical reasons

There are certain points of common interest here. The first issue worth looking at is the historical dealings the case study countries have had with existent member states. In the cases of Poland and the Czech Republic, both have had serious problems in the past with Germany, and this has shown itself in the attitudes of these countries. According to Muller-Heidelberg, "…Euroscepticism [in the Czech Republic] derives mostly from a strong hostility to Germany".[86] This hostility is not just a result of the occupation of the Sudetenland before World War II, but also because of the post-war 'Benes Decrees', which saw the German minority in Bohemia expelled from the country, a point which has proven troublesome for both countries since then. This has thus been manifested in the attitudes of the ODS, the KSCM, and especially in the now-defunct Republican Party.

This historical aspect has also been played on by Polish parties; but at mass level, the issue is more that the people feel 'devaluated' by the Germans, and fear the Germany may begin to refuse Poles access to German labour markets etc.[87] However, Poles do not have negative memories of other member states: Czechs do, often feeling betrayed by the failure of the British and the French to honour their pacts of allegiance during the Sudeten crisis. Such feelings possibly evoke distrust of their new fellow members, and may partially account for some of the mass-based scepticism.

Slovakia, on the other hand, does not have these same issues; its major historical rivals have been the Czechs and the Hungarians, both new members themselves, and joining the EU may act as a reassurance for Slovaks, who may still have fears over irredentism in either of these countries. Finally, neither Poland nor Slovakia had the post-war problems the Czechs had vis-à-vis the Sudeten Germans, thus possibly accounting for some of the elevated public antipathy to Europe. So clearly, history could play a part in the evocation of scepticism or enthusiasm in these countries.

4.1.2 Economic reasons

From a mass perspective, economics could play a part. As was noted at the start of this thesis, the Czech Republic as a relatively well-developed economy, whilst Slovakia and Poland are much poorer. This is reflected by the fact that upon entry, one of the main fears of the Czech people was that membership would have a negative impact on employment, that it would lead to job losses to the East.[88] This was also a fear expressed by many Slovaks, although this was somewhat unrealistic, given that they had some of the lowest production costs in the EU.[89] The same issue was not a major problem for Polish people. Since then, Slovaks and Poles have both noted a positive effect on the employment figures

[86] Muller-Heidelberg: "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p12, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html
[87] Ibid
[88] Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Czech Republic Executive Summary" p6
[89] Commission: "Eurobarometer 2004.1- Slovakia Executive Summary" p6

in their country from membership.[90] Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, opinions on the employment situation have consistently been more negative, with seventy-six per cent of people regarding the job market as being in bad shape in late 2006.[91] In this sense, Czech people might have seen their country as having more to lose than the Slovaks and the Poles (correctly, it may seem), thus leading to higher mass-level scepticism. So it is also likely that the economic status of these countries, both at the point of accession and now, played a strong role in the development of mass-level Euroscepticism.

4.1.3 Other reasons?

It is less likely that issues such as re-incorporation into a supranational entity so soon after leaving the Communist bloc has played a role, especially at elite level. While Vaclav Klaus has periodically railed against Czech incorporation into the EU 'super-state', these proclamations have often been more aimed against socialism, rather than European integration. An issue which has been raised in the Czech Republic is the increased 'politicisation' of the EU. However, fears of a return to domination by a proxy government do not seem to be part of this rhetoric, and these objections are more akin to the traditional complaints regarding the loss of sovereignty, which are often found in many other 'old' members of the Union. So this memory of Muscovite-control does not seem to play a large role in Czech attitudes, much less in Slovak and Polish approaches. The Eurobarometer polls have, admittedly, often shown lower support in the Czech Republic for a European Political Union than in Slovakia and Poland. Again, this most likely relates more to the Czech fear of the deepening of the Union going too far, rather than worries over their country being swallowed up by the 'United States of Europe' like as happened during the time of communism.

Thus, it can be suggested that the two major reasons for elevated mass and elite level criticism towards Europe are historical dealings with the old member states, and the economic status of these countries. Czech Republic, having less-than positive memories of its previous interactions with three member countries, and having more to lose economically from membership, has the highest level of scepticism. Slovakia, on the other hand, having had none of the same negative experiences with the old member countries, and having more to gain economically, has the lowest level of elite- and mass-based scepticism.

4.2 The nature of the sceptical rhetoric

There a number of notable differences in the nature of the rhetoric used by elites and other

[90] Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Slovakia Executive Summary" p6; Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Poland Executive Summary" p1

[91] Commission: "Eurobarometer 66- Czech Republic Executive Summary" pp4-5

groups which are opposed to Europe in these countries. This can tell us a lot about the level of scepticism in the level of scepticism in the case study group, and about the differences in opinion (or the lack thereof) between the political parties and the general populace in their attitudes to Europe. We shall first look at the perspective of the parliamentary groupings.

In the Czech Republic, elite criticisms towards Europe are often based around hard facts: the impact of integration on the economy, losses of national sovereignty, and so on. A big issue for the ODS is the politicisation of the EU, for example: they see the EU as being a tool for economic integration, a means of deepening economic co-operation and enlarging markets.[92] Thus, for them, the political development of the Union is unwanted, and to be avoided. Furthermore, its discourses towards Germany, though fuelled by their historical past, are often firmly rooted in the present: the Franco-German leadership of Europe is to be avoided, as it brings Europe down a 'socialist' path.[93] However, elite voices in Poland and Slovakia (especially in the case of the former) frequently have a more emotional factor. Many of the Polish objections are that the EU will destroy the character of the Polish nation; that a secular wave from Europe will threaten the religious, cultural, and traditional nature of the country; and that it will make people more materialistic.[94] These voices are often enhanced by Radio Marjya, the afore-mentioned fundamentalist catholic radio station. Indeed, religion, and the impact the EU will have on the church, has often played a large role in elite-based scepticism. Meanwhile, Slovak objections have often been that western values are not necessarily appropriate for the Slovak people.[95] This is combined with certain complaints about the economic requirements of membership. However, these discourses are nowhere near as emotional as those found in Poland.

On the other hand, there is far less of a difference between the rhetoric of mass-level objections across the three countries. Judging at the time of accession, the main fears of citizens of the three countries seem to have all been related to economics and crime. Worries were expressed over the performance of agriculture and an influx of organised crime. Although there was some deviation, it does not seem that cultural and ideological reasons are a major part of mass-based sceptical rhetoric.

It is then interesting to note these trends. In the Czech Republic, elite level sceptic rhetoric identifies hard facts, while in Poland, the objections are more emotional and ideological. Slovak elites adopt somewhat of a combination of both these positions, but with a stronger emphasis on the facts of integration. Meanwhile, the complaints at mass level all seem to incorporate the same reasoning, and they all seem to focus more on the economic aspects of integration.

---

[92] Kopecky: "An Awkward Newcomer?" in Harmsen and Spiering (eds.): *Euroscepticism* p239

[93] Hanley: "Party Institutionalisation and Centre-Right Euroscepticism in East-Central Europe", [online], available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/turin/ws25/Hanley.pdf

[94] Muller-Heidelberg: "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p6, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.htm

[95] Muller-Heidelberg: "To what extent is Euroscepticism a West European phenomenon?", p6, [online], available at http://www.grin.com/en/26871.htm

4.3 Differences in the level of mass-based and elite-based scepticism

The above findings have important consequences for this issue. As has already been stated, the contrast between the three countries in terms of the differences in volume of mass-level and elite-level scepticism is drastic. In Poland, there is a veritable chasm between the Euroenthusiastic public, and the strongly Eurosceptic government. In Slovakia, there is a greater amount of elite scepticism than public scepticism, but these positions are much closer; whilst in the Czech Republic, the people seem to be singing off the same hymn-sheet as their political leaders. There are two possible explanations for this.

4.3.1 Trust of elite positions

The first is that the relationship between the two cleavages depends to a great deal upon trust. It is possible that as the masses become more and more distrustful of their own national political institutions, so they approach a 'critical mass' whereby they abandon the viewpoints of their leaders, and go in the opposite direction. As I elaborated on earlier, Poland has the lowest level of trust in the EU25 for the national parties, parliament, and government. Thus, this critical mass would be reached, and people would be taking their own positions from the reverse of those of their leaders. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, trust levels, although low, are much higher than those in Poland, meaning that people still draw their opinions from what they are told by their leaders. Slovakia, having trust levels somewhere between these two countries, has a moderate level of differentiation between the two cleavages, thus lending credence to this explanation.

4.3.2 Are mass voices actually represented by elites?

However, what is more likely is that given my above findings on the nature of Eurosceptic rhetoric in these countries, the issue is more to do with actual representation of the people's viewpoints. The rhetoric of the elite in the Czech Republic matches that of their electorate. It thus stands to reason that these party groups are more in touch with the voices and ideas of their constituents and are reacting to it. By the same token, the rhetoric amongst Polish elites is quite removed from that of the Polish people, suggesting that they *are not* responding to the views of the people on the ground. Slovakia, again, adopts an intermediate position: the elites are partially responsive to the masses, but not fully; thus, there is some differentiation between the positions of the two cleavages, but not to the same extent as that which is found in Poland. One thing someone could then draw from this is that it is possible that many of the parties in these two countries are not elected because of their approaches to Europe, but rather for other domestic reasons.

5 Conclusions

This study has led to several findings and hypotheses about Euroscepticism in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Poland. From the empirical analysis of the masses and the elites in these countries, I have discovered the following trends. In Poland, there is a great difference between the level and nature of elite and mass attitudes towards Europe. At elite level, there is widespread scepticism. The three main eurosceptic parties are all mainstream and electable, and they are at least soft Eurosceptic; at times, hard Eurosceptic and/or Eurorejectionist. However, at the popular level, there is much more Euroenthusiasm; anti-Europe views are consigned more to the fringes of society. In the Czech Republic, there is not the same differentiation: rather, there is a general atmosphere of scepticism, which is widespread and mainstream at both the elite and popular levels, and tends to be soft- to moderate-Eurosceptic in nature (although there are also strong elements of Eurorejectionism). In Slovakia, there is a very high public level of Euroenthusiasm. As a result, the political leaders are probably somewhat constrained by this: however, there is a more critical attitude visible here. It is not Eurorejectionist, but rather occupies varying shades of Euroscepticism.

The comparative analysis of these countries explains a lot of the reasons for these differing trends. The variance in the levels of scepticism has much to do with history and economics. The Czech Republic has had negative dealings with Germany in the recent past, and has been let down by France and Britain. Furthermore, its rate of economic development, combined with the fact that it had something to lose from integration has lead to more scepticism at both levels. Poland's dealings with Germany have likewise been poor historically, however, the fact that it had more to gain (and probably has gained more) from joining the EU has contributed to higher elite-based scepticism, but low mass scepticism. Meanwhile, Slovakia has not had negative experiences with existing members of the EU, and, like Poland, had a lot to gain from accession: hence its lower figures of anti-Europe sentiment across the board.

Rhetoric amongst elites in these countries is very different. In the Czech Republic, it is more based on hard facts, and actual issues involved with integration. In Poland, sceptical discourses are much more emotionally and ideologically driven, whereas in Slovakia, political groupings tend to incorporate aspects of both of the above. However, at mass level, the concerns of people are the same in all three countries: economics and crime, hard facts of the integration process, matter most. This in turn feeds into my next explanation, the reason for discrepancies in the level and character of euroscepticism between elites and masses in these three countries. It is certainly possible that trust (or the lack thereof) plays a role: once distrust reaches a critical mass, people begin to take their positions on Europe from the *opposite* of the parties. However, it is more likely that the

issue is to do with whether or not elites actually represent the voices of their constituents. Thus in Czech Republic, where discourse at both levels match, there is greater representation of the people's views, leading to more similar trends. This is less the case in Slovakia, and not at all in Poland, thence the higher levels of differentiation.

In short, the findings of the comparative analysis have led to the creation of these hypotheses about how scepticism works in these three countries:

1) the levels of Euroscepticism is dependent on the historical interactions with existing member states, and the level of economic development in the country in question; and

2) differences in the amounts of scepticism at elite and mass level may be a result of the corresponding level of trust of the elites by the masses, but more likely is caused by whether the elites are in tune to the masses or not.

6 Bibliography

BOOKS:

Bartosz Napieralski: (2005) “Party-based Euroscepticism in Poland: Definition, classification, and causality”
Unknown publisher; Warsaw

Karen Henderson (eds.): (1999) “Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union”
UCL Press; Cornwall

Robert Harmsen; Menno Spiering (eds.): (2004) “Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity, and European Integration”
Rodopi press; New York

CONFERENCE PAPERS:

Petr Kopecky: “Mass Attitudes towards the European Union in the Czech and Slovak Republics”
Conference Paper, delivered at University of Indiana, Bloomington on April 2nd 2004

EUROBAROMETER REPORTS:

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Czech Republic Executive Summary”
Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Poland Executive Summary”
Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 2004.1: Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries- Slovakia Executive Summary”
Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 62- Czech Republic Executive Summary”

Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 62- Poland Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2004) “Eurobarometer 62- Slovakia Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2005) “Eurobarometer 63.4- Czech Republic Executive Summary”
Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2005) “Eurobarometer 63.4- Slovakia Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2005) “Eurobarometer 64- Poland Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2005) “Eurobarometer 64- Slovakia Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 65- Czech Republic Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 65- Poland Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 65- Slovakia Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 66- Czech Republic Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 66- Poland Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

European Commission: (2006) “Eurobarometer 66- Slovakia Executive Summary” Commission; Brussels

NEWSPAPER AND JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Bojan Petrovic; Etel Solingen: (2005) “Europeanization and Internationalisation: The Case of the Czech Republic” in *New Political Economy*, vol. 10, no. 3

James Hughes; Gwendolyn Sasse; Claire Gordon: (2002) “Saying ‘Maybe’ to the ‘Return

to Europe': Elites and the Political Space for Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3

Jan Rovny: (2004) "Conceptualising Party-based Euroscepticism: Magnitude and Motivations" in *Collegium*, vol. 29, no. 4

Karen Henderson: (2001) "Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Opposition attitudes to the EU in the Slovak Republic" in *Opposing Europe- Sussex European Institute*, vol. 50, no. 5

Kjell Albin Abrahamson: (2007) "Back to the grey European everyday" in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snallposten*, no. 87, March 31st 2007

Nick Sitter: (2002) "Opposing Europe: Euro-scepticism, Opposition, and Party Competition" in *Opposing Europe- Sussex European Institute*, vol. 56, no. 9

Paul Taggart; Aleks Szczerbiak: (2004) "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe" in *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 1

Petr Kopecky; Cas Mudde: (2002) "The Two sides of Euroscepticism: Party positions on European Integration in East Central Europe" in *European Union Politics*, vol. 3, no. 3

Ronald Linden; Lisa Pohlman: (2003) "Now you see it, now you don't: anti-EU politics in Central and Southeast Europe" in Journal of European Integration, vol.25, no. 4

Tim Haughton: (2004) "What Role has Europe Played in Party Politics in Slovakia" in *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 1

WEBSITES:

Birte Muller-Heidelberg: (2004) "Comparing Euroscepticism in Poland and the Czech Republic", p6, [online], accessed on 16/4/2007, available at http://www.grin.com/en/26879.html

Birte Muller-Heidelberg: (2004) "To what extent is Euro scepticism a West European phenomenon?" p9, [online], accessed on 17/4/2007, available at http://www.grin.com/en/26871.html

Carles Vilar: "Real International Statistics in Religion", [online], accessed on 7/5/2007, available at http://www.religionstatistics.net/statofrel.htm

Karen Henderson: (2002) "Exceptionalism or Convergence? Euroscepticism and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe", p14, [online], accessed on 17/4/2007 available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/turin/ws25/Henderson.pdf

Paul Taggart; Aleks Szczerbiak: (2002) “The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU member and candidate states”, Sussex European Institute, [online], accessed on 13/11/2006, available at http://www.central.susx.ac.uk/sei/documents/wp51.pdf

Sean Hanley: (2002) “Party Institutionalism and Centre-Right Euroscepticism in East Central Europe: the Case of the Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic”, [online], accessed on 17/4/2007, available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/turin/ws25/Hanley.pdf