



**Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism
in the EU Candidate States of
Central and Eastern Europe**

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SEI Working Paper No 46
Opposing Europe Research Network Working Paper No 2

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First published in May 2001
by the **Sussex European Institute**
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Abstract

This paper examines party-based Euroscepticism in the candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe. In an attempt to develop comparative lessons from the different cases, the paper presents research into the location, electoral strength and type of Euroscepticism in the party systems of these countries. The data is then used to examine six propositions about the relationship between party-based Euroscepticism and left-right ideological spectrum, party position in party systems, public Euroscepticism, prospects for accession, 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism and state longevity. The paper concludes that extending the scope of our study of Euroscepticism to the candidate states both extends our understanding of Euroscepticism from its study in Western Europe and also brings new insights into party systems in central and Eastern Europe as well as offering clues to some future effects of EU enlargement.

Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe¹

Introduction

Trying to understand contemporary European politics without understanding European integration is at best an incomplete process and at worst a fruitless one. But conversely, trying to understand European integration without understanding European domestic politics is a mistake. Unfortunately comparative work on European politics has too often ignored the European Union. The study of European integration studies has, for its own part, until recently shown little concern with the 'domestic' politics of Europe. This has impoverished both areas. Comparative European politics has passed over the effects of and the insights possible from the processes of European integration but has too often missed out on an opportunity to extend the range of comparison by incorporating the EU level. European integration studies have shown a concern with polity and policy but have had little time for the politics of Europe and have suffered as a result being poorly equipped to explain why public opinion has deviated from the permissive consensus of the early days of post-war European integration.

Studying the party politics of European integration is to focus on a key point of intersection between European integration and European politics. Despite the hopes of earlier proponents, no European party system has emerged. And yet the processes of European integration are driven forward, held back or redirected by actors of, from or beholden to political parties. The moments of intergovernmental bargains, of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, are negotiated by party politicians and the more mundane daily politics of European integration are not without the influence of parties, party politicians and of party politics. At the same time, the realms of party politics at the domestic level are rarely free of EU issues. The consensus that has existed across member state party elites that European integration is desirable has been broad and rather unenlightening for those attempting to draw out differentiations over this most important of issues. Recently however cracks have appeared in that consensus.

The growth of European integration has given rise to contestation and opposition. It would be surprising if it did not. The European project has generated novel institutions, complex processes and a whole realm of regulatory policies but it has also generated debate, discourse and division. It has created its own politics at domestic levels. But it has not generated those politics in a vacuum. The associational politics of parties and party systems, and the processes connected with them, force the issue into certain configurations and have the effect of patterning conflict. Looking at the nature of Euroscepticism therefore means looking at how domestic politics structure one part of the process of European integration. But it also means that we can use the European issue to illuminate deeper lines of division within party systems, between the core and periphery, between the

¹ This paper represents one of the outputs of the 'Opposing Europe' network which is an international network of researchers working on party-based Euroscepticism across Europe and which is co-convened by the co-authors of the paper. The authors would like to acknowledge the considerable help in the research for this paper of Evald Mikkel, Elena Iankova, Sean Hanley, Petr Kopecky Agnes Batory, Ruta Buneviciute, Sorin Ionita, Kieran Williams, Solvita Harbacevica, Karen Henderson, Elena Jileva, Anca Dumitrescu, Janice Bell, Alenka Krasovec, Deyan Kiuranov and Gunta Misane and colleagues and students at the Sussex European Institute,. They would also like to thank Helen Wallace and Paul Webb for their comments in revising this paper. In addition they would like to thank the members of the 'Opposing Europe' network for their participation and would encourage any researchers interested in joining the network to contact the authors. The authors are responsible for any errors but will no doubt pass the blame to each other in the event of serious mistakes.

embattled centre and the alienated outer rim. In short, studying Euroscepticism tells us something about European integration and it tells us much about party politics.

In terms of public opinion and the positions of political elites, there are variations in how opposition to Europe is manifested. In EU member states, there are many parties, or factions within parties that express opinions that we could class as at least sceptical or, at the extreme, hostile to European integration. Taken together, these collected Eurosceptics constitute a range of very different political parties and factions from extreme left to far right via the new left and the new populist right. The issue of European integration puts strange bedfellows together and puts them together in different national configurations. Different nations exhibit different patterns of Euroscepticism. If we take these variations -- ideological and national --we can see how the issue of Europe provides us with a powerful comparative tool for illuminating the nature and behaviour of party systems. And we can see how these different national patterns have an effect on the shape of European integration.

With the prospect of enlargement to the countries of East and Central Europe, there is the prospect of the extension of the existing institutional structure and a process of transition among the candidate states. The ten states are undergoing significant economic, constitutional and social reform in order to meet the criteria of entry into the EU. This process represents substantial change for those states. It is a process that has led to some elite frustration and public opinion can no longer be taken for granted. It is important to note that, until recently support for EU membership has been the object of an overwhelmingly supportive (and in most cases, mass) consensus. From a position of relatively positive or indifferent public attitudes to the EU in 1993-4 (Rose & Haerpfer, 1995: 447), it is now possible to see the emergence of parties advocating a more negative conception of EU accession and it is no longer safe to assume a compliant and supportive mood of public opinion. We might even see this as evidence of the Europeanisation (or, more properly, the 'EU-isation') of mass politics in central and Eastern Europe.

In comparison with previous enlargements, the current enlargement has some features that may encourage the development of opposition to the process. The first factor is the time of the process. Although, as Alan Mayhew (2000: 7) notes, the Iberian enlargement took eight years, the time taken from the deposition of documents of application to the opening of negotiations was a little over a year while this process has taken two and three years respectively for Poland and Hungary. While there may be good reasons for this difference (such as the extension of the *acquis* since the Iberian enlargement), there can be little doubt that there is a perception of a misfit between the rhetoric of leading EU politicians championing enlargement with a the process that seems to be protracted and given a low priority by key actors. As Mayhew suggests, one of the worrying signs is the lack of involvement of EU member-states who have preferred to leave to process to the Commission (Mayhew, 2000: 40). This mood was captured by the Polish Minister for European Affairs when he said that 'the Europe of today has to take the opportunity offered by the courageous changes in Eastern Europe to unite the continent. We're making real advances and we should not be kept out in the cold anymore.' (*Guardian* December 8, 2000). Moving the candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe out of the cold and into the fold of EU membership means engaging in a process likely to generate modest levels of opposition as a sort of political friction operating against the larger machinations of institutional change and the larger goal of eventual accession. But we also need to recognise that it is not only the accession process that is likely to generate reaction. Membership does not bring with it a compliant populace and a permissive consensus cannot be counted on even among the established member-states of the EU.

In mapping the degree to which various forms of Euroscepticism have already been manifested in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe, we are able to trace out the way the accession process has already impinged on domestic party politics in these states. It also enables us to have some basis for projecting how further development of the accession process may give rise to deeper conflicts within the states, and where those lines of division might arise. Political parties and particularly party systems play a key role in determining the shape of issues and conflicts and therefore understanding party politics in these states offers us valuable clues to the way the European issue may play out in their wider political systems.

This paper has three main aims. The first is to develop our conceptualisation of Euroscepticism by differentiating between what we will term 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism. The second aim is to try to replicate the research previously conducted to map party-based Euroscepticism in West European states in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe. Bringing these new cases in allows us to extend the comparative range of our work by simply increasing the number of cases. It also brings a new dimension by the incorporation of a new set of cases with the distinct history of the post-war Communist regimes and the subsequent transitions after 1989 to liberal democratic regimes. In addition to this it provides us with the sub-division between established states and those countries involved in state-building. It therefore increases not only the number of cases but also the number of potential variables we can investigate. The third aim of this paper is to test out some propositions about Euroscepticism using this data. Our overall argument is that the position that parties take with regard to the European issue is, at least partially, a function of their position in their party systems.

In the following section we review the literature on Euroscepticism and then offer a definition of a differentiation between hard and soft Euroscepticism. From the review, we then have a section in which we layout six propositions that we examined in relation to our data. After that we describe the methods by which we gathered the data on the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe. We then present the data in a tabular form and also offer brief textual descriptions of the country cases. After having laid out the data we return to our six propositions in a section which analyses each proposition in relation to the data. In the conclusion we summarise our findings, offer some comparisons with the West European experience and suggest some future avenues for further research in this area.

Defining and Differentiating Euroscepticism

There has been something of a flurry of research on party-based Euroscepticism in EU member-states in the past few years. An article published by one of the present authors (Taggart, 1998) provides the basis for this piece and mapped contemporary West European party-based Euroscepticism in an attempt to develop some comparative lessons. There have been a number of other comparative articles looking at the basis of Euroscepticism in EU member states. The work of Gary Marks, Lisbet Hooghe and Carole Wilson (Marks and Hooghe, 1999; Marks and Wilson, 2000) makes use of the expert judgement survey material gathered by Leonard Ray (1999) to argue that, in EU member-states that party positions on European integration are more strongly related to their party families than to their national contexts. In the piece by Marks and Wilson (2000) they use that data to argue that traditional cleavage theory works well to account for positions on European integration and that it is a better guide than using national variations. They examine why there is variation within the social democratic, liberal, Christian democratic and conservative party families by stressing how different aspects of integration have different impacts on the parties' constituencies in different states. Peter Mair, in an article in a special issue of *West European*

Politics devoted to the effects of Europeanisation on domestic politics, argues that the effect of European integration on domestic party systems is limited and that, in tracing the lines of division over Europe, 'Europe as such appears as neither a necessary or sufficient condition for that divide' (Mair, 2000: 35). The present authors have also presented the findings of a comparative workshop on Euroscepticism in Szczerbiak and Taggart (2000).

Susan Milner in her introduction (Milner 2000) to a special issue of the journal *European Integration*, argues that the term Euroscepticism has its roots in British political discourse and its origins as a significant political force in French and Danish referendums on Maastricht which opened up both elite political and academic discourse to the importance of public opinion in the process of integration. Looking at long-term trends in public opinion in the EU, Milner observes differences in levels of support by countries who joined the EU at different times and suggests that a ceiling of support might have been reached in the founding states. She asserts the importance of party systems and of some social factors in determining levels of support, and argues that countries seeking 'escape' will seek refuge in the EU while countries with sources of independence will have a propensity towards Euroscepticism. Summarising the findings of the four case studies in the issue (UK, the Nordic states, Germany and France) Milner argues that embedded cultural factors are important but that these are mediated through factors such as wider social attitudes and the nature of representative structures. It is important, in considering Milner's arguments about the role of timing of accession that we differentiate between different types of late-comers to the EU as the experiences of Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland are very distinct from those of the UK, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. This differentiation may yield differing effects of Euroscepticism.

In their book on *Political Parties in the European Union*, Simon Hix and Christopher Lord (1997: Chapter 2) use data from party members in EU member states to map the shape of the EU party system along the two axes of left-right and integration-sovereignty. They consider the parties in ideological groupings and conclude that the 'question of more or less integration into a new European system is a manifest dimension of political conflict that seriously undermines the coherence of the traditional families' (Hix & Lord, 1997: 53). Although their aim was not primarily to study Euroscepticism, this is one pole in the schema they develop and therefore becomes an important part of their analysis. It is also worth noting Simon Hix's work on voting patterns in the European Parliament currently being undertaken as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's 'One Europe or Several' Programme in this regard.

Comparative work on Central and East European states is rare but the edited book by Karen Henderson (1999a) brings together a number of pieces that cover public opinion in Central and Eastern Europe (Grabbe & Hughes, 1999) as well as case studies of Poland (Millard, 1999), Slovakia (Henderson, 1999b), Slovenia (Brinar, 1999) and the Baltics (Herd, 1999). A number of papers from the 'Opposing Europe' network presented at the April 2001 Political Studies Association Conference include case studies of Hungary (Batory, 2001), Slovakia (Henderson, 2001) and Poland (Szczerbiak, 2001b).

There have been a number of country studies. As we might expect, these have been focused around countries with higher levels of Euroscepticism. Geoffrey Evans (1998), looking at the British case, uses the British Election Panel Study as data to examine the role of the European issue in relation to voters for the Conservative Party between 1992 and 1996, and finds an increasing gap between the party's position and the position of its voters and argues that this was costly in the 1997 elections and therefore that a more markedly Eurosceptic line would be electorally advantageous for the party in the future. Stephen George (2000) argues for British exceptionalism but focuses more on the elite level arguing for the importance of the media in shaping British political elite attitudes on

Europe. The theme of British exceptionalism is taken up by David Baker and David Seawright (2000) in their paper on the bases of Conservative Euroscepticism in Britain. They argue that Euroscepticism in the Conservative Party represents the dominance of a very particular brand of conservative ideology. Mark Aspinwall (2000) presents an analysis of 'awkwardness' of the British elite over Europe in which he argues that institutional factors, or more precisely the potential power of parliamentary backbench MPs by the electoral system (under certain distinct circumstances) is a better explanation of this behaviour of the elite than historical or cultural explanations that focus on British elite attitudes.

The Nordic cases are well represented in the literature. Cynthia Kite (1996) offers a comparative work which maps intra and inter-party conflicts in Denmark, Norway and Sweden between 1991 and 1996. Left-wing and social democratic sources of opposition in the Nordic region are dealt with in Geyer and Swank (1997) who, using survey results from Norwegian anti-EU social democrats find that they draw from the traditionalist-materialists and from the postmaterialist-leftist groups, but significantly not from the modernisers within the party. Christensen (1996) compares the Left-Socialist parties in Sweden, Denmark and Norway to see why they have differing stances on European integration concluding that institutional differences within the parties and the positions of the countries in Europe account for these differences.

Work on Euroscepticism conducted, as case studies, in candidate states is a rarer commodity. Aleks Szczerbiak (2001a) provides an in-depth analysis of Eurosceptic trends in Poland while work by Petr Kopecky and Peter Ucen (1998) offers case studies of the Czech and Slovak republics. There are also a number of case studies in one edition of the *Journal of European Public Policy* which cover Slovenia (Brinar & Svetlicic, 1999), Hungary (Agh, 1999) and Poland (Stawarska, 1999) as well as the chapters mentioned already in Henderson (1999a). Tibor Navracscics (1997) provides an analysis of the missing debate in Hungary over the European issue arguing that in the mid-1990s a consensus between the parties hid some very different conceptions of the European project and its implications for Hungary.

What is clear is that there is not much comparative work on Euroscepticism. What work there is tends to be focused on existing member-states. And the case studies are more numerous for member than for non member states. There are variations in approaches such as between the quantitative (e.g. Evans, 1998; Ray 1999; Marks & Wilson, 2000; Aspinwall 2000) and the qualitative (e.g. Christensen, 1996; Taggart, 1998; Henderson, 1999). However there does seem to be a common theme in the literature that the form of party politics in particular states does play a role in determining party positions on Europe. Our research stays within that paradigm and develops the point further.

We use the term Euroscepticism to be all encompassing and to incorporate a wider range of varying positions. As per the formulation in Taggart (1998: 366) Euroscepticism 'expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration'. We find it useful however to break down the Euroscepticism manifest in Eastern and central Europe into 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism. Bearing in mind that all the cases under examination have a relatively high degree of consensus among political elites about the positive nature of European integration and specifically of their respective state's need to join, we can differentiate between those who are outside the consensus and do express hostility to the idea of European integration, and those that express specific limited objections to the nature of the accession process.

Hard Euroscepticism implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU. Theoretically hard Euroscepticism encompasses those with principled objection to the idea of any European economic or political integration. In reality such a position is too abstract to be applicable. In practice hard Euroscepticism can be identified by the principled objection to the current form of European integration in the EU. The principled objection comes from belief that the EU is counter to deeply held values or, more likely, is the embodiment of negative values. Examples of this would be the objection that the EU is too liberal/capitalist/socialist.

By definition any party that is a single issue anti-EU party is likely to be a hard Eurosceptic party in this sense as the mobilisation over the single issue indicates that the party sees the issue as a vital one and this is unlikely if the sort of opposition is contingent and qualified. However, in the case of the candidate countries we suggest that some parties might take adopt Eurosceptic language in terms of micro and rhetorical positions while still maintaining a nominal commitment to accession. We are therefore assuming that, in such cases, nominal commitments to accession owe more to the existence of overwhelming elite consensus over Europe than to the 'heart' of the party's position. There may also be sense that the EU has a form that is not desirable but that there is no alternative, or that the alternative is to return to communist rule and this is an even less desirable goal.

Soft Euroscepticism, on the other hand, involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration and can, in turn be further sub-divided into 'policy' Euroscepticism and 'national-interest' Euroscepticism. Both types of soft Euroscepticism are contingent as they do not imply an opposition to integration on principled grounds (as in the case of hard Euroscepticism) but do imply that if there were alterations to either a policy area or a shift in national interest, European integration in its current form could be supported or even encouraged. Although we do not, in this paper, explore this sub-division in the cases in which we conducted research we will use this sub-differentiation of soft Euroscepticism in passing in the analysis.

Policy Euroscepticism is opposition to measures designed to deepen significantly European political and economic integration (e.g. EMU) or is opposition to an existing particular policy and is expressed in terms of opposition to specific extensions of EU competencies. However, it is not incompatible with expressing broad support for the project (or a particular model) of European integration. For example, a policy Eurosceptic in a member-state could be pro-EU but be opposed to the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty or their country's membership of the euro. Policy Euroscepticism is very much a time- and country-specific phenomenon and depends on the particular issues at stake at any given time and the particular stage of the integration process that has been reached or is the subject of debate in any particular country. For example, in Britain, Sweden and Denmark policy Euroscepticism is currently expressed primarily through opposition to the euro, while in other countries that are already part of the single currency zone it is focused on other issues such as ceding further powers to supranational EU institutions. In the case of candidate states, the policy may well be one of the stumbling blocks for the accession process. In such cases compliance with the *acquis* may be accepted as necessary by the candidate state but there may be a sense that special provision needs to be given to something specific in the candidate state (e.g. agriculture in Poland or a nuclear power plant in Bulgaria or Lithuania).

National-interest Euroscepticism, on the other hand, involves employing the rhetoric of defending or standing up for 'the national interest' in the context of debates about the EU. Again, this kind of soft Euroscepticism is compatible with support in principle for the European project. Indeed it can also (theoretically, at least) encompass those who actually feel sympathetic towards deepening European integration, but who also feel the need to employ 'national-interest Eurosceptic' rhetoric

to shore up their domestic political support base. There are strong grounds for this position among candidate states. The process of accession involves a degree of negotiation (even if it is not an equal negotiation) and much of the compromise involves candidates sacrificing short-term national interests.

Policy and national-interest Euroscepticism are, of course, not mutually exclusive and can often overlap. For example, in some countries, soft Eurosceptics may portray themselves as (or actually believe that they are) defending the national interest by opposing specific proposals to extend EU competencies. For example, the British Conservative Party's 1999 European election slogan 'In Europe But Not Run By Europe' was framed to express both a general national-interest Euroscepticism but also a more specific policy Euroscepticism with regard to British membership of the euro.

The differentiation between soft and hard Euroscepticism is designed to help us in sorting out differences in positions in central and Eastern Europe, but as has been apparent from the discussion above, its use is not necessarily confined there. We believe that this differentiation is equally applicable to Western Europe and elsewhere we have elaborated a set of propositions that could be examined across all European states (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2000). But for the purposes of this paper, we shall now develop a series of propositions that relate to the candidate countries under consideration.

Six Propositions Concerning Euroscepticism

In looking at the constellation of Euroscepticism we aim to test a number of propositions. The first three derive from the work on Western Europe and allow us to extend our understanding of Euroscepticism in its most general sense, while the last three specifically relate to the experience of Central and Eastern European states. Below we lay out six inter-connecting propositions with short explanations of the thinking behind each one. The propositions are reexamined later in the paper in the light of the data we gather.

1. Left-Right Distribution

The distribution of Euroscepticism in Western European party systems is across the left-right spectrum and cannot be characterised as either left-wing or right-wing. Even within national party systems, Euroscepticism is expressed by parties from opposite ends of the spectrum. It is notable that Euroscepticism brings together some unusual coalitions of ideological forces. Although recent research has attempted to reinvigorate the relationship between positioning on the left-right spectrum, the strong conclusions in support of this relationship have not been borne out by the evidence of the research. Looking at a wholly new set of cases provided by the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe allows us to examine whether, in this different context, the left-right division has more or less analytical use. Our proposition is therefore that *a party's position on the left-right spectrum is not correlated with whether it is Eurosceptical or not.*

2. Party Position

One of the reasons for studying Euroscepticism is for its potential use as an issue illuminating lines of divisions within party systems. We have elsewhere suggested that a party's position in its party

system has a strong bearing on the costs or incentives it has to express any sort of Euroscepticism (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2000) and in the research presented here we therefore test *the proposition that the positions of parties in their party systems is related to the expression of Euroscepticism*.

This proposition is deliberately framed in general terms but has two dimensions. The first is that parties at the 'core' of their party systems (i.e. parties that are parties of government or potential parties of government) have high costs associated with expressing any sort of Euroscepticism as it will be these parties that will be directly engaged in the negotiating the accession process and because the general consensus around the benefits of EU accession are most strongly represented at the ideological heart of a country's party system. The second dimension is that parties that see themselves as peripheral to their party system and who, for strategic or tactical reasons, base (at least part of) their appeal on their status as outsiders may use Euroscepticism as a means of emphasising that position. In addition, it is probable that parties that are peripheral are able to take Eurosceptic positions because, without having participation in government, this is a relatively costless stance. The fact that issues of European integration are often 'second-order' issues puts their stance at one remove from their core appeal that is more likely to be based around domestic national issues.

3. Public Euroscepticism

While the intergovernmental bargains that underlie European integration are made between representatives of political parties and while many of the personnel of EU institutions such as the Council of Ministers, the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament are selected through or by parties, the importance of political parties is often obscured by the relative complexity of the EU political system. This means that parties, and more importantly, party systems are reduced to being conceived of as ciphers for public opinion. There is, of course, a relationship between public opinion and party opinion but that relationship is not as simple, linear or as monocausal as is often portrayed.

The dynamics of competition within a party system may increase the strategic incentives for the expression of positions that differentiate the parties and therefore might lead to parties being Eurosceptic where the reservoir of popular Euroscepticism is relatively low. The same may be true in reverse where there may be relatively high levels of popular Euroscepticism but the dynamics of the party system may create the incentives for consensual behaviour (in order to form coalitions) so that Euroscepticism is thereby minimised in the parties in favour of a consensus around European integration. This tendency is exacerbated by the fact that European integration is a 'second-order issue' so that parties may adopt positions on it without jeopardising their core identity or electoral appeal. If this is true then party-based hard Euroscepticism is likely to underestimate public Euroscepticism.

In framing this as a proposition we therefore seek to establish for different countries *that the level of party-based Euroscepticism is not necessarily correlated with levels of popular Euroscepticism*.

4. Prospects for Accession

We argue that there are reasons for suspecting a link between a country's prospects for accession and levels of Euroscepticism. The logic is that, as the process of accession (and pre-accession) is underway and as the perception of accession as a reality becomes stronger the specific costs will become more apparent in the candidate states. But while the costs may be immediately apparent,

the benefits are still long-term and somewhat abstract. We assume that there is a general consensus among both elites and publics that EU accession is a long-term objective but that this consensus will give rise to scepticism over particular policy issues of issues of institutional adjustment.

The argument here is that the process of accession, whilst taking on the appearance of a dialogue or two-sided negotiation, is in fact a one sided negotiation with candidate countries and political elites in those countries having to accommodate to the demands of the European Commission and ultimately of the member states in order to join. Elites in the EU and in EU member-states may well have incentives to encourage candidate states to undertake fundamental economic and political structural reform, but this rhetoric may be at odds with their own involvement in the accession process. The effect of any protracted accession process in the domestic politics of candidate states will therefore be likely to foster the opportunity for frustration on the part of those involved or associated with the accession negotiations as well as providing the opportunity and incentive for domestic oppositions to publicly express disquiet to capitalise on any popular frustration for electoral purposes. This fits with arguments about EU politics as an example of two-level or 'nested' games where the interaction between the domestic and EU levels is such that the games take on a distinct dynamic (Tsebelis, 1990).

The proposition is therefore that *Euroscepticism is most likely to be stronger in those candidate states where accession is perceived as a more immediate prospect than in those candidate states where it seems more distant.*

5. Hard and Soft Euroscepticism

Our differentiation between hard and soft Euroscepticism is designed to nuance our understanding of different varieties of opposition in the candidate states. As we noted in the earlier discussion of the differentiation, we would expect to associate hard Euroscepticism with single-issue anti-EU parties. Given the wide consensus around the importance of EU accession and the desire to fully effect a transition from the communist legacy in Central and Eastern Europe, we would expect to see much less of this type of Euroscepticism. In contrast, we expect the dominant type of Euroscepticism to be soft Euroscepticism that derives from the accession process itself and from the institutional, economic and political reforms associated with the process. Our proposition then is that *hard Euroscepticism is likely to be less evident than soft Euroscepticism in the candidate states.*

6. State Longevity

In our final proposition we examine whether the particular nature of recent political and economic experiences in Central and Eastern Europe have a bearing on whether Euroscepticism gains a foothold in their party systems. It seems reasonable to suggest that the different types of transition from communism and the different experiences of post-communist state-building or political transformations would have an impact on the degrees and kinds of Euroscepticism. In short, we are concerned as to whether the state is newly established or has a longer lineage. The length of time a state has existed has an effect on how cohesive it is.

In their examination of public opinion towards accession in the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe Heather Grabbe and Kirsty Hughes make the observation that, although it is difficult to see trends in why different countries have different levels of support, 'one evident trend is that levels of positive support are lower in the newly independent countries and higher in the already established states' with Hungary as an exception (Grabbe & Hughes, 1999: 188). The

converse of this is therefore that Euroscepticism is likely to be stronger in those states where national identities are less established, more fragile and therefore accession to and incorporation into a supra national institution such as the EU is perceived as a greater threat to that identity.

Drawing from this we can therefore extend the logic from popular Euroscepticism to examine whether it is true for party-based Euroscepticism. The proposition would therefore be that *we are likely to see higher levels of party-based Euroscepticism in states that are newly independent compared with the established states.*

Having laid out the propositions to be examined, we now turn to a brief explanation of how the data was gathered before using it to see which propositions are supported by the experience of the candidate states in central and Eastern Europe.

Methodology

One of the issues with research on Euroscepticism has been the question of how to deal with relatively a relatively small number of cases – a small 'N'. There are relatively few parties that express Euroscepticism and those that do are often very minor parties attaining a very small share of the vote. Part of our interest in such parties is their very 'peripheral-ness' and so this issue is neither unexpected nor unimportant. Examining them means looking at the borders of the political consensus among party systems in Europe. Thus what makes the topic interesting also throws up methodological issues. We need to be aware that we are dealing with minority (and often very small minority) positions. Too often a focus on one aspect of politics might distort its overall importance, justifying the researcher's own interest by blowing up the importance of the subject. In the case of Euroscepticism, we are faced with an opposite issue. There is a danger that established methodologies have understated the real nature of party-based Euroscepticism.

In trying to examine party positions across ten states, we need to adopt a method that produces results that are valid, reliable and comparable. Validity and reliability are relatively easy to establish for single country studies but in attempting cross-national comparisons, the same tools may well not be so reliable and valid. We also face the difficulties of using the terms 'left' and 'right' comparatively because of the different issue dimensions they refer to. This is a particular problem for post-communist states. However, we take Kopecky and Mudde's (2000) exhortation to use the central and Eastern European cases comparatively as a reason to grapple with this. We also face the obvious issue that, as we acknowledge elsewhere, there is a lack of precision in the way that the term 'Euroscepticism' is used.

There are at least four potential ways we can look at party-based Euroscepticism. The first way we can see how the distribution of opinion on European integration is among party members or supporters (e.g. Featherstone, 1987; van der Eijk & Franklin, 1991; Gaffney, 1996; Hix and Lord, 1997; Gabel, 1998; Henderson, 1999b; Batory, 2001). This is useful and illuminating but if we are concerned about party 'outputs' -- in other words if we are concerned about what parties do in relation to decisions on European integration -- we need to be aware that parties are not the aggregation of their members/supporters in that party elites may take positions at variance with their supporters. And we need to be aware that this tendency is heightened when the issue may be a 'second-order' issue as Europe often is. The second way is to examine the distribution of opinion on European integration among party elites, usually parliamentarians, using surveys (Rattinger, 1994; Alexandre & Jardin, 1996; Baker et al, 1999; Baker & Seawright 2000; Schmitt & Thomassen,

1999). This is very useful in tracing factional conflict and in explaining backbench dissent but once again, it is not necessarily an accurate guide to the party's overall position in relation to European integration.

The biggest problem with both these methodologies is practical rather than ontological and this is simply that trying to do large-scale comparisons (wider rather than deeper) simply rules out using these techniques as they are unfeasible across ten states. The third method is the examination of party manifestos which does allow for comparison across states (e.g. Budge, Robertson & Hearl, 1987). There have not been any studies of this kind specifically oriented towards the European issue and there are difficulties about how far information given in party manifestoes can give a full picture of such a nuanced issue as European integration. The final type of research methodology is expert surveys.

Research on EU member states' party systems and their relationship to the issue of European integration has often been based on the expert survey conducted by Leonard Ray (e.g. Ray, 1999; Marks & Hooghe 1999; Marks and Wilson, 2000; Mair, 2000). There are a number of problems with expert surveys as a tool (Budge, 2000) but there are specific problems with this tool for research on Euroscepticism. Two problems exist with this source of data. The first is that in looking for Euroscepticism, there is very limited variance on the variable of support and this means that there may well be tendency for respondents to exaggerate differences between parties. This problem is exacerbated by the exclusion of the smaller parties, the second problem. Ray's focus, entirely legitimately, was on the major established parties in the party systems. Methodologically this makes sense as it is easier to obtain higher reliability for judgements on such parties. But for looking at Euroscepticism, which is disproportionately located at the less established end of the political spectrum, excluding such parties leads to systematically biased comparative data. This is why we have not attempted to replicate Ray's data for the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe. We are skeptical about the possibilities of providing quantitative data from qualitative judgements in this case and therefore have aimed for a general mapping supplemented with some limited quantitative analysis.

In this research therefore we have used our own research and expert evaluations of researchers familiar with national party systems but we have not sought to quantify those evaluations. We accept that there are potential limitations to this approach in that it relies heavily on the assertions of a few individuals. We have therefore attempted as far as possible to seek multiple sources for each country we focus on, and we tried as much as possible to develop a dialogue with those we were using as sources in order to try and establish results that are comparable in different national settings. This has meant that we have had to interpret the answers to questions we asked. Many experts offered their own definitions of Euroscepticism that fitted well with the national experiences they were dealing with but the difficulty was that these definitions rarely travelled well and so, in the interests of systematic comparison, we have tried to standardise what was meant by hard and soft Euroscepticism. This is another way of saying that not all sources will necessarily agree with how we have characterised their responses in terms of hard and soft Euroscepticism.

The results are laid out below in table 1 below and this provides the basis for most of the subsequent analysis in this paper. In table 1 we provide a mapping of the parties and factions expressing either hard or soft Euroscepticism in central and Eastern Europe. We have included the percentage of the vote attained in the most recent national elections where appropriate. The reason for including this is to give some indication of their electoral importance and as an indicator of party relevance. We have not given figures in the case of factions where it would be misleading to gauge their strength through means of electoral support for the whole party.

Table 1

Contemporary Political Parties with Hard and Soft Euroscepticism in the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Parliamentary Election results from the most recent elections in brackets where applicable)

	Hard	Soft
Bulgaria		None
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (11.0 -'98) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Democratic Party (27.7 – '98) • Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (3.9 - '98)
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estonian Christian People's Party (2.43 - '99) • Estonian Future Party^a • Republican Party^b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Party (23.41 – '99) • Estonian Rural People's Party (7.27 – '99)
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungarian Justice and Life Party (5.5 – '98) • Hungarian Workers' Party (4.1 '98) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIDESZ/Hungarian Civic Party (28.2 – '98) • FKGP Independent Party of Smallholders (13.8 – '98)
Latvia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latvian Social Democratic Alliance (12.9 - '98) • Conservative Union for Fatherland & Freedom (14.2 - '98)
Lithuania		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre Union of Lithuania (2.86 – '00) • Lithuanian Peasants Party (4.08 – '00)
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polish Agreement (DNS)^c • Self Defence (DNS)^d • Union of Real Politics^e 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian National Union (faction in Solidarity Electoral Action) • Polish Peasant Party (7.3 – '97) • Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (5.6 – '97)
Romania		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Romania Party (19.48 - 00)
Slovakia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (27.0 -'98) • Slovak National Party (9.1 -'98) • Christian Democratic Movement (faction in Slovak Democratic Coalition)
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Party (Andrej Bajuk) (0.59 - '00) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovenian National Party (4.38 - '00)

Sources:

Bulgaria - Deyan Kiuranov, (Centre for Liberal Strategies), Elena Iankova (Cornell University); Czech Republic - Sean Hanley (Brunel University), Kieran Williams (SSEES/UCL); Petr Kopecky (University of Sheffield); Kopecky and Uncen (1998); Estonia - Evald Mikkel (University of Tartu), Mikkel and Kasekamp (2000) and Fitzmaurice (2001); Hungary - Agnes Batory, (University of Cambridge); Latvia - Gunta Misane (Latvia Bureau of European Information); Lithuania - Ruta Buienevita (Sussex European Institute); Poland - Aleks Szczerbiak (Sussex European Institute) and Millard (1999); Romania - Sorin Ionita (Georgetown University); Slovakia - Karen Henderson, (University of Leicester), Kieran Williams (SSEES/UCL); Kopecky and Uncen (1998); Slovenia - Alenka Krasovec (Ljubljana University); General - *Financial Times*.

Notes:

^aThis party failed to be registered for the 1999 elections and so no vote share is shown

^bThis party has been formed since the 1999 elections and so no vote share is shown

^cParties formed after the last parliamentary election but having competed in the 2000 presidential election.

^d This party contested the 1997 elections in a number of local constituencies but did not present a 'national list'

^e This party contested the 1997 elections but as part of a broader coalition

Table 1 clearly demonstrates that there exist significant manifestations of Euroscepticism in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe. Closer examination reveals that many of the parties are small (in terms of electoral support) but this should not obscure the fact that party-based Euroscepticism is becoming established as part of these party systems. The data of course hides lots of shades of opinion and can only serve as a guide to Euroscepticism in these countries but looking at the broad contours does allow us to make some general comparative observations.

At one extreme, we have **Bulgaria** for which we have selected no parties as being Eurosceptic in either the hard or the soft sense. There may be a case for arguing that some parties do display some soft Eurosceptic positions with regard to the defence of the national interest on sensitive issues such as the visa regime and the Kozloduy nuclear power plant but it is hard to argue that they are unequivocally soft Eurosceptic parties. In Bulgaria anti-Western attitudes have tended to be articulated in the form of opposition to NATO membership.

Romania is a difficult case. There are parties with constituencies who see themselves as adversely affected by EU accession and who are concerned about the economic liberalisation associated with incorporation into the single market such as the Party of Social Democracy in Romania. However, we have only listed one party as soft Eurosceptic because it seems to be the only unequivocal case. The Greater Romania Party's strength in the November parliamentary elections gave their party leader and presidential candidate, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a powerful base for challenging the eventual winner of the presidential race, social democrat Ion Iliescu, and was seen internationally as a cause for real concern. Tudor is committed to Romanian accession to the EU and he has clearly moderated his position in recent months and in November he said he wanted to keep Romania on track to join the EU but he wished to clean up the country first and capped this by saying: 'I believe in a real Europe, not in a Europe of beggars, of vagabonds and mafia and so on' (*Financial Times*, November 29, 2000).

Looking at the Baltic states, it is clear that the issue of EU accession has become part of the currency of political debate and discourse among the parties. **Estonia** was marked out as a 'front-runner' for accession by the European Commission among the Baltic states. There is much evidence of Euroscepticism in its party system. It is the only country (of the ten central and eastern European candidate states) with a party that can be classified as a single-issue anti-EU party (Estonian Future Party) but this is a small party that has not yet contested an election. It is joined in its hard Eurosceptic position by another small party (Republican Party) without an electoral record and the more established but small Christian People's Party. Numerically among the Baltic states, Estonia therefore represents the case with the strongest manifestation of party-based hard Euroscepticism. It is joined by parties expressing soft Euroscepticism in the Centre Party and the Estonian Rural People's Party. The Centre Party is the main opposition party and was the party with the highest share of the vote in the 1999 elections, being a party of government before the elections.

In the case of the other two Baltic states, there are similarities in that neither country has a manifestation of hard Euroscepticism but both countries have some soft Euroscepticism. In **Latvia**, the Social Democratic Alliance has here been classed as soft Eurosceptic because its arguments have been that the priorities for Latvia should be focused primarily around dealing with internal social problems before focusing on EU accession. In the case of the Conservative Union for Fatherland & Freedom, the party is officially for EU accession but has been moving towards a position which means it is likely to take a national interest soft Eurosceptic position stressing the importance of national independence and of Latvian cultural values. We have not included the party For Human Rights in the United Latvia as soft Eurosceptic but we would note that it does

make the argument that the importance of Russian relations should not be lost and that these would clearly be damaged by EU accession. In **Lithuania** the latest parliamentary elections were in 2000. Only the Centre Party and the Peasants Party expressed soft Euroscepticism.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia took a hard Eurosceptic position at its 1999 Congress stating that 'while supporting the processes of European integration, the Congress declared its opposition to membership of the European Union in its present form' (www.kscm.cz). Soft Euroscepticism is expressed at the other end of the political spectrum by the now largely defunct party of the far right, the Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSC) which took a hard line stance against the EU. Its position was largely determined by its populist leader Sladek and therefore is best seen as soft Eurosceptic and stems largely from a hostility toward Germany. The other party expressing soft Euroscepticism is the Civic Democratic Party which is the party of Vaclav Klaus and is a mainstream opposition party. In power Klaus adopted a bombastic style of communication with the EU. Although his position is one of favouring accession he has been very critical of the bureaucracy of the EU and the party has taken a negative view of further political integration in the Union (Kopecky & Ucen, 1998). Klaus is the most prominent central and Eastern European Eurosceptic, albeit of a 'soft' hue, from a market liberal perspective.

Two small parties in **Hungary** have taken hard Eurosceptic positions. The far right Hungarian Justice and Life Party is seen as a cause for concern in the EU, as expressed by the EU ambassador to Hungary in February this year, as a far right party with the potential for coming into government and causing potential problems for the accession process. It was formed as a breakaway from the governing Hungarian Democratic Forum party in 1993. At the other ideological pole, the Hungarian Workers' Party is the smaller of the two successor parties to the Communist Party and has taken a strong line against Hungary's membership of the EU. Soft Euroscepticism is taken up by two parties in the governing coalition, FIDESZ as the major party and the Smallholders Party as the junior partner. FIDESZ's leader, premier Victor Orban, has increasingly adopted 'national interest' Euroscepticism.

Although all the main parties and groupings that contested the most recent parliamentary election in September 1997 were broadly supportive of **Poland** joining the EU, some of them took a soft Eurosceptic stance or contained factions that did. These included the Catholic-nationalist Christian National Union party that was a significant component within the Solidarity Electoral Action electoral coalition that won the largest share of the the vote and went on to form the main government coalition partner. They also included the Polish Peasant Party (7.3 per cent) that was a junior coalition partner in the 1993-7 government and (now much less significant) Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (5.6 per cent), the party of the former Solidarity premier, Jan Olszewski. With one quarter of Poles nominally employed in agriculture and its electoral base located primarily among peasant smallholders, the only socio-economic group in Poland currently opposed to EU membership (albeit narrowly), there is a possibility that the Peasant Party may sharpen its anti-EU rhetoric as the accession negotiations proceed (although this was not the case in the 2000 presidential election).

Since the last parliamentary election there has been a crack in the previously overwhelmingly pro-EU elite consensus with the formation in 1999 of the Polish Agreement (Szczerbiak, 2001b). Formed as a breakaway from Solidarity Electoral Action and closely associated with the Catholic-nationalist right, the Polish Agreement was the first attempt to establish a political formation in post-communist Poland that was explicitly (and primarily defined by the fact that it was) opposed

to EU membership. However, the party's leader Jan Lopuszanski won a derisory share of the vote in the October 2000 presidential elections (0.8 per cent).

A number of other minor candidates contested the October 2000 election on a hard Eurosceptic ticket. The most successful of these was the leader of the radical farming union Self-Defence (3.1 per cent) who drew his support mainly from farming areas. The eccentric leader of the radical liberal-conservative Union of Real Politics party won 1.43 per cent on a programme that posited Polish membership of the North American Free Trade Association as an alternative to the EU.²

In **Slovakia** there are only soft Eurosceptic parties. Former prime minister Meciar's party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, gained the highest vote share of all parties in the 1998 parliamentary elections but was not part of the four-party government coalition as there was a strong consensus about the need to move away from his period of office. As Henderson notes, even when Meciar was in office, his commitment to integration was at least questionable as domestic goals took precedence over foreign policy (Henderson, 1999b: 227-8). Moving Meciar out of office in 1998 therefore significantly moved Slovakia forward in its relationship with the EU as his administration was seen as cause for alarm by those considering the possibility of Slovakia's accession to the EU. The Slovak National Party's Euroscepticism derives from a general isolationism and a position of reserved support for accession (Kopecky & Ucem, 1998). In addition the Christian Democratic Movement is a faction in the centre-right Slovak Democratic Coalition. Its skepticism stems from a sensitivity to Russia and to a cultural sense that Western values are not necessarily appropriate for the Slovak nation.

Slovenia has been the only part of the former Yugoslavia to be among the candidate states. Irena Brinar (1999: 251-2) comments that 'there is ..general consensus in the late 1990s that Slovenia should become a full EU member. No political party opposes this orientation. The EU is seen as the only viable option for Slovenia in the long run. Nevertheless, there are differing views about the speed, nature and intensity of Slovenia's integration'. These differing views have recently allowed us to categorise the New Party, headed by Andrej Bajuk, as hard Eurosceptic. Bajuk was a former prime minister whose term in office was extremely stormy and it was his resignation from his centre-right party that brought about the change of government in 2000. His New Party gained only a tiny share of the vote in the 2000 elections but his coalition garnered somewhat more with 8 per cent. Similarly a small share of the vote went to the only soft Eurosceptic party, the Slovenian National Party.

Bringing the results together, it is possible to look at the overall potential vote share for parties expressing hard or soft Euroscepticism and these are laid out in table 2 below. We could suggest that these combined vote shares for these parties represents the potential size of electoral constituencies for Euroscepticism in these countries. However, we are much more cautious than this and believe that the figures represent, more realistically, the size of the electoral constituencies not put off voting for a party by expressions of Euroscepticism. We need to bear in mind that there is only one party whose identity is primarily constructed in terms of Euroscepticism (Estonian Future Party) and that party has not yet been tested at the polls.³ Overall, we can see that the cumulative average electoral constituencies for parties expressing some sort of Euroscepticism in the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe is by no means insignificant as it is 23.48 per cent across the ten states.

² Self-Defence only contested a few districts in the September 1997 election while the Union of Real Politics was subsumed within a broader coalition.

³ Although we may want to consider Polish Agreement as being very close to being a single-issue anti-EU party.

Table 2**Cumulative Share of the Vote for Party Based Euroscepticism in Parliamentary Elections for lower Chamber by Country and Type of Euroscepticism**

Country	Hard	Soft	Total
Bulgaria	0	0	0
Slovenia	0.59	4.38	4.97
Lithuania	0	6.94	6.94
Poland	0	12.9	12.9
Romania	0	19.48	19.48
Latvia	0	27.1	27.1
Estonia	2.43	30.68	33.11
Slovakia	0	36.1	36.1
Czech Republic	11.0	31.6	42.6
Hungary	9.6	42.0	51.6
<i>Average</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>21.1</i>	<i>23.48</i>

Having mapped party-based Euroscepticism in the candidate states of central and Eastern Europe, it is now possible for us to turn back to our propositions to see which have been supported by the evidence and which have not.

1. Left-Right Distribution

In order to examine the proposition that Eurosceptic parties come from all parts of the left-right spectrum, we have, in table 3 below, listed all the hard and soft Eurosceptic parties with an indication of the party family to which they belong. The categorisations are broad and face the usual difficulties of categorisation. In the case of party systems that are less established than those in Western Europe, it is difficult to talk of consistent party families but we have tried to establish some common labels.⁴

⁴ Klaus von Beyme in 1996 identified eight party families in central and Eastern Europe. These were (1) reformed communists (2) forum parties (3) Christian democrats (4) liberal (5) social democrats (6) agrarian (7) ecological families, and (8) regional and ethnic parties (von Beyme, 1996). However these categories are now less useful and represent perhaps a transition constellation of party families.

Table 3**Party Families of Political Parties with Eurosceptic Positions**

Country	Party	Party Family
Czech Republic	Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	Far right/nationalist/neo-fascist
	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	Communist
	Civic Democratic Party	Liberal/conservative
Estonia	Estonian Christian People's Party	Nationalist-Protestant
	Centre Party	Populist
	Estonian Rural People's Party	Agrarian
	Estonian Future Party	Anti-EU
Hungary	Republican Party	Nationalist/conservative
	Hungarian Justice and Life Party	Far right/nationalist
	Hungarian Workers Party	Communist
	FEDESZ/Hungarian Civic Party	Conservative
Latvia	FKGP Independent Party of Smallholders	Agrarian/populist
	Latvian Social Democratic Alliance	Social Democratic
Lithuania	Conservative Union for Fatherland & Freedom	Conservative
	The Centre Union of Lithuania	Liberal
Poland	Lithuanian Peasants Party	Agrarian
	Polish Agreement (DNS)	Nationalist
	Self Defence (DNS)	Agrarian-Populist/nationalist
	Christian National Union (faction in Solidarity Electoral Action)	Nationalist/conservative
	Polish Peasant Party	Agrarian
Romania	Movement for Poland's Reconstruction	Nationalist/conservative
	Union of Real Politics	Liberal/conservative
Slovakia	Greater Romania Party	Far-right/nationalist
	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia	Nationalist/populist
Slovenia	Slovak National Party	Far-right/nationalist
	Christian Democratic Movement	Christian democrat
	New Party	Liberal/conservative
	Slovenian National Party	Far-right

Table 3 shows that while there is a variety in terms of the party types expressing Euroscepticism, in comparison with Western European cases, there does seem to be a stronger tendency for Eurosceptic parties in the Central and Eastern candidate states to be on the right of the spectrum. On the left there are only communist parties in Hungary and the Czech Republic expressing soft and hard Euroscepticism (respectively) and the only social democratic party expressing Euroscepticism is in Latvia.

Looking at the right of the political spectrum it seems that there is a preponderance of nationalist parties or parties of the far right expressing some sort of Euroscepticism (as in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). While not all such parties are

peripheral to their party systems, many parties do operate at the extreme right of the ideological spectrum and are outside the consensus at the centre.

We need to be clear that while we can see a clearer trend for parties on the right of the political spectrum to be Eurosceptic in the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe, opposition to Europe is not the exclusive preserve of the right. And, while the variety is less marked than in Western Europe, parties from different parts of the left-right spectrum express Euroscepticism. From communist parties on the far left, through social democratic, liberal, agrarian, Christian democratic, conservative and nationalist and populist parties on the far right, Euroscepticism transcends the left-right spectrum. This gives further evidence that generally attempting to lever the 'European' issue into a left-right framework is at least difficult and possibly even fruitless.

2. Party Position

In looking at whether a party's position in its party system is related to the expression of Euroscepticism, we can look at whether mainstream parties avoid Euroscepticism and we can look at how far peripheral parties express Euroscepticism as an expression of their peripheral status.

In Western Europe, Euroscepticism is almost completely absent from mainstream governmental parties (Taggart, 1998: 372). This is not true for Central and Eastern Europe. It is quite clear that many major parties have taken Eurosceptic positions. Parties expressing soft Euroscepticism are potential parties of government in the Czech Republic, where Klaus' Civic Democratic Party was in power until 1998, and in Latvia, where the Conservative Union for Fatherland and Freedom were in coalition government until 1998. In Romania, the Greater Romania Party is not in government but its presidential candidate came second in the first round of voting for the presidency in the 2000 elections and therefore the party can certainly be considered a mainstream party even if its ideology is on the far right of the ideological spectrum. In Estonia, the Centre Party which expresses soft Euroscepticism, is the largest party in the terms of seats in the parliament and is the main opposition party. The party's leader (Edgar Savissar) was prime minister between 1990 and 1992 and so can be classified as a potential party of government. In Slovenia the New Party which expressed hard Euroscepticism is the newly formed party of the former Prime Minister Andrej Bajuk and is an important part of the contemporary opposition even if his share of the vote is very low since forming his new party. Whether his party establishes itself as a mainstream party of government remains to be seen. In Slovakia the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia party is a former party of government and was the vehicle for Meciar's term as Prime Minister. This means that exclusion from government of Meciar's party is one of the forces binding together the current governing coalition but the coalition is a fragile one and a return to power by Meciar is not out the question. It is hard to describe the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia as a mainstream opposition party but it is clear that the party is certainly in opposition and is by no means peripheral to the functioning of the Slovak party system. Only in Hungary are mainstream parties (FIDESZ and the Smallholders Party) currently part of the government expressing Euroscepticism.

Looking at where Euroscepticism comes from we can conclude that, unlike Western Europe, in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe, soft Euroscepticism seems to be expressed by some mainstream parties. It is expressed by opposition parties and by parties in government (e.g. Klaus in Slovakia, Orban in Hungary and the Christian National Union in Poland). While we need to be clear that most parties in government do not express Euroscepticism it does seem clear that there are not disincentives for mainstream parties to express views outside of the pro-European consensus in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe.

On the other hand parties at the extremes of the party system who are outside the core of their party systems, in the sense of being (often right-wing) extremist parties inhabiting ideological positions outside the consensus at the heart of the party system, also tend to take Eurosceptic positions. As we noted above the predominant type of party seems to be one on the far-right or at least of a nationalist or populist orientation, many of which are peripheral parties. But the existence of communist parties gives further evidence that parties that are more peripheral to their party systems are likely to express Euroscepticism. In addition it is worth noting that all hard Eurosceptic parties are peripheral to their party systems.

We therefore find that there is some evidence to support the proposition that the positions of parties in their party systems is related to the expression of Euroscepticism, although we need to be clear that this relationship is different from that in Western Europe.

3. Public Euroscepticism

In order to examine our proposition that the level of party-based Euroscepticism is not necessarily correlated with levels of popular Euroscepticism, we need to introduce some measure of levels of public Euroscepticism. Table 4 below lays out the results of a survey conducted in 2000 comparing levels of support for accession to the EU. The second column lays out the percentage of those respondents who said that they would vote no if a referendum would be held tomorrow.⁵

Table 4

**Levels of Euroscepticism in Public Opinion
(Percent of public opinion that would vote no if there were to be a referendum tomorrow on (country's) membership of the EU)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>(For</i>
Latvia	33.0	44.2
Estonia	28.1	45.8
Lithuania	27.5	39.4
Czech Republic	21.6	54.6
Slovenia	21.4	57.9
Poland	20.4	61.6
Hungary	14.0	53.5
Slovakia	12.7	61.6
Bulgaria	5.4	60.0
Romania	4.1	71.9
<i>Average</i>	<i>18.8</i>	<i>55.1</i>

Sources: Taylor Nelson SOFRES (2000).

Looking at the data in column 2 of table 4, we can differentiate between countries with relatively high levels of public Euroscepticism and those with relatively low levels. We have used the SOFRES data in preference to other sources as this is the only recent polling data that is comparable across the ten states. At the extreme Latvia has a third of their population who would vote 'no' and these high levels seem to be common to the other Baltic states. The next tranche of

⁵ This is similar to the questions routinely asked in the Central and Eastern European Eurobarometer that provided a very useful on-going comparable gauge of public opinion in these states. Unfortunately for our purposes it was discontinued after 1997 and cannot provide us with up to date data.

states includes the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Poland with levels of Euroscepticism between 20 and 22 per cent. These two groups taken together are above the mean (18.8 per cent) and will be taken to be countries with high levels of Euroscepticism. Hungary and Slovakia taken together have broadly similar levels of low Euroscepticism at 14 and 12.7 per cent respectively, while the countries with the lowest levels of popular Euroscepticism are clearly Bulgaria and Romania. The levels in these counties are extremely low in absolute terms. Taking those last two groupings together we can classify them as countries with relatively low levels of public Euroscepticism.

In table 5 below, we have dichotomized the variables of public opinion and party-based Euroscepticism into low and high using the mean value on each variable. This is a rather blunt instrument but it provides a useful visual aid to examine the link between public opinion and party-based Euroscepticism. If parties were a simple cipher for public opinion we would expect that countries would cluster in the top left and bottom right quadrants. This is not the case. Table 5 shows that countries with low levels of public Euroscepticism have the potential for high levels of party-based Euroscepticism, as is the case with Hungary and Slovakia, while countries with high levels of public Euroscepticism have the potential for low party-based Euroscepticism, as is the case with Slovenia, Poland and Lithuania. There is no simple link between party-based Euroscepticism and public opinion on European integration. Indeed it is important to be clear that the vote for hard party-based Euroscepticism does significantly understate the level of public opposition and is therefore no guide to what would happen in any accession referendum.

Table 5, in effect, emphasises that parties 'matter', in the sense that competition between political parties creates its own dynamic and not simply a cipher for public debates or public opinion on issues. In the study of the politics of European integration, the clear implication is that it is necessary to understand the domestic context of party competition in order to gain a full picture of the context for national elite positions on European integration. Simply reading the 'game' of domestic politics from the distribution of public opinion is to ignore the role of parties as key players in the game and runs the risk of misunderstanding both process and outcome in the link between domestic politics and international, and importantly, intergovernmental decisions.

Table 5

Levels of Public Euroscepticism and Levels of Party-Based Euroscepticism

	<i>Low Public Euroscepticism</i>	<i>High Public Euroscepticism</i>
<i>Low Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Bulgaria Romania	Slovenia Poland Lithuania
<i>High Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Hungary Slovakia	Czech Republic Estonia Latvia

Sources: constructed from data in tables 1 and 4

4. Prospects for Accession

The process of accession has been a competitive one for many states. Since 1998 six countries have been negotiating for accession since 1998. This includes the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus. This group is sometimes called the Luxembourg Group because the negotiations were given the green light at the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997. At the start of 2000 these were joined by another six (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Malta) and are referred to as the Helsinki Group as their negotiations were started after the European Council at Helsinki in December 1999. We can use the differentiation to give some sort of indication of which countries are likely to accede first, although we need to bear in mind that the timing and ordering of accession is highly contentious and by no means settled. Negotiations with the Luxembourg group have come a long way while the prospects for the Helsinki are seen as having a longer time-line Looking at our ten cases in terms of these two groupings therefore gives us some sort of measure of the current prospects for accession, with the Luxembourg Group being 'closer' than the Helsinki Group.⁶

If we make a rough gauge of potential electoral support for Euroscepticism by aggregating the electoral support for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties and differentiating between those above the mean as having high potential and those below as having low potential, we can see if there is any relationship between the membership in either the Luxembourg or Helsinki groups. The results of this are laid out below in table 6. This seems to indicate that there is little relationship as countries on a faster track to accession (the Luxembourg Group) have both high and low levels of aggregate party-based Euroscepticism and the same is true of those countries on the slower track.

Table 6

Levels of Party-Based Euroscepticism by Candidate Country Groupings

	<i>Luxembourg Group</i>	<i>Helsinki Group</i>
<i>Low Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Slovenia Poland	Bulgaria Lithuania Romania
<i>High Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Czech Republic Estonia Hungary	Latvia Slovakia

The picture is somewhat less equivocal if we differentiate between those countries with 'hard' Eurosceptic parties and those without. As table 7 below shows all countries in the Luxembourg Group have examples of 'hard' Eurosceptic parties whereas none of those in the Helsinki Group have them.

⁶ Although we are aware that this distinction is a rather blunt one as some members of the Helsinki group could well be prepared for entry before some members of the Luxembourg Group. However, as this is all highly speculative, we are using this distinction as the 'least worst'.

Table 7

Levels of Party-Based Euroscepticism by Candidate Country Groupings

	<i>Luxembourg Group</i>	<i>Helsinki Group</i>
<i>Candidate countries with Hard Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Slovenia Estonia Czech Republic Poland Hungary	
<i>Candidate countries without Hard Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>		Bulgaria Lithuania Romania Latvia Slovakia

5. Hard and Soft Euroscepticism

It is clear that there is much evidence from the candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe to support our proposition that hard Euroscepticism is likely to be less evident than soft Euroscepticism. Looking at the aggregate evidence in table 2, which charts the levels of electoral support for all parties in each country expressing either variety of Euroscepticism, it is clear that the average levels of hard Euroscepticism (1.4 per cent) are much below those of soft Euroscepticism (21.1 per cent) in the candidate states. In individual countries there are no cases where hard Euroscepticism outperforms soft Euroscepticism at the polls. There is no evidence of any hard Euroscepticism in half of the ten cases whereas, in contrast, there is soft Euroscepticism in nine out of the ten cases.

Hard Euroscepticism is rarer than soft Euroscepticism. This reflects the fact that there exists a high level of elite political consensus over the advantages of accession to the EU in the candidate states of Eastern and central Europe. Almost like the 'permissive consensus' of West European states over the development of European integration, there seems to be little opportunity for parties and other actors to express wholesale opposition to European integration. On the other hand, with the potentially protracted nature of the accession process, there is plenty of opportunity and maybe even some powerful strategic incentives -- in terms of domestic party competition -- to express disquiet about either how the process of accession is being conducted or with the effects of accession on particular policy areas, or more significantly, on particular constituencies. This also gives us some clue to the potential future shape of Euroscepticism as it would seem likely that, with accession looming, soft Euroscepticism is much more likely to develop than hard Euroscepticism as an embedded feature of party competition.

6. State Longevity

Examining the proposition that newly independent states are more likely to have higher levels of party based Euroscepticism in the light of the research, it is hard to see strong support for this

proposition. Table 8 below lays out difference between high and low levels of party-based Euroscepticism by whether the states are newly independent or established.⁷

Table 8

Levels of Party-Based Euroscepticism by Established and Newly Independent States

	<i>Established States</i>	<i>Newly Independent States</i>
<i>Low Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Romania Poland Bulgaria	Slovenia Lithuania
<i>High Party-Based Euroscepticism</i>	Hungary	Estonia Latvia Czech Republic Slovakia

As Grabbe and Hughes (1999) note Hungary is an exception to the rule as an established state with high levels of party-based Euroscepticism. In addition our research shows that Slovenia and Lithuania are examples of newly established states with relatively low levels of party-based Euroscepticism. In other words there seems to be no clear pattern to the distribution of Euroscepticism based on our proposition about state development. The examples of Slovenia and Lithuania may well illustrate nations who see Europe as an escape from something worse while the exceptionalism of Hungary may have something to do with the extensive Hungarian diaspora whose existence is a spur to more nationalist (and therefore less EU-friendly) attitudes. Whether states are newly formed or established states seems to have little relation to the level of party-based Euroscepticism. Finding little relationship between whether states are newly independent or established states and levels of party-based Euroscepticism fits with the finding that popular levels of Euroscepticism are not directly related to party-based levels of Euroscepticism.

Conclusions and Comparisons

This paper has provided a preliminary mapping of Euroscepticism in the candidate states of Eastern and central Europe. In doing this it has become clear that, while there are significant national variations, we have been able to make some preliminary findings concerning our six propositions. The findings have often been complex and so we can offer ten observations stemming from our investigation of six propositions.

In summary our research leads us to conclude that in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe:

- Euroscepticism does draw from a range of party families extending across the left and right of the political spectrum
- there is a bunching of Eurosceptical parties on the right side of the left-right political spectrum

⁷ Karen Henderson (1999: 224) suggests that in some respects it makes sense to treat the Czech Republic as an established state and Slovakia as a newly independent state as most of the population of the former Czechoslovakia and the capital city stayed in the Czech Republic.

- Euroscepticism is used by some parties at the peripheries of their party systems to reinforce their outsider status
- some mainstream parties have a tendency to express soft Euroscepticism
- votes for hard Eurosceptic parties underestimate levels of public Euroscepticism
- levels of public Euroscepticism are not correlated with levels of party-based Euroscepticism
- countries with more imminent prospects of accession are not more likely to have higher levels of aggregate party-based Euroscepticism
- all countries with more imminent prospects of accession have manifestations of 'hard' party-based Euroscepticism while those with less imminent prospects do not
- 'soft' Euroscepticism is much more prevalent than 'hard' Euroscepticism
- there is no clear relationship between higher-levels of party-based Euroscepticism and whether a state is a newly independent state rather than an established state.

Trying to put these conclusions together we can characterize Euroscepticism in central and Eastern European candidate states as a minority component of nearly all those party systems, but not an insignificant minority, and this seems to be true regardless of how close accession is perceived to be or what sort of transition the countries have experienced since communism. The form of Euroscepticism is more usually 'soft' in the sense that it offers a qualified criticism of European integration either on grounds of particular national concerns or for particular policy reasons, than the 'harder' outright rejection of European integration. Peripheral parties use Euroscepticism to emphasize their distinctiveness and so to increase their position of competitive advantage in their systems. Soft Euroscepticism is also used by some mainstream parties and is therefore potentially an embedded component of party competition at the centre of party systems.

If we examine how these conclusions differ from what we know from the comparative research on Euroscepticism in Western Europe (drawing mainly from Taggart, 1998) it is clear that there are important differences. While there is a range of party families in those parties expressing Euroscepticism, in the candidate states there is a greater concentration of parties on the (nationalist) right end of the spectrum. There is less diversity and therefore is more bunching of parties in central and Eastern European countries. This may have three different (and some mutually exclusive) explanations. The first, and the harder to deal with, is that notions of left and right do not transfer between Western and central and Eastern Europe easily and therefore that Euroscepticism seems to bunch on the 'right' of the political spectrum in central and Eastern Europe does not mean necessarily that we can generalize that Euroscepticism in central and Eastern Europe is 'right-wing' in pan-European comparative terms. The second explanation depends on us being able to comparatively analyse and suggests that the experiences of state-building and transition in central and Eastern Europe have meant that Euroscepticism is markedly more right-wing in these countries because it is associated with the defence of national identities in the face of dramatic political, social and economic upheaval. A third explanation might be that the dimensions of conflict in these party systems are more constrained (as there is not the same degree of either new politics or new populist mobilization acting as an additional dimension to the left-right spectrum) and therefore what is spread out over a two dimensional ideological space in Western Europe is compressed into one dimension in central and Eastern European party systems.

The absence of one factor should be noted. Only in one very minor case (that of the Estonian Future Party) have we classified any of the parties as single-issue anti-EU parties, although the Polish Agreement does come close to this category. This contrasts with the presence of such parties in EU member-states such as Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. We suggest that this illustrates how the European issue has a greater tendency to be a truly 'second-order' issue in states that have not yet acceded to the Union. In other words, it is and can only ever

be secondary to the more immediate domestic political problems when accession is at the very earliest two or three years away.

The second-order nature of the issue is the attribute that allows it to serve as a lever or as a point of differentiation between parties and between types of parties. That Europe is used by peripheral parties to boost their outsider status thus shoring up their electoral constituency among the disaffected demonstrates the effectiveness of the European issue as a malleable issue that allows us to differentiate between core and periphery. The changeability of the European issue also adds to its use in this way. 'The' EU is a changing set of institutions with ever new competencies, new treaties, new coalitions and, of course, an expanding *acquis*. This means that Euroscepticism allows parties to adopt positions that can relatively easily be moderated subsequently. Whereas the values of democracy, nation or capitalism are portrayed as unchanging, the European project is inherently in flux. This gives the issue of Europe a particular strategic value for party elites.

The most striking difference is between the absence of Euroscepticism in Western European countries in the mainstream or governmental parties and its presence among mainstream parties in Central and Eastern Europe.⁸ This simple fact illustrates that there appears to be a lower 'threshold' over which mainstream parties in central and Eastern Europe feel able express Euroscepticism.

In making comparisons between Western and central and Eastern Euroscepticism it becomes clear that there are many comparisons that are either hard to make or that depend on the different nature of party systems in these two parts of Europe. The party systems may well then hold the key to explaining at some least some of the major differences. While we can suggest some sort of convergence between the development of party systems across Europe, it would be premature to suggest that they have converged entirely. Indeed it would be difficult to describe convergence across the states of Western Europe. The issue of party system formation and development in central and Eastern Europe has been deliberately side-stepped in this paper as we see this as very much a preliminary mapping exercise but there may well be much analytical mileage from relating the findings of this paper to the comparative work on political parties (Lewis, 1996, 2001) and on party systems (Kitschelt et al., 1999).

The possibilities for further research lie in four directions. The first, as discussed above, involves introducing more variables (such as party system variables) into the study of the present set of cases. The second strategy might be to extend the number of cases, and this could be done in a number of different directions. The most obvious exclusions from the present paper are the other candidate countries not in central and Eastern Europe of Cyprus and Malta (which is a potentially very interesting case given that it has a mainstream party, the Labour Party, that takes a hard Eurosceptic stance), and the applicant country Turkey which has a distinct status because negotiations have not yet been opened with the Commission. Looking at whether or how Euroscepticism is manifested in them would help us to isolate whether some of the features we have seen in the candidate countries of central and Eastern Europe are related to their position as candidate countries or to their particular historical experiences as post-Communist central and Eastern European countries. This could also be addressed by extending the comparison to non-candidate countries in central and Eastern Europe who see accession as a long-term goal such as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as those more closely within the Russian orbit such as Belarus or Ukraine. The difficulty with this may well be that there is, given the distance of any

⁸ The UK offers a clear exception but it is important to not let the example of the UK occlude the wider picture across the other 14 member states.

prospect of EU accession, be no Euroscepticism to speak of. On the other hand this does not mean that there is an absence of a debate in these countries about a 'return to Europe' in their politics.

There are two other ways we could extend the cases to further improve our comparative hold on Euroscepticism. The first would be to extend the range of Western European non-EU member states to include countries such as Switzerland (Taggart, 1998 already incorporated Norway) and Iceland. The other way of extending the cases might be to compare the development of Euroscepticism in candidate states in previous enlargements, although we would suspect that it is only in the most recent enlargement that we would find significant Euroscepticism in enough states to make the comparison meaningful.

The third possible strategy for further comparative research is to use the insights gleaned from the central and Eastern European cases to reconceptualise Euroscepticism. This might mean, in short, seeing how far the differentiation between hard and soft Euroscepticism applies empirically to Western European cases. The final possible strategy is to try to incorporate the Western and central and Eastern European case in a unified study which offers the possibility of a truly pan-European comparative project. This poses some real methodological and comparative problems such as have already been touched on in this paper, including the difference in party systems and party family categorizations. We feel that, despite these concerns, a pan-European comparison is worth attempting. It is by no means a substitute for detailed case studies of party systems but a wider ambit can add a perspective and a conceptualization that is far more powerful than one restricted to national particularities and peculiarities.

Pan-European comparisons are already being made, in effect, by the EU and being practiced by the Commission in their evaluations of how far different European states conform to a common model and who is eligible to join the EU. Enlargement and the development and application of accession criteria represent an attempt to construct a political reality that transcends any Western-Eastern division. Analytically, studying the way that the issue of European integration impinges on domestic politics across Europe, from EU member states through candidate states to those states with no interest in accession, represents an attempt to keep up with the changing political (future) reality. It also represents the fact that we already cannot entirely divorce the study of European politics from the study of European integration. As the EU grows and 'Europe' changes these developments will not occur independently. There will be a greater effect of European integration on domestic European politics but at the same time, further integration will become increasingly dependent on domestic political forces and actors. Our analysis of Euroscepticism shows that it is already an integral part of party systems in central and Eastern Europe. This has consequences for the enlargement process. At the same time, our analysis also serves as one more lens through which to comparatively chart wider developments in those party systems and we believe this shows the potential for comparative research that incorporates the European dimension not only for its own sake but also for the 'domestic' insights it offers. EU Enlargement offers huge challenges for Europe but it provides huge opportunities for extending the scope of comparative European research.

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