

FINAL REPORT**20-02-2015****Determinants of Eurosceptical Voting Behavior in CEE Countries and Party Responses**

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PROJECT SYNOPSIS

The project undertook a quantitative cross-national study of the successes of eurosceptic political parties in Central and East Europe (CEE), specifically in Hungary (H), Slovakia (S), and Poland (P). The underlying empirical puzzle was to understand why eurosceptical parties proliferate in relatively pro-European electorates. Understanding the determinates of party-based euroscepticism required understanding the role of populism and protest politics as well as the impact of the European economic/financial crisis on voter attitudes toward the EU. To this end three national opinion surveys were executed in H, S, and P on the interplay of attitudes toward the EU, party preferences and underlying motives. The overarching objective of the grant was the reintegration of a researcher returning from the US into the European research community and to develop a sustained collaborative research agenda. The main challenge was the delay of the project by one year due problems complying with a mandated ethics review (s. midterm report and below). Despite this, all data have been collected, the analysis is near completion, two publications have appeared/been accepted, 8 conference papers have been accepted/presented, two articles are under review and a research conference was held. Publications and research proceed in the form of international collaborations. By all accounts the project can be judged as success in terms of meeting its primary objectives, especially when considering that the fieldwork is one year behind schedule.

PROJECT OBJETIVES

- Implementation and execution of planned project research project, notably a survey of political attitudes in relation to party-based euroscepticism in three CEE countries
- Reintegration of returning scholar into European research community.
- Successful development of follow-up research to sustain professional career post-integration.

Project Website containing related public documents/papers: <http://www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=28571&MP=93-44799&L=0>

IMPLEMENTTION AND RESULTS IN DETAIL

The central puzzle underlying the project was the simple question of why there has been a large and increasing number of eurosceptical protest parties in Central and Eastern Europe despite relatively pro-European mass publics (when compared to Western Europe). The theoretical assumption was that not all these protest parties are as genuinely eurosceptical as they appear but adopt such a position to signal distance to the generally pro-European mainstream parties. Empirically, these protest parties were expected to give low salience to European issues and high salience to national protest issues such as corruption. By surveying voters on their perception of protest parties, we were able to distinguish national protest parties from genuine eurosceptical parties and mixed protest parties. By introducing the two criteria of salience and positionality, we hoped to make a significant contribution to disaggregate the group of eurosceptical, populist, and protest parties and could determine that the domestic protest motive (and not euroscepticism) is central to voter preference formation. A research note to *Government and Opposition* found a favorable review however a full article would have to await the results of all surveys which were delayed until April 2014 due to problems complying with the mandated ethics review – except for Hungary, the national review boards by the respective academies of science rejected our petition after nearly 6 months and referred us to our own university's review process. It took another year to receive approval for this change from the grant program administrators, which meant that the survey portion started de facto one and half years behind schedule.

In the meanwhile, we compiled a detailed analysis of the development of euroscteticism and the relationship between CEE countries and Europe using other data such as the Eurobarometer and

Chapel Hill Expert Survey data. Our findings traced the changing trend lines in voter attitudes on Europe across time, including the convergence at accession and subsequent divergence based on voter evaluations of the costs/benefits of membership and of the conditions imposed by the EU. We also were able to show how in CEE countries previously pro-European conservative mainstream parties became more eurosceptical in response to rightwing challengers, especially after ex-communist parties morphed into pro-European and moderate parties of the left. This research formed the 50 page closing chapter in the new *Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700* by A.S. Klimo and I. Livezeanu (eds.) due in 2015 and is intended to be a standard work on Eastern Europe.

As the research progressed, the European economic and financial crisis needed to be incorporated because it was obviously affecting attitudes about Europe, the mainstream, and protest parties. The delay in the survey had the fortunate side effect of allowing us to add questions about this topic before the field work began. We were able to confirm, as we suspected, that the European financial crisis has increased the salience of the European level in national politics and influenced voters' views of national politics/parties. This stands in contrast to previous findings that it is citizens' attitudes toward the national level that were assumed to influence opinions about the European Union. We also examined the cause in attitudinal change as a result of the financial crisis and compared a rationalist hypothesis (Does the EU action help/hurt my pocketbook?) with a psychological hypothesis (closed minded nationalist versus open-minded cosmopolitan disposition). We then analyzed differences between the Euro-zone member Slovakia versus non-Euro-zone Hungary (and later Poland). The findings, using our data on Hungary and Slovakia, were published in the German journal *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 2014. Because the Ukraine crisis tended to inflate pro-European opinions in Poland, we were advised by the survey firm to delay the fieldwork there so that the Polish data did not become available until May 2014. Hence we were able to present full research papers at conferences only from June 2014 onward. Since then, 7 different conference papers at major international conferences (and a small research conference at our own institution) have followed with two follow-up papers now under review for publication.

Two conference papers continued the examination of cost/benefit motives in determining pro- or anti-European attitudes in the sense of evaluating the competence of national versus European-level institutions when managing the Euro-crisis. We call one paper *Helping or Hurting* and find indeed a significant effect both on (eurosceptical) attitude and (eurosceptical) party-preference. Other research sought to disaggregate the eurosceptical voters and trace their profile. Building on our first published paper, we expanded the argument to look at "Electoral behavior under Shock" testing a range of causes (cognition of problem, clue theory, nationalism, economic motive, sovereignty, utilitarianism, etc.) to see the effect of the crisis and European stability mechanisms on euroscepticism. The article is part of a proposed special issue currently under review by *European Journal of Political Research* to which we were invited and which is coordinated by K. Jacobs and D. Farrell.

A different research avenue in this project looked at the behavior of main right parties to a far right eurosceptical challenger. Here we wanted to see whether the reaction was similar to findings from West European party systems and could confirm that, when competing with (radical) right party competitors, main right parties tend to move to the right on sociocultural issues in CEE but not on socioeconomic issues. After presenting this paper at the ECPR joint sessions in 2014, the article has been sent for review to *East European Politics*.

The project has also resulted in invitations to join on-going research networks and teams investigating the organization of populist and protest parties as well as comparing new form of political populism (entrepreneurial populism, populists in government) in CEE and Western Europe (see Addendum), which will sustain our research agenda for some time to come. We judge our project as very successful and are satisfied with our output, especially in light of the delays beyond our control and are grateful to the European Commission and the Marie Curie Program for giving us this opportunity.

APPENDIX

PROJECT DELAY/EXPLANATION

Permission to modify ethics review procedure for planned survey was delayed by one year: Request was made March 26, 2012. Permission received from Mr. Laurent CORREIA Friday, Feb. 1 2013 16:09/ *Reason*: National review boards in S, P rejected ethics review request after long petitioning in 2012, referring researchers to own university review board, which granted permission Nov. 29, 2012 – cf. full documentation in midterm report.

Publications

- 1) Reinhard Heinisch, Bernd Schlipphak. "Wenn Europa zum Problem wird – Die Effekte der Finanzkrise auf Euroskeptizismus und nationales Wahlverhalten in Mittel- und Osteuropa." *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 8 (5)2014: 177-196.
- 2) Reinhard Heinisch "Returning to Europe: Between Europhilia and Euroscepticism in East European Party Politics." In, *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700*. Arpad Stephan Klimo, Irina Livezeanu (eds.) (forthcoming 2015).
<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415584333/>

Conference Papers/Major Conferences

- 1) Reinhard Heinisch, Monika Mühlböck. "Helping or Hurting? Perception of the EU and Reactions to the Financial Crisis in Eastern Central Europe. Paper prepared for the Midwest Political Science Association April 16-19, 2015 Chicago. (Paper presented also at the Tag der österreichischen Politikwissenschaft, Vienna, November 29, 2014).
- 2) Reinhard Heinisch, Monika Mühlböck. "The Eurosceptical Voter: Attitudes and Electoral Behavior in Central and Eastern Europe." Paper prepared for the Midwest Political Science Association April 16-19, 2015 Chicago.
- 3) Reinhard Heinisch, Steven Saxonberg "Explaining the Emergence of Entrepreneurial Populism in Austria and the Czech Republic." Paper prepared for the Council for European Studies (CES) July 8-10, 2015 Sciences Po, Paris, France
- 4) Reinhard Heinisch, Bernd Schlipphak. Electoral Behavior under Shock – Euroscepticism, Domestic Extremist Voting and the Role of the Financial Crisis. Paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop, April 10-15, 2014 Salamanca Spain.
- 5) Reinhard Heinisch, Monika Mühlböck. "Perceiving the EU — Problem or Solution? Reacting to the Financial Crisis in Eastern Central Europe." Paper prepared for the 4th Annual General Conference of the European Political Science Association, 19-21 June 2014, Edinburgh
- 6) Reinhard Heinisch, Kristina Hauser. "Main Right Party Responses to Radical Populist and Extremist Party Voting in Central Europe." Paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop, April 10-15, 2014 Salamanca Spain. (Paper presented also at the Tag der österreichischen Politikwissenschaft, Vienna, November 29, 2014).
- 7) Reinhard Heinisch, Bernd Schlipphak "Die Finanzkrise und Ihr Einfluss auf nationales Wahlverhalten; Ergebnisse aus Ungarn und der Slowakei. Paper prepared for the Jahrestagung des DVPW-Arbeitskreises Wahlen und politische Einstellungen. Mannheim June 6-7, 2013.

ONGOING WORK

(a) Start of related project comparing populist protest parties (entrepreneurial populism) in Austria and Czech Republic) with S. Saxonburg, Charles University, resulting in an edited book project on party organization of populist and protest parties with O.Mazzoleni, U. of Lausanne, book proposal is being submitted to Palgrave.

PLANNED WORK Book/Working Title: Revisiting Party-based Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe.

As a new series editor of the German science publisher Nomos (<http://www.nomos-shop.de/reihenpopup.aspx?reihe=444>), the fellow as a standing invitation to publish a volume on Euroscepticism in CEE with Nomos.

FOLLOW-UP PROJECTS

The fellow was invited to join the following international collaborations:

- (a) *Up to the Mainstream? Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in the New Millennium*/By T.Akkerman, S. L. de Lange & M. Rooduijn (coordinated U. of Amsterdam).
- (b) *Absorbing the Blow: The Impact of Populist parties on Party Systems* by S.Wolinetz & A. Zaslove.
- (c) *Dealing with Populists-in-Government*: forthcoming in Special issue of *Democratization* coordinated by P. Taggart & C. Rovira Kaltwasser

Project Staff

- Christa Landsberger (PhD-level project assistant 2011-2012/funded by project)
- Birgit Kunrath ((PhD-fellow, attached to professorship/funded by university 2011-13)
- Kristina Hauser (PhD-fellow, attached to professorship/funded by university 2013-14)
- Monika Mühlböck (PostDoc, University of Vienna 2013/externally funded).
- Nina Molcanova (temp. service contract/Slovak native speaker needed for survey in Slovakia)
- Andrew Kierig (temp. service contract/Engl. native speaker/ translation and editing services)

Surveys

HUNGARY/Firm TARKI/Contract 31/10/2012—Fieldwork December 2012

Questionnaire : http://www.uni-salzburg.at/fileadmin/multimedia/Politikwissenschaft%20und%20Soziologie/documents/Survey_Hungary.pdf

SLOVAKIA Firm: FOCUS/Invoice 02/04/2013—Fieldwork March 2013

Questionnaire : http://www.uni-salzburg.at/fileadmin/multimedia/Politikwissenschaft%20und%20Soziologie/documents/Survey_Slovakia.pdf

POLAND/Firm: Exploratory survey/Firm Nortstat polska/Invoice 14/03/2014 /Fieldwork December 2013/ Main survey: PBS-social science research/Contract 23/04/14/ (actual fieldwork May 2014).

Questionnaire: http://www.uni-salzburg.at/fileadmin/multimedia/Politikwissenschaft%20und%20Soziologie/documents/Survey_Poland.pdf