Are the Balkan EU Candidates Different? Building a Balkan Model of Support for European Integration

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Abstract

This article endeavors to test Anderson's theory of imagined communities by examining the European integration movement on the Balkan Peninsula. By addressing economic choice and national identity in driving support for both the European Union and NATO, the findings here indicate that differences exist in how voters endorse joining the West in three societies in one distinct region of the post-communist world. In societies which are more ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous such as Bulgaria and Romania, there is greater variation in backing endorsement for Western Europe based on ethnicity and languages in 1997 than in Slovenia which is more homogeneous.

Keywords: Balkans, ethnicity, EU integration, imagined community

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INTRODUCTION

On 1 May, 2004 ten states eight of which were formerly Communist became members of the European Union. Many of these states had already joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and now, upon joining the EU, have entered into a more complex and encompassing social and economic organization. Yet many observers, scholars and non-academics alike, suggest that membership for the European Union both in the original EU-15 and in the candidate countries (CC) was facilitated by bureaucratic elites who have opted to integrate within a larger political and economic union in the EU without the great majority support of citizens. This idea of a "democratic deficit" can now be researched further as the European Union expands into formerly authoritarian societies which are still in the process of democratization and often are much more ethnically and linguistically diverse than Western European societies. Because studies measuring support for joining organizations like the EU and NATO in Europe have tended to focus more on these Western European societies, there is a disparity in cross-national survey data from the new societies making examination of them more critical. With the earlier 1998 NATO admittance of the three Visegrad states of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, more research is now being initiated on the New EU Ten, that is, seven former Warsaw Pact members plus Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus. More research is also needed in future candidate members states such as Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. Why political elite support may frequently differ from that of public opinion on the issue of for European integration becomes in baseline point of inquiry. Do voters within certain regions of the post-Communist world differ cross-nationally? If so, do they differ greatly from regions outside their own? This article examines the idea of an imagined community in three societies on the Balkan Peninsula which is itself a unique part of the post-Communist world. By looking at Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia, an effort is made in discerning the power of national identity and languages along with satisfaction with democracy in three countries that share both similarities and differences. By looking at support for two types of international organizations, the EU and NATO respectively, an attempt is made to differentiate the existence of imagined communities regarding an economics and social based organ like the EU and a national-security oriented organ like NATO. This paper concludes by briefly looking at attitudinal change since 1997 regarding European integration in these three societies.

Theory

Benedict Anderson describes an imagined community when he examines the phenomenon of nations or national identity to modern states when they formed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries[1]. Political elites in these states tried to build "imagined communities" which made each state and society unique in its own history. For Anderson, languages along with education and historical artifacts served to establish nations and nation-states in Europe and later in the colonial and developing regions. People developed identities based upon the use and reuse of these languages while print material reinforced these identities to create attachments to both the state and each other.

Such imagined communities might also be defined in terms of citizenship and political participation based on a civic approach, or they might be based on historical biological links which presuppose an ethnic approach[2]. In other words, states and political elites might make communities more inclusive or exclusive by utilizing more open immigration policies and such. The use of laws thus further facilitates the popular perception of what exactly the nation is versus the outsider.

Inclusive residence-based citizenship laws and exclusive ancestry-based citizenship laws are two legal traditions used throughout Europe but most famously in France and Germany historically[3]. If civic nationalism based on "forged national identities" can prevail in a society or societies over an identity tied to a unique group (or nation)-based history, then bonds between different groups may grow uniting different peoples within a society[4]. By looking at societies that are both ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous, one might be able to notice not only the existence of imagined communities but also how such communities perceive integration with other states and societies.

Prior Empirical Research

Research addressing support for NATO in Western Europe has indicated that variation exists between societies and individuals across those societies, a variation that seems to divide Northern and Mediterranean Europe. As a whole, people in Great Britain, Germany

1. Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*. London;.Verso.
2. Kupchan, C. (1995) Nationalism resurgent. *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe* (pp. 4). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
3. Brubaker, R. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press.
4. Banchoff, T. (1999) National identity and EU legitimacy in France and Germany. *Legitimacy and the European Union. (pp. 184). London: Routledge.*

and Denmark have expressed greater backing for NATO as a forum for defense policymaking than people in Spain, Greece and Italy during the 1980s[5]. Similar research on support for joining the EU in Western Europe has found that socio-economic and nationality-based factors are prevalent across different countries in Europe[6]. Western Europeans may have a strong national identity and still support the EU if a person has an "attachment" to Europe as a whole[7].

Regarding EU support in Central and Eastern Europe, it has been shown that skilled men with a high school education or beyond tend to back accession according to data from 1990. Such supporters also have a positive opinion of the market economy[8]. Subsequent studies predict a link between endorsement for the EU and a positive outlook on market-driven economics, and those more satisfied with democracy in Bulgaria[9], the Czech Republic[10], and Poland[11]. Economic winners, that is, those who have benefited from market reform and privatization are most likely to vote for EU entry and such support is again seemingly related to higher education, youth and living in large cities in ten formerly Communist societies[12, 13]. Other factors of importance include Communist party support and historical events, for example the Soviet invasion of Poland and the Baltic states in 1939, likely contributes to greater support for joining NATO[14].

5. Everts, P. (1995) NATO, the European Community, and the United Nations. *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

6. Shulman, S. (2002). Challenging the civic/ethnic and West/East dichotomies in the study of nationalism. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35, 554-85.

7. Carey, S. (2002). Undivided loyalties- Is National identity an obstacle to European integration? *European Union Politics*, 3, 387-413. He addresses the role of national identity in the EU-15. By using *Eurobarometer* survey data and data from two regions (East Germany and Northern Ireland), he finds that a negative relationship between national identity and EU support. In other words, as national identity increases, EU support declines.

8. Berglund, S. & Aarebrot, F. (1995). The view from Central Europe. *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

9. Cichowski, R (2000).Western dreams, eastern realities: Support for the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33, 1243-1278.

10. Kucia, M. (1999) Public opinion in Central Europe on EU accession: The Czech Republic and Poland. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 143-152.,

11. Gabel, M. and Whitten, G. (1997). Economic conditions, Economic Perceptions, and Public Support for European integration. *Political Behavior,* 19, 81-96.

12. Markowski, R. & Tucker, J. (2003). Pocketbooks, politics and parties: The 2003 Polish Referendum on EU membership. Presented at the 2004 Midwest Political Science Association Meeting at Chicago. April 17-22.

13. Tucker, J., Pacek, A. & Berinsky, A. (2002). Transitional winners and losers: Attitudes toward EU membership in post-communist countries. *Americal Journal of Political Science,* 46, 557-571.

14. Kostadinova, T. (2000). East European Public Support for NATO membership: Fears and Aspirations. *Journal of Peace Research*, 37 (2), 235-249.

However, such research typically does not address the roles that languages or ethnic makeup play in the former Communist societies which are far more heterogeneous than Western European societies[15].

Survey respondents in the 1997 survey data may also exhibit both individual and economic self-interest and a public interest perspective in voting for the EU and NATO accession, two distinct perspectives which rely heavily on economic factors like education, income and per capita gross national product[16]. Post-Communist society survey respondents may endorse the EU more often that NATO because the benefits of the economic union are financial and thus more tangible than any feeling of military security.

Finally, those who are inclined to join the EU may also be inclined to join NATO as well but such an inclination differs across several post-Communist societies with factors like ethnic identity and the number of languages typically spoken having some influence on the desire for EU accession[17].

The expansion of the European Union provides an opportunity to examine the notion of an imagined community, that is, an identity based on ethnicity and language simply because the concepts of the "nation", "nationality" and "national identity" become more critical in this context and may be studied while also taking into consideration issues related to economic rationality and national security. Additionally, even though the European Union has become a much more than the simple coal and steel economic regime it originated as in the 1950s and is making inroads on greater intra-European defense coordination, the EU still defers to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which is still the primary military defense organization among most wealthy Western states. Even if the EU is making inroads into a coherent security policy while NATO might be lessening in its role as the dominant security apparatus, the differentiation between high politics and low politics holds some value despite the fact that some scholars are making such role distinctions less relevant in an age of declining state power and globalization[18].

15. Gupta, D. and Koesel, K. (2003). "Understanding the Economic and Institutionalist Determinants of Nationalist Support". Presented at the Annual American Political Science Association meeting, Philadelphia.

16. Caplanova, A., Orviska, M., & Hudson, J. (2004). "Eastern European attitudes to integration with Western Europe. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42. (2), 271-288.

17. Ardovino, M. and Ono, K. (2004). "Europe as an Imagined Community? Testing Support for EU Accession in Five Post-Communist Societies". Paper presented at the Annual Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago.

18. Baldwin, D. (1985). *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.\

One might expect the desire to join such groups might differ by economic factors along with ethnicity and language-based national variables because the EU and NATO comprise such distinct types of inter-governmental organizations. Since states can be members of either the EU and/or NATO but not always both, there is apparently a distinction among both politicians and military leaders who continue to maintain the traditional security versus wealth accumulation objectives. Political tradeoffs are often made by politicians and such tradeoffs become points of political contention among various social actors. In other words, military strength from arms spending or modernization is politically popular but only to the extent that it does not compete with social expenditures sought by the low political constituents[19]. By examining two distinct perspectives on support for integration, it becomes possible to gauge where, when and why different variables might influence desire for membership in NATO and the EU.

Three Cases

Bulgaria

Bulgaria was ruled by long-time autocrat, Todor Zhivkov, considered by most scholars of post-Communist Europe as a hardliner and one of the most loyal of the pro-Moscow Warsaw Pact leaders. Political loyalty to the Soviets and Communist Party ideology in general is evident in Bulgarian elections after in the 1990s when the once monopolistic Communist Party was still a more popular choice. Ironically, political support for the main offshoot of the former Cold War Bulgarian Communist party, the Socialist Party (BSP), is still strong even if the party has shifted its position and opted to support NATO membership for Bulgaria while insisting on a need to maintain relations with Russia. Bulgaria did join the military alliance in 2004 but must defer its entry in to the EU until 2007 at the earliest. It, more than most Warsaw Pact members, has stronger ties to Russia and the East. Unfortunately Bulgarian voters, like their Romanian neighbors, face a more difficult path to EU acceptance and hold a unique post-Communist political legacy of greater authoritarianism and weaker pluralism than the rest of the area. Harsher reform efforts needed facilitate market integration with the West may drive greater anti-EU sentiment especially if any ethnic division becomes an issue. In January 2001, a fourteen party coalition made up by both neo-communist and social democratic parties ran

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19. Thies, W. (2003). *Friendly Rivals: Bargaining and Burden-shifting in NATO.* New York: M.E. Sharpe.

against the ruling center-right coalition. A final competitor, former King Simeon II, who formed a National Movement, entered the parliamentary election and won[20]. The resulting government was composed of the National Movement and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS). By November, however, street demonstrations by labor and professional unions indicated popular discontent with state policies. In 2004, the Bulgarian government accelerated its efforts to meet EU criteria. Over 700 measures have been proposed by the European Council of Ministers in an Action Plan for Sofia to implement including new laws, administrative measures and improved organizational coordination between departments involved in the integration process[21].

Romania

Romania in 2005 has even greater ties with its authoritarian past than Bulgaria and other societies in the post-Communist area, ties that suggest a radical continuity[22]. Such continuity might be symbolic of the purely totalitarian as well as sultanistic regime under Ceausescu. His leadership style was extremely personalistic in that he relied on virtually no technocratic or party help nor did he permit the open existence of any independent non-state organizations[23]. The violent collapse of his regime in December 1989 resulted in a lack of viable political actors that could negotiate a pacted transition to democracy.

The former Communist leadership under Ion Iliescu simply replaced Ceausescu and created rules that prevented any non-state challenger from winning political influence, a roadblock type strategy used to prevent complete democratic representation[24]. As a result, Romanian society is less pluralistic in terms of civil society and the state has implemented political institutions that discourage a true rule of law and open reform.

In the 2000 legislative and presidential elections, a coalition of three parties formed led by the Party of Social Democracy (PDSR) but those parties only garnered thirty-six percent of the total votes cast by the electorate[25]. The PDSR in the 1990s, interestingly, won and held office by the backing of the aforementioned nationalist parties before finally

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20. 2004 online at http:www.europeanforum.

21. 2004 online at http:www.euroactiv.com

22. Shafir, M. (2000). "Marginalization or mainstream? The Extreme Right in Post-Communist Romania". The Politics of the Extreme Right. London: Pinter.

23. Linz, J. and Stepan, A. (1996). The Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

24. Casper, G. and Taylor, M. (1996). Negotiating Democracy- Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

25. 2002 online at http:www.europeanforum

losing later in the decade. Now a new coalition of centrist parties has brought   Iliescu back into power, the original opportunist who utilized a nationalist, anti-West platform successfully for years by attracting the support of the ex-regime Communists, rural voters and state sector workers.

His policies advocated an environment that propagates ethnic prejudice and political authoritarianism. The "nationalizing nationalism" of the Romanian government in the 1990s has confronted the "homeland nationalism" of Hungary in that there has been a two-way, conflictive dynamic between two groups of peoples and two states in Eastern Europe[26].

Romania began its integration into Western Europe[27] when Brussels invited Bucharest to begin negotiations in 1999 at Helsinki and initiated them by 2000 under the center-right government, a procedure that had concluded six chapters by the end of the year. Bucharest's backing of NATO involvement in Serbia facilitated an early entry into the defense organization and it would later be a visible participant in the American campaign in the Iraq.

Slovenia

Slovenia is exceptional in that although a part of the post-Communist area, it is the only country of the ten new EU members that was not under direct Soviet influence since it was not a member of the Warsaw Pact. Slovenes lived in a different Communist world in many ways being a part of Tito's Yugoslavian Federation that often proclaimed a non-aligned position during the Cold War. Ironically, Slovenia enjoyed greater political and economic freedom during the Cold War .Yet the very political and social structure of Yugoslavia which was based on separating ethnic communities into separate states would eventually collapse, leading to civil strife and ethnic cleansing in many parts of the Balkan Peninsula. Slovenia was the first region to declare independence in 1991 and did so effectively because of its relative ethnic homogeneity and geographic distance to Western Europe.

For the past ten years, Slovenia has enjoyed political continuity under the leadership of Janez Drnovsek and his Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) an offshoot of the old Communist Party and successor to the Communist Youth Organization). Such stability has occurred because of a planned "European project" that entailed economic and social reform

26. Brubaker, R. (1996). Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe. London: Cambridge University Press.
27. 2004 online at http:www.europeanforum

that made EU entry inevitable[28]. Of the fifteen parties listed on the 1997 survey, only two small parties might be considered anti-EU. In the October 2000 general elections, the Liberal Democrats won thirty-six percent of the vote (thirty four seats), an increase of seven seats from the 1996 contest. The runner up party, the Social Democrats only took half as many seats while parties like the Democratic Pensioners Party and the National Party, an anti-EU party, only received four and three seats respectively. A total of eight parties received seats in the parliament including one issue parties suggesting that party cleavages and identification in Slovenia is fairly stable over time for a society using such an electoral system. There is little ethnic or linguistic conflict in Slovenia although a smallish Roma population (7000) continues to lag behind in terms of economic prosperity. Overall economic growth has increased along with trade for the relatively small population (under three million).

The Liberal Democrat government pursued NATO membership early in 1994 and joined officially in 1992 despite the claims of many citizens that membership will prove impractical and expensive economically for such a small country. In a spring 2003 referendum, approximately 66 percent of voters voted for NATO and EU membership while 33 percent voted against. The turnout for the referendum was around 60 percent which is an improvement from the Slovene decision but still not overwhelming in its implication[29]. Slovenes appear to be more driven by economic "low political issues" than any security imperative perhaps a result of being a neutral state in the Cold War.

Data and Methods

By comparing a logistical analysis of 1997 *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer* (CEEB) data, and the spring 2004 cross-national data collected right before accession of ten countries into the EU, any trends of support for integration might be considered. The dependent variable in the initial is the number of Yes responses to "Do you support joining the European Union?" and "Do you support joining NATO?" Those responses which are "Don't Know" are excluded from the analysis.

The initial analysis also includes a pooled set of ten societies which includes the three Balkan cases. This way, one might discern any statistical differences between the whole post-Communist area and among the Balkan societies. The first model included independent variables that have been analyzed previously and are typically more economic in orientation. These

28. 2004 online at http:www.euroactiv.com
29. 2004 online at http:www.europeanforum

include age (five ranges), income (four ranges), education (three ranges), place of residence (city or country) and job type (public or private sector). The second full model includes three more variables relating to a possible national awareness. These include the number of languages spoken (one, two, three or more), ethnic identity (majority or minority) and the level of satisfaction with democratic consolidation (four ranges).

**Table 1. Analysis of Support for Joining the EU
And NATO in Ten Post-Communist Societies**

	EU Support		NATO Support	
	Socio-economic	National	Socio-economic	National
Age	-.024	.018	Age .006	.045
	(.023)	(.033)	.021)	(.031)
Education	.153 ***	.090**	Education .137***	178***
	(.027)	(.039)	(.025)	(.037)
Income	.220 ***	.191	Income .191 ***	143 ***
	(.026)	(-.038) ***	(.023)	(.035)
Job Type	.015 **	.010	Job Type .013 **	.015 **
	(.005)	(.007)	(.005)	(.007)
Place of	-.111 **	.171	Place of -.079 *	-.016
Residence	(.051)	(.073) **	Residence (.047)	(.068)
(CONSTANT) 285			(CONSTANT) -.975	
		(.116)	(.107)	
Languages Spoken		.003	Languages	-.043
		(.036)		(.034)
Ethnicity		.388 ***	Ethnicity	.910 ***
		(.107)		.105)
Satisfaction			Satisfaction	
with democracy -.		338 ***	with democracy	-.408 ***
		(.047)		(.044)
(CONSTANT)		.412	(CONSTANT)	-.679
		(.237)		(.225)

*** p< .001 **p<.05   *p< .10

Notes: Survey data taken from 1997 Eastern and Central Eurobarometer. **Standard errors are in parentheses. Analysis performed using multivariate logistic regression with "Yes to do you support joining the EU and NATO as the dependent variables. The results were generated using SPSS.**

Pooled country data includes the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary which comprise Central Europe, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia which comprise Baltic Europe and Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia which comprise Balkan Europe respectively

**Table 2. Analysis of Support for Joining the EU
And NATO in Bulgaria**

	EU Support		NATO Support	
	Socio-economic	National	Socio-economic	National
Age	-.089	-.120	Age -.194 **	-.180
	(.085)	(.129)	(.071)	(.117)
Education	.444 ***	.315 **	Education .219 **	.118
	(.093)	(.143)	(.081)	(.135)
Income	.439 **	-.055	Income .591 ***	.481
	(.190)	(.249)	(.142)	(.217)
Job Type	-.009	.017	Job Type .007	-.010
	(.020)	(.030)	(.017)	(.027)
Place of	.212	.082	Place of -.119	-.356
Residence	(.206)	(.293)	Residence (.169)	(.259)
(CONSTANT) -.385			(CONSTANT)-1.095	
	(.456)		(.384)	
Languages Spoken		-.113	Languages	- .066
		(.204)		(.179)
Ethnicity		.690	Ethnicity	1.372 **
		(.463)		(.534)
Satisfaction		-.501	Satisfaction	-1.086 ***
with democracy		(.186)	with democracy	(.182)
(CONSTANT)		1.791	(CONSTANT)	1.588
		(.931)		(.855)

*** p< .001 **p<.05   *p< .10
Note: *Survey data taken from 1997 Eastern and Central Eurobarometer.* **Standard errors are in parentheses. Analysis performed using multivariate logistic regression with "Yes to do you support joining the EU and NATO as the dependent variables. The results were generated using SPSS.**

**Table 3. Analysis of Support for Joining the EU
And NATO in Romania**

	EU Support		NATO Support	
	Socio-economic	**National**	**Socio-economic**	**National**
Age	.126 *	.039	**Age** -.227 **	.039
	(.094)	(.139)	(.078)	(.029)
Education	.353 **	.221	**Education** .043	.221
	(.119)	(.178)	(.095)	(.178)
Income	-.321 **	.203	**Income** .163	.203
	(.160)	(.243)	(.125)	(.243)
Job Type	-.056	-.013	**Job Type** .004	-.013
	(.081)	(.029)	(.017)	(.029)
Place of	-.007	-.139	**Place of** .211	-.139
Residence	(.210)	(.298)	**Residence** (.167)	(.298)
(CONSTANT)	.296		**(CONSTANT)** -1.163	
	(.526)		(.384)	
Languages Spoken		.511	**Languages**	.511 **
		(.224)		(.224)
Ethnicity		.382	**Ethnicity**	. 382
		(.457)		(.457)
Satisfaction		-.804 ***	**Satisfaction**	-.804 ***
with democracy		(.188)	**with democracy**	(.188)
(CONSTANT)		1.708	**(CONSTANT)**	-1.708
		(.966)		(.966)

*** p< .001 **p<.05   *p< .10
Note: Survey data taken from 1997 Eastern and Central Eurobarometer. **Standard
errors are in parentheses. Analysis performed using multivariate logistic
regression with "Yes to do you support joining the EU and NATO as the
dependent variables. The results were generated using SPSS.**

**Table 4. Analysis of Support for Joining the EU
And NATO in Slovenia**

	EU Support			NATO Support	
	Socio-economic	National		Socio-economic	National
Age	.217 ** (.077)	.248 ** (.119)	Age	.124 ** (.068)	.139 (.101)
Education	.172 *** (.091)	-.020 (.138)	Education	- .029 (.122)	.118 (.135)
Income	.382 ** (.125)	.412 ** (.190)	Income	320 * (.174)	.481 (.217)
Job Type	.050 ** (.018	.060 ** (.026)	Job Type	.055 ** (.024)	-.010 (.027)
Place of Residence	.026 (.179)	.403 (.270)	Place of Residence	.406 * (.233)	-.356 (.259)
(CONSTANT)	-1.589 (.483)		(CONSTANT)		-1.820 (.438)
Languages Spoken		-.005 (.119)	Languages		- .077 (.103)
Ethnicity		-.074 (.058)	Ethnicity		.013 (.042)
Satisfaction with democracy		-.790 *** (.188)	Satisfaction with democracy		-.217 (.157)
(CONSTANT)		2.582 (1.748)	(CONSTANT)		-.513 (1.351)

*** p< .001 **p<.05   *p< .10

Note: *Survey data taken from 1997 Eastern and Central Eurobarometer.* **Standard errors are in parentheses. Analysis performed using multivariate logistic regression with "Yes to do you support joining the EU and NATO as the dependent variables. The results were generated using SPSS.**

Results

Prior research has emphasized that age likely reflects a positive relationship. In other words, those who are younger tend to back integration most. In the pooled data here, age does not appear to be statistically significant. On the other hand, those 15 through 39 in Bulgaria tend to back both the EU and NATO more often than their older countrymen, and younger Romanian respondents do so as well when only five socio-economic variables are controlled. When three national variables are included, only NATO backing differs prominently in Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia.

Regarding income, a variable which often represents economic motivations in studies of both Western European and post-Communist attitudes towards integration, pooled respondents are much more likely to back joining both the European Union and NATO if they earn higher income levels, a finding that supports an economic orientation in integration support. In the three separate societies, one's income level is positive and significant in the social-economic model in Bulgaria with both EU and NATO but not when the three ethnic-national variables are included. It is possible that the impact of the democratic satisfaction variable is overriding any impact that income has. In Romania, higher earning residents tend to endorse the EU and NATO more often than lower income residents but only when five economic variables are included. In Slovenia, higher income becomes significant in three of four models hinting that economics is driving a great part of favorable integration support when both the EU and NATO are the focus.

Earlier studies explain that more education, a greater reliance on the free market, youth and city life tend to raise expectations for both the EU and NATO[30]. Here, education appears to be both positive and robust across the pooled societies with college educated persons much more optimistic about integration. This is likewise for Bulgarian respondents in three of the four analyses. In Romania and Slovenia, education is significant in only one of the four models. Again, it is likely that democratic satisfaction is trumping any direct impact that education has in the full models.

Across the post-Communist area of Europe, urbanites are significantly more likely to favor the European Union but this is not the case with NATO when all variables are included. In Bulgaria and Romania separately, there does not appear to be important differences relating where one lives to support for integration while place of residence registers some significant among Slovenian respondents backing NATO entry when the socio-economic factors are utilized.

One surprising finding with job type is contrary to most expectations and relates that public or state workers lean towards both the EU and NATO. This is possibly due to the large agricultural sector's inclusion with the private sector. When one looks at Romania and Bulgaria, there are no statistically important differences when comparing the job sectors. However in tiny Slovenia, which is the least agricultural of the three cases, private-sector employees favor both the social Union and military alliance with the West in three of the four models. Slovenia's statistically relevant differences across job sectors might be a result of its past membership in

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30. Tucker et al. and Caplanova

a Belgrade-dominated Yugoslav Federation that often exploited Slovene wealth.

The first factor relating to the existence of an imagined community, which languages are spoken, is surprisingly insignificant across the pooled sampling. Within each society, bilingual and multilingual respondents in Romania endorse military integration more than monolingual respondents. Because Romania is among the most heterogeneous of the three Balkan cases here, one might consider the role of an active or passive ethnic nationalism especially when NATO support varies from EU support. Why languages do not stand out in Bulgaria which has a large ethnic minority is somewhat puzzling. Language becomes more prominent in societies where exclusive language policies exist preventing minority languages from being used in certain positions. Bulgarian policy has been more open and inclusive in comparison to Latvia where the use of non-Latvian tongues is discouraged. In fact, the use of language itself may be a result of a peculiar transience among Balkan and Baltic respondents. Unlike ethnic identity which is more permanently and physically innate, one can acquire languages over time even if that acquisition becomes less adept as one ages and may even correlate with education to some extent. In other words, one can change one's linguistic orientation more greatly than one's ethnic identity.

Among the Baltic respondents, in particular Latvians which are not addressed here, it is very possible that many of the older ethnic majority citizens can speak Russian which many learned in school under the Soviet Union but refuse to acknowledge that ability because of the current political situation of recent political independence and anti-Russian sentiment. The same might be said for some ethnic Russians who live in the Baltics and who refuse to acknowledge any fluency in Latvian because of any existing multinational acrimony. Therefore, language as a tool in measuring political identity must be taken with a grain of salt and is not as straightforward and simple as ethnic identity which rarely changes with the political times. Even if language might easily be an artifact of another variable like education and job in some cases, implementing it as a factor while constructing a model of an imagined community will likely justify it as important in other cases. Language might be acting as a proxy factor for ethnic identity in some instances and its use is necessary even if it becomes difficult in ascertaining any direct causal relationships with integration support.

One's ethnic identity in the post-Communist area of Europe appears to be statistically positive and robust. Overall, those who are an ethnic majority tend to back joining the EU and NATO more often than those

who are an ethnic minority. However, such a relationship may be confusing since the context of majority and minority would be crucial in determining any existence of a dynamic of imagined communities. By looking at separate societies, one notices that ethnicity becomes more important especially when national defense is an issue.

In Bulgaria, a smaller Turkish minority is less supportive of both the EU and NATO, a finding that is surprisingly since Turkey is already a member of the defense organization. Ethnic Turks could be resistant to the EU because they see themselves as "less European" or perhaps they perceive their ethnic homeland as likely to be excluded from the EU in much the same way as ethnic Russians feel slighted about Russia's exclusion in the European integration project. They might also see NATO as a tool of Western (i.e. American) imperialism against the Muslim world.

Ethnic minorities in Bulgaria and Latvia might also see the EU as a project that would further alienate their political position via the well-known democratic deficit which brings up the final hypothesis and variable. In homogenous Slovenia, not surprisingly, ethnicity matters little in a state that was founded upon an exclusive ethnic identity (Slovene) and was first to move away from the multi-ethnic state.

The final variable, *satisfaction with democracy,* is the one constant across the whole post-Communist area but in each society as well and is probably the most important factor driving the full models in all three cases. In Romania, pool data suggests that those least content with democracy are firmly against the EU while those most content with democracy are most welcoming of it. The same goes with NATO support where many respondents could see outside influence on the armed forces as another "imperialist" effort even if by more benign foreign powers. The pattern in Romania and Slovenia is not so clear with NATO dividing Bulgarian society more than the EU, a possible spillover from the "high politics" national security issue mentioned above. This reinforces the link that political affiliation and historical-geographic features have as Communist party membership and past foreign military invasions significantly boost support for integration among Baltic Latvians[31].

In ethnically homogeneous Slovenia, strong resistance to the EU and NATO among those dissatisfied with democracy suggests an imagined community based not on an ethnic divide locally but more on a community more skeptical about foreign leadership, and the idea of a more European and universal culture. Yet, EU and NATO membership

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31. Kostadinova

could also provide protection from other more unstable, ethnic-based states to the south and east creating a dilemma for many Slovenes.

Table 5. Imagined Communities and Support for EU Accession in Three Balkan Societies

Society	Cultural Homogeneity	Support for EU
Bulgaria	Medium to High	Ethnic Majority: High Ethnic Minority: Medium
Romania	Medium to High	Ethnic Majority: High Ethnic Minority: Low
Slovenia	Very High	Ethnic Majority: Medium Ethnic Minority: High

(Table derived from statistical analysis of 1997 CEEB data)

Attitudes Towards EU Accession Over Time

Surveys of the respondents in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia from 1999 to 2004 show that indeed there is some variation especially as the EU accession grows closer. Because Slovenia is the only country to actually join in May 2004, attitudes likely differ

Table 6. EU Support Examined Temporally

Bulgaria		Romania		Slovenia	
1999-2000	70 %	1999-2000	77 %	1999-2000	42 %
Autumn 2002	68 %	Autumn 2002	78 %	Autumn 2002	43 %
Spring 2004	70 %	Spring 2004	70 %	Spring 2004	40 %

Percentage of those who see the European Union as "A good thing"
(Taken from Candidate Country Eurobarometer 2004.1 February-March 2004)

While not taking into consideration the three percent margin of error, or a similar statistical analysis of data, the pre-accession 2004 survey of Bulgarian survey respondents clearly reflect very stable support of joining the EU with 70 percent seeing it as a "good thing" in 1999 and 70 percent doing so in 2004. Because Bulgaria is one of the poorer EU accession candidates compared to societies in Central Europe, and one of the most geographically distant from Brussels, one might expect

perceived economic benefits among voters might play a great part. Because Bulgaria can improve its infrastructure to a greater extent relatively speaking even with monies from a delayed process of aid distribution, those who expect to benefit financially through increased trade will probably be more consistent in endorsing integration. A modernization of infrastructure and a further consolidation of political institutions might also encourage some voters to see the EU's political institutions as being more democratic compared to currect practices. On the other hand, Bulgaria's long-time loyalty to the Soviet Union and Moscow seems to have lessened in the twenty-first century as more Bulgarians appear to be looking to the West for help.

Despite any complications in the state sector, public opinion about the prospect of EU accession appeared positive in 1997 with close to an eighty percent approval rating. Over the next six years, the approval rating would stay within the 65 to 80 percent range until 2004 when it would drop noticeably to seventy.

The two current obstacles to a rapid Romanian EU accession involve political corruption and a questionable human rights record, obstacles that could be better resolved if EU laws regulating public administration and judicial reform would be implemented and monitored more closely[32]. Romania, along with Bulgaria, has however achieved sufficient progress that they reached the point of a functioning market economy but still must make refinements or face the possibility of a one year delay for entry[33].

Yet, Romanian respondents' positive support for EU accession remained above the candidate country average throughout the period by about ten percentage points, higher even than Hungary's measure. Respondents in Romania have, as a whole then, been more optimistic about joining Brussels. Upon considering the issue of democratic satisfaction with governance at home and in the EU, respondents in 1997, surprisingly, did not reflect any statistical differences on EU support as it relates to satisfaction with democracy. In spring 2004 when eight neighboring post-Communist countries were about to join the West, support for EU accession was at 70 percent, highest among the former Visegrad states and lower only to Turkish pro EU support. Bulgaria, the other society that was deferred EU entry for three years, followed Romania at 65 percent with both being well above both the EU average (48 percent) and the New Member State average (43 percent).
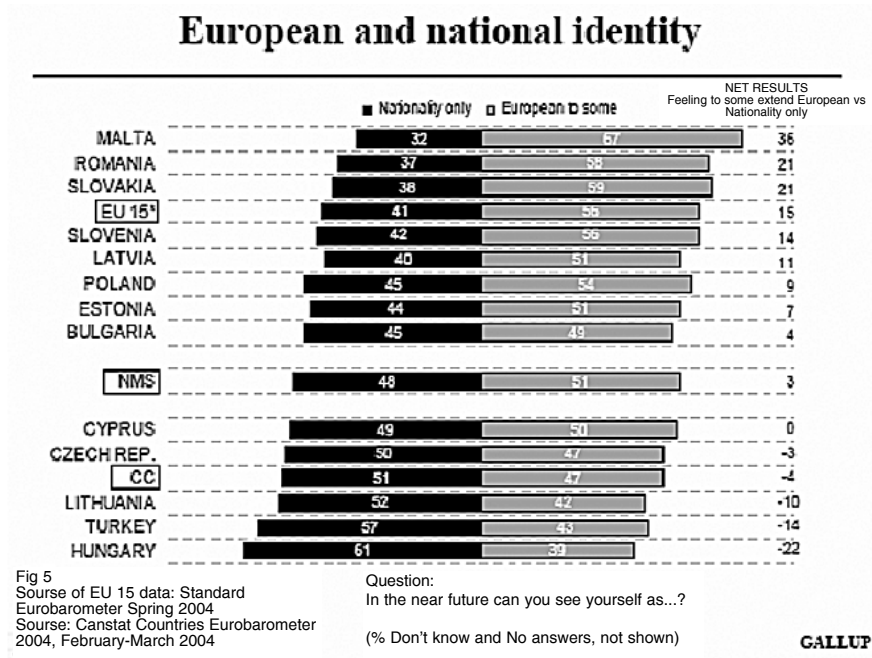
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32. 2/3/04 online at http:www.euobserver.com
33. 10/6/04 online at http:www.euobserver.com

Interestingly, Romanian respondents in spring 2004 also displayed the highest satisfaction with democracy rate among post-Communist candidates with 53 percent approving and only 16 percent disapproving. This is despite the problems with corruption in government and accusations of systematic discrimination against ethnic minorities and small political parties. However, most Romanians are less optimistic about democratic representation in the EU with 56 percent opining that their voices will be heard, a mark which is below Hungary but still above the rest of the Central European and Baltic countries. In terms of ethnic identity, both Romanian and Hungarian ethnic groups appear to back EU accession. Because Hungary is now a member of the EU, the Hungarian minority issue in Romania could become more depending on which policies the Hungarian government implements relating to its own ethnic *Diaspora* abroad. Within Romania, however, there appears to be little ethnic or national conflict over the EU integration issue for now.

Support for European Union membership in Slovenia appears to be less consistent over five years than in either Bulgaria or Romania but more consistent than Central European societies such as Poland and the Czech Republic. Roughly 42 percent of responses see Brussels as a "good thing", about the same proportion of those who are ambivalent or neutral. In 2004, Slovenes joined the most skeptical of societies like Latvia and Poland in seeing the EU as a "a good thing", placing it below the New Member Society (NMS) average of 43 percent. In contrast, Romanian and Bulgarian responses ranked among the most supportive of accession with each having over 60 percent approval.

Slovenes did improve their view of the EU in their 44 percent approval of perceived democratic practice in the EU (not shown here), the exact average among the candidate countries and slightly above EU 15 average. Yet this is still below the more optimistic opinions that their Balkan neighbors have.

Table 7. National identity and EU support

European and national identity

Fig 5
Sourse of EU 15 data: Standard
Eurobarometer Spring 2004
Sourse: Canstat Countries Eurobarometer
2004, February-March 2004

Question:
In the near future can you see yourself as...?

(% Don't know and No answers, not shown)

GALLUP

Slovenia, like the Czech Republic and Hungary, is ethnically homogenous relatively speaking and reflects those societies in terms of perceiving democracy. Yet, the more heterogeneous Baltic societies, more heterogeneous than either Bulgaria or Romania, are the most cynical bringing up the issue of ethnic differences in support for integration. Table 7 above represents support for the European Union measured in terms of perceived national identity, a most typical approach in conceptualizing national awareness. However, as any scholar of Europe knows, the current societies of the EU-15 and the Candidate States (CC) have somewhat differing economic and historical backgrounds. Western societies tended to industrialize much earlier and states formed with more modern political institutions decades if not centuries before some of their Eastern counterparts.

This being so, the idea of what a nation has probably differed (and still does in many respects) across the now twenty-five member European Union, differences that exist even among longtime Western European states such as Germany and France. Therefore, the very recent additions of cross-national attitudes on what exactly European identity is in the New Europe must be addressed with some caution.

Another interesting mark is the EU-15 average, 41 percent who claim

a dominant national identity versus 56 percent with a European identity. Because the majority of Candidate Country societies fall below the EU-15 average, the theory of an ethnic nationalism may be supported simply because many of these states are characterized as having ethnic divisions and several societies which are former members of multiethnic empires or federations and have since seceded to form ethnically homogenous states. However, since both heterogeneous societies and homogeneous societies do not appear in a logically consistent manner, the notion that ethnic makeup alone in a society drives national identity cannot be supported all the time in every society. National identity appears more pervasive in all types of society, heterogeneous and homogenous, poorer or wealthier, Baltic or Balkan.

Conclusions

This paper has asked the question "What is driving support for joining the European Union in three post-Communist candidate societies? Is it simple economic expectations of benefits or costs? Or is it a view that there is one "true Europe based on ethnicity and language" which stretches across from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea? Or is it some combination of both perspectives?

The idea that imagined communities drive political behavior appears to be most persuasive in the case of Bulgaria and Romania where differences among ethnic minorities and the majority exist for both the EU and NATO. In Romania, languages appear to divide voters most on NATO support, a finding that brings up the issue of the large Hungarian population in Transylvania. In Bulgaria, ethnic Bulgarians appear to be more enthusiastic about NATO than are other ethnic groups.

In the case of Slovenia which is much smaller and ethnically homogenous, finding statistical variation based upon ethnic and linguistic identity becomes problematic simply because there are very few non-Slovenes to compare. Yet one may consider the issue of democratic satisfaction, an issue that becomes that divides the Slovene nation when EU support is an issue. Public support in 2004 for joining the EU is still much lower than in either Romania or Bulgaria suggesting a more homogenous, Central European type of EU-resistant nationalism. National identities, obviously, are not as imagined as one might expect even in an age of rapid globalization and a weakening of the nation-state.

In terms of economic factors, those that earn more income and have expectations of greater economic benefits from market integration and have more education tend to back EU accession across all three societies.

Though some differences also exist between the three Balkan countries, probably influenced in part by perceived national identities, such differences might not be as pronounced as in a region such as the Baltics, a topic not covered here but elsewhere.

In the Balkans as a whole, high political issues like joining NATO seem to be most affected by perceived national identities based on language and ethnicity. National security, on the face of it, might be related more to feelings of a national awareness. In contrast, when economic factors appear important, they are more often linked to EU support, a link that reiterates earlier notions of a difference in high politics and low politics and how citizens perceive them even in the context of the rapidly integrating New Europe.

The European Union for many might be a Brussels-based foreign organization that could impose its will on the present life and this has likely reminded many of the legacies of a foreign-imposed, authoritarian past. Citizens in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia had similar yet dissimilar experiences under communism. Economic development, political pluralism and civil society hall vary across the Balkan Peninsula and all three drive political attitudes. But ethnicity and languages also vary and appear to influence public opinion to a degree as well.

Bulgaria and Romania, the most culturally heterogeneous of the three Balkan cases covered here, will likely join the European Union in 2007. Turkey, an applicant for EU membership since 1963, is also drawing serious countenance but is considered by many too Islamic to ever be a part of the "imagined European community", thus creating a furor among many European politicians and their constituents. One outgoing EU commissioner warns that a European Union of forty members is possible if expansion continues and implores voters to vote "no" to new members in national referendums[34]. That politician is likely right in his prediction that the citizen-voters will eventually determine the future of European integration and not the bureaucrats.

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34. Ibid

DATA APPENDIX

Dependent variables

Yes to Join EU/NATO coded 1
NO/no response coded 0

Independent Variables

AGE
15-24 years coded 1
25-39 years coded 2
40-54 years coded 3
55-64 years coded 4
65 years up coded 5

EDUCATION
Up to elementary coded 1
Some secondary coded 2
Secondary grad coded 3
Higher education coded 4

INCOME
Bottom quartile coded 1
Third quartile coded 2
Second quartile coded 3
Top quartile coded 4 (note: Sixteen ranges were combined into four quartiles)

JOB
Civil servant, state-owned enterprise coded 1
Private sector owner, employer, agriculture, other work coded 0

PLACE OF RESIDENCECapital/large city coded 1
Small town/countryside coded 0

LANGUAGE
One language coded 1
Two languages coded 2
Three languages coded 3
Four languages coded 3
Five languages coded 3
Six languages coded 3

ETHNICITY
Majority coded 1
Minority coded 0

DEMOCRATIC SATISFACTION

Very satisfied coded 1
Fairly satisfied coded 2
Not very satisfied coded 3
Not at all satisfied coded 4