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EAGER TO JOIN? A STUDY OF EURO-ENTHUSIASM IN SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Introduction

The Euro-integrative processes have been seen by both the international community and other relevant actors as the most appropriate framework for the democratization and pacification of the vibrant Balkans since the fall of socialism. With Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania already having become members of the EU, Brussels pushes for the adoption of the European agenda in the other Balkan countries, which are one after another becoming candidates and potential candidates for membership. While observing this progress in the region, an intriguing occurrence can be noticed, which puts two very close countries in the region in contrast to one another. In the last three years, a difference has been observed between the attitudes of citizens of Serbia and of Montenegro when asked whether they think joining the EU would be beneficial for them. At a time when both governments declare their European aspirations and proximate their coopera-

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tion with the EU, polls have suggested that positive attitudes have been declining among the population in Serbia, whereas they have been increasing in Montenegro.

This paper aims to examine the attitudes that the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro have had towards their respective countries' membership in the European Union, especially the reasons for the decline or rise of support as assessed from public opinion polls conducted by international and domestic organizations. The paper will focus on three aspects and assess their influence on the attitudes of citizens: democratic scope (as examined by Freedom House through several indicators such as governance, corruption, civil society, etc.), rhetoric and attitudes of local politicians, and the influence of country-specific requirements of the EU. By engaging in a comparative case study between Serbia and Montenegro, the paper will attempt to answer the question: How do democratic performance, attitudes of local politicians, and attitudes to country-specific EU requirements affect Euro-enthusiasm of Serbian and Montenegrin citizens? It will analyze how the above-mentioned factors affect the level of Euro-enthusiasm and test the following hypothesis: Whereas improved democratic scope should cause stable Euro-enthusiasm among citizens, negative rhetoric of politicians towards the EU and negative attitudes towards country-specific requirements of the EU cause decreased Euro-enthusiasm among Serbian citizens.

The first part will shortly outline the theoretical understandings and definitions of what democratization, EU integration, and Euro-enthusiasm are, as well as what are the essential preconditions for EU integration in the Western Balkans. In the second part, a historical account of how the approximation to the EU has been conducted in the two countries will be presented, with specific regard to the three independent variables identified in the hypothesis. Finally, the last part will present the nature of fluctuations in Euro-enthusiasm in the two countries, and attempt to shed light on the reasons for the important difference between them. Furthermore, it will explain what this means for their Euro-integrative process, and discuss the EU's role when it comes to changing public attitudes.

1. Democratization and EU Integration

In this part, the issues of democratization and EU integration will be placed in the relevant contextual and historical frameworks for the region that is being examined. Thus, an explanation of the most common understandings on what post-communist democratization is will be given, and

the paper will furthermore touch upon the issue of EU integration and pre-conditions for it. In the end, it will turn to the issue of public support for EU integration in candidate and potential candidate countries.

1.1 The theoretical Framework on Democratization and EU Integration

Samuel Huntington includes the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) into “the third wave of democratization,” along with, most notably, Southern Europe and Latin America (Huntington, pp. 3-13). Starting from 1974, this wave represents the transitions from authoritarian/non-democratic regimes to democratic political systems. The difference, between CEE and Southern Europe and Latin America, is of course that the latter two cases had involved transitions from right-wing dictatorships, while in CEE democracy came after socialism. More notably, the case of CEE transitions and democratization processes has been of greater interest for scholars and policy-makers, not only because of the vast territory, population and the geographical location of these countries, but also because of the diversity of democratization dynamics they showed, much to the awe of Western scholars who expected them to be more homogeneous. Furthermore, the Euro-integrative processes have been seen as being of utmost importance for the guarantee of peace and respect for human rights in the area, following the violent 90’s in the Balkans.

In a general sense, transition/democratization entails the process through which formerly non-democratic regimes transform themselves into democratic ones. When discussing the problems of consolidating democracy, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan describe transition as

complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure* (Linz & Stepan, p. 3).

As can be seen, Linz and Stepan take a very political and technocratic understanding of democratization, but then continue by shortly stating that a consolidated democracy is the one where “democracy is the only game in town.” They give more substance to the definition when they name the five self-supporting arenas of democracy:

First, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous politi-

cal society. Third, throughout the territory of the state all major political actors, especially the government and the state apparatus, must be effectively subjected to a rule of law that protects individual freedoms and associational life. Fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society (Ibid, p. 7).

Seeing the potential and historical obligation towards their eastern neighbors, the EU provided the former communist countries with the possibility of becoming member states, once they had met the specific criteria for membership spelled out in Copenhagen in 1993:

Membership requires that candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (Presidency Conclusions, 7.A.iii).

At the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki in 2003, it was clearly stated that the future of the Western Balkans would be in the EU. That year, Serbia and Montenegro started their Euro-integrative processes as a single country, and continued separately after the Montenegrin declaration of independence in 2006. The focus of the paper is on the accession process of these two countries and, in particular, on the support of the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro for the accession. Euro-enthusiasm is in fact an essential element of the accession process.

1.2 Euro-Enthusiasm: The Importance of Public Attitudes Towards EU Integration

The concept of Euro-enthusiasm has mostly been used in the debates regarding EU member states in order to portray the support for, or opposition to, further deepening, integration and enlargement of the Union. As the Euro-lingo goes, Euro-enthusiasm, or Euro-optimism, is opposed to Euro-skepticism, or Euro-pessimism. Paul Taggart offers a clear account of what Euro-skepticism is: "Euro-skepticism expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (Taggart, p. 366).

Aside from the well-known polarity between Euro-optimists (or Euro-enthusiasts) and Euro-pessimists or (Euro-skeptics) among political leaders and parties at the European level, the purpose of this paper will be

to look at the attitudes of the public itself, mainly because the legitimacy of EU institutions depends on the support of the citizens of the Union. Martin Slater has pointed out that “the founders of the European community were far-sighted enough to see that the long-term survival of the community in a democratic age would depend on its finding legitimacy with the general public” (Slater, p. 72). Euro-enthusiasm is essential, first of all, during the accession process, when governments are called to adopt measures that can appear unpopular. It is very important that the members-to-come have citizens who support the integration to the EU. Euro-enthusiasm is also essential after the accession has taken place, when the country is a member of the Union.

It could be valuable to consider countries of the earlier part of the third wave of democratization, as Huntington has called them, with regards to their Euro-enthusiasm at the time of their accession process:

Enthusiasm for the EC in Spain and Portugal suggests a range of political, cultural, and historical characteristics as explanations of cross-national differences in EC orientations. In addition to economic considerations, EC membership was widely seen in these countries, as well as in Greece, as an essential contribution to the democratization, stabilization, and legitimacy of the new political systems after the regime transformation of the mid-1970s (Niedermeyer & Sinnott, p.66).

In the same way, considering that the EU has provided the acceding countries with comprehensive indicators with regards to the democratization processes as prescribed in the Copenhagen criteria, the Euro-integrative process has been regarded with overall positive attitudes among countries from the Western Balkans, since they were associated not only with economic growth, but also with the improvement of the democratic capacities and the successful functioning of their governments.

Researching Euro-enthusiasm in acceding members is important due to the potential dangers of the citizens' disillusionment with the EU both at the time of accession and of membership. Negative sentiments towards European integration in member states can cause a growth in the EU democratic deficit: from deepening the gap between ordinary citizens and the European institutions, causing disregard for the legitimacy of the EU, up to the utmost danger of the rise of the radical right - nationalist groups building their rhetoric against the financial programs of the EU and against the values of diversity in the bloc, like witnessed in Bulgaria or Hungary.

Euro-skepticism may cause a disregard for the process of democratization during the accession, a decrease in the legitimacy of local pro-democratic leaders, and even worse, a “no” vote at the accession referendum,

dangers that Croatia was recently facing. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that determine Euro-enthusiasm and Euro-skepticism.

1.3 Preconditions for Euro-Enthusiasm

There are many factors that can determine the formation of positive attitudes towards the EU: improved economic performance, instruments of pre-accession used to aid many sectors of the society, improved democratic functioning of institutions, or the guarantee of long-lasting peace and security, to name a few. In this analysis, three main factors will be considered: improved democratic performance (a control variable for Serbia and Montenegro considering the two countries are more or less on the same track), attitudes and rhetoric of local politicians (that influence the formation of the public opinion), and country-specific conditionality imposed by the EU (focus on additional conditions may diminish the perceived importance of the reforms already accomplished as part of the EU accession, creating the feeling that these reforms are of secondary importance).

It will be suggested that, in order to ensure long-lasting Euro-enthusiasm, the EU needs to change its approach towards clearer communication of the accession requirements to the citizens of the acceding countries. As will be shown in the specific case of EU conditionality for Serbia, it is its rhetorical manipulation by the local politicians that led to a decrease of Euro-enthusiasm in the country, despite the reforms accomplished with the EU assistance.

Whereas the EU progress reports use less measurable, non-quantitative, and more bureaucratic language to evaluate progress, Freedom House's "Nations in Transit" assesses democratic scope in a quantitative manner through overseeing the quality of development in several areas: electoral process, civil society, independent media, national and local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption. Therefore, Freedom House reports will be used to collect data on the democratic scope of the two countries considered. The rhetoric of local politicians will be analyzed through speeches, statements, and actions of politicians as communicated in the media. Country-specific conditions (and the way they are perceived) will be described through EU documents and media reports. Finally, Euro-enthusiasm will be measured through analyzing the results of public opinion surveys regarding the EU and related questions.

2. The Euro-Integrative Processes in Serbia and Montenegro

In this part, the paper will examine the changes that have occurred in the two countries since they have begun their accession process. It will outline what kind of improvements in the democratic capacities have happened with the guidance of the EU, how the rhetoric of local politicians has been developing (or not developing) in a way that supports the EU, whether the EU has issued special requirements for the countries, and how those requirements have been perceived by the citizens of those states.

2.1 Relations with the EU

In 2006, at the time when Montenegro declared its independence, the Euro-integrative processes of the two countries were being managed together, as a single state of Serbia and Montenegro. Officially, the process of approximation to the EU, the so-called Stabilization and Association Process, started after the fall of Milosevic in 2000 and the coming to power of pro-democratic leaders in the country. In 2001, a Joint Consultative Task Force was established in order to examine certain areas of the social and economic life of the country and pave the way for the adoption of EU standards (EU Integration Office, Serbia).

Following further strengthening of, the EU's position on the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries, as declared in June of 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit, a new form of cooperation was introduced – the Enhanced Permanent Dialogue (EPD), which was meant to ensure the positive assessment of the feasibility study on the membership prospects. Within the EPD, several meetings took place with the aim of deepening country cooperation with the EU until the negotiations for the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) started. During these meetings, representatives of both sides discussed reforms and changes on issues such as the “Constitutional Charter when it came to furthering international relations, efficient functioning of institutions and the rule of law. Special recommendations were formulated in the area of justice and home affairs, intellectual and industrial property, competition rights and other sector policies” (Ibid.). In 2005, negotiations for the SAA started for the state union, but were unfortunately suspended due to non-compliance with the ICTY (EU Delegation, Serbia). The two countries went their separate ways after the declaration of independence of Montenegro in May 2006.

After Serbia (as an independent state) committed itself to cooperating with the ICTY and adopted all the necessary constitutional reforms, negotiations for the SAA were re-opened in June 2007, initialed in November

2007, and concluded in May 2008 (EU Integration Office, R. Serbia). Serbia's membership application was submitted in December 2009 (Lowen). However, the country has still not been granted candidacy status. As the latest development, Serbia answered the Legislative questionnaire containing approximately 2,500 questions, and is waiting for a positive response to its candidacy in the March this year (Ansamed) (EU Delegation, Serbia).

Montenegro's process has been smoother after the declaration of independence. The SAA negotiations were initiated in March 2007, and the Agreement was signed in October that same year. After having answered the Questionnaire in December 2009, the country was granted candidate status one year later, and the EC recommended a start of negotiations in October 2011 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Montenegro).

2.2 The Improvement of Democratic Capacities

Freedom House has observed a steady, though not constant, improvement of the democratic capacities of both countries since the EU has proclaimed their European perspective. In areas such as electoral process, civil society, independent media, national and local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption, Freedom House has measured their advancement in the form of an average democracy score. Considering that the Euro-integrative processes are mostly associated with the improvement of democratic capacities of the country (its adaptation to the EU standards of governance, rule of law, etc.) the Freedom House Nations in Transit indexes have been chosen for the purpose of this analysis, not only because they are measurable and comparable over time and between states, but also because it will be easier to trace their influence in relation to Euro-enthusiasm.

On a scale from 1 (highest – consolidated democracy) to 7 (lowest – non-democracy) Serbia has gone from a score of 5.04 in 2001 to that of 3.64 in 2011 (Pesek & Nikolajevic, p. 455). There has been an overall growth in its democracy score, the occasional periods with no improvement (in 2008 and 2009), intertwined with two 'democracy peaks' in 2007 (a score of 3.68 when Serbia got back on the European track and renewed its SAA negotiations) and 2011 (the current score of 3.64). Out of the individual areas of progress, as typical for the transitional countries of the region, corruption and judicial framework and independence remain the most troublesome areas, with the current score of 4.25 and 4.50 respectively, and the EU urges the country for yet stronger stance in the fight to remedy this (Barlovac, BalkanInsight, 05. 10. 2010). On the other hand, having

started with a 4.00 back in 2001, civil society now holds the best score of 2.25, following the passing of a new Law on Associations in 2009 and the strengthened cooperation between NGOs and the government.

Montenegro currently has a worse democracy score than Serbia – 3.82 (Uljarevic & Muk, p. 389), in line with the trend that progress since the independence has been slower than that of Serbia (Djuranovic, p. 380). In fact, the new score presents a slight decrease, following a constant of 3.79 in the last three years, since the signing of the SAA in 2008. As expected, corruption has the lowest score with 5.00 but, unlike Serbia, its second worst are national democratic governance and independent media with 4.25 (Uljanovic & Muk, p. 389). According to the 2010 Freedom House report, “even though Montenegro made progress in harmonizing legal regulations with EU standards, little joint progress was made by the government, the opposition, and the civic sector toward faster implementation and fulfillment of the conditions of good governance; thus, Montenegro’s national democratic governance rating remains at 4.25” (Djuranovic, p. 380). Like in Serbia, civil society has also scored best, though it has remained at a constant 2.75 in the last four years, due to the lack of understanding of the complementary roles of the government and the civil society (Ibid., p. 381).

If we take the presumption that the perception citizens have of the democratic performance of their country is identical to the score registered by Freedom House (bearing in mind that the reports are written by experts who observe, collect and analyze the perceptions of the public, the media and other relevant actors), it results from this analysis that the democratic performance of both states is not the factor that has determined the difference in the levels of Euro-enthusiasm of their citizens.

2.3 Political Attitudes and Rhetoric

Serbia’s progress with regards to democratization and Euro-integration after the fall of Milosevic was predominantly paved under the charismatic leadership of its first democracy-oriented prime minister, Zoran Djindjic, and his Democratic Party (DS). Realizing the historical momentum, [H]e insisted that Serbia turns the page – that it must show to its neighbors and the entire world that it did not support war crimes, the killing of civilians and ethnic cleansing. But his pro-reformist and Western ideas found many enemies who called him a foreign mercenary. Meanwhile his attempts to instill change were blocked by nationalists (Barlovac, *BalkanInsight*, 05. 10. 2010).

He played a very important role in the arrest of Milosevic, including his calls for war criminals Karadzic and Mladic to surrender to the ICTY.

However, it is exactly in his decision on coming to terms with the past that he parted ways with his partner in the anti-Milosevic political movement, the nationalist Vojislav Kostunica. Having been president of Serbia in 2000–2003 and prime-minister in 2004–2008, Kostunica opposed the handing over of Milosevic to The Hague and expressed criticism over the work of the tribunal, emphasizing that cooperation would be much easier if the alleged war criminals were given the chance to defend themselves without imprisonment during trials (B92, 30. 05. 2004). Finally, his permanent obsession with keeping Kosovo as a part of Serbia took over his political agenda:

He was the first to address the crowds of around 200,000 Serbs attending a massive protest against Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008, delivering an emotional speech: 'Kosovo – that's Serbia's first name.' Such rhetoric contributed to weakening of the country's already fragile economy with the dinar losing six per cent of its value in the first two months of 2008. (Barlovac, *BalkanInsight*, 05. 10. 2010)

At the presidential elections in 2008, after the breakup of the Serbia-Montenegro union, the country faced the most outright divide in terms of its European aspirations. At the faceoff between pro-European Boris Tadic of the Democratic Party and nationalist, pro-Russian Tomislav Nikolic of the Serbian Radical Party, Serbia saw its largest voter turnout since 2000. Very closely monitored by the EU; these elections were seen as the referendum on the nation's future. While Tadic was believed to be the one able to take the country on the right path towards Europe, his rhetoric on Kosovo did not differ from that of his counterpart Nikolic (BBC News, 04. 02. 2008). Whereas Tadic would say: "The only possible policies are to support both strategic goals: EU membership and the preservation of Kosovo," (B92, 10. 01. 2008) the response of Nikolic would be: "My message to the EU is to stop blackmailing Serbia and stop putting impossible conditions, that we are ready to be within the EU, but there are some conditions we cannot fulfill" (BBC News, 04. 02. 2008). What can be seen from this context is that the most relevant Serbian politicians, no matter how supportive of EU membership, were still ready to leave open questions such as Kosovo, which might endanger their relations with EU member states sympathetic to the Kosovo independence.

On the other side, Tadic's decision to comply with the demands of the ICTY, and the arrest of Karadzic in 2008 and Mladic and Hadzic in 2011 definitely eased the cooperation with the EU (EU Delegation, Serbia). Some issues that impeded integration have been resolved: the capture of Mladic and Hadzic (an issue on the basis of which the Netherlands have

strongly opposed the advancement of EU cooperation with Serbia) but others remain at large - Kosovo in particular (for which the EU has not had a unified policy). Kostunica saw the signing of the SAA as treason and a clear sign that the EU wants the country to give up Kosovo, because of the plans of replacing the UMNİK international peacekeeping program with that of the EU (B92, 27. 01. 2008). "Those who signed the stabilization and Association Agreement [SAA] are fully responsible for it and they signed it in their own names and never in the name of Serbia," Kostunica said in an interview (Deutsche Welle, 30. 04. 2008). Currently, the significantly weakened Radicals have increased their anti-European sentiments, requesting that the EU clearly states whether it wants Serbia with, or without Kosovo within its neighbors. "The European Union has alternative, it is not a partner of Serbia, it is not a friend to Serbia," a party official said, adding how "Russian banks grant loans at three percent interest rate, while German banks charge six" (B92, 29. 07. 2010). Tadic himself maintains the perspective that Serbia will not change its policy towards Kosovo as a condition for the EU (Basic-Savic, Deutsche Welle, 24. 01. 2010).

As Serbia is still struggling over these open issues and while its politicians have diverse opinions regarding the EU integration, the situation in Montenegro has been more or less clear, except the issues involving crime in politics. However, this paper observes the Euro-aspirations of the country's relevant politicians. From the independence in 2006, there has been a clear consensus among the Montenegrin political spectrum on their EU bids. In an enthusiastic statement after the independence referendum, prime-minister Milo Djukanovic expressed his optimism: "I am convinced Montenegro could be the next country from this region to join the European Union, after Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia, which are further along the process." (Radio Free Europe, 23.05. 2011)

In a move risky for the good relations with the country's historical partner Serbia, Montenegro recognized Kosovo's independence several months after the unilateral declaration in 2008 (New York Times, 09. 10. 2008). In spite of the opposition from pro-Serbian politicians, the direction of the debate has not been putting into question the EU integrations perspective, but rather their relations with Serbia (B92, 09. 10. 2008). As the new prime-minister Igor Luksic stepped into power, he said that "the government's priority under his leadership would be to 'implement the measures necessary for Montenegro to open accession talks with the European Union ... and to stay on the course of structural reforms that will improve Montenegro's healthcare, education and social welfare'" (Komnenic, Reuters, 21. 12. 2010).

This analysis has shown that the rhetoric of politicians has had a great influence on the support of the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro for the EU accession process. The main difference is obviously the lack of unified attitude in Serbia, unlike Montenegro. Although the most relevant Serbian politicians proclaim their European aspirations, there have been many ‘ifs’ regarding Kosovo. This unclear situation has influenced public opinion and led to a decrease of the level of citizen Euro-enthusiasm.

2.4 Country-Specific Requirements of the EU

Beside the rhetoric used by politicians, another element differentiates the accession process of Serbia and Montenegro (and therefore influences the Euro-enthusiasm of their citizens). These are the specific requirements set forth by the EU. Both countries have to respect the Copenhagen criteria, but Serbia alone has had to deal with (and find a solution for) two sensible issues: Kosovo and cooperation with the ICTY.

Kosovo is very relevant for the debate on Euro-enthusiasm specifically because of the way it has been ‘utilized’ on the local political scene. As the EU has not reached a common policy on the recognition of Kosovo, it has not been adamant in requesting that Serbia recognize its independence. As previously mentioned, neither the pro-European nor the nationalist leaders are ready to give up on Kosovo yet, even though the topic has been abused by the nationalists, who have in this way shaped the public opinion against cooperation with the EU. In particular, at the signing of the SAA, Kostunica fervently opposed one of the conditions set by the EU, the acceptance of its greater involvement in the peacekeeping and stabilization process in the contested ‘state,’ seeing it as a “first step toward an imposed secession of the province” (Kosovo Compromise, 04. 01. 2008). In response, officials from EU member states reiterated that the recognition of Kosovo was not a membership condition for Serbia: “Regarding Kosovo, no one is asking Serbia to recognize its independence. Serbia must find a way, on its own, to face the fact that Kosovo has been recognized by 22 EU member-states,” the UK Ambassador to Serbia stated in 2009 (BalkanInsight, 13. 02. 2009). Nevertheless, the EU has requested that Serbia “take a constructive stance” on the issue of Kosovo, whatever this really means.

On the contrary, cooperation with the ICTY (which included the apprehension of war criminals) has definitely been a political condition necessary for Serbia, with the Netherlands being the strongest opponent to Serbian integrative processes. As the talks on signing the SAA were suspended due to the non-compliance with the ICTY, the EU expressed interest in resuming talks “provided that [Serbia] shows clear commitment

and takes concrete and effective action for full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)” (EurActiv, 13. 02. 2007). After the arrest of Karadzic, Serbia hoped that the EU would stop setting new conditions and take a weaker and more understanding stance with regards to Mladic and Hadzic (The Peninsula, 07. 11. 2008). Before the arrests of the latter two, when Serbia was expecting to gain candidate status, following political negotiations between the Netherlands and the other member states, the EU reached a consensus in overlooking Serbia’s progress: “They decided that at every step in the accession process, all 27 states must be convinced that Serbia is cooperating to the full with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)” (Government of the Netherlands).

Again, Montenegro has not faced political criteria in its integration process, as Serbia has. After its Constitutional consolidation since the declaration of independence, it has been on the path of fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and making the necessary reforms on its own, though not always at a satisfactory pace. The greatest challenge and worry of the EU officials seems to be the fight against crime and corruption in the country (BalkanInsight, 01. 12. 2008).

This section has shown the main differences between the two countries in their accession process. Whereas both show improvements in the democratic processes, the Serbian process is impeded by the inconsistent political rhetoric of its politicians regarding the specific conditions that the country faces. The next chapter continues to explore how these differences influenced the Euro-enthusiasm of the citizens of the two countries.

3. The Issue of Euro-Enthusiasm

This section will first take a look at some public opinion data, in order to depict the overall level of public support for EU membership in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as review other specific questions relevant to Euro-enthusiasm. Furthermore, it will analyze what this means for the future of the countries, both in their advanced processes of Euro-integration, but also as EU member states.

3.1 Public Opinion on the EU

Starting with a survey from 2002, it can be seen that the level of trust of Serbian citizens in the EU at that time was 31% (SEEDS). Two years later, that number had increased to 48% (Nikolic & Ivanov). Whereas the level of trust in the EU has increased in the period that followed as well,

fewer and fewer citizens were giving a positive answer to the question of whether they considered Serbia's membership in the EU as a good thing. Declining from 61% in 2006, to 58% in 2008, 50% in 2009, and 44% in 2010 according to the latest studies conducted by Gallup, the dwindling number of citizens who think that EU membership is a good thing is a clear indicator that something has been going wrong with the way the political situation and events shaped the public's attitudes. Furthermore, the number of citizens who feel that membership is a bad thing has risen from 10% in 2006 to 17% in 2010 (Gallup, p. 22).

Other polls have shown answers to other interesting questions related to Euro-enthusiasm. A poll from 2007, at the time of the suspended SAA talks, the majority of Serbian citizens (49%) were of the opinion that the issue obstructing their country's integration to the EU is the European policy of constant conditionality and blackmailing towards Serbia, much more than the incompetence of the local leadership or their failure to fulfill international obligations (EU Integration Office, Serbia). The percentages have slightly varied since then, but conditionality has consistently remained constantly the most favored answer, with the number of citizens of this opinion being identical in 2010. As of 2010, there were also still around 40% Serbian citizens who felt that Mladic was a hero, despite the 19% who felt he was a war criminal (Radio Sarajevo, 26. 10. 2010). Furthermore, in 2007, 77% of citizens did not support cooperation with the ICTY, even if this meant a stop to the integration process, and the majority (45%) believed that the EU is conditioning them to give up Kosovo (EU Integration Office, Serbia).

Even a moderate level of trust in the ICTY was as low as 8% in 2002 (SEEDS). In 2006, 85% of the citizens of Serbia answered that the ICTY needs to be abolished by 2010, because it degraded Serbs (BalkanYum, 15. 01. 2007). 72 % of the respondents had overall negative attitudes towards the ICTY, which was mostly viewed as unfair, partial and biased, prosecuting only Serbs, in a poll conducted in 2009 (OSCE Mission to Serbia).

In Montenegro, the level of trust in the EU was higher than in Serbia in 2002 – 38% (SEEDS) and in 2004 – 51% (Nikolic & Ivanov). Without the negative influence exercised by issues like Kosovo or the ICTY, Euro-enthusiasm has had an even greater overall increase. Aside from a fall in 2008, the positive views of the EU have ranged from 64% in 2006 to 73% in 2010. The percentage of citizens who viewed EU membership as a negative has decreased from 7% in 2006 to 4% in 2010 (Gallup, p. 22).

3.2 Analyzing Euro-Enthusiasm

This analysis of the developments in the two countries and the changes in public opinion towards the EU sets the basis for the discussion of how several factors can influence public opinion.

In 2002, trust in the EU was more or less equal and on the rise as the two governments turned towards the Euro-integrative processes. With the improvement of the democratic capacities of the two societies, as evaluated by the Balkan Monitor, Euro-enthusiasm has increased, mainly because Euro-integration was associated, among other factors mentioned in the first chapter, with the improvements of the scope of democracy. The two countries started differing in 2006, after they split and became separate states. A country specific requirement for Serbia- the compliance with the ICTY - has caused a difference in the level of Euro-enthusiasm of the citizens of the two countries. This requirement was absent, or it was no longer an issue in Montenegro, but has remained a crucial obstacle to a country whose population still largely sees Mladic as a hero and the ICTY as anti-Serbian, while at the same time feeling that the EU considers the democratic reforms achieved as insignificant unless other political conditions are met. The analysis shows this factor to have been somewhat influential into the decreasing Euro-enthusiasm in Serbia.

This factor has been strengthened by the rhetoric of politicians. Whereas Tadic has abided to cooperate in the capture of Mladic and Hadzic, but not to give away Kosovo, the rhetoric of the nationalists such as Kostunica and the radicals who have constantly underlined that Kosovo needs to be independent in order for Serbia to become a member of the EU has caused the decline of public support for EU membership.

Even though EU officials have stated at several occasions that Kosovo is not a condition, they have obviously not been successful enough against the propaganda of the nationalists in convincing the public. Pro-democratic forces, on the other hand, have not stepped up to the long-term goals set for Serbia and seem not to have accepted the fact that 'Kosovo has been lost'. In other words, instead of demonstrating (through the achievement of reforms) that Kosovo is not a condition for EU membership, the 'presumed' pro-European political leadership seems to be more comfortable in a situation where the public feels that Kosovo is a condition, while their failure to advance the economy, for example, remains backstage.

In this chapter, the relevant factors have been tied together. Through the overview of surveys, it was shown how Euro-enthusiasm has decreased in Serbia and increased in Montenegro. Furthermore, it was shown how these statistics correlate with the influence of domestic rhetoric and EU

conditions, thus explaining the varying attitudes among Serbian citizens in regards to EU integrations. In contrast, the lack of such rhetoric and conditionality in Montenegro isolated the improvement of democratic capacities as the most important factor for the increased Euro-enthusiasm of its citizens.

4. Conclusion

This paper has compared Serbia and Montenegro with regards to the factors that have influenced the Euro-enthusiasm of their citizens. Regarding the two states as different cases, three independent variables have been chosen: improvement of democratic capacities, attitudes and rhetoric of local politicians and country-specific conditions for EU accession, and it was assessed how these can have an influence on the dependent variable: public attitudes towards the EU.

In the first section, some crucial theoretical frameworks regarding democratization and EU integration were outlined. Also, some of the factors that influence the attitudes of citizens towards the EU were identified. Additionally, the importance of positive attitudes for the long-term functioning of the EU and its individual member states was emphasized.

In the second section, the paper assessed the factors that can influence Euro-enthusiasm. The findings indicated that both countries show more or less equal progress in the improvement of democratic capacities, but differ in the level of rhetoric of politicians and EU demands. Whereas Montenegro does not have relevant local politicians who have a problem with the EU or the conditions set by the EU, in Serbia, the issues of cooperation with the ICTY and the issue of Kosovo have been topics that have impeded the fast progress towards accession.

In the final section, the increasing Euro-enthusiasm in Montenegro, and the decreasing one in Serbia were presented. Furthermore, the factors outlined in the second chapter were compared with these new findings for both states, and it was shown what influence they have had on the public attitudes.

The conclusion is that the outlined hypothesis has been supported by the evidence presented: whereas improved democratic scope should cause stable Euro-enthusiasm among citizens, negative rhetoric of politicians towards the EU and negative attitudes towards country-specific requirements of the EU cause a decrease in the public support for EU membership.

Abstract

This study compares the relations of Serbia and Montenegro to the EU, with specific regard to their citizens' support for EU membership. The two countries differ in terms of the Euro-enthusiasm of their citizens: while support for EU membership has been decreasing in Serbia, it is quite the contrary in Montenegro. Euro-enthusiasm is analyzed through three factors that influence it: democratic scope (examined through several indicators such as governance, corruption, civil society, etc.), rhetoric and attitudes of local politicians, and the influence of country-specific requirements of the EU. The study argues that, while both countries show improvement in democratic capacities as part of their approximation processes, it is country-specific conditions coming from the EU and local politicians' interpretation of and reaction to these that shape public attitudes. Thus, it shows that issues such as cooperation with the ICTY and the independence of Kosovo cause a decline in positive attitudes of Serbian citizens towards the EU.

Резиме

Оваа студија ги споредува односите на Србија и на Црна Гора кон ЕУ, со посебен акцент на поддршката од нивните граѓаните за членство во ЕУ. Двете држави се разликуваат во однос на евро-ентузијазмот на нивните граѓани: додека поддршката за членство во ЕУ се намалува во Србија, ситуацијата е спротивна во Црна Гора. Евро-ентузијазмот е анализиран преку три фактори што влијаат на него: обемот на развиеност на демократијата (испитан преку неколку показатели како управување, корупција, цивилно општество итн.), реториката и ставовите на локалните политичари, и влијанието на барањата специфични за државата од страна на ЕУ. Студијата покажува дека, иако двете држави покажуваат напредок во демократските капацитети како дел од нивните процеси за приближување, условите специфични за државата што се наметнати од ЕУ и интерпретацијата и реакцијата на истите од локалните политичари ги оформуваат ставовите на јавноста. Како резултат на ова, студијата покажува дека прашања како соработката со Меѓународниот кривичен суд во Хаг и независноста на Косово предизвикуваат намалување на позитивните ставови на српските граѓани кон ЕУ.

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