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EU ENLARGEMENT AND THE PUBLIC OPINION ON THE CZECH REPUBLIC: AN EXPLANATORY ANALYSIS

P. Dostál: *EU enlargement and the public opinion on the Czech Republic: an explanatory analysis*. – Geografie – Sborník ČGS, 107, 2, pp. 121 – 138 (2002). The article provides an analysis of the public opinion in EU countries on the anticipated Czech membership. Public opinion and mass interest articulations are central to studies on European integration. Macro-geographical structure of the EU and its enlarged periphery of associated countries is examined in order to derive basic explanatory assumptions. The differentiation in the support for the Czech membership is explained with the help of structural variables and public opinion variables. Statistical analysis (LISREL model) shows the importance of post-materialist value orientation of the EU populations for their support given to the enlargement with the Czech Republic. The public in rich and large countries and in French-speaking parts of the EU tends to give less support for the Czech accession indicating that a strong integrative sense of a larger European community still has to emerge.

KEY WORDS: European Union enlargement – public opinion – Czech Republic.

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1. Introduction

For Europeans and also for many people from other parts of the world the collapse of the geopolitical divide of the Iron Curtain at the end of the 1980s brought a fundamental change of historical importance. Perhaps the most important change since the end of the Second World War. As an inevitable consequence of this collapse, there started complex processes of redrawing the map of Europe thereby changing the basic geopolitical and geo-economic organisation of the continent structured in a historical core of the European Union, its old and new semi-peripheries and, importantly, its periphery that has included since the fall of the Iron Curtain a large number of old, new or restored post-communist countries. Many people were surprised by the rapidity and easiness with which this geopolitical and developmental redrawing of the map of Europe took place (see also Ash 1993; Dostál, Hampl 1996).

By the end of the 1990s, anticipated eastern enlargement of the European Union has become critical for the future of European integration (Preston 1997; Mayhew 1998). In the beginning of the 1990s the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (EU) was signed by the twelve member governments of the European Communities. The largely Liberal Institutional view of Maastricht was that the Treaty would be an important step towards an international society in Western Europe strengthening European integration. The post-war four decades long period of building an international society only

in the North-West and the South-West of Europe and in Greece seemingly ended. It appeared that also for the numerous countries in East-Central Europe and Eastern Europe, a new Article 49 of the EU Treaty (Amsterdam 1997) on enlargement stipulated that "Any European state may apply to become a Member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by absolute majority of its component members". However, the Article 49 also demands that an applicant country must respect principles specified in Article 6 which stipulates that "the Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law". Importantly, the EU Treaty does not include any geographical definition of Europe. In consequence, this and the basic stipulations of the Treaty make clear that the prospect of EU membership continues to offer the important incentive to the Central and Eastern Europeans to persevere with western-style political and economic transformation.

Obviously, the far-reaching fragmentation of the map of East Central and Eastern Europe has complicated the evolution of European unifying processes. However, with Emerson (1997), Preston (1997) and many other observers of current European integration, one has to recognize that only the EU is a key institutional vehicle able to make the dynamics of European integration persistent and strong. It seems that the basic geopolitical and geo-economic organisation of the continent in the historical core of the EU, its old and new semi-peripheries and its periphery is undergoing significant changes. Most of the post-communist countries officially aspire since mid-1990s EU membership (EC 2000). Such membership requires qualitative regime adaptations and the establishment of the Western-styled institutional arrangements and compatibility with Western political and economic standards of democracy and market economy (cf. Dostál 1998). The Copenhagen European Council meeting of June 1993 established three general criteria of the EU for evaluation of accession candidates (i) stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for protection of minorities, (ii) existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU, and (iii) ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (EC 2000, 9-10; Mayhew 1998).

Importantly, the official criteria imply that in the potential accession countries far-reaching adaptations of institutions, organisational and individual behaviour have to take place. In brief, the adaptation processes have to stretch much further and affect whole societies and economies than only invoke necessary adaptations of the political and economic elites in the post-communist countries concerned. It is therefore important to know whether such accompanying behavioural and public opinion adaptations contribute significantly to current unifying processes of European integration. Accordingly, the central argument in this paper is that in the line with the classical claim of Deutsch et al. (1957), the current process of European integration has to be understood as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of peaceful change" (1957, 5). The stress on the sense of community is particularly important, because it is "a matter of mutual

sympathies and loyalty; of 'we-feeling', trust, and mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests; of mutually successful predictions of behaviour, and of co-operative actions in accordance with it" (1957, 36). Hence, this classical claim makes clear that variables on geopolitical sentiment and identity describing political opinions and mass interest articulations are central to studies on European integration, because common identity and sense of community have to be acknowledged also at the beginning of the third millennium as essential features of political integration (see also Sinnott, 1995). In other words, analyses concerned with processes of integration have to be focused on the question (i) whether current transnational integrative efforts of the political elites are supported by some sense of European community in the public opinion of the EU countries and in the candidate countries, and whether (ii) such a sense of belonging to an European community is spreading across the former divide of the Iron Curtain, and more specifically, whether (iii) value-orientation of the public opinion in the Czech Republic is westward orientated to the integration into the EU.

Accordingly, one way of assessing the extent to which the post-Cold War fragmentation of Europe is being surmounted and the European integration process tends to proceed, is to focus the analytic effort on explanation of public opinions in the fifteen member states of the EU about anticipated new enlargement of the EU towards the set of twelve accession countries (ten post-communist states from the former Soviet-dominated geopolitical orbit and Mediterranean Cyprus and Malta). Therefore, this paper attempts to confront the western and the eastern public opinions on the anticipated EU enlargement with respect to the anticipated membership of the Czech Republic. The structure of the paper is as follows. The second section focuses on the basic pattern of macro-geographical structure of the EU and its enlarged periphery of the current thirteen associated countries. The third section seeks to indicate the character of changing public opinion of the Czech electorate on the anticipated EU membership. The fourth section is concerned with statistical explanation of differences in support for the Czech accession in the EU in the public opinion in the set of fifteen EU countries. Finally, the concluding section draws major conclusions resulting from the analytic explanatory effort and also provides a reflection on current unifying and fragmenting tendencies in the post-Cold War Europe.

2. EU historical core, semi-peripheries and peripheries

The geopolitical divide of Europe that persisted for more than four decades after the Second World War was artificial. It did not correspond to any macro-regional division of politics, culture and religion, and it also made no sense in terms of the geography of diffusion of modernisation during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (see Pollard 1981). In terms of a West-East gradient of modernisation (largely industrialisation), the Czech Lands (i.e. the current Czech Republic) certainly belonged to the western and most industrialised regions of the continent in that historical period. The modernisation process integrated the territory of the Czech Republic into the core area of industrial activities of western continental Europe. Therefore, from this general geopolitical and geo-economic viewpoint, one can see the current western-style institutional reforms and behavioural

adaptation of citizens in the Czech Republic as resulting from a “coming back” on the development trajectory of “open” societal systems with a corresponding reintroduction of competitive mechanisms and motivations of plurality of actors and interest groups in political and economic subsystems. In other words, it can be claimed that the current western-style behavioural adaptations and changing values orientations taking place in the Czech Republic must be seen as qualitative subjective processes of “westward orientation” (see also Dostál, Markuse 2001).

The EU is the major geopolitical and geo-economic compact of the continent. Moreover, in terms of complexity of political and economic integration the EU cannot be compared with another inter-state compact in the world. Despite this, the fundamental political and economic structure of the set of 15 EU countries and 13 candidate countries can be differentiated in accordance with two different criteria. First, there is the distinction in accordance with the date of EU membership and EU association of the candidate countries concerned. Second, there is the gross domestic product per capita in 2000 dimension to be used in the basic groupings of 28 countries. The GDP is usually a measure of the value at market prices of goods and services over a year. The GDP measure is in real terms and is expressed in purchasing power standards in order to make comparisons more meaningful by excluding effect of higher price levels in the EU and some candidate countries such as Cyprus or Slovenia.

The first (time) dimension distinguishes between the six countries (France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) that moved the supra-national entity called today the EU from the Treaty of Paris (the European Coal and Steel Community) of 1951 to the Treaties of Rome (the European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy) of 1957, and negotiated later enlargements in order to prepare accession of other (new) members (Preston 1997; Mayhew 1998). The original six members form the first grouping, i.e. the historical core of the European Community and were joined by the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland in a first wave of enlargement in 1973. The three countries of the 1973 enlargement have today a similar level of economic performance (GDP per capita in 2000) as the historical core of the EU. This suggests that these early candidate countries have profited in long term from their integration into the EU geo-economic and geopolitical compact. It appears that the 1973 enlargement group forms currently the second grouping, i.e. an old outer group of the historical core. Then came Greece in 1981 and in 1986 Spain and Portugal. This second enlargement is often called the Mediterranean wave and in terms of the economic performance these three members still form the third grouping, i.e. a periphery of the current EU. Most recently Austria, Sweden and Finland came in 1995 and this enlargement can be called the wave of EFTA (European Free Trade Association). These countries form today the fourth grouping, i.e. a new outer core of the EU. This last enlargement took place after the entity of European Community became European Union in November 1993 as a result of Maastricht Treaty of 1991. The time axis of EU membership can be further extended by the dates of EU association of candidate countries. The association with the EU has materialised in the form of Europe Association Agreements (EAA). During the period December 1991 – June 1996 there were signed EAAs of the EU with ten post-communist countries, and in 1994-1998 the EAAs came into force (EC 2000). The EAAs cover geo-economic issues of trade, cooperation areas including industry, customs, transports, and

environment. The agreements also cover geopolitical issues of political dialog, legal approximation and some security areas. Importantly, they aim to establish in short term a free-trade area between the EU and the associated country on the basis of reciprocity, but applied in an asymmetric way, there is more rapid liberalisation on the EU side than on the side of associated country. However, the first country to have an EAA was Turkey that signed an association agreement already in 1963 and applied for full EU membership in 1987. Due to the fall of the Iron Curtain and unsatisfactory records on political rights and civil liberties Turkey was not allowed to open accession negotiations, but to consolidate its custom union with the EU (Preston 1997, 213-219). This in contrast to Malta and Cyprus that signed EAAs in 1971 and 1973 and are allowed to negotiate on their EU memberships (Mayhew 1998, 95-99). These countries form in terms of their GDP per capita the fifth grouping, i.e. a periphery of old associated countries.

The ten post-communist countries have signed their EAAs in 1991-1996 and came into force 1994-1998. Once geopolitical conditions allowed, the post-communist countries were granted forms of association leading to free trade, though with some important limitations for agricultural and so-called sensitive products. Interestingly, Harrison (1995) suggests that there appears a close correlation between branches of sensitive sectors and areas of high subsidy within the EU. Moreover, the Copenhagen criteria mentioned above appear to be a clear restatement of the inviolability of the *aquis communitaire*, i.e. of full acceptance of the entire EU legislation and norms by accession countries. There are two groups of newly associated post-communist countries. On the one hand, there is the sixth grouping of so-called Luxembourg group of post-communist countries including Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Estonia. The group includes candidate countries with which the European Council in Luxembourg endorsed in December 1997 European Commission recommendations to open negotiations. In long-term perspective, one can anticipate that this group of countries will form a semi-periphery of the EU. This group of five post-communist candidate countries tends to show better institutional transformation and economic performance than the other newly associated countries (Dostál 1998; EC 2000). Other post-communist candidate countries seemingly have to anticipate significantly slower integration process and from a long-term viewpoint they will possibly form the seventh grouping, i.e. a "genuine" periphery of the future enlarged EU.

This basic differentiation of the set of 28 countries into seven groupings of countries allows the following assumptions that can be further used in an explanatory analysis of the public opinion on the eastern enlargement and on the EU accession of the Czech Republic. First, the historical core and the rich old and new outer cores of the current EU have to anticipate larger contributions to the EU budget when the newly associated countries will become members. Largely, one can assume that the countries forming the historical core will become all contributors to the EU budget and much less receipts or at least below-average receipts (Preston, 1997). Second, they have to anticipate a restructuring of current Common Agricultural Policy. This will have significant impact on the long-time established interest of agricultural sector especially in the countries of the historical core. Third, the countries in the EU periphery must expect a restructuring of existing Structural and Cohesion Funds. The impact of the Iberian enlargement implied an important structural spending (Baldwin et al. 1997). It can be expected that these

members will demand special budget allocations in return for accepting the financial support for the new members. Fourth, under EU rules, small countries are accorded far more votes per citizen than the larger ones. Clearly, eastern enlargement will bring pressures to change the EU rules, and not surprisingly, this will lead to reorientations in budget priorities and uncertainty about well-established financial distributions between countries, sectors and regions. The public opinion in the large countries can be concerned about overall effectiveness if "micro-states" will have to assume the same level of EU responsibilities as large states. Other concerns focus on the power of blocking coalitions of small states to frustrate ambitions of the larger ones. Whichever assumption will be correct, the anticipated eastern enlargement will inevitably change budgetary interests of the four basic groupings of the current EU member countries. New and low economic performance eastern entrants will be inclined to use their power as members to boost EU structural spending and try to change eligibility criteria. There is no reason to assume that the new entrants would be different from those of the Mediterranean enlargement. Finally, one may point out to fears in border regions of EU countries having as neighbours the candidate countries.

3. Changing public opinion on the Czech membership

It is obvious that across Central and Eastern Europe current motivations to join the EU are based on what the EU represents in terms of politics, economy, geographical location and also security. The EU is seen as successful post-war geopolitical and geo-economic compact that has facilitated integration in western Europe. The EU is also seen as a main source of trade, investment and aid. The much higher living standards in most of the EU countries than in the Czech Republic have led to expectations that association with and later accession into the EU will bring similar benefits. These considerations seem to combine in drawing the public opinion towards the magnet of the EU membership.

The realisation of the EU association agreement and the January 1996 official submission of the Czech application for the EU membership clearly shows the willingness of the Czech political elite to enter the EU. The application for membership is an autonomous decision for the country concerned. It is based on subjective assessments of the political elite of other possible options for geopolitical and geo-economic integration of the country. However, view and assessments among both political actors and the general public about the EU membership and its different implications can importantly differ. It is possible to discern emerging attitudes to issues that will be implied in the anticipated EU membership. On the one hand, it involves expectation concerned with necessary adjustments and adaptations that result from the membership. On the other hand, it also involves assessing challenges and opportunities. Moreover, there has been in the Czech Republic little discussion of the pros and cons of different elements of the rights and obligations of the membership. Until the economic downturn in summer 1997 there was considerable confidence in the Czech public opinion about getting in the EU. Understandably, there is some concern about the position of small countries within the EU and similarly there is wariness about steps towards political union in a country that recently abolished an unsatisfactory federal relationship with Slovakia.

Tab. 1 – Czech public opinion on the Czech membership in the EU (voting in a referendum)

Answers	08/96	04/97	04/99	09/99	05/00	10/00	03/01	05/01
Yes EU	46	50	46	44	42	48	45	40
No EU	41	34	40	39	42	37	37	38
Undecided	13	16	14	17	16	15	18	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: STEM, Trendy 1996 – 2001. Prague 2001

The public opinion is important in establishing necessary legitimacy of the anticipated membership. In particular, when in the Czech Republic a referendum will be held on membership. Table 1 clearly indicates that the public support for the EU membership is now lower than in the early years of the political and economic transformation. At the most general level of whether or not the electorate would support the EU accession of the Czech Republic in a referendum the public opinion shows a decreasing support from a maximum of 50 % in 1997 to a significantly lower level of 40 % in 2001. The share of those who would vote against EU membership is stable, but considerable. One may draw the conclusion that those who supported membership tend to shift in the category of undecided voters. The Czech public opinion on EU accession seems to reflect current long and difficult negotiations on some basic elements of the EU membership. It seems that in particular anticipated constraints on one of the four basic freedoms of the EU integration, the free movement of labour force, has significantly contributed the declining support shown in Table 1. The poll findings must be seen in a context of quite constrained knowledge of the Czech public on the EU membership that still is experienced as quite remote. Despite of the general support for a westward orientation of the country (Dostál, Markuse 2001), the Czech public seems more doubtful about who benefits from the relations with the EU. Opinion polls have shown that the public believes that private business, educational system, government civil servants and armed forces will largely benefit as ties with the EU become closer. In contrast, low income groups, manual workers and employees of state enterprises believe that they will loose. Interestingly, over 50 % of the public indicate that farmers will loose from the EU accession (Central and Eastern Eurobarometer no. 7; STEM, 1999; 2001). This certainly illustrates the low level of specific knowledge concerning the Common Agricultural Policy and of other sectors of the EU policy-making and political orientation of the EU in general.

In a survey commissioned by the European Commission in October 2001 in all associated countries (see Applicant Countries Barometer 2001), however, it appeared that a majority (54 %) of the Czech electorate would support in a referendum the accession of the Czech Republic in the EU (see Tab. 2). The highest level of support for EU membership was indicated in Romania and Bulgaria. It is necessary to note that due to lagging political and economic transformation (see the Copenhagen criteria; EC, 2000) the two countries cannot anticipate membership in a first group of candidate countries that will access into the EU. The lowest shares of support is in Estonia and in Malta where according to the survey only 40 respectively 38 % of the electorate would give a positive vote in a referendum on the EU membership. It is also necessary to note that the sample from the Czech Republic shows in the Luxembourg group an average level of support for EU membership. Moreover,

Tab. 2 – Public opinion in 13 candidate countries on EU membership (voting in referendum – survey results in October 2001)

Country	For EU	Against EU	No answer	No participation
Romania	85	3	6	7
Bulgaria	80	4	9	6
Hungary	70	10	7	13
Turkey	68	20	8	4
Slovakia	66	11	9	15
Average13 cc	65	18	9	8
Cyprus	62	25	11	2
Slovenia	56	22	13	9
Czechia	54	18	13	15
Poland	54	26	9	11
Lithuania	50	20	15	15
Latvia	46	32	12	9
Malta	40	36	14	11
Estonia	38	27	14	21

Source: Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001. European Commission, Brussels.

the European Commission survey also indicates that 75 % of the Czech electorate that intended to participate in the referendum would vote for the membership (Applicant Countries Barometer 2001, p. 6).

One may perhaps draw the conclusion that given the general westward value-orientation of the Czech public the anticipated EU referendum will deliver a majority for the EU membership. In view of this optimistic assessment it is important to know whether the Czech membership is supported by the public opinion of the fifteen members states and tends to provide necessary legitimacy for anticipated Czech accession.

4. EU public opinion on the Czech membership

Public opinion data on European integration are provided by Eurobarometer surveys. The Eurobarometer surveys are conducted on behalf of the European Commission (see Reif, Inglehart, 1991). This programme started in 1970. In 1974, the Eurobarometer surveys were launched as a regular programme to monitor public opinion in the member countries. Representative national samples of the public are since then interviewed in the spring and autumn of each year. Standard sample size of the surveys is approximately 1,000 persons per country of the population aged 15 years and older. Over 16,000 inhabitants have been interviewed face-to-face in the 15 member states. Most of the Eurobarometer questions are driven by policy considerations rather than scientific concerns. Despite this, there are clear advantages attached to the Eurobarometer data. In short, analytical possibilities are large and one can trace in macro-level analyses differences in opinions of the citizenry in the fifteen EU countries on the question “should the Czech Republic join the European Union?” (Eurobarometer no. 54, 2001, B.78).

Figure 1 shows how support for the Czech membership varies between the EU member states by indicating the percentage of positive answers in

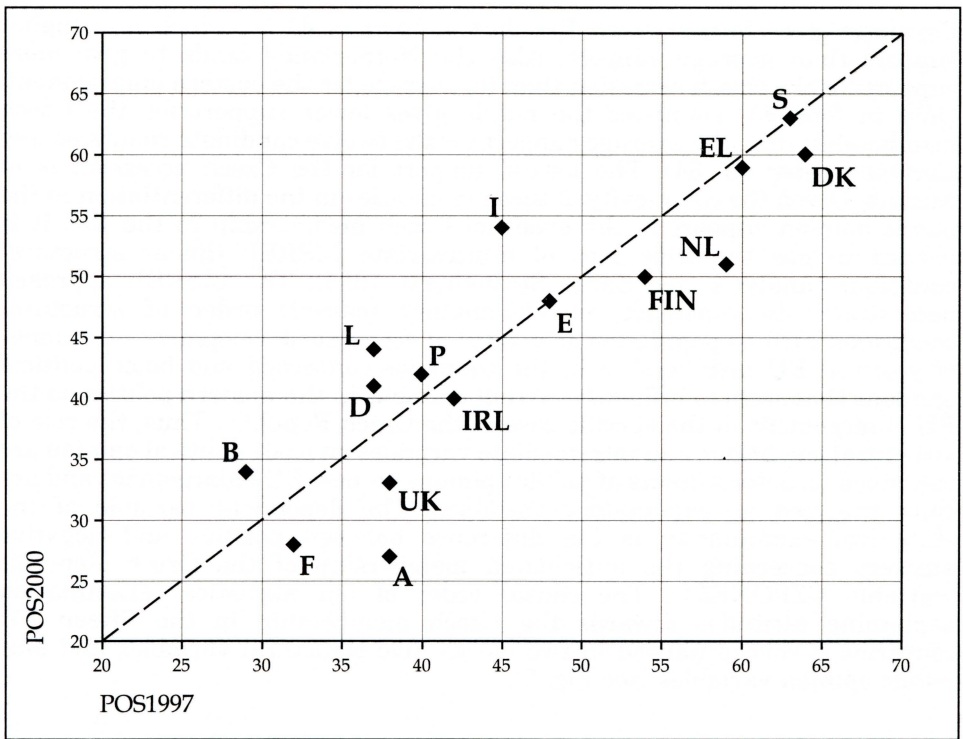


Fig. 1 – EU public opinion on the Czech membership in 1997 and 2000

autumn of 1997 and autumn of 2000. Closer comparison of the variation across the countries reveals some shifts in 1997-2000 in the support for the Czech membership. First, it appears that the strong support is expressed in the public opinion of Scandinavian members Sweden and Denmark and in Greece. A further conclusion to be drawn is that a high support (50 % or more) is given also by the public in Italy, the Netherlands and Finland. Second, it is significant to establish that the public opinion in France and Austria, but also in the UK and Belgium, is very low. However, also the support in Germany is low. One must note that there are important differences between West and East Germany. The public in West Germany gives support for the Czech membership of only 38 % (autumn 2000). The public opinion in East Germany indicates support of 53 %. It appears that the public opinion in the key countries of the EU forming so-called major axis of decision-making, France and Germany, tends to give only a low support for the Czech accession. This seems to be a serious handicap for necessary legitimacy of the anticipated membership. Third, it must be mentioned that Italy and the Netherlands, both members of the historical core of the EU, give clear support for the Czech accession. It is also important to point out that the electorates in Greece and also in Spain tend to support the Czech membership. This is significant, because the two countries belong to the EU periphery that is largely dependent on Structural and Cohesion Funds and the public in these countries could anticipate a redistribution of the funds following the accession. Fourth, it also appears that the support for the Czech accession has decreased a little since 1997. Importantly, one has to stress that the public in

Germany gives to the Czech Republic support of 41 %, which is a higher support than average support. Also the Netherlands tends to give more support for the Czech accession than its average for the eastern enlargement. Only in four EU countries the public gives lower support for the Czech membership than the average support for the twelve candidate countries (see Eurobarometer no. 54). The lowest support for the Czech accession is in Austria. Given the complexity of these tendencies in the differentiation in the public opinion support to the eventual Czech membership in the EU, it is needed to use the wide lens of multivariate LISREL (linear structural equations) analysis (see Saris, Stronkhorst 1984). The LISREL approach necessitates to construct an explanatory (causal) order of structural conditions such as population size, level of economic development or number of years of EU membership in the countries concerned and basic political opinions that seem to influence current opinions in the western polities on the EU enlargement in the specific case of the Czech Republic. Thus, the role of structural conditions and intermediate variables on basic political opinion are examined as determinants of public opinions on new EU enlargement and are thus analysed as explanatory variables. The dependent variable of the statistical examination is the difference between positive and negative answers concerning the anticipated membership of the Czech Republic (variable CZPONE54). The causal order of our statistical examination explaining attitudes towards the Czech membership in the fifteen EU countries is conceptualised in two blocks: five structural variables and four public opinion variables (see Fig. 2).

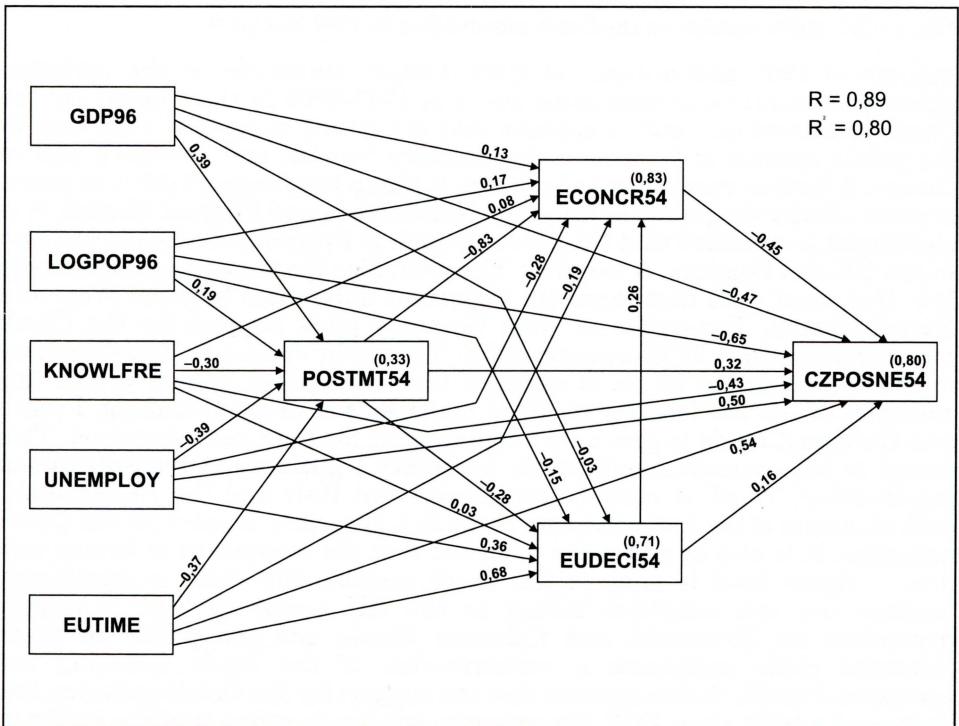


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4. 1. Structural variables

A first structural condition (variable GDP96) is the economic development level represented by GDP per capita in purchasing power parity in 1996 (Eurostat 1998, 45). Because the EU countries with high scores on this variable are the major net per capita contributors to the EU budget (Preston 1997), one can expect a negative effect of this variable on the dependent variable CZPONE54. A second structural variable to be examined in terms of its effects in the LISREL model is the population size (LOGPOP96). There have been claims underlying the importance of the population size expecting that the large EU members would be less in favour of membership of the post-communist countries because they are relatively small and would strengthen the position of the small EU countries and, in consequence, change current balance with the large member states and also further complicate the strained transnational decision-making in an EU of twenty or more members (Avery, Cameron 1998, 140ff). Given the enormous differences in population size, varying from tiny Luxembourg (0.4 million inhabitants) to reunited Germany (80 million inhabitants), the variable has been transformed in order to obtain more normal distribution. The third structural condition relates to basic language areas of the EU. Variable KNOWFRE (percentage of citizens speaking French) indicates differences across the fifteen countries in belonging to the French-speaking and French-knowing area. This structural condition is included in the model in order to check factually frequent claims (see for instance Emerson 1998) that French-speaking polities have geographical orientations in their eventual support for a new enlargement towards the south and south-east and thus tend to support the Mediterranean enlargement on the current southern EU periphery and not the eastern enlargement. The fourth structural condition in the fifteen countries to be examined on its effects in the model is the average unemployment rate in 2000 (variable UNEMPLOY) as a measure indicating the need for traditional welfare state involvement. For instance, Inglehart (1991) indicated in a cross-national comparison in the EU that with increasing level of economic development and social security also trust toward other nations slightly tends to increase. In consequence, one can expect a positive facilitating impact of this variable on the support for the Czech membership. Finally, a sixth structural condition is a simple, yet important one. Variable EUTIME indicates across the fifteen countries the number of years of EU membership. The major hypothesis to be tested in the model is whether the public opinion in the old member states is inclined to support more a new enlargement with the Czech Republic due to long-lasting experience with the EU institutions and procedures, with frequent incorporation of peripheral countries into the EU compact in the past and with advantages and disadvantages of the post-war European integration in general (cf. Sinnott, 1995; Preston, 1997).

4. 2. Public opinion variables

Next, there is in the causal order of our first model a block of three intermediate variables. Since the beginning of public opinion analyses in the EU the advent of post-materialist value orientation has been central in debates and research on public opinion patterns and trends. Post-materialist value orientation has been widely seen as a major cause influencing other trends in political opinion of the EU public (Inglehart 1997, 108ff). Basic claim on post-

Tab. 3 - Post-materialist public opinion (component loadings)

Indicators	Component loadings Post-materialism
Human rights	0.900
Third World	0.744
Environment-consumers	0.681
drugs-crime	0.575
Research	0.397
Education-culture	0.299
Immigration policy	0.116
Social policy	-0.640
Employment	-0.735
Currency	-0.811
Extracted total variance = 40.3 %	No rotation

Source: Eurobarometer No. 54. 2000. European Commission, Brussels.

the traditional materialist value orientation stressing employment and social policy, stable economy, strong currency, or fighting rising prices. Given the great importance of this value orientation in the EU public in the literature, we attempt to substantiate the tension between post-materialism and materialism using available Eurobarometer no. 54 survey data from the same autumn 2000 sample that we also used constructing our first dependent variable CZPONE54.

One can use as suitable indicators percentages of respondents who indicated three most important policy areas they thought European Parliament has to concentrate on. Principal component analysis is employed (see Rummel 1970) in order to construct a common statistical dimension that represents the tension between post-materialist and materialist orientations of the public in individual EU countries and gives standardised scores for each country on the dimension (see Tab. 3). The ten policy areas selected in the survey show across the fifteen countries remarkable consistency.

The first unrotated principal component shown in Table 3 represents 40.3 % of the total variation of the ten indicators. The structure of component loadings shows clearly the assumed tension between post-materialist and materialist orientations. Hence, a complex score called POSTMT54 on this dimension can be used to show differences in post-materialist orientations across the fifteen countries. The highest score on the dimension belongs to Sweden. We assume that the complex measure POSTMT54 will have in the model a positive effect on the dependent variable CZPONE54. The second public opinion variable represents a basic positive attitude towards further internal EU integration. It is the average percentage of 18 policy areas that the public in the fifteen countries prefers to be covered by supra-national decision-making of the EU (Eurobarometer no. 54, B34-B36). In other words, one can assume that this variable indicates the inclination of the EU public to shift more competences in these fields from the level of nation-states to the EU level of decision making. This variable EUDECI is also assumed to have a positive effect on the dependent variable CZPONE54. The third public opinion variable is a measure representing systematic stress in the EU public opinion on the importance of economic criteria in evaluation of the anticipated

materialism argues that alongside of the coming of a post-industrial economy and advanced welfare state, a shift from materialist values and political orientation towards post-materialist ones takes place and derives from the tension between the public concerns with economic growth and the concerns with quality of life, such as environment, well-being, more say on the job, more say in government, development support for Third World aid, research and education or human rights. This in contrast to

Tab. 4 – Public opinion on criteria concerning enlargement (component loadings)

Indicator	Component 1 Economic criteria ECONCR54	Component 2 Socio-environmental criteria
Human rights	0.173	0.939
Economic development	0.893	0.116
Acceptance acquis	0.738	0.073
No costs	0.856	-0.085
EU interests	0.884	-0.159
Crime and drugs	-0.022	0.970
Environment	-0.081	0.968
Pay share	0.606	0.398

Source: Eurobarometer No. 54, 2000. European Commission, Brussels.

eastern enlargement (variable ECONCR54). Also this measure is derived with the help of principal component analysis. Table 4 shows the structure of component loadings on the first two components. The first component has a structure that is consistent with the highly overlapping economic values-orientated opinions on the coming enlargement. One can expect that this measure will have a negative effect on the support for the EU membership of the Czech Republic.

4. 3. Explaining the EU public opinion

These empirical dimensions representing structural conditions and public opinions and associated hypotheses are thus translated into the causal model shown in Figure 2. The LISREL model procedure estimates independent direct and indirect, or mediated, effects in complex models with a large number of variables. The multiple regression of this model indicates that the six structural conditions and three public opinion variables determine together 80 % of the total variation of variable CZPONE54 across the fifteen EU countries ($R^2 = 0.80$). In consequence, this high level of determination makes it possible to estimate the various effects in the model and interpret them in terms of causal relationships.

It appears that the five variables representing the structural conditions together determine 33 % of the total variation of the POSMT54 scores throughout the fifteen countries. As assumed above, differences in the materialist orientation are significantly effected by the variable GDP96 representing the role of advance welfare state involvement and the importance of redistributive measures in the individual EU countries. The effect of 0.39 indicates that a shift of one standard deviation on this variable implies a significant shift of 0.39 of standard deviation on the POSTMT54 dimension. This effect is in accordance with the suggestion of Inglehart (1997) saying that in democratic redistributive societies (i.e. advanced welfare states) the shift towards post-materialist values is considerable. In contrast, the independent effects of other structural conditions except the population size measure, have clear negative effect on the post-materialism indicator. It appears that the public in French-speaking EU countries tends to be more materialistic (effect -0.30). Also the unemployment measure has a clear negative effect on the post-materialism variable (-0.39). Surprisingly, the independent effect (-0.37) of variable EUTIME shows that there is a general

negative tendency towards post-materialism in the old EU member countries. The determination level of the other intermediate variable EUDECI98 is considerable (71 %), and the estimated independent effects of two structural conditions on this variable are significant. The variable EUTIME has a strong effect (0.68) indicating that the old EU polities of the historical core wish to further strengthen the supra-national role of the EU institutions. The positive effect of the unemployment variable (0.36) shows that the public in the countries with higher unemployment rate tends to support a strengthening of decision-making at the EU level. However, there is also a negative effect (-0.28) of the post-materialism measure on the variable EUDECI98. This effect suggests that the EU polities with clear post-materialist orientations are not inclined to support further strengthening of the transnational EU decision-making. As expected, the post-materialism variable has a very strong negative effect (-0.83) on the measure of economic criteria on enlargement (ECONCR54).

As indicated above, the five structural conditions and the three intermediate variables statistically determine 80 % of the variation of the dependent variable CZPONE54. One may establish in Table 5 that the measure of post-materialism (POSTMT54) plays a significant mediating role in the model (total indirect effect of 0.36). It appears that the variable indicating the level of economic development (GDP96) has a significant direct negative effect (-0.47) on the support for the eastern enlargement with the Czech Republic. This result shows that the richer EU polities are less inclined to support the anticipated accession. Further, the clear negative direct effect (-0.65) of the population size measure shows the tendency of the large EU polities to consider the Czech membership as less desirable. There is also a similar negative effect of the variable KNOWLFRE suggesting that the French-speaking parts of the EU do not tend to support a new EU enlargement with the Czech Republic. It is also significant that the variable EUTIME shows important facilitating impact on the positive public opinion on the Czech membership. The negative effect (-0.45) of the measure on economic criteria of enlargement (ECONCR54) is in accordance with general hypotheses structured in the model.

Finally, one may stress the importance of the total effects of the eight variables on the variable measuring the positive opinion on the Czech membership (Table 5). First, it appears that the post-materialism measure has a very strong positive total effect (0.68). This also is in accordance with the key hypothesis explained above (see Inglehart 1997). Second, the

Tab. 5 – Effects of explanatory variables on public opinion on the Czech membership (CZPONE54)

Explanatory variables	Total effects	Indirect effects	Direct effects
GDP96	-0.27	0.20	-0.47
LOGPOP96	-0.60	0.05	-0.65
KNOWLFRE	-0.66	-0.24	-0.43
UNEMPLOY	0.37	-0.12	0.50
EUTIME	0.40	-0.13	0.54
POSTMT54	0.68	0.36	0.32
EUDECI54	0.04	-0.12	0.16
ECONCR54	-0.45	-	-0.45

population size variable has a significant negative total effect (-0.60). This suggests that in particular the small member countries tend to support the Czech membership. The variable representing French-speaking parts of the EU public has also a very clear negative total effect (-0.66) in the model. Third, the unemployment variable shows a significant positive total effect (0.37). It seems that the high support for the Czech Republic in Greece and some above-average support in Italy and Spain is responsible for this unexpected effect. These Mediterranean countries tend to support in spite of structural problems on national labour market. Perhaps, these polities seen in the Czech public an associate against hard free market measures that would limit current redistributive structural funds policies in the future. Fourth, there is also a significant positive effect (0.40) of the dimension indicating the number of years of EU membership. This outcome suggests that the public in the original members of the EU have enough confidence in the successfully concluded accession negotiations because they have experience with nine negotiations that led to accessions.

5. Conclusion

These statistical outcomes make clear that in the set of the fifteen EU countries there is an very important positive effect of post-materialist values on the positive public opinion about the new enlargement with the Czech Republic. The analysis also confirms the hypothesis that the polities of richer and larger EU countries are less inclined to give support for the anticipated enlargement. This outcome of the statistical examination is very significant. It was emphasised earlier that the countries of the historical core and the rich old and new outer core of the current EU have to anticipate larger contributions to the EU budget when the newly associated countries will become members. On the other hand, there are some indications that the public opinion in some countries in the historical core of the EU (Italy and the Netherlands) tend to support the Czech membership.

However, the most significant support for the accession of the Czech Republic comes from the Scandinavian countries. The electorates in the northern outer core of the current EU prefer the enlargement (widening) instead of giving support to efforts focused on further deepening of the geopolitical and geo-economic compact of the EU. The clear negative effects of the post-materialist dimension in the model on the opinion focused on a further strengthening of decision-making in Brussels (measure EUDECI54) and on the opinion stressing the economic criteria of enlargement (measure ECONCR54) indicate this significant tendency. Another significant tendency in the public opinion is the clear negative effect of the population size dimension on the support for the Czech membership. It seems that small EU countries tend to support the Czech accession. As explained above, under EU rules, small countries are accorded far more votes per citizen than the larger ones. Therefore, any eastern enlargement with small states will bring pressures to change the EU rules, and not surprisingly, this will lead to reorientations in budget priorities and uncertainty about well-established financial distributions between countries, sectors and regions. The public opinion in the large countries can be concerned about overall effectiveness of the EU if "micro-states" will have to assume the same level of EU responsibilities as large states. As mentioned earlier, other concerns in the

public opinion of the large EU countries focus on the power of blocking coalitions of small states that can frustrate ambitions of the larger ones.

The assessment in section three has shown the declining support for the anticipated Czech membership by the Czech electorate. It seems that the shrinking support for the integration into the EU is associated with ongoing difficult negotiations of the Czech political elite with the central actors of the EU. In this context, there arises the question whether there are significant differences in the effects of the model when as dependent variables are inserted the public opinions of the fifteen EU electorates regarding the accession of the other four candidate countries of the so-called Luxembourg group (i.e. Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and Estonia). Additional statistical examinations indicate that there are some significant differences in the effects of the five structural variables and the three explanatory public opinion variables. In other words, suggested explanations of variation in support for the EU membership of other candidate countries can differ from the one concerned with the Czech membership and summarised in this paper. Therefore, it seems that a strong and integrative sense of a larger European community based on "mutual sympathies and loyalty; of 'we-feeling', trust, and mutual consideration" as envisaged by Deutsch at al. (1957, 36) and some other observers of unifying and fragmenting tendencies in Europe, still has to emerge in the western public opinion.

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S u m m a r y

ROZŠIŘOVÁNÍ EVROPSKÉ UNIE A VEŘEJNÉ MÍNĚNÍ O ČESKÉ REPUBLICICE: EXPLANACNÍ ANALÝZA

Evropanům a mnohým lidem z jiných částí světa přineslo nové geopolitické rozdělení po pádu železné opony koncem osmdesátých let podstatnou a historicky důležitou změnu. Tato změna je možná tou nejdůležitější od konce druhé světové války. Pád železné opony s sebou nevyhnutelně přináší počátek složitého procesu přepracování mapy Evropy a potřebu změnit geopolitické a geoeconomické uspořádání kontinentu, vyznačit staré a nové semi-periferie. Během druhé poloviny let devadesátých se předpokládané rozšiřování Evropské unie stalo pro budoucí evropskou integraci rozhodujícím procesem. Je zřejmé, že fragmentace východní a střední Evropy v některých ohledech zkomplikovala vývoj evropského procesu sjednocování, avšak EU zůstává jediným klíčovým institucionálním prostředkem k vytvoření trvalé a silné evropské integrace.

Zdá se, že základní geopolitická a geoeconomická organizace prochází významnými změnami v historickém jádru EU, v jeho staré a nové semi-periferii i v jeho periferii. Členství vyžaduje kvalitativní přizpůsobení politických a ekonomických režimů, a tedy takových institucionálních opatření, která by byla kompatibilní se západními standardy demokracie a tržní ekonomiky. Je tedy důležité vědět, zda-li tyto doprovodné adaptace chování a veřejného názoru, významně přispívají k současným procesům evropské integrace. Jedním způsobem zhodnocení míry dosažené úrovně i pokračování procesu evropské integrace je analýza názorů veřejnosti patnácti států EU týkající se předpokládaného nového rozšíření EU směrem k přistoupení kandidátských zemí. Článek se pokouší srovnat západní a východní veřejné mínění z hlediska vztahu k očekávanému rozšíření EU, a to se speciálním ohledem na předjímané členství České republiky v EU.

EU je vnímána jako hlavní zdroj rozšíření trhu, investic a pomoci. Životní úroveň, která je ve většině zemí EU mnohem vyšší než v Česku, vzbudila očekávání, že přidružení a pozdější přistoupení k EU přinesou podobný prospěch. Zdá se, že tyto názory společně posilují ve veřejném mínění přitažlivost členství v EU. Veřejné mínění sehrává významnou roli v zajištění legitimacy očekávaného členství, a to zvláště, když se bude v České republice o členství konat referendum. Veřejná podpora členství v EU je v současné době nižší než v polovině devadesátých let. Přestože panuje veřejná podpora prozápadní orientace země tak se zdá, že si česká veřejnost není jistá tím, kdo bude mít výhody z připojení k EU. Průzkumy veřejného mínění ukázaly, že veřejnost věří, že užší vazba k EU

prinese značný prospěch soukromému podnikání, vzdělávacímu systému, vládním úředníkům a armádním složkám. Naproti tomu skupiny obyvatelstva s nižším příjmem a vzděláním, manuálně pracující a zaměstnanci státních podniků ve prospěch spíše nevěří.

Existence porovnatelných údajů Eurobarometru EU dovoluje provádět statistickou analýzu na makro-úrovni země, stanovit podobnosti a rozdíly mezi jednotlivými zeměmi a naznačit systémové podmínky, které je způsobují. Je možné v rámci makro-úrovňové analýzy vystopovat rozdíly v názorech obyvatelstva v patnácti zemích EU na otázku „měla by Česká republika přistoupit k Evropské unii?“ (Eurobarometer č. 54, podzim 2000). Modelování LISREL (lineární strukturální rovnice) umožňuje zkonstruovat explanační (kauzální) systém stávající ze dvou skupin proměnných: pět strukturální (jako HDP na obyv.) a tři proměnné ukazující základní politické a hodnotové orientace (jako post-materialismus), které ovlivňují stávající veřejné mínění v patnácti zemích o rozšíření EU Českou republikou. Tyto strukturální podmínky a základní politické a hodnotové orientace jsou proto koncipovány jakožto určující faktory veřejného mínění o novém přistoupení České republiky. Poslední závislá proměnná je definována jako rozdíl mezi kladnými a zápornými odpověďmi a která tudíž ukazuje rozdíly v souboru patnácti zemí EU v podpoře pro vstup České republiky.

Celkové efekty osmi explanačních proměnných jsou významné. Za prvé je nutné zdůraznit, že intenzita post-materialistické hodnotové orientace má velmi silný pozitivní efekt na kladné veřejné mínění o členství České republiky v EU. Tento výsledek explanační analýzy je v plné shodě s klíčovou hypotézou celého modelu. Za druhé je nutné podotknout, že populační velikost země má významný negativní celkový efekt naznačující tendenci malých členských zemí podporovat české členství. Explanační model rovněž dokládá, že francouzsky mluvící části veřejnosti EU mají signifikantní celkový efekt negativní. Za třetí se ukazuje, že úroveň nezaměstnanosti má kladný celkový efekt. Zdá se, že vysoká podpora Česka v Řecku a nadprůměrná podpora v Itálii a Španělsku podmiňuje tento neočekávaný efekt. Tyto středozemní země mají tendenci české členství podporovat, přestože mají vážné strukturální problémy na trhu práce. Za čtvrté, je zapotřebí podtrhnout význam celkového pozitivního efektu dimenze dokumentující délku členství v EU. Tento výsledek naznačuje, že veřejnost členů historického jádra EU má více důvěry v úspěšné završení vyjednávání o přijetí České republiky, neboť mají zkušenost s devíti negociacemi, které vyústily v efektivní vstup nových členů.

Nejvýznamnější podpora pro přistoupení České republiky nicméně přichází ze skandinávských zemí. Voliči v severní zóně současné EU dávají přednost procesu rozšiřování, namísto aby poskytovali podporu úsilí zaměřeného na další prohlubování geopolitické a geoeconomické integrity EU. Tyto kauzální vztahy ukazují na význam preferencí ve veřejném mínění, které směřují k rozšiřování EU a odmítají další prohlubování stávající integrity EU. Malé země EU se kloní k podpoře vstupu České republiky a zdá se, že veřejné mínění ve velkých zemích EU vyjadřuje obavy z moci skupinových koalic malých zemích, která může podkopávat ambice zemí větších. Proto se zdá, že silný a integrující smysl širšího evropského společenství založeného na vzájemném porozumění a loajalitě, pocitu společenství, důvěře a oboustranné ohleduplnosti – jak předjímalí a předjímají někteří pozorovatelé tendenci sjednocování a fragmentace v Evropě – se stále musí reprodukovat v mínění západní veřejnosti.

Obr. 1 – Veřejné mínění v EU na české členství v letech 1997 a 2000

Obr. 2 – Veřejné mínění EU v r. 2000 o českém členství: explanační model LISREL

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