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Paper prepared for presentation to LSEE Public Lecture
Democratization, European Integration and Identity
Democratization and European Integration:
How attitudes towards the EU change, and why religion matters



**Democratization, European Integration, and Identity:
Attitudes towards the EU across the EU member states and the
Western Balkans**

Monday, 20 November 2017
6.00 PM, COW 1.11,
Cowdray House, LSE



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Context

Democratization & Euroscepticism

- In Poland the process of democratization and EU integration overlapped and high levels of support for EU membership did not follow the same low levels of trust or support for domestic political elites.
- Poles made up their mind towards EU accession already at the time of the very first relations between Poland and the EU.
- Levels of support for the EU, however, have not always been high and stable, but seemed to be independent from the only domestic political situation.
- RQ: What drives support for EU integration before and after accession?

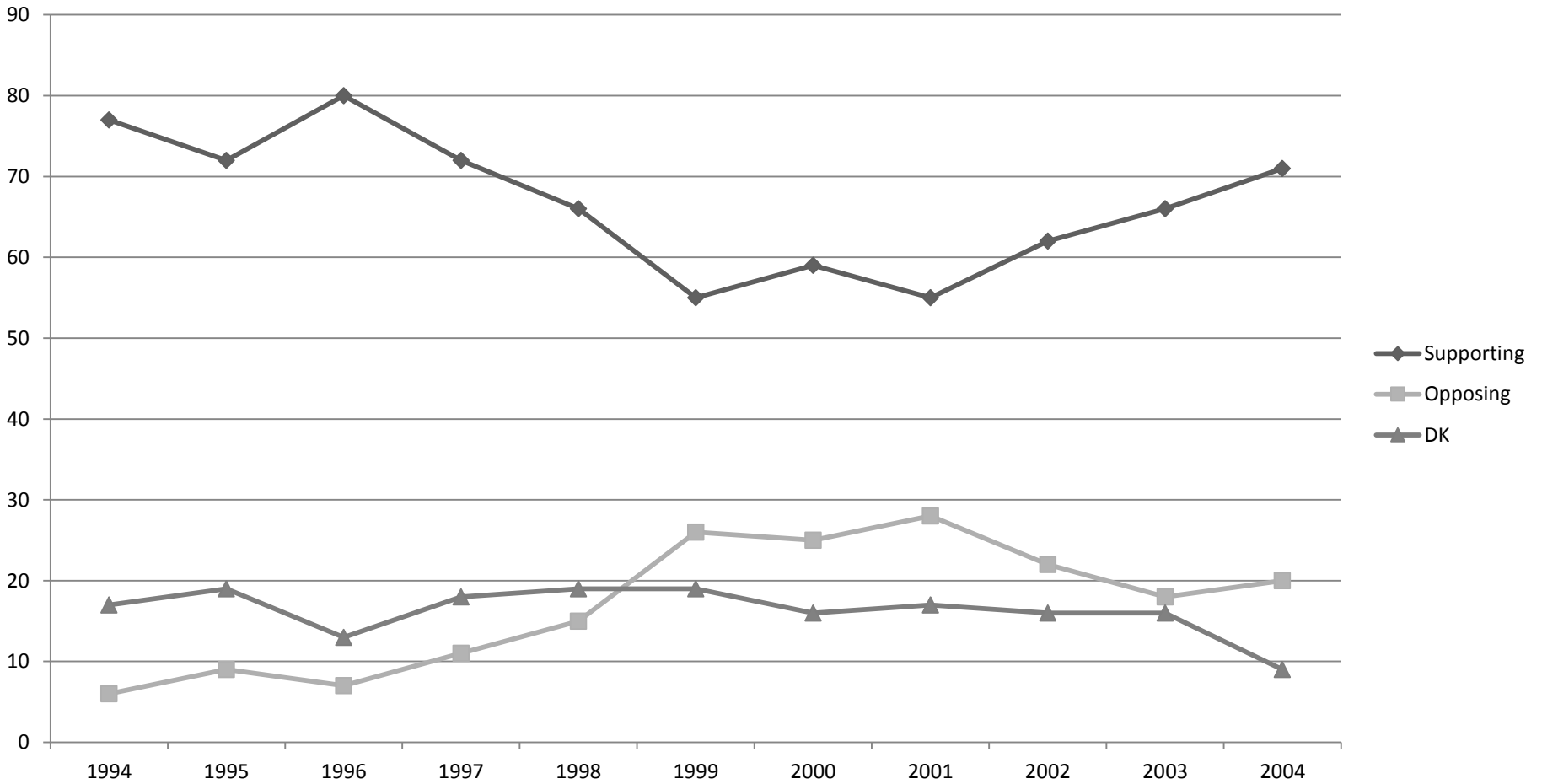
Presentation

- Frameworks of analysis
- Attitudes towards the EU before and after accession
- Analysis
- Satisfaction for democracy and rational utilitarianism, the role of Religion:
Explaining Poland today
- And South Eastern Europe

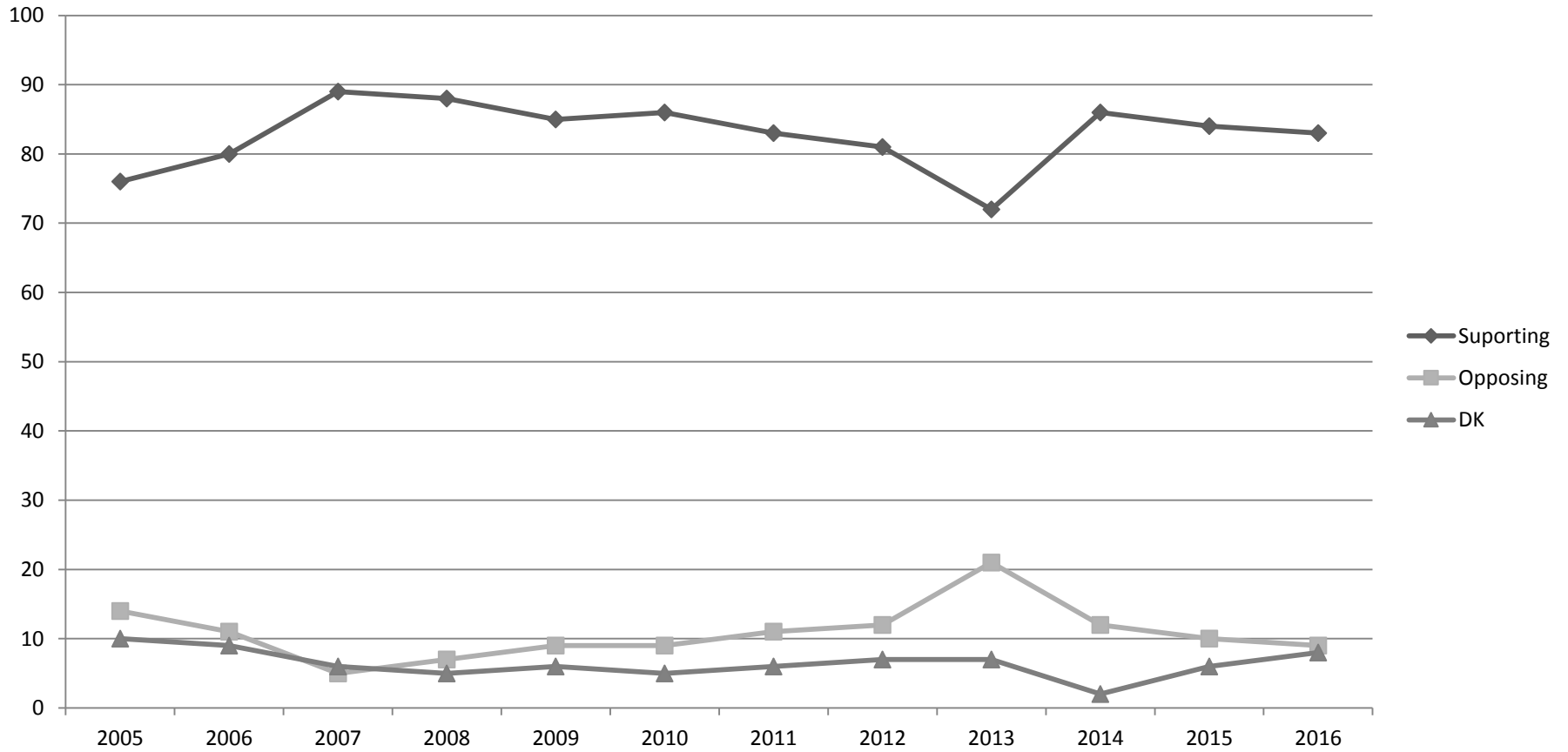
Frameworks of analysis

- Cognitive mobilization
- Mass-political elites
- Utilitarian rationality
- National identity
- Influence of domestic politics

Poland before accession



Poland after accession



Hypotheses

- *Political cues*

H1: Political cues are likely not to be explanatory in Poland before accession, and (also) after joining the EU.

- *Cognitive mobilization*

H2: Cognitive mobilization is likely not to be explanatory in Poland before accession, but, due to the rising knowledge about the EU and increasing general benefits, is likely to be significant after joining the EU.

- *Utilitarian Rationality*

H3: The utilitarian model is likely to be explanatory in Poland before and after accession.

- *National Identity*

H4: National identity is likely to be explanatory in Poland before accession and (also) after accession.

- *Domestic proxies*

H5: The relationship between the evaluation of the direction of the country and EU support in Poland before accession is likely to be negative and is likely to be positive after accession.

Discussion

- In Poland the process of democratization did not negatively influence attitudes towards the EU. On the contrary citizens who were satisfied with the process of democratization and how democracy worked were also the ones who were more supportive towards the EU (H5) ✓
- Political parties, as expected, and political cues explanations are the weakest factors overall (H1)
- Similarly cognitive mobilization is more effective across those with higher levels of education and more interest in politics, but is much less explanatory than the rational utilitarian and the domestic proxy frameworks (H2)
- Polish attitudes were based on a mixture of affective and utilitarian dimensions, where joining the EU could represent an improvement on the domestic institutions and system, while the cost and benefit ratio could increase the likelihood of a positive vote in the accession referendum (benefits both at the personal and country levels are the most significant factors after joining the EU) (H3) ✓
- Economic voting is salient in framing public support for the EU, both at the personal and country levels, and it is likely to be determinant all across the post-Communist region (H3) ✓

Croatia

(MVEP data)

- Patterns of attitudes similar to Poland.
- With the end of the war a distinctive trend towards desecularization (increased religiosity by more 40% in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia - no parallel in the modern era, see Ognjenovic and Jozelic 2014).
- Ideological-cultural and historical-identity cleavages (but national sovereignty does not show any relationship with EU accession divide, Henjak 2015)
- The HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, Croatian Democratic Union) had a dominant position during the democratization process, with a focus on 'independence and statehood', less on democratization. Franjo Tudjman represented the Croats more than Croatia (Søberg 2007).
- The Catholic Church and the HDZ developed a narrow connection, funeral ceremony of Tudjman in December 1999, "Da zivi djelo velikog Tudjmana", i.e. "The deeds of great Tudjman shall live".

Serbia

(MFA data)

- Serbian Orthodox Church vs Europe, Europeanization as the synonym of 'vice, vanity, and hypocrisy.' (Ramet 2006)
- Similar narrative, as used by Father Rydzyk, 'what is abnormal is increasingly being taken as normal' (Ramet 2006)
- 'Nationalist authoritarianism' (Gordy 1999); Serbian Orthodox Church vs Europe, where Europeanization was the synonym of 'vice, vanity, and hypocrisy.' (Ramet 2006)
- Narrative present among the SPS (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*, Socialist Party of Serbia) voter.
- The denial syndrome: discursive refusal of troubles and the 'active avoidance' of that memory in order to maintain the general public accepted sovereignty of the past. (Byford 2008)

Conclusion

- This analysis confirms Cichowski's expectation, determinants of attitudes change over time.
- The domestic political and economic situations affect attitudes towards the EU and are likely to explain increasing levels of dissatisfaction across young people or fears of joining the Eurozone.
- Satisfaction towards democracy, benefits from the EU and support for the EU integration process moved together and the immediate perceived benefits at the personal and country levels are the most significant factors. Religion matters.
- In the long term, dissatisfaction towards political elites and pockets of poverty in the country have affected domestic politics (see the 2015 presidential and general elections in Poland) and the vote towards radical right parties, although support for the EU remains high and stable.

On religion

- In CEE, where there is a predominant religion, belonging to that religious community is 'linked to the belonging' to the nation (Bremer 2008) - EU integration is likely to represent a challenge for any religion, if symbolic and fundamental element of national identity (Poland, Croatia, Serbia) (Guerra forthcoming).
- At the institutional and political theological levels - Catholicism is favoured over the Orthodox Church (anti-Western attitude, structured at the national level) (Guerra 2012).
- Leverage of the EU on parties in government, but when an alliance emerges, this can vocalize opposition to EU integration (Guerra 2012), radicalize the public debates (Ramet 2006, 2008; Byford 2008; Guerra 2012, 2013, 2017, forthcoming) or focus on issues as the position of the Church, abortion, Poland vs. EU.
- The new PiS government secured 20 million zł tranche of state funding for Father Tadeusz Rydzyk's institution of higher education in Toruń at the end of January 2016 (Polish Ukaz) (Guerra 2017).
- Foreign-born far-right supporters living in the UK, one of the most active groups, *Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski* (National Rebirth of Poland) (Hope not Hate, February 2016).