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# Slovakia and the European Union: Complexities and Contradictions

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# **Slovakia and the European Union: Complexities and Contradictions**

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**Honors Thesis in International Studies**

**Macalester College**

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## **Abstract**

The European Union is a grand project in supranational governance. As the Union continues to enlarge, however, it faces new challenges and new questions. In this thesis, I use Slovakia as a case study to examine the impact of EU integration and the relationship between the EU's political goals and the political culture of states themselves. I will argue that there is often a complex and contradictory relationship between these two conceptions, and that this has long-term implications for the processes of continued European integration, supranational governance, and Europeanization which are central to the future of the European Union.

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

The European Union is the greatest project in supranationality the world has ever known. Begun narrowly as an economic union, and originally based on the unification of policy regarding only two products, it has developed into a major political, cultural, and economic union. From 6 members, it has grown this year to 27, including 10 which previously lay behind the iron curtain in the Soviet sphere of interest. When French foreign minister Robert Schuman announced the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950<sup>1</sup>, he could not have envisioned the Union which would eventually develop. This Union is something much more than Schuman imagined. It is a different union with different goals, different agendas, and a diversity which would have seemed unimaginable at its inception.

These changes have been controversial, and they have not come easily either for the European Union or for the new member states. Greater influence has meant greater complexity and larger bureaucracy. As states struggle to adapt to the complex rules and regulations of the Union, the Union struggles to adapt to the new complexities that come with diversity. The EU faces new questions with each new member. How should economic policy be conceptualized in a union whose members' economies run the gamut from weak and developing, to some of the strongest in the world? Are existing policies, formulated in the context of Western Europe, useful in a political climate still reeling from the effects of communist oppression? How far should expansion extend, and

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<sup>1</sup> Schuman, Robert. "The Schuman Declaration of May 9th, 1950." Europa. 12 Apr 2007 <[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl_en.htm)>.

where are the lines of Europe? The answers to these questions, and the impact of European integration will likely not be clear for some time.

In this paper, I will look at Slovakia, one of the newer members of the European Union, to examine the impact of EU integration and the relationship between the EU's political goals and the political climate of states themselves. In particular, given the European Union's concept of the political future of Europe, I will ask how well Slovakia conforms to this core political vision.

Slovakia's case is especially interesting for several reasons. As a new member state, it provides a lens through which to view the process of accession and the early impacts of membership on new member states. The Slovak case is also particularly interesting because Slovakia's accession to the EU, for a time, was far from certain. Finally, political developments in Slovakia since accession have brought to power a government made up of three parties whose commitment to integration is dubious, and their actions since election have further called into question their political orientation. These events provide a particularly salient example of the complex relationship between EU and domestic politics in member states.

I will begin my thesis by outlining a brief history of Slovakia since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Paying particular attention to the development of national consciousness throughout this period and the interactions of nationalism with the outside forces which controlled the Slovak lands, I will explore the development of Slovak political culture through history. Slovakia's present political climate and its relationship to the European Union as an outside force which influences Slovak policy are integrally linked to its

historical relationship to control by outside forces and the development of Slovak national identity in opposition to this.

Thus grounded in the history of Slovakia, I proceed to an examination of the EU's development from an economic union designed to prevent war, into a supranational organization dedicated to the unification and security of the European continent.

Beginning with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, I will explore the way that the EU's goals and powers have shifted over time. Through this exploration, I will develop a paradigm for understanding the goals of the European union and outline the core political vision which underlies these goals.

Once I have established a definition of the European Union's political vision, I begin to examine where Slovakia, as a new member state, fits into this political vision. This discussion must start with a look at the accession process as the EU's instrument of evaluation for prospective member states. Looking at Slovakia's movement through this process will provide a basis for understanding Slovak integration into the EU. The weaknesses of accession will be discussed, as well as the political values embodied by it. Slovakia's accession process will be the foundation upon which further examination of the relationship between Slovak and EU political climates will be grounded.

Next I will seek to explore Slovakia's own political culture. Here I will define political culture as the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the citizens of a state. In analyzing Slovakia's fit with the EU's political vision, I will look at three key indicators of political culture. First, I will look at voter behavior, particularly the outcome of the referendum on EU membership and the most recent, 2006, elections. I will use voter behavior as a way to examine Slovak political choice, and the way that the electorate

responds to party and organizational behavior. Secondly, I will analyze the behavior of political parties and their programs. In this examination, I will look at the way that the current government parties interact with and respond to the European Union and its regulations. Finally, I will examine public opinion data from the last two years pertaining to Slovak citizen's own views on the European Union and their own government. I will look at these as an indication of Slovak citizen's relationship to the EU. These three levels of analysis will allow my argument to be based not only on government behavior, but also on the express opinions of citizens themselves.

Looking at these examples, I will argue that there are clear contradictions in Slovak political culture, especially as relates to the EU. These contradictions point to a complex relationship between Slovakia and the European Union. In my analysis and conclusion I will explore this complex relationship and discuss the implications of such interaction on future processes of European integration and Europeanization.

## Chapter 2

### **Literature Review**

My thesis will draw on, and contribute to, two separate scholarly literatures: literature on theories of nationalism and literature on Europeanization. For many years, these literatures have remained largely distinct, perhaps even exclusive of one another. In recent years a few scholars have begun to discuss the intersections between these two areas of research, and it is in this area that my work will most concretely contribute. In this section, therefore, I will first seek to describe the current state of each of these literatures, and then to discuss the points of intersection and their importance to events in Central and Eastern Europe.

#### Theories of Europeanization

In discussing theories of Europeanization, it is important to first make a distinction between the concept of Europeanization and that European Integration. Although these terms would seem logically to refer to similar processes, they represent two different, if intersecting, bodies of scholarship. As a broad generalization, theories of integration focus primarily on the impact of shifting EU boundaries and changing systems of governance on the European community as a collective whole. Theories of Europeanization, on the other hand, focus on the impact of many of these same processes on domestic political and social systems. Although there continues to be some disagreement as to this specific distinction, the majority of scholarship subscribes to some version of this distinction in terms.

In this paper, I will be working primarily with theories of Europeanization, although it is inevitable that in any such discussion, theories of integration will be

relevant. This intersection speaks to the main focus of my study, which is the relationship between EU and domestic conceptions of political community in Slovakia. In the long run, however, my primary interest in this study is the domestic situation in Slovakia, and only secondarily and relationally the impact that that situation has on the broader European community. Thus, here, I will try to discuss the ways in which Europeanization is characterized in current scholarship, before outlining the definition I use in this thesis.

Tania Borzel argues that “Europeanization is a two-way process. It entails a ‘bottom-up’ and a ‘top-down’ dimension”<sup>2</sup>. In her description, the bottom-up dimension of Europeanization encompasses the way that European institutions are developed and create a new set of “norms, rules and practices”<sup>3</sup>, while the top-down dimension focuses on the “impact of these new institutions on political structures and processes of the Member States”<sup>4</sup>. This is reflective of the distinction between European integration and Europeanization which I made above. Indeed, some definitions of Europeanization border on confusion with issues of European integration.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most important distinction here is that of development versus impact. The bottom-up dimension of Europeanization refers to the creation of structures, and the top-down dimension refers to the effect of these structures on domestic actors. European integration, on the other hand, refers to the political process of creating a union of European governments.

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<sup>2</sup> Borzel, Tania (2002).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Jim Bullet and Andrew Gamble discuss just this confusion in their piece “Conceptualizing Europeanization”. They talk about the importance of considering theories of “concept formation” in the creation of our definitions of newly developed social scientific terms.

While I agree with Borzel that these concepts represent two *dimensions* of one concept (Europeanization), many studies of Europeanization not only focus on one of these aspects, but also define Europeanization in a way which excludes the other. Specifically, I am referring to studies which define Europeanization as simply the domestic impact of EU integration (see Glenn 2002, Knill & Dirk, and to a somewhat lesser degree Gwiazda for examples of this approach)<sup>6</sup>. Often these sorts of definitions are found in work which simply assumes an understanding of the concept of Europeanization without putting forth a working definition. In these cases, it is most commonly left to the reader to assume that Europeanization refers simply to the domestic aspect of integration theory.

One problem with this type of definition is that it neglects to examine any of the processes of Europeanization which take place outside of the European Union (both in candidate countries and in non-EU states within Europe) and also largely ignores the bi-directional nature of Europeanization as coming both from states to the collective and from the collective to the state (this will be discussed in somewhat more detail later). In the simplicity of this definition, many of the important aspects of Europeanization are lost. Seen only as an extension of theories of integration, the uniqueness and complexity of this process at both the political and social levels is not adequately accounted for.

Some other definitions recognize the double faceted nature of Europeanization mentioned by Borzel, but choose, as she suggests, to focus on one facet or the other. That is, they choose to approach their study either by focusing primarily on the

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<sup>6</sup> Glenn, John (2002); Knill, Christoph and Lehmkuhl, Dirk.; Gwiazda, Anna (2002).

institutions and their development (see Beyers and Trondal)<sup>7</sup> or by focusing primarily on their domestic impact (see Goetz and Hix, Gwiazda, Glenn, and Knill & Dirk).<sup>8</sup> In either case, while analysis may be simplified, it is also incomplete. Studies focusing only on institutions tend to minimize the impact of the often significant changes which must be made to domestic political systems in order to implement these institutions. On the other hand, studies which focus exclusively on domestic impact of these institutions often minimize the agency of domestic governments in creating and shaping political communities and structures. In either case, important levels of analysis are neglected.

The final type of analysis of Europeanization is one which tries to bring together both aspects of Europeanization in a working definition. This characterizes Borzel's approach, and similarly Howell's (who seems to draw quite heavily on Borzel). Borzel links the top-down and bottom-up facets of Europeanization by focusing "on the ways in which Member State governments both shape European policy outcomes and adapt to them"<sup>9</sup>. The central point of her argument is that governments, in an attempt to minimize the costs of implementation of European norms to domestic systems, attempt to "upload their domestic policies to the European level" while simultaneously downloading European level standards, creating an interactive, relational process of Europeanization.<sup>10</sup>

Although Borzel does attempt to provide a more comprehensive, connective definition of Europeanization and to analyze the process from a more holistic perspective, there are still several major criticisms to be made of her work. Perhaps the most

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<sup>7</sup> Beyers, Jan and Trondal, Jarle (2004).

<sup>8</sup> The second of these is the more common approach, although this is a recent development. This is most likely due to an increasing interest in the domestic impact of European institutions and also the increasing recognition of (perceived) overlap between the bottom-up aspect of Europeanization and theories of European integration.

<sup>9</sup> Borzel, Tania (2002).

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

important is that her paper focuses on the Europeanization process almost exclusively *within member states*. Disregarding for the moment the fact that Europeanization is in some ways a global and not only a European phenomenon, the boundaries of Europe are by no means conclusively agreed upon, nor are they delineated by the boundaries of the European Union. Switzerland, for example, which has opted not to join the European Union, would, I believe, be considered almost unarguably to be located within the boundaries of Europe, and this is not to mention the numerous states which may one day join the EU, but have not yet entered formal accession talks.<sup>11</sup> With the boundaries of Europe so disputed, it seems problematic to speak of Europeanization as a process only applicable to EU member states (and perhaps also, by implication, accession states). Even if it is EU norms which we will use to delineate “European” standards, rules, expectations, etc, there are certainly both indirect and direct pressures on non-EU states within the European sphere to conform to these standards, and rewards besides EU membership (such as improved trade relations, looser border controls, etc) to be gained through compliance to a European norm.

This however brings up the second, and perhaps more serious, criticism of Borzel, and indeed of every theory examined thus far, and that is the exclusive focus on political systems to the exclusion of cultural impacts or impacts on political community of processes of Europeanization. As Europeanization theory has focused almost exclusively on the Europeanization of institutions, it has paid little or no attention to the integration of these institutions into society, or their acceptance by citizens of member states.

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<sup>11</sup> I am thinking here principally of the Ukraine, Belarus, and some of the former Yugoslav Republics, but Turkey may certainly also fall into this category.

Radaelli has previously, and I believe correctly, pointed out that Europeanization, though commonly mistaken with such terms, is not synonymous (nor does it necessarily imply as a consequence) convergence of ideas or policies, harmonization (that is bringing policies into complete harmony with one another), or political integration<sup>12</sup>. I do believe, however, that Europeanization can be conceptualized as a process of gradual *gravitation* towards a core set of concepts, and a core “European” political and social identity. While states are each moving in different ways, at different paces, and from different directions, they are all moving, or perceive themselves to be moving, towards the same central object. Here it is important to note that this is evidenced not only by shifts in policy or institutional structures, but also by overall shifts in social conceptions of identity and changes in the functioning of political communities. Additionally, I believe that the object, “Europe”, refers to something significantly more complex than simply a convergence of “EU standards” or policy, and instead implies a much more abstract and intangible idea”. Indeed I perceive one of the greatest challenges in the European Union today to be grounded in precisely the intangibility of Europe as an object. European states all seem to believe they are heading towards the same goal (European unity), but as evidenced by the uneven support for the EU constitution and ongoing debates about the nature of European governance and the future of expansion, seem to perceive the nature and shape of that goal somewhat differently.

How, then, can we define Europeanization? I submit that Europeanization refers to the process by which a society gradually changes and gravitates in the direction of what it perceives to be the European ideal. This is a process both of policy shifts, and

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<sup>12</sup> Radaelli 2002

changes at the cultural level, and is driven by EU standards, perceived (though not concretely outlined) external pressures, and changes from within based on the perception of the Europe towards which society is heading. It is an interactive process involving both top-down and bottom-up changes<sup>13</sup>, and can be motivated by a variety of agendas. The connecting factor in all cases is a sense of movement towards “Europe”. Although definitions of what is represented by, how best to arrive at, and what it will take to reach this object may differ, Europeanization represents the perceived movement towards it. Additionally, gravitation is a multi-directional process in which all bodies exert force on one another in order to create a functioning system of movement. The same is true of Europeanization. Just as member states gravitate towards “Europe”, Europe is also being shifted and steered by the member states, creating a complex system of push and pull that shapes understandings of Europe and the European Union.

### Theories of Nationalism

The second major body of literature which will inform (and be informed) by this thesis is that on the nature of nationalism. Scholarship on theories of nationalism has historically been divided into two general categories, within which there exist many facets. In this paper I will refer to these two theories as the modernist and pre-modernist theories, though each has been characterized in a variety of ways.

Pre-modernist theories of nationalism, sometimes referred to as primordialist, essentialist, or society-centered theories, refer at the most basic level to theories which

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<sup>13</sup> I disagree here with Gwiadza in her assessment that Central and Eastern European countries only receive and do not contribute to standards of Europeanization. Although at the highest policy levels this is arguably the case, at other levels there is an ongoing continental dialogue which includes and is influenced by these countries.

place the development of national consciousness before the advent of modernity (marked as beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with the French revolution). In fact, these theories encompass a wide variety of ideas from Pierre Van den Berghe's<sup>14</sup> sociobiological approach which argues that ethnicity (and by implication nationality) is essentially inborn, to less deterministic conceptions of the nation, such as that put forward by Liah Greenfield<sup>15</sup> who believes based on her historical research that ideas of nationhood developed before modernity (especially in England). Indeed, Greenfield believes that the nation helped usher in the age of modernity and not vice versa (as argued by modernist theories). Although encompassing a range of theories, pre-modernist theories are commonly grounded in an assumption:

that group identity is a given. That there exist in all societies certain primordial, irrational attachments based on blood, race, language, religion, region, etc. [that] Modern states...are superimposed on the primordial realities which are the ethnic groups of communities. Primordialists believe that ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the historical experience of human beings to the point of being practically a given. Sociobiologists [as discussed above with Van den Bergh] take this perspective a step further and assert the biological character of ethnicity.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast, modernist theories of nationalism, which are sometimes referred to as constructivist, instrumentalist or elite centered theories,

maintain that nationalism emerges as a result of the process of transition from traditional to modern society; some of these theories focus more specifically on the spread of industrialization, and on the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions functionally associated with it, as the main cause for the development of nationalism.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Van den Berghe 1978

<sup>15</sup> Liah Greenfield, "Is Nation Unavoidable? Is Nation Unavoidable Today?" In Hanspeter Kriesi et al., *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*. Chur: Rügger (1999), 37-54.

<sup>16</sup> Llobera, Josep R. 1999. pg. 3

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* pg. 11

These theories are put forth in varying ways by Gellner, Breuilly, and Mann. Instead of being grounded in an almost atavistic understanding of the origins of national attachment, nationalism is viewed primarily as a political construct of elites with no (or little) grounding in a reality of cultural history. Ernst Gellner's definition is typical of a modernist understanding of nationalism. Gellner argues that,

nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state—a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation—should not separate the power-holders from the rest.<sup>18</sup>

A final, and relatively emergent, theory of nationalism is the ethno-symbolist theory characterized by the scholarship of Anthony Smith. Smith's work critiques both modernist and pre-modernist understandings of nationalism, and as his critiques are representative of the most common critiques leveled against these theories of nationalism, I will outline them here, before going on to discuss the middle ground he tries to forge between the two approaches.

In critiquing what I have here called the pre-modernist theories of nationalism (though as noted earlier this theory goes by many names), Smith outlines three primary critiques. First, he points out that humans have multiple identities and that therefore ethnic or national identity has “no absolute priority”<sup>19</sup>. This begins to break down aspects of the pre-modern model as it eliminates the primacy of national bonds and points to a failure to explain why they, and not other group identities, take primacy in nationalism. Secondly, he argues that ethnic or national identities are not static, but fluid and change over time. This challenges the notion of longevity and constancy put forth in

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<sup>18</sup> Gellner, Ernst. 1983. pg. 1

<sup>19</sup> Smith, Anthony. 1989. pg. 33

the pre-modernist models of nationalism. If identities change over time, they cannot be grounded in only one, static connection to history. Changing identities suggest changing influences, and changing concepts of self and connection to the past. Finally, he calls attention to the role of individual agency in assigning ones own ethnic identity. This seems to challenge a sense of nations as inborn, as people are able to shift groups, in many cases with little difficulty.

Smith also, and perhaps even more strongly, critiques the more widely accepted modernist views of the nation. Here he points out that while the historical concept is a relatively modern development,

it is...possible to trace the growth of national sentiments which transcend ethnic ties back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, if not earlier, in several states of Western Europe.<sup>20</sup>

He concedes some aspects of the modernist critique of pre-modernist theory, but points out that modernist theories have taken the anti-historical perspective to an extreme which is contradicted by the historical record. Secondly, Smith argues that nation building as an active process is difficult and not always successful. The development of a strong state does not necessarily bring about a strong national consciousness. This addresses the modernist perspective that nationalism and the nation are a necessary outgrowth of the development of the modern state. Additionally, it points out that identity is somewhat more difficult to manipulate than some modernist theorists seem to suggest. Finally, he argues that these theories fail to explain why people will irrationally continue to stand up for the nation; why people die for nations. In other words, where does the passion come from if national identity it purely a creation of elites? This sort of passion, seemingly

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* pg. 38

irrational, must be more deeply grounded than to simply lie in a manipulated mind. It seems that this passion must be connected to a deep sense of attachment to a culture and a history that is real, or at least seems very real to the individual. By attempting to move away from deterministic theories of ethnicity and the nation, modernists have neglected the very real historical factors and sentiments which play into nationalism.<sup>21</sup>

In attempting to move beyond these two definitions, Smith tries to create a definition which while recognizing the impact of modernity in helping to shape concepts and awareness as well as expressions of nationalism and the nation, also takes into account historical rootedness and ties within nationalism. For Smith,

Modern nations and nationalism are grounded in pre-existing ethnic ties and their political mobilizations, and are formed by this legacy.<sup>22</sup>

In developing his “ethno-symbolist” theory of nationalism, Smith is in essence attempting to bridge a gap between what have been two highly contentious basic approaches to the study of nationalism. I believe that in this he is successful, and it is in his approach that I will attempt to ground my understandings of nationalisms as they develop.

Before outlining the definition with which I will work in this paper, I would like briefly to comment on one other common fallacy in the study of nationalism, and that is the inherent negativity of the concept of nationalism. Often, nationalism is approached by scholars, only in terms of its negative impact and consequences and it is assumed that the concept itself bears an inherently negative connotation. In this case, I will attempt to overcome this. It is important to recognize that many sentiments and movements falling within the categories of “nationalist” can be productive, positive, and even integrative.

While much of my study will focus on the negative impacts of nationalism and the

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* pg. 39-40

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* pg. 71

negative forms that it takes, it is important to note that the term and concept itself are not normatively negative.

In this paper then, I will approach nationalism as a feeling of strong, often passionate identification with and attachment to a self and group defined idea of the nation brought about by both political influences, community and state structures, and a consciousness and development of a perceived deep historical connectivity of the group, often grounded in cultural factors such as land, language, and religion. The development of nationalist sentiments is not only a process which is informed by elites who construct systems which encourage national identities, but also from organic formations of identity and consciousness of self and the group.

This definition draws significantly from Smith's understanding of nationalism. Additionally, instead of viewing nationalism as a purely destructive force, I will try to examine it as simply a deep attachment to the nation, and to look at it in the context of its influence on political culture. I hope that this definition will serve to emphasize the multiple influences which help to create and encourage nationalism as well as the multi-directional development which I perceive nationalism as taking.

### Chapter 3

#### **A Brief Historical Outline of Slovakia**

Almost as far back as we can trace Slovak history, it is a history of domination. The connecting line between individual moments in the history is one of continuous control by other groups.<sup>23</sup> Many “important moments”, the points on the timeline of Slovakia, are really only the moments when the dominating group changed. A discussion of this tendency can be traced back to the Great Moravian empire, but for the purposes of this thesis, I will begin by looking at the period when Slovak national consciousness began to develop, and examine the relationship of this development, and the development of nationalism, to Slovakia’s interactions with the outside forces which controlled it.

The land that now makes up modern day Slovakia was part of the Kingdom of Hungary beginning in about 1000 AD, although full incorporation was not achieved until the early 1300s. It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, that a strong movement of Slovak national consciousness began to develop. Following the developments throughout Europe at that time (spurred on by the French Revolution), the early years of this movement were committed to developing a concept of national identity among Slovaks, within the Hungarian Kingdom. One result of this movement was the codification of Slovak as a literary language (as had been done with Czech some time before), by Anton Bernolak in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This language was then reformed and improved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Ludovit’ Stur. The codification of the language was one of the first major national projects of the Slovak people. It allowed for the development of newspapers and other publications in Slovak, which contributed to the

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<sup>23</sup> This section is drawn from a consolidation of accounts of Slovak history from Peter Toma and Dusan Kovac’s book *Slovakia: From Samo to Dzurinda* and from the Slovak Embassy’s own account.

continued strengthening of Slovak national identity, and was one major factors in the development of Slovak nationalism.

One of the early manifestations of Slovak nationalism, was the struggle for autonomy during the wars between Austria and Hungary in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. At this point, the national movement was still controlled by a small group of elites. While many Slovaks fought for the Austrians in this war in hopes of obtaining greater autonomy, most peasants were uninvolved in the war, and some even fought for the Hungarians. The elites hoped, however, that siding with the Austrians would lead to greater autonomy. Unfortunately, the result was not what they had wished for. Instead of gaining greater autonomy, they became incorporated into the Hungarian area of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the end of the war. This shift in leadership had little tangible impact on Slovakia, as they remained minorities under Hungarian rule, and at this time Hungary had significant autonomy within the empire.

In the end of the 19<sup>h</sup> century, the Slovaks formed an alliance with the Czechs and began to talk more seriously and publicly about their desire for independence. In the late 1890s, some Slovaks took part in a conference in Budapest called the Congress of Oppressed Peoples, which was one of the most public signs of minority resistance to have occurred in Hungary up to this point. This was worrying to the Hungarian government, and marked the strengthening of demands for universal voting rights and independence. As the monarchy at this time inched slowly towards a more democratic system (although few citizens actually had the right to vote), national movements within Austro-Hungary began to strengthen, including among the Slovaks. This is the period during which the first strong, Slovak political parties came into being, including Slovenska Narodna Strana

(SNS) or the Slovak National Party, to which the modern SNS (part of the current governing coalition) traces its roots. At the time, however, it was a party who placed much of its faith in Russian power and the unity of the Slavs in bringing about Slovak independence. Opposed to this conception were the Roman Catholics, represented by the Slovak People's Party which believed that Slovakia should focus on small steps, and improvements gradually in the direction of stronger national character. Finally, under the Social Democratic Party (founded in 1905), the intelligentsia, especially represented by the youth, and taking cues from the Slovak language journal "Hlas", supported the *actions* of the Catholics, but focused on Czecho-Slovak cooperation as a path towards greater autonomy and independence for the Slovak nation. They also tended to represent the interests of protestants, and so the divide between this group and the Catholics was partially grounded in religious and not only ideological differences.

The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century leading up to WWI were challenging times for Slovaks, but also marked some of the earliest successes of the national movement. During this period, the Slovaks managed to have 7 deputies elected to the Hungarian parliament, and this strengthened the sense of national character among Slovaks. The Hungarian government's response, however, was oppressive and even violent. It was during this period that Magyarization (movements by the Hungarian government to try to make all citizens more Hungarian) reached its height. All students were required to attend school, and all instruction was conducted in Hungarian. A particularly poignant event from this period was the killing of 15 Slovaks by Hungarian authorities during the consecration of a church at Cernova. When the Hungarians refused to allow Andrej Hlinka, a popular priest and Slovak political figure who helped found the Slovak People's

Party, to bless the church the Slovaks protested, and were violently silenced by the Hungarian police. In response to this increased oppression, Slovak nationalism began to be strengthened as an oppositional force to Hungarian control.

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a movement of Slovaks (and Czechs) abroad also began to play a significant role in the Slovak national movements, and especially in the struggle for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czecho-Slovak National Council, headquartered in Paris, as well as organizations in the United States were particularly important during this time. As the national movement was increasingly suppressed throughout wartime within the Slovak territory of the Empire, Slovaks living abroad kept the struggle alive and began to formulate plans for the creation of an independent Czecho-Slovak republic.

In 1915, Czechs and Slovaks abroad declared the creation of a federated Czech and Slovak state through the Cleveland Agreement. This was followed in May of 1917, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, when T.G. Masaryk, who would go on to be the first president of Czechoslovakia, signed an agreement along with other Czechs and Slovaks abroad which guaranteed a certain level of autonomy for the Slovak lands within this federated Czecho-Slovak republic. The creation of this state with the support of allied powers, however, did not occur until late October 1918. Its borders were later secured under the various international peace treaties resulting from the end of the First World War.

The interwar Czechoslovak state is often held up as the only true example of successful democracy in Central and Eastern Europe in the interwar period. It is true that, from an economic perspective, Czechoslovakia at this time was one of the most successful states in Europe. Additionally, the state had a democratic structure which was

far superior to other systems in the region. This, however, belies the underlying sense of domination felt by many Slovaks.

Slovaks were at a distinct disadvantage in Czechoslovakia in many ways. Firstly, they represented a minority, and some numbers would seem to indicate that they were not even the largest minority (this position being held by the Germans who at this time were still the majority in some parts of the western Czech lands). This numerical disadvantage, however, was coupled with a much more crippling economic and industrial disadvantage. The Czech lands had had a very different place in the world of the last few centuries. Czech industry was already at a relatively high level of development, and because they had been under less repression, national institutions such as schools in the Czech language, were already present. In Slovakia, on the other hand, industrial development had been severely hindered by their position within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Slovakia remained largely agricultural and didn't have much of the national infrastructure present in Moravia and the Czech lands.

These disadvantages were exacerbated in the Slovak consciousness by the growing emphasis of many individuals in the government on the development of a Czechoslovak national consciousness. This was problematic, because Slovak national consciousness had only recently been solidified, and threatened to be subsumed within this larger collective understanding of the nation (which also was, consequently, the understanding of the nation embodied in the Czechoslovak constitution). Additionally, because most of the high-ranking government officials were Czechs and there were very few positions, even within Slovakia, occupied by Slovaks, there was a strong de facto emphasis on the "Czech" in Czechoslovak. All of these philosophical issues of identity

and nation coupled with the already growing resentment among Slovaks of their position of social disadvantage, and their broad exclusion from powerful government position, sparked the beginning of the Slovak autonomy movement in the interwar period.

This movement was beginning to grow, but had not yet been addressed by the government, when Hitler began threatening the lands to Germany's east. Under increasing pressure from Hitler, in the fall of 1938 Czecho-Slovakia was forced to cede large parts of its territory to both the West and the South to Germany and Hungary respectively. Later during that same fall, the Czecho-Slovak government, now strongly influenced by Nazi control, granted autonomy to Slovakia. The following spring, Slovakia achieved full independence after which the government quickly devolved into a one party system led by general Jozef Tiso. This independent Slovak state would be strongly influenced by the Nazi regime in Germany, and by fascist ideology.

Under the fascist government of the independent Slovak Republic, genocide was committed against the Jews on a mass scale. Very few of Slovakia's Jews came out of World War II alive. In terms of actual battle, however, Slovakia's participation in the war was relatively minimal in comparison to other countries. In fact, conditions during the war were reasonably good, as war created jobs and some economic opportunities. Nonetheless, there was a fairly large resistance movement which began from the very beginning of the fascist control of the state. Many Slovaks joined the Soviet army, and became members of Czecho-Slovak divisions of that army. Indeed, according to the Slovak embassy's rendition of history, by the end of the war more Slovaks were fighting for the Allied forces than for the Germans who officially controlled the state, though these numbers may not be entirely accurate.

Late in the war, the Slovak National Council formed and began, along with the Czecho-Slovak government in exile in London, to plan a national uprising. This uprising, which took place in 1944, eventually was defeated by Germany. For a few months, however, Slovak rebels held large sections of central Slovakia and ruled as an unofficial government, also creating new political parties and operating a rebel radio station. This also helped to cement some ideas of Slovak national consciousness, as it was one of the first times that Slovakia had acted in its own interest with little assistance from the outside world. Slovak national identity was thus cemented in two powerful, but conflicting ways: through the support of the independent state and through the resistance movement. In this way, Slovak national identity was both strengthened and polarized.

Following the end of the Second World War, negotiations began in relation to the formation of the post-war state. Because Czechoslovakia had been liberated by the Soviets, and also because of persistent pan-Slavic understandings of international relations among many in both the Czech lands and Slovakia, these negotiations were strongly influenced by the Soviets. In fact, the initial meetings which determined the structure of the new state were held in Moscow. During many of these negotiations, Slovak delegates were largely excluded. In the initial negotiations, Slovaks were only included in discussions regarding Czech and Slovak relations in the new state. The outcome of the meetings in Moscow and the subsequent meeting between Czech and Slovak groups in Kosice was an agreement to a generally democratic governmental structure in which Slovaks would be granted considerable autonomy, and which recognized the Czechs and Slovaks as separate, equal nations. This would never actually be a fully realized policy, as politics tended to remain dominated from Prague.

In the first free elections, held in 1946, the majority of Slovaks voted for the Democratic Party. Because, however, the majority of Czechs voted for the Communist Party, and Czechs held the majority in the country, the Communist Party received a total of 38% of the vote in the entire country, giving it a majority. Eventually, in 1948, the communist party seized complete control of Czechoslovakia.

Communist Czechoslovakia would be the next dominating force in the history of Slovakia. Having been minorities, and often persecuted minorities, within the Kingdom of Hungary, the Austro-Hungarian empire, the first Czecho-Slovak state (despite promises to the contrary), and having lacked full control over their own country during the fascist years of the first independent Slovak Republic, Slovaks hoped that under communism they would at least have the greater autonomy promised to them under the Moscow and Kosice agreements. To some extent, this would be a reality. Especially later during the communist years, Slovakia did, in fact, gain greater autonomy from other *states* than it had probably ever possessed. Many Slovaks *did* participate in the Czechoslovak government during the communist years. One of the most famous attempts at liberalization in communist history, the concept of socialism with a human face during the Prague Spring, was conceptualized and led by Alexandr Dubcek, a Slovak. However, with the exception of this brief period the country remained under strict communist rule, controlled to a large degree from Moscow, and it is hard to argue that the country had any real autonomy.

Nonetheless, Slovakia was given a certain level of control over its own affairs, within the structure of the communist party system, especially after the Soviets put down the liberalization of the Prague Spring and federalized the Czechoslovak state. Decisions

were no longer solely, or even primarily, controlled from Prague. This greater level of autonomy may help to explain why the resistance movement to communism was much less outspoken in Slovakia, than in the Czech Republic.

In the Czech lands, underground resistance movements among intellectuals grew up quite strongly relatively early in the communist period. Slovakia's resistance movement had a much different, and much quieter face. Grounded in the work of some Catholic priests, Slovakia's resistance was primarily a religious one (though Slovak intellectual dissidents did participate with Czech dissidents in Prague), and much of the most outspoken actions of political dissent by Slovaks took place in the Czech lands and not in Slovakia. As such, Slovakia never fully developed the large, underground intellectual network that developed in the Czech Republic.

When resistance began to rise in the late 1980s, and under Gorbachev the Soviet Union began to gradually loosen its strangle hold on the independent states of Eastern and Central Europe, most of the activity was happening in Prague. Although some of the 250 people who had signed the Charter 77 declaration in 1977 demanding improved human rights standards were Slovaks, the majority were Czechs, as well as most high ranking members of the resistance movement. This lack of a strong dissident movement meant that Slovaks did not develop the same underground intellectual class as the Czechs. When the communist system was finally dissolved, it was the Czechs who took the greatest control of the country, because it was largely the Czechs who had the capacity to do so.

From the very beginning of the newly independent Czechoslovak state, there were problems negotiating the role that Slovaks would play in the government. An inability to

agree on these issues was one of the primary motivating factors for the division of the single state into two in 1992. This marked the first time in Slovak history where it would be a truly independent state. Even during its brief period of independence, its sovereignty was limited by German oversight. It is in this context that we can begin to look at the relationship between Slovakia and the European Union.

## Chapter 4

### **EU History and the Development of a European Political Vision**

Before examining the interaction between Slovak and EU political visions, it is important to define what the EU's political vision *is*. In this chapter, I will outline the history and development of the European Union. Beginning with the early creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, and following the development of this initial organization through to the European Union as it exists today, I will look at the process through which the EU has shaped its vision of the European political world. Finally, I will outline the characteristics which define the EU's political vision and its goals for the future of Europe.

The early history of the European Union lies in the aftermath of the Second World War and the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. This idea, as first announced by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in mid-1950, dictated that French and German coal and steel would be pooled together and governed by a common "High Authority"<sup>24</sup>. Although the union between these countries was to be an economic one, the theory underlying its creation was based on the idea of creating greater European security and stability. As such, it was integrally linked with concepts of nationalism.

Having just come out of a major nationalist conflict, France and Germany recognized a need for change. Past attempts by individual nations to take control of the European continent, driven by nationalist rhetoric, had led to two major European wars in less than half a century. Although not using the word "nationalism" these states

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<sup>24</sup> Schuman, Robert. "The Schuman Declaration of May 9th, 1950." Europa. 12 Apr 2007  
<[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl_en.htm)>.

addressed their fear of its resurgence and/or continuation in the preamble to the founding treaty. After asserting the centrality of peace to the project, the preamble goes on to say that the states signing it are:

Resolved to substitute for age old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared.<sup>25</sup>

The “age old rivalries” of Europeans had been national, and the preamble suggested the elimination of divisions on this basis in favor of a unification of European interests. They advocated the creation of a community whose future would be a shared one, not hindered by national particularity, but strengthened by each of its members.

Economics was a reasonable place to start. By sacrificing a level of national sovereignty to the sovereignty of a collective authority, states were binding themselves to one another in a web of interconnectedness. As Schuman declared when he announced the creation of the community, this interdependence of resources would make “any war between France and Germany...not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.”<sup>26</sup> Economic unification would bring positive results for all states, while allowing them to retain their sovereignty in most issues. In the end not only France and Germany, but also Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty in Paris in 1951, establishing “the ECSC High Authority, to which member governments transferred their sovereign powers.”<sup>27</sup> This organization laid the foundation for the development, over the next half century of an increasingly large and

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<sup>25</sup> European Community. “Treaty Constituting the European Coal and Steel Community”. 1951. *European Navigator*. 12 April 2007. <http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm>.

<sup>26</sup> Schuman, Robert. "The Schuman Declaration of May 9th, 1950." Europa. 12 Apr 2007 <[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/decl_en.htm)>.

<sup>27</sup> European Union. *The European Union: A Guide for Americans*. 2005.

increasingly interdependent union of states, which eventually developed into the European Union.

While economic union, especially in the early years was relatively successful and fairly widely embraced in the 6 member countries of the ECSC, early attempts to move from a purely economic union and consolidate military and political programs were unsuccessful. In 1957 the ECSC members, as a part of the Treaty of Rome, created the European Economic Community (EEC) which consolidated their markets and economic policies beyond simply coal and steel, and further established the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), which consolidated policies on nuclear power. These first decades of European community, however, were primarily focused on solidifying and strengthening the economic union created by the ECSC and creating the institutions to support it. It was not until the late 1980s, however, that a unified Europe as we know it today would begin to solidify.<sup>28</sup>

In 1986, the Single European Act (SEA) was passed. This marked the first major successful attempt by the European Community to progress from simple economic union and towards increasing political and cultural union. This act increased the powers of the European Community so that they included issues such as the creation of common foreign and environmental policy. It also created institutional changes which made it easier to make decisions at a European level. Finally, it strengthened many of the economic ideas which had been laid out in the treaty of Rome. Consolidation of policies under this treaty, however, was not entirely successful. Instead, it laid the foundation for

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

the Maastricht Treaty, also known as the Treaty on European Union, 6 years later which would officially create the “European Union”.<sup>29</sup>

The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, represented an even clearer shift than the SEA in the goals of the European Community. It embodied a commitment to much broader unification of policies across the community. It was this treaty that opened the way for political, and eventually cultural, unification which has dramatically changed the shape of European unification since. According to the European Union, the treaty “responded to 5 key goals”:

1. Strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the institutions
2. Improving the effectiveness of the institutions
3. Establishing economic and monetary union
4. Developing the Community social dimension
5. Establishing a common foreign and security policy<sup>30</sup>

In responding to these goals, the treaty created the European Union, which it founded upon three pillars.

The first pillar was “the European Communities”<sup>31</sup>. This pillar encompassed all of the policy established by the ECSC, EURATOM, as well as the economic and monetary union as laid out by earlier treaties, and expanded within the Maastricht treaty. This pillar also included an expansion of cooperation in policies related to research, education and the environment. In general, it covers areas of policy where “Member States share their sovereignty via the Community institutions”<sup>32</sup>.

The second pillar called for the implementation of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which was suggested by earlier treaties, but whose creation was only

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> “Treaty of Maastricht on the European Union”. *Europa*.  
[http://www.europa.eu/scadplus/treaties/maastricht\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu/scadplus/treaties/maastricht_en.htm)

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

clearly called for under the Maastricht Treaty. The recommendations laid out by Maastricht are meant to replace earlier recommendations in previous treaties. It did not, however, fully unify foreign policies across the union. Instead, it *allowed* and suggested that states take action together, but was based not on EU enforcement, but on intergovernmental cooperation and consensus. The third pillar of the European Union is the unification of “justice and home affairs”<sup>33</sup>, and called for intergovernmental cooperation in these areas.

Although Maastricht did not create a federal European state, as some had thought was the direction of the European Union, it did reform the core ideals of the organization. Having begun with the goal of preventing nationalist conflict and creating a more secure, successful Europe, the European Union was now a fully political and, in many ways, cultural union, at least on paper. It created European citizenship, making all citizens of member states citizens of the Union as well. Citizenship was a codification of the EU’s goal of creating a supranational identity which would supercede or at least work in concert with national identity. The European Union was no longer a purely economic union, but a union which encompassed many aspects of politics, culture, and daily life for people in member states.

Since Maastricht, the European Union has reformed its functions through both the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Treaty of Nice. It has remained committed, however, to the expanded unification of the European community as laid out in Maastricht, and has sought, throughout the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century the creation of even greater convergence of policy.

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

The final, and perhaps clearest evidence of the EU's push for increased supranationality, is the failed treaty on the European Constitution<sup>34</sup>. The creation of an EU constitution in the form suggested would have marked another major milestone in European history. Many states felt, however, that the constitution represented federalization to too great a degree, and their citizens were unwilling to support it in the end. Some also felt that it was too great a sacrifice of national sovereignty. The fact that it was opposed in referendum by both French and Dutch voters is an especially strong sign that Europe is not ready for such a move, as these states have traditionally been two of the strongest supporters of the European Union.<sup>35</sup>

The European Union has come a long way from its first conception as a steel and coal sharing treaty between France and Germany. From the original six members it has grown, this year, to 27. Its members now include states who were under communist control when the Union was founded, and whose histories suggest that their integration into the Union will be a particularly interesting process. The European Union is now a large, supranational organization whose reach extends into issues of politics, agriculture, security, and even culture. Its core political project is one of supranationality; the creation of a group of states whose citizens see themselves as integrally linked to the larger collective of members. Its aim is the creation of a European identity, "united in diversity", and the unification of the policies of those states which are part of the European community.

Looking at the EU's development, and drawing heavily on the Treaty of Maastricht, and on the European Union's own literature, I define the EU's political vision

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<sup>34</sup> *BBC News*. "What the EU constitution says". June 22, 2004. Last accessed: April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2950276.stm>

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

as encompassing four major characteristics: supranationality, democracy, respect for human and minority rights, and social responsibility. In many ways, despite all the changes that have taken place in the Union in the past few decades, these core political ideals are not so different from those embodied by the early incarnations of the EU. Today, the EU views supranationality in a much broader way than it did in its early conceptions, but supranationality was always central to a project of European Unification. Democracy is embodied today by the EU's attempts to create strong, democratic states on its Eastern borders, but is also in evidence in the structure of the early institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community. Respect for minority and human rights has become much more central in EU discourse, but the human rights regime developed concurrently with the development of the European community, and there was always a link between the two. Finally, a sense of social responsibility is central to the EU's vision. This developed most concretely with the treaty of Maastricht, however, it is embodied in the economic policies of early European collectives.

As I have said the EU has changed significantly throughout the years. In terms of core values, however, much as stayed the same. EU institutions have developed to better assert its political vision, and to spread that vision throughout Europe. In the next sections I will examine how successful this process of transmission and expansion has been.

## Chapter 5

### **The Accession Process and Slovakia's Path to Membership**

In order to begin discussing how Slovakia conforms to the EU's political vision, I will begin with an examination of the history of interaction between Slovakia and the European Union. This began right after the fall of communism, while Slovakia was still a part of Czechoslovakia, and continues till the present day. Here, I will briefly outline the EU accession process, and discuss the way this process occurred in Slovakia. The focus here will be on creating a picture of how relationships between Slovakia and the EU developed, and the process that Slovakia went through in trying to conform to the EU's political vision and gain membership to the Union.

European Union membership has been seen in Slovakia as a marker of the sort of economic and political stability which they have worked towards since the fall of communism, as well as representing a cultural 'return to Europe'. Beyond the clear monetary and political benefits perceived to come with accession, there is also a strong sense of national pride that is at stake among ordinary people in the struggle for EU membership. European Union membership became a symbol of Slovakia's return to its rightful place in the European community.

The road to EU accession is a long and arduous one for even the most stable candidate countries. For countries like Slovakia, whose political climate has oscillated somewhat unpredictably between promoting strong, western European style democratic principles and more nationalist, isolationist policy, the process was even more challenging. Although Slovakia successfully joined the European Union in 2004, in 1998 it had been originally excluded from the group of states expected to join in the next

accession, instead having been classified, along with Romania and Bulgaria, as a state which had made insufficient progress towards membership to warrant serious consideration of immediate accession. In this chapter I will outline the accession process as a whole looking both at the process as it stands now, and how the process was different for the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) than it was for earlier accession states. I will then proceed to a discussion of this process as it occurred in Slovakia.

### The Accession Process

At the most basic level, the criteria for accession to the EU are extraordinarily simple. As defined by the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993, all states wishing to join the European Union must meet the following three criteria:

1. Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.
2. Membership requires the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union.
3. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.<sup>36</sup>

The simple wording and layout of these standards is, however, misleading.

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, for many of the CEECs creating a strong, democratic political climate, a functioning market economy and developing the institutional stability to allow them to fulfill obligations of EU membership is no mean feat. The accession process, however, is complicated in ways that go beyond the obvious challenges of shifting an entire governmental system.

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<sup>36</sup> European Commission. *Accession Criteria*. Last Accessed: April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement\\_process/accession\\_process/criteria/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/criteria/index_en.htm)

Firstly, the Copenhagen criteria as the basic expectations for membership have been written vaguely, with no explanation of what it would mean to “achieve stability”, “have a functioning market economy”, etc. This lack of specificity leads to considerable confusion regarding the precise expectations which must be met in order for membership to be granted. Given the diversity of economic styles, minority protection strategies, governmental structures, etc. in current EU member states it is perhaps understandable that standards for accession would be vague, allowing for a broad number of effective solutions to institutional problems and the development of varied, case based solutions for improvement of governmental systems, economic markets, and rights protection laws. In reality, however, the accession process, especially as it has developed in the most recent accessions, allows for very little of this sort of individuality.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the lack of specificity in the actual standards required for membership, the EU seems to have developed a set of increasingly specific *de facto* standards for accession states. As Heather Grabbe has pointed out,

Considering the variety of models of capitalism to be found among EU member states, the accession policy documents (particularly the Accession Partnerships...) promote a remarkably uniform view of what a “market economy” should look like.<sup>38</sup>

We can see a similar trend in the promotion of minority language laws and other human rights standards as the primary path towards minority protection, as well as in the expanded understanding of what is needed to fulfill the “obligations of membership”.

Previously this condition was considered to require the

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<sup>37</sup> Grabbe, Heather. “European Union Conditionality and the *Acquis Communautaire*”. *International Political Science Review*. Vol. 23, No. 3, pg. 251. 2002.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* pg. 252

implementation of the *acquis communautaire* which amounts to 80,000 pages of legislative texts already, but it keeps growing as the Union develops new policies and issues new directives, declarations, and jurisprudence.<sup>39</sup>

For the CEECs, however,

The *acquis* has been defined more broadly as “all the real and potential rights and obligations of the EU system and its institutional framework.”<sup>40</sup>

Especially given what Grabbe calls the “maximalist” interpretation of this definition by the European Union, this means that the accession process for the CEECs is much less flexible and case based than earlier accession procedures. In earlier accessions, the process was much more focused on a cooperative, mutually beneficial negotiation process allowing for concessions, opt outs, and special intergovernmental agreements. The relationships mirrored, in many ways, a productive business relationship between two companies.

In contrast, the relationship between the European Union and the CEECs has been more akin to that of a strict parent to a misbehaving child, with firm consequences and denial of privileges if rules are not followed exactly as presented. While, “Greece, Portugal, and Spain were allowed into the Union with the aim of helping them consolidate democracy after entry”<sup>41</sup>, the CEECs are expected to have fully complied with all EU standards at their time of entry. Additionally, while there are very limited possibilities for transitional periods or special arrangements for the CEECs, the European Union has placed strong, and somewhat long-term, limitations on some of the most

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.* pp. 252-253

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* pg. 253

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* pg. 255

important rewards associated with joining the Union, such as access to free movement of labor and open borders.

It is important to note this power differential within the accession process. In some ways, it seems obvious that the European Union would hold the power in the accession process, but within the current structure, candidate states retain almost *no* autonomous power within this process. This has not always been true, and the results of the one-way conversation that represents the current accession process can be extremely detrimental to candidate countries.

### The Accession Process in Slovakia

The problems with the accession process can be especially frustrating for a state like Slovakia, whose path to Union membership was so fraught with difficulty. Although Slovakia's negotiations with the European Union initially began during the early 90s as part of Czechoslovakia, its progress very quickly deteriorated after the Velvet Divorce under the government of Vladimir Meciar.

By the time Slovakia became an independent state in 1993, it had, as a part of Czechoslovakia, begun many of the initial steps towards joining the EU by beginning to network with international and European organizations, as well as becoming party to various conventions and establishing trade agreements. Immediately after independence, Slovakia renegotiated a Europe Agreement as an independent state, joined the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the UN, as well as joining NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme. Despite these initial positive signs, even in the early years of independence, under the third Meciar government of 1994-1998, significant problems of implementation

and democracy building arose which caused problems for Slovakia in creating further movement towards EU accession.

As Geoffrey Pridham explains in his article comparing the Meciar government with the much more pro-EU government of Mikulas Dzurinda which followed it,

Meciar's policy, while continuous with that pursued since the end of communism, left doubts about the priority accorded relations with the EU. Notwithstanding formal initiatives, like making an application for EU membership early in his third government in June 1995, the strategic commitment to follow through with necessary measures was not strong.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the mid-1990s, the Meciar government continually failed to fulfill the obligations necessary for EU accession. The EU issued a series of *demarches*, or "official criticisms", mainly expressing

concern over the growing power of the executive in Slovak politics, attempts to undermine parliamentary control and opposition parties, assaults on the independent media and moves to discriminate against the Hungarian minority in official matters.<sup>43</sup>

The Slovak government's response to these criticisms was less than optimal.

These reactions ranged from partial denial or downplaying of a problem, and assertions of procedural rectitude or misunderstanding of the Slovak position, to denunciation of intervention in internal affairs or attacks on the opposition parties for giving Slovakia a bad name abroad (as they tended to provide the EU with evidence of abuses of power at home).<sup>44</sup>

In addition to the government's general lack of positive response to the growing concerns of the European Union and other international organizations, the Meciar government was unable to effectively function in the Western diplomatic world. A more

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<sup>42</sup> Pridham, Geoffrey. "The European Union's Democratic Conditionality and Domestic Politics in Slovakia: The Meciar and Dzurinda Governments Compared". *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 54, No. 2, 2002. pg. 210

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* pg. 212

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* pg. 213

eastern orientation (Meciar was fond of discussing Slovakia as a bridge between east and west), combined with a weak diplomatic corps which lacked both linguistic skills and adeptness in interactions with western elites, made the formation of important bilateral relationships with western countries very difficult.

By 1997 “there was talk about terminating the Europe Agreement with Slovakia.”<sup>45</sup>, but this did not cause a significant change in Meciar’s policy. As a result, Slovakia was not invited, along with the Czech Republic and some of the other CEECs, to begin official negotiations for European Union membership. This was one of several motivating factors which led to the formation of an alliance among various opposition parties in Slovakia in advance of the 1998 elections. The mobilization of the opposition in response to the authoritarian practices of the Meciar government led to a victory in 1998 by Mikulas Dzurinda, and the creation of a new, four party democratic coalition.<sup>46</sup>

Almost immediately, the newly formed coalition government instituted a dramatically improved approach to relations with Brussels. Possessing both the political will and the diplomatic savvy that Meciar had lacked, Dzurinda visited Brussels only days after his election and established the European Commission/Slovakia High Level Working Group to help recreate positive movement towards accession. This was the first of a number of steps which began to open a better conversation between Slovakia and the European Union. Additionally, Dzurinda very quickly improved the diplomatic corps, strengthened international inter-party ties, and provided increased access for the European Union to high level Slovak government officials.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* pg. 213

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* pg. 214

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* pg. 215

While Slovakia's problems with EU accession hardly disappeared with the change in government, reports were continually and overwhelmingly positive throughout the late 1990s. Despite some challenging intra-coalition disagreements, official opinions from EU sources as well as international organizations and the United States (who had been one of the key players in keeping Slovakia from full NATO membership) were optimistic about Slovakia's path towards stable democracy. In late 1999, Slovakia entered official negotiations for EU membership and in 2000 became a full member of NATO.<sup>48</sup>

The changes which occurred from the very beginning of the Dzurinda government allowed Slovakia to move more or less smoothly along the path towards EU accession. While there continued to be tensions between members of the coalition government, and some struggles with implementation, especially regarding contentious issues like minority language laws, the strengthened relationship between Brussels and Bratislava, as well as the ongoing commitment of the Dzurinda government to EU accession, kept these problems somewhat in check.<sup>49</sup>

Having been initially excluded from the group of countries expected to join the EU in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Slovakia's remarkable progress following 1998 led to the country's accession, along with the Czech Republic, Hungary, and most of the other North and Central Eastern European countries in 2004. This membership should have marked the achievement, by Slovakia, of substantial convergence of policy with the European Union and a dedication to the political goals of the European Union. The rest of this paper will examine how well Slovakia actually conforms to the EU's political vision, and the relationship between this vision and Slovakia's own political culture.

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* pp. 216-219

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* pp. 216-222

## Chapter 6

### **Voter Behavior and the European Union**

The first level of analysis at which I will evaluate Slovakia's relationship with the European Union's political vision is that of voter behavior. Focusing on the referendum on EU membership in 2003 and the most recent parliamentary elections in 2006, I will explore the way that voter behavior reflects support for the European Union's political program. By evaluating the choices that Slovaks make, and the ways that those choices are influenced, we can gain a better understanding of the way that citizens engage (or choose not to) with the political world in and beyond their country.

#### Referendum on European Union Membership

The Slovak referendum on the European Union took place in May of 2003. This referendum was exceptional in the history of the European Union for two key reasons. The first, and most often commented upon, way in which this referendum stood out from others was in the percentage of voters who voted in support of EU membership. Although throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the EU had enjoyed relatively high levels of support in similar referendums, the Slovak case had the highest percentage of 'yes' votes ever recorded in an EU referendum. Although numbers range from 93-95%, Karen Henderson, evaluating valid votes instead of total votes, puts the percentage at 93.71% votes in favor of EU membership.<sup>50</sup>

This extraordinary level of support, interesting on its own, is even more interesting when examined in combination with the other way that the Slovak referendum was unique. While no other referendum produced such a high number of 'yes' votes, the

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<sup>50</sup> Henderson, Karen. "EU Accession and the New Slovak Consensus". *West European Politics*. Vol. 27, No. 4, 2004. pg. 652.

Slovak referendum also had the second lowest level of voter turnout of any of the referendums on EU membership. Only 52.15% of the population voted, and the threshold of validity was only passed in the last hour of the referendum.<sup>51</sup>

Karen Henderson has evaluated the significance of this in great detail in her article “EU Accession and the New Slovak Consensus”. She points to a number of factors which influenced this outcome. Firstly, she argues that what the EU referendum was measuring was not the inherent support for the EU as an institution. By the time referendums were held in Slovakia and other Central and Eastern European countries, “there was no realistic alternative to EU membership for the states of Central and Eastern Europe”. Economically and politically, it would have been disastrous not to join the EU.<sup>52</sup>

Henderson argues, in a second article, that because Slovaks did not perceive opposition to the EU as an appealing option, EU membership came to represent a set of cultural and social issues which were highly salient in the Slovak consciousness, and intricately linked with the Slovak sense of self and of the nation. Henderson argues that

Pro-EU attitudes reflect a symbolic adherence to the notion of a “return to Europe” which assumes that the demands of EU membership are merely a blueprint for returning countries to the positions they would have been in if they had not been subjected to communist rule.<sup>53</sup>

She goes on to argue that opposition to the EU in Slovakia is thus related not to an opposition to the institution as such, but to a general opposition to the project of democratization and Europeanization. Those opposing the EU tend to be those who

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* pg. 652

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Henderson, Karen. “Eurocepticism of Europhobia: Opposition Attitudes to the EU in the Slovak Republic.” Sussex European Institute. 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the UK Political Studies Association, 2001. Manchester.

“have alternative images of what their country would have been like had it been able to follow an indigenously determined path in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>54</sup> These tend to be those who are nostalgic for either the communist or fascist periods of Slovak history. We can also see this by looking at the makeup of the voters, where Henderson observes that “the prominence of supporters of the unreformed Communist Party of Slovakia among ‘no’ voters suggests that the underlying issue was regime change”<sup>55</sup>. As such, the referendum did not truly represent an evaluation of the support for EU membership, but was instead a vote on Slovakia’s return to Europe, and its right to be a member of the European community in general, which was something which few Slovaks opposed.

Because of the perception of EU membership as returning Slovakia to its rightful place in Europe (as noted above), it also became political suicide for a party to openly oppose to the EU. Even the previously very Eurosceptical HZDS supported the EU as Slovakia approached referendum. This meant that leading up to the referendum there was no open opposition to the EU, and therefore no political debate, and no concerted effort at a ‘no’ campaign. This lack of debate combined with the a sense that EU membership was a necessity for the future of Slovakia meant that many “voters with a level of antipathy towards the EU, together with a lack of interest and information, reacted by withdrawing from politics and staying home.”<sup>56</sup>

Thus the EU referendum was primarily a measure of Slovaks’ commitment to continued transition and democratization in general as opposed to strong support for EU institutions and the process of European integration specifically. This is not to argue that

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<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* pg. 4

<sup>55</sup> Henderson 2004, pg. 667

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* pg. 666

Slovaks did not support the EU (which will be explored more deeply in the following chapters), but that referendum outcomes alone do not describe the true level of support within Slovak society. It is also important to observe the overwhelming lack of debate in the lead up to EU membership, and therefore very little information on the possible negative impacts of EU integration.

### 2006 Parliamentary Elections

The 2006 elections were the first since Slovakia had joined the European Union. In the months leading up to the elections, there was much speculation among scholars and in the press as to who would win the election, and even more importantly who that party would choose as its coalition partners. There were only two parties who were really in a position to receive the most votes, according to polling data before the election: the ruling SDKU (Democratic and Christian Union) led by Mikulas Dzurinda, and the relatively young Smer, a socialist party, led by Robert Fico. In the end, Smer received just under 30% percent of the votes, with the SDKU earning only a little more than 18%.<sup>57</sup>

This outcome was extremely important in terms of defining the Slovak political orientation. The SDKU under Dzurinda's leadership had pulled Slovakia out of international isolation, and turned the country's international image around. His coalition had been almost single handedly responsible for gaining Slovakia membership in the European Union. Nonetheless, SDKU was unable to retain its place in the government, and was replaced by Smer.

Smer, led by Robert Fico, was a relatively young party founded in 2000. The party had run on a platform of overturning the reforms created by the Dzurinda

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<sup>57</sup> Buckova, Michaela. "Slovensko hlasuje, zda pujde doleva". *Mlada Fronta DNES*. June 6, 2006. pg. 11.

government, especially in terms of fiscal policy and taxation. Robert Fico, who became prime minister after the elections, was something of an unpredictable character. In the past, he had been compared to a younger version of Vladimir Meciar, the man who led Slovakia into international isolation in the 1990s. He had a history of anti-minority rhetoric towards both the Roma and Hungarian communities, and had always taken a somewhat Euroskeptical approach to relationships with the EU. Many scholars, however, believed that these had been mistakes of youth, and that he had moved more towards a mainstream, pro-western political platform.<sup>58</sup>

The results of this election are intriguing, especially so soon after gaining European Union membership. One might anticipate that Dzurinda's SDKU, having been largely responsible for Slovakia's gaining membership in the European Union, would have enjoyed a relatively high level of popularity among Slovak citizens. Given the high levels of support for the EU which seemed to be evident in the referendum (despite the issues associated with low turnout), it is somewhat surprising that the party to win the most votes in the 2006 elections was one that ran on a platform of overturning some of the very policies which had gained Slovakia entry into the EU and legitimacy in the international community.

One possible explanation for this seemingly contradictory outcome is related to Henderson's explanation of the EU referendum results. Given that the EU referendum seems to have been less a referendum on EU institutions as such, and more concretely a referendum on Slovak return to Europe and democratization in general, the results of the election may actually begin to illuminate the real points of Slovak support. While Slovaks support EU membership as a concept, and as an unavoidable step in the

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<sup>58</sup> Transitions Online Staff. "Slovakia: Fico's Smer". *Transitions Online*. June 19, 2006.

continuation of Slovak success as a state (as demonstrated by the EU referendum), they tend not to actually agree with many of the policies which line up most closely with the EU's political goals as we can see in the lack of support garnered by Dzurinda's party in the most recent elections. Although Dzurinda had been an attractive candidate in previous years because his party represented the promise of successful EU accession, once such accession was achieved, Slovaks were less willing to actively support the actual policies which brought about this success.

In any case, the results of both of these votes demonstrate a complexity in the behavior of the Slovak citizenry in voting, and also suggest a complicated relationship between the values of Slovak citizens and the values of the EU. These issues will be explored more deeply in the later analysis chapter.

## Chapter 7 **Political Party Behavior and the European Union**

The second level of analysis at which I will examine the relationship between Slovak and EU political values is the behavior and programs of political parties in Slovakia. First, I will look at Smer's choice of coalition partners in evaluating the party's underlying political goals. Then, looking at behavior since the formation of the coalition, I will analyze the way that this behavior compares to and responds to the EU's core political vision.

### Coalition Formation

Given the distribution of votes, and the unpredictability of Fico as a political player, the choices made in coalition formation following the 2006 elections were of particular importance. Kevin Deegan-Kraus, in his post-election analysis, identifies eight possible coalitions which could be formed in order to create a majority. Two of these would have excluded Smer as a coalition partner, but would have required a significant level of cooperation between parties which were unlikely to cooperate, and so it seemed most likely from the beginning that Smer would form the government.<sup>59</sup>

The coalition which Smer formed, however, was one which had been referred to in the past as the "worst-case scenario"<sup>60</sup>, and which few people predicted would be the coalition choice. He joined forces with the ultra-nationalist SNS (Slovak National Party) and the HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia), which under the leadership of Vladimir Meciar had driven the Slovak reputation and economy into the ground in the 1990s.

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<sup>59</sup> Deegan-Kraus, Kevin. *Pozorblog*. <http://www.pozorblog.com/2006/week25/index.html>

<sup>60</sup> Jurinova, Martina. "Fico Extends Hand to Meciar, Slota". *Slovak Spectator*. July 3rd, 2006. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2006026&cl=24003>

One analyst at *Transitions Online Magazine* made a forceful argument in the days after the election and before the formation of the coalition in which he argued that a coalition between Smer, SNS and HZDS was a virtual impossibility. The commentator argues that,

Fico would be making a bad miscalculation to team up with Meciar...By partnering with Meciar, Fico would gain no fresh votes, could lose some, and would almost certainly ensure he could not gain more votes come the next elections. The same is also true (probably even truer) about any link-up with the nationalists. Such a coalition would tell the electorate that Fico believes the way forward leads backwards. Back to a divisive period...So, political history and logic suggest Fico will look to the right to form a governing coalition.<sup>61</sup>

This argument looks very much like those made by many observers in the international press in the days between the election and the formation of the coalition. A coalition with SNS and HZDS, especially when there were other, viable coalition options available, seemed to be a sign that Slovakia was headed back towards a more national, as opposed to supranational model. It returned Vladimir Meciar, the HZDS leader best known for nearly ruining Slovakia's chances at EU membership, to a place within the government, and relegitimized the SNS whose outspoken leader, Jan Slota, was notorious for drunken rants about Hungarians, and for complaining about the Roma birth rate. If Fico was trying to recreate himself and his party not as the Euroskeptics they had been in the 90s, but as pro-European, forward thinking social democrats, a coalition with the two Slovak parties which look the least Euro-friendly seems an odd choice.

### Supranationality

The Party of European Socialists (PES), the umbrella organization for socialist parties in the European Union, also thought that this was an unfitting choice. Only weeks

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<sup>61</sup> Transitions Online Staff. "Slovakia: Fico's Smer". *Transitions Online*. June 19, 2006.

after the formation of the coalition, they issued a suspension to Smer, charging that as nationalism was in direct conflict with the ideals of socialism, a coalition with an extreme nationalist party was inappropriate for a member of their organization. In June, there will be a review of this suspension, but it marks an important sight for analyzing the orientation of the present government.<sup>62</sup>

Since the party's suspension from the PES, Fico and other Smer leaders have made no attempt to negotiate with the PES to regain entry to the organization. The leader of the PES, Martin Schultz, has expressed confusion on several occasions as to why the party would not try to regain their place within the organization. He has said that he, "can't imagine why Robert Fico would be so passive"<sup>63</sup> in his approach to Smer's suspension. Indeed, it seems Fico would have very little to lose by negotiating with the PES, and significant international legitimacy to gain.

Fico's response to suspension from the PES represents one of the ways that the government's behavior since forming a coalition has indicated a dubious commitment to the principle of supranationality. In a supranational organization like the European Union, the multi-lateral relationships formed in block groups like the PES are especially important. During the Meciar government, antagonistic relations with diplomats from other EU countries were one issue which led to Slovakia's international isolation. Additionally, membership in party groups, like the PES, are important for creating a voice for individual state party programs within the wider context of the European community. Fico has shown, through his lack of response to PES criticism, and his

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<sup>62</sup> Party of European Socialists. "Resolution Adopted by the PES Presidency Brussels, 12 October 2006". Accessed at: <http://www.pes.org/content/view/721/90>

<sup>63</sup> Slovak Spectator Staff. "Smer Indifferent About PES Membership". *Slovak Spectator*. February 19, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007007&cl=26774>

continued defense of the SNS as a party which is not extremist or nationalist, that he is not overly concerned with the maintenance of these international relationships.

Additionally, in Slovak foreign policy, Fico and his party have seemed to make moves towards asserting greater Slovak independence from European ideas. Fico was recently criticized for attending a gala at the Cuban embassy in Bratislava in honor of the communist revolution in that country. Domestically, this raised eyebrows as an issue of decorum, but it also seems to be one event of several which signal a shift in Slovakia's foreign policy in general.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to attending the party at the Cuban embassy, Fico has also strengthened Slovakia's ties with a number of internationally isolated regimes like Libya and Belarus. This general trend in improving Slovak relationships with this kind of regime represents a show of Slovak independence in issues of policy from the European Union. Especially when combined with the governments somewhat tense relationship with it's counterparts in Europe, this seems to be a troubling move away from European concepts of a supranational vision of Europe, and towards more independent policy making as well as closer relationships with troubling regimes.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, the rhetoric of some of the members of the coalition, especially the SNS, has been in direct conflict with principles of supranational government in Europe. Jan Slota has stated, in an interview with the *Slovak Spectator*:

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<sup>64</sup> Slovak Spectator Staff. "Politicians Criticize Fico's Participation at Cuba Reception". January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=online&cl=26307>

<sup>65</sup> Jurinova, Martina. "Fico Giving New Face to Slovak Foreign Policy". *Slovak Spectator*. January 22, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007003&cl=26315>

I think the word “national” should be heard louder in European politics. I want to work for my nation. I am also a part of Europe and the European Union, but only as long as no one interferes with my national rights.<sup>66</sup>

This rhetoric, which exemplifies much of the program of the SNS, is in opposition to the European Union’s political vision which demands the sacrifice of a level of national autonomy to European level governance.

On the whole, then, it seems unclear whether Smer and its coalition truly support the supranationality of the European Union. Some members of the coalition actually seem to directly oppose it. In this way, Slovak government behavior seems not to conform to the political vision of the EU as relates to the further development of European integration, despite rhetoric to the contrary.

### Democracy

At the most basic level, Slovak democracy is functioning. The coalition was democratically elected, and seems to truly reflect the wishes of the Slovak people. There have, however, been some disturbing early signs in terms of the government’s commitment to democracy and the openness and freedom of the government. The government announced recently that cabinet sessions would be closed to the public. This was seen by many as an attempt to limit public access to information, and as seriously decreasing the transparency of the government. There have also been other failed attempts to limit access to information about government proceedings for the public.

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<sup>66</sup> Nicholson, Tom. “‘My Problem’: Hungarians and Gypsies”. *Slovak Spectator*. May 22, 2006. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2006020&cl=23391>

These measures failed largely in response to significant criticism by the international community and NGOs in Slovakia.<sup>67</sup>

Additionally, the government has had tense relationships with the media from the very first day after the election, when according to the *Slovak Spectator*, “the victorious Smer party barred journalists from its headquarters and forced them to wait outside on the sidewalk” (*Slovak Spectator*). Since the election, the government has further antagonized journalists with its policies, and has been accused of trying to direct the media’s coverage of important government events. Although there has not been any direct attack on the freedom of the press, the government’s policies do not seem to promote the media freedom and access that would seem to be embodied by the EU’s concept of strong, free democratic societies.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, the government has come under fire for appointing the children of prominent businessmen, party officials, and donors to high ranking positions within the government.<sup>69</sup> Although the government has argued that all of their nominees are qualified, widespread accusations of corruption still abound. These accusations were not lessened when, recently, the economic minister made a statement supporting the use of dirty money by the government in order to secure arms deals in competition with private companies.

Overall, there have been a number of signs that the government’s commitment to truly free and democratic institutions is questionable. While the government backs up its decisions, the high level of questionable behavior indicates some underlying corruption.

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<sup>67</sup> Lesna, L’uba. “Smer Versus the Media?”. *Slovak Spectator*. October 23, 2006. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2006041&cl=24927>

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Lesna, L’uba and Nicholson, Tom. “Fico Coalition In Hot Water Over ‘Jobs for the Boys’”. *Slovak Spectator*. December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2006047&cl=25292>

Finally, attempts to limit access by the media to government actions make these behaviors increasingly suspect.

### Human and Minority Rights

After the formation of the coalition, one of the most immediate concerns expressed by the international community was over the situation of minority rights. There was concern that the inclusion of the ultra-nationalist SNS, which had a history of extreme anti-minority rhetoric, combined with Robert Fico's own history of less extreme rhetoric would lead to the worsening of inter-ethnic relations. While Fico's political party program was primarily focused on economics, one clause specifically guarantees equal attention to all regardless of nationality or ethnicity<sup>70</sup>, but his choice of coalition partners immediately called this into question.

These fears seemed to be confirmed when immediately following the election and the formation of the coalition there was a small rash of violent incidents against Hungarian minorities in Southern Slovakia. More disturbing than the events themselves, however, was the response of the government. In one incident, a young Hungarian student claimed to have been attacked in a small town in southern Slovakia. The government did not quickly condemn the attack, and in fact went on to blame Hungarians themselves for the situation. Robert Fico called the claims an "attempt to damage Slovakia's image"<sup>71</sup>, and the girl herself reported that "six policemen were shouting at [her] that [she] was a liar and that [she] had been lying from the beginning"<sup>72</sup> Relations

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<sup>70</sup> Smer-Socialna Demokracia. "Smerom k L'udom: Volebny Program SMER – socialna demokracia". [http://www.strana-smer.sk/index.php?id=volebny\\_program&clanok=volebny\\_program\\_2006](http://www.strana-smer.sk/index.php?id=volebny_program&clanok=volebny_program_2006)

<sup>71</sup> Jurinova, Martina. "Police: Hedviga Lied". *Slovak Spectator*. September 18, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

with Hungary became significantly more tense in the immediate aftermath of the events, until eventually calming due to bi-lateral negotiations between the two governments.

Despite the official calming of tensions, these events helped cement the Hungarian minority political party's (SMK) skepticism of the new coalition. This was not improved by the government's continued action towards minorities. There was some early talk among government officials of repealing the minority language law, which was one of the central requirements for Slovak accession to the EU. This talk seems largely to have stopped, however some of the official appointments made by the government have continued to call into question the level at which they show respect for minority rights and the concerns of minority groups.

The most high profile example of this is the appointment of Ivan Petransky to lead the Institute of National Memory. The Institute of National Memory is "an archive that documents and publishes state crimes committed under Slovakia's 20<sup>th</sup> century fascist and communist regimes"<sup>73</sup> The director of the institute is responsible for handling and disseminating all of the information regarding the history, especially related to the secret police, from these periods. Petransky's appointment was considered questionable because his previous job was as a historian for the ultra-nationalist historical and cultural society, Matica Slovenska. Matica Slovenska openly glorifies the war-time fascist state and is well known for its paranoid anti-minority rhetoric. According to the *Slovak Spectator* "Matica Slovenská publications do not conceal an approval of the Slovak wartime state and its president, Jozef Tiso, and even cast doubt on the historical event of the

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<sup>73</sup> Lesna, L'uba. "Far-Right Party Nominee to lead UPN". *Slovak Spectator*. February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007005&cl=26482>

Holocaust.”<sup>74</sup> Given his past association, many saw this appointment as demonstrating a clear conflict, and accused Petrasky as being unfit for the position. His appointment was initially not approved after he was seen attending a rally in celebration of the war-time fascist state. Despite these criticisms, however, the government pushed through his appointment to the post. Many historians have expressed concern that he will not appropriately deal with the information regarding the fascist past in Slovakia. The government’s continued support of Petrasky, seems to indicate a lack of interest in these criticisms.<sup>75</sup>

Fico’s foreign policy has also been seen as a troubling sign of the government’s dubious relationship to human and minority rights. Fico’s visit to the Cuban embassy, discussed in the previous section, was largely interpreted as tacit support for the widespread human rights violations which occur in that country. One representative from a human rights NGO in Slovakia argued that Fico’s attendance at this event represented a celebration by Fico of a regime that “for 48 years has been putting free-thinking people in jail and keeping the rest isolated on the island without giving them the change to freely choose their political representation.”<sup>76</sup> Such concerns were hardly allayed when the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Dusan Caplovic, defended Fico’s presence at the event, further asserting that Fidel Castro was not a dictator and seeming to downplay the human rights abuses occurring in that country.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Lesna, L’uba. “Matica Journal Doubts Holocaust”. *Slovak Spectator*. February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007006&cl=26631>

<sup>75</sup> Lesna, L’uba. “Far-Right Party Nominee to lead UPN”. *Slovak Spectator*. February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007005&cl=26482>

<sup>76</sup> Jurinova, Martina. “Fico Giving New Face to Slovak Foreign Policy”. *Slovak Spectator*. January 22, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007003&cl=26315>

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

Thus, while the government as a whole does not have an officially anti-minority orientation, its behavior calls into question its dedication to the full protection of the minority communities in Slovakia. Additionally, some of its appointees, as well as the leaders of some of the parties in government, express an openly disdainful attitude towards minorities and exhibit strong nationalist tendencies. Finally, Fico's behavior towards Cuba, and the statements of some of his ministers have seemed to express a contradiction between commonly held European conceptions of human rights and the understanding of these rights in the Slovak government.

### Social Responsibility

It is in the area of social responsibility that Smer's rhetoric seems most clearly to conform to the ideas of the European Union. As a socialist party, many of the theories underlying Smer's political program are based on greater social welfare and protection. Unfortunately, the paths that he has taken in these areas do not conform as well in practice as in theory to the European social model. His focus here has been taxation and monetary policy. Despite the fact that his economic ideas may be somewhat more leftist, they do not seem to create a clear improvement in the economic and social conditions of the country. Additionally, many of the policies which Fico would like to see overturned, such as tax and financial policy, represent some of the most successful policies of the last government and are viewed quite favorably in the international community. Finally, because Fico's vision of social responsibility does not seem, in practice, to extend to minorities (as discussed above), it is difficult to take his claims of improving the conditions of all those in Slovakia seriously.

## Chapter 8

### **Slovak Public Opinion and the European Union**

The final level of analysis at which I will examine Slovakia's political culture in relation to the political vision of the European Union is through public opinion. Using both domestic public opinion polls, and data from the 2006 Eurobarometer, I will look at Slovak support for the government as well as the EU. Additionally, I will explore Slovak opinion of these bodies, the way they should function, and the impact that they have on their lives as citizens.

#### Government vs. EU Support

As I have discussed in previous sections, in the June elections, Smer received just under 30% of the vote. The other two coalition partners, the HZDS and the SNS, received 8.79% and 11.73% of the vote respectively.<sup>78</sup> Given some of the contentious decisions made by the government in recent months (discussed in previous chapters), it is interesting to see how stable the government's support has been since its election.

A recent public opinion poll conducted by the Statistics Office's Institute for Public Opinion Research (UVVM) in February 2007<sup>79</sup> shows that not only is Smer still the most popular party in the country, but its support has actually increased significantly since the party took office. According to this survey, 46.7% of respondents support Smer, a truly incredible number in Slovakia's multi-party system. Additionally, the SNS, while having lost some support since the election (down to 10.6% from 11.73% of votes in the election), is now the second most popular party in the country due to plummeting

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<sup>78</sup> Jurinova, Martina. "Smer and SDKU Dominate Vote". *Slovak Spectator*. June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2006024&cl=23719>

<sup>79</sup> Slovak Spectator Staff. "Smer is Slovakia's Most Popular Party". *Slovak Spectator*. March 12, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007010&cl=27031>

levels of support for the former government party of the SDKU. The HZDS has also done well, with its support rising to 10.4%. The combined support for the three parties in the government is 67.7%

This high level of support is particularly interesting in light of the government's criticism by the international community in a number of areas. Smer's support, of course, is the most astounding. An opinion in the *Slovak Spectator* recently speculated that in the next round of elections, Fico's Smer would have the ability to rule as a single party, without a coalition<sup>80</sup>. While this may still be some ways off, it is clear that Smer holds significant power among the Slovak public, and that the coalition in general enjoys extremely high levels of support.

The European Union also continues to enjoy extremely high levels of public support in Slovakia. In the recent Eurobarometer survey<sup>81</sup>, conducted in the fall of 2006, after the parliamentary elections, 61% of Slovaks considered EU membership a good thing. An even higher percentage, 71%, believed that the country had benefited from EU membership. These numbers are interesting in relation to one another, because the government seems to garner similarly high levels of support to those of the European Union, despite the fact that as I have discussed in previous sections, their values do not always seem to align.

A similar contradiction seems to arise over questions of trust. Slovaks, as they have done in the past, trust the European Union significantly more than they trust their own national government. Only 39% of Slovaks trust the Slovak government (although

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<sup>80</sup> Marchevisky, Pavel. "Is Fico Heading Towards a One-Party Government in 2010?". *Slovak Spectator*. April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. <http://www.slovakspectator.sk/clanok.asp?vyd=2007013&cl=27253>

<sup>81</sup> European Commission (commissioned by). "National Report, Executive Summary Slovak Republic". *Eurobarometer 66: Public Opinion in the European Union*. (Autumn 2006).

Fico's individual numbers are higher at 45.6%) while 62% trust the European Union. On the other hand, government trust has increased by 18% since the election of the new coalition. These numbers seem likely to continue to increase given the high levels of government support throughout Slovakia. Concurrently, trust for the European Union has also increased. Thus, while Slovaks have generally tended to trust EU institutions more readily than national institutions, and continue to do so, it is interesting to observe that both of these numbers have gone up, despite government behavior. The government, which seems to act in opposition to many core EU values, is more trusted than the previous government which was widely viewed in a positive light by the EU. Additionally, trust in such a government has not had any negative impact on growing trust in EU institutions.

#### European Integration and Stronger European Political Union

One of the questions asked on the most recent Eurobarometer related to support or lack of support for "the development of European integration towards European political union". At the most basic level, this question is key in evaluating EU citizen support for increased supranationality in the European Union, and thus speaks to one of the core political values of the EU. Answers to this question would seem to be a marker of whether or not individuals support this concept.

Slovaks, along with Slovenes, came out as the most supportive of the 25 states surveyed of such developments. 77% of Slovaks supported the above quote, and therefore, at least in theory, the principle of supranational governance and an expanded European influence on political community. Interestingly, however, the Eurobarometer goes on to observe that while Slovaks support the *concept* of greater European political

unity, their views on what this entails “do not correspond with the probable competencies of European political union”. In other words, Slovak definitions of a political union do not correspond with EU hopes for such a union.

In discussing the areas where the EU should have influence over Slovak policy, 58% of Slovaks believe that agriculture should be the sole responsibility of the national government, while even more, 80%, believe that the EU should not play a role in the development of taxation policy. Ironically, the European Union already has an extraordinarily high degree of control over the development of agricultural policies through the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). While the EU does not directly control tax policy, it does influence economic policy, and many of the tax policies passed by the previous government were related to European demands of economic integration. Thus, the areas where Slovaks believe the EU should have the least influence actually represent areas where the EU has a relatively significant influence.

On the other hand, Slovaks are generally quite comfortable with a large degree of EU influence on foreign and security policy. These are policy areas towards which the EU leaders might like to expand, but where it has little concrete control at the present time. In general, it is in the realm of domestic policies such as agriculture, food production, human and minority rights, and monetary issues where the EU has the most significant influence. At this time, European states have been generally reluctant to sacrifice national sovereignty on foreign and security issues.

Thus, European political community actually functions in direct opposition to Slovak concepts of how this community should be structured. The policies which Slovaks feel least inclined to sacrifice to supranational governance are the policies over

which the EU has the most concrete control, and those policies where Slovaks are more willing to give up their national sovereignty are areas where the EU has, and is likely to continue at least for a few years to have, relatively little control. This points to a contradiction between EU and Slovak concepts of increased political union, which make the interpretation of strong Slovak support for such a union extremely complicated.

#### Slovak Vision of the European Union

Finally, in evaluating public opinion in Slovakia, it is important to look at how Slovaks view and define the European Union. I have already established that Slovaks show strong support for the European Union in general, and for the concepts of further political integration within the Union. On the other hand, there have seemed to be some contradictions in Slovak and EU interpretations of these concepts. How, then, do Slovaks perceive the European Union as an institutional body?

When asked to describe the values that most represent the European Union, the most common answer among Slovaks was democracy, which 50% of Slovaks identified as the principle which most defined the European Union. After democracy were peace and human rights, each of which were chosen by 43% of respondents. Additionally, 72% of Slovaks believe that the values of European states are “fairly close” or “very close” to one another. In their definition of the European Union, Slovaks are similar to other European states in choosing issues of democracy, peace and human rights. These answers also seem to conform to the EU’s own political project and core values.

Somewhat contradictory, however, are Slovaks’ perceptions of their role within this institution. Despite rating democracy as the most central value of the European Union, 62% of Slovaks “do not think their voice counts in the European Union”, and only

10% of Slovaks feel that they are “involved with the European Union”. Also, while Slovaks rate human rights as a strong value of the European Union, there was significant outcry among both the public and several political parties against passing minority protection legislation as mandated by the European Union during the accession process.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, Slovaks believe that democracy defines the European Union as an institution, but do not feel that they, as citizens within this democracy, have a voice. They believe that human rights are central to the European Union, and that European values tend to be consistent across states, but do not support the sorts of legislation that the EU deems necessary for the protection of these rights which are so central. These contradictions seem to point to a complexity of interaction between the European Union and Slovakia which will be analyzed in more depth in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>82</sup> Kopanic, Michael J. “The New Minority Language Law in Slovakia”. *Central Europe Review*. Vol. 1, No. 2. July 5, 1999. <http://www.ce-review.org/99/2/kopanic2.html>

## **Chapter 9** **Conclusion**

This paper has explored the relationship between Slovak visions of their own place in Europe and their domestic political community, of Europe's political future, and of the European Union's own political vision and expectations. Using public opinion data, voting patterns and government policy and behavior I have examined the Slovak political orientation both domestically and in relation to the EU. I have offered a broad focus which includes both individual's and the government's perspectives, and to examine not only individual factors, but the interaction of a variety of variables. Through this exploration, I have attempted to answer the question of whether Slovakia conforms to the European Union's core political vision.

My exploration suggests that there is not a clear yes or no answer to this question. Slovakia's relationship with the political goals of the European Union seems to be complicated and contradictory. At times, Slovaks seem to embody the ideal European citizens, with high levels of support for the European Union and for further integration of the European community. On the other hand, there seems to be relatively low levels of support for the sorts of policies which would back up these positive indicators. Referring back to my earlier critique of existing scholarship on Europeanization, we can see that it is precisely these complexities which are largely absent in examinations of Europeanization and European integration.

In chapter two, I argued that the existing literature tends to neglect the bi-directional nature of Europeanization. While Borzel has addressed this to some extent in her scholarship, I believe that her primary focus on institutional development excludes an important aspect of these processes: the interaction between not only EU institutions and

domestic institutions, but between the underlying understandings of political culture in the European Union and individual states. I argued that in examining and evaluating processes of Europeanization, it is important to look both at shifts in policy and at changes which happen at the level of political culture, and simultaneously examine not only how the EU interacts with member states, but also how member states respond to the EU. The contradictions inherent in the Slovak case point to the fact that to ignore these issues is to ignore some of the more serious, underlying challenges of Europeanization.

An examination of the Slovak case from a purely institutional perspective would likely result in a rather positive conclusion about Slovakia's progress towards Europeanization. A deeper look at the functioning of these institutions might be slightly less optimistic, but would tend to also indicate strong progress. Slovakia has made legal reforms and shifted many of its policies to conform to the norms required by the European Union, and at least rhetorically, the government perceives itself as moving towards Europe.

Concurrently, examining the Slovak case from the perspective of only cultural and social developments, as measured primarily by opinion polls, would also likely lead to a positive conclusion. Public support for Slovakia's continued integration into the European Union is high, and Slovaks have high levels of trust and support for the EU. Slovaks rank higher than almost any other state in the Union in all of these areas.

As I have examined in this paper, however, these findings do not tell the whole story. Thus, an examination of the process of Europeanization in Slovakia which takes into account only one side of the process is likely to have somewhat superficial results. It is only when we dig deeper, and begin to examine the interactions between the varying

aspects of this process that we find the contradictions which I have explored in this thesis. These contradictions only become evident in the interplay between EU and domestic political cultures, and in the relationships between citizens and governments, which tend not to be concretely addressed in literature on Europeanization.

It is in these interactions that we can observe that although Slovaks have high levels of support for the European Union, their voting behaviors and their understanding of the European Union make the meaning behind this support difficult to gauge. Although Slovaks support greater European integration, they also do not believe that this should infringe on control over domestic issues, which contradicts the European Union's own goals of greater supranational governance. Slovaks believe that the European Union represents their values, but do not believe that they have a say in the organization which dictates how those values will be represented. All of this points to an underlying conflict which is not clear through an examination based on individual factors alone.

It is in these contradictions between the domestic political culture of Slovakia and the European Union's political ideals that we see the impact of nationalism on Europeanization in the Slovak case. There is still a strong undercurrent of nationalist sentiment among both individuals and the government in Slovakia. In relation to Europeanization, nationalism is likely to always present a conflict. From the earliest days of the European Coal and Steel Community, it was nationalism which was European unity's greatest foe. It is difficult to conceive of a state which can be simultaneously committed to nationalism and supranationalism. The terms seem to contradict one another, and yet this seems to underlie Slovakia's current political situation.

Slovakia has a government which contains parties with a strong history of nationalist sentiment. Current sentiment is less extreme, but has tended to be increasingly nationalist in recent years, and yet as this nationalist rhetoric increases, so does Slovakia's claims to and support for European integration. This conflict between a domestic political culture which still has strong nationalist undertones and an EU political culture dedicated to eliminating such sentiments may also help to explain many of the contradictions in public opinion, for example high support for the European Union combined with an aversion to EU intervention in domestic affairs, or pro-EU rhetoric by government parties combined with simultaneous assertions of political independence through policy. The EU is viewed positively, but conflicting concepts of political culture mean that implementation of policies is challenging, and the political parties which Slovaks support may not be the most pro-EU. Eventually, this conflict will have to be negotiated. In the long run, Slovakia and the EU are dealing with a contradiction of values at a deep level, and if Europeanization is going to continue, this contradiction will have to be resolved.

Europeanization, however, progresses without attention to the intricacies and contradictions present in individual states. Instead, EU accession, meant to be the institutional embodiment of this process, is applied as a cookie cutter formula to all states, with the expectations that all states will comply in identical ways. By ignoring individual situations, the EU has created long term challenges for itself in the attempt to develop a strongly united European community.

I predict that the long-term impacts of these contradictions will have serious implications for the EU's goal of European unification. If the political goals of states

continue to conflict, at a basic level, with the political goals of the European Union, support for the EU both among citizens and among governments is likely to falter. This is likely to mean a lack of political will and societal support for the continued integration of states into the European community, and for the expansion of supranational governance in Europe.

These explorations, however, still leave open the question of why these contradictions and challenges exist. I touched on this briefly in the preceding paragraphs, but they warrant greater theorizing. Based on my research, I believe that there are multiple influences which have shaped the Slovak case. Some of these are specific to the Slovakia in particular, but others seem to point to a larger European trend and to underlying challenges in the European Union and processes of Europeanization.

Slovak history, as explored in Chapter 3, is marked by almost contiguous domination by outside forces. In the context of both empires and federal states, Slovak national identity has been challenged and threatened for as long as it has existed. Nationalist sentiment, in both the positive and negative sense, developed among Slovaks as a reaction to such threats. Historically, when Slovaks have felt that their identity was threatened, nationalist sentiment, particularly outspoken and violent nationalist sentiment, has tended to rise in response to an insecurity of identity, and a desire to protect individual national identity. One example of this is the rise of fascism partially in response to the sense of domination by the Czech majority in Czechoslovakia. This is perhaps the most extreme case, but there are other examples of the relationship between domination or autonomy and nationalism, such as the rise of nationalism in response to Magyarization, and decreases in nationalism under communism after the Czechoslovak

state was federalized and Slovakia granted significant autonomy within the state. These examples show a link between a sense of threat to the Slovak identity and the rise of nationalist and oppositional sentiment within Slovakia.

We can see a similar situation now in response to the European Union. The current Slovak state is the first fully independent, autonomous state in Slovak history. It is the first time that Slovaks have been fully in control of their own affairs, but the EU has limited that. Immediately after independence, Slovakia moved to join the EU and thus has once again placed its sovereignty partially in the hands of another entity. While the EU may not be a dominating force in the same way as, for example, Austria-Hungary, it represents the transfer of control over Slovak affairs away from Slovaks and towards a supranational entity. This actual transfer, combined with a cultural memory of much stronger domination, then invokes a rise in nationalist sentiment in order to more strongly assert the Slovak identity.

Partially, this is due to the interactions between Slovakia and the European Union in the process of accession, and in the implementation of policies since membership. In discussing theories of nationalism early in the paper, I outlined three major approaches to the study. I myself defined nationalism using an ethnosymbolist approach, but it is interesting to look at the modernist and primordialist approaches in examining Slovak interactions with the EU.

Slovak nationalism has typically taken a primordialist approach to understanding the nation. That is, Slovak national consciousness is described as being deeply linked to a historical and almost spiritual connection to “Slovakness”. In contrast, the European Union takes a much more modernist approach to understanding national identity. That is,

the EU treats national identity as something which can be shaped, and changed over time, and uses integration and accession to attempt to create new identities for its citizens. The EU, then, assumes that individuals within states will respond to this project in rational ways and with modernist concepts of their own identities. In Slovakia, however, because national identity is grounded in rhetoric of primordial, historical attachment, this modernist project of constructing new identities, and of identifying oneself strongly with a supranational identity, becomes an attack on the foundations of national identity. The EU and Slovakia are approaching the idea of identity in concretely different ways, and this leads to a lack of fit between the EU's approach and the Slovak approach. In a sense, the two groups are speaking different languages of the nation, and this is a major factor in creating opposing political cultures which subsequently create challenges to Europeanization.

Although these processes do seem to be linked to the particularities of Slovak history, if we look more broadly at Europe in general, many of the contradictions and problems which I have examined in the Slovak case seem not to be isolated, but to fit into a larger trend. Throughout Europe from France to Finland, not to mention in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, there is growing support for nationalist policies and growing opposition to the further expansion of EU control. We can see these trends in the German parliamentary elections of 2006 where in several regional parliaments neo-Nazi parties gained seats, in the current French elections, and, of course, in the failure of the EU constitution which was perceived by many as an attempt to bring greater federalization to the European system.

It would seem that the contradictions which I have explored in this thesis, although influenced by Slovakia's own history and current situation, run deeper than simply the particularities of individual, national cases, and instead can be seen throughout the EU. Negative reactions to greater supranationalism have become a European trend. I theorize that given this wider trend, many of the challenges we see in Slovakia actually rest in the process of Europeanization and the project of EU expansion itself. As these processes continue, national sovereignty is increasingly eroded, and this makes states and their citizens increasingly insecure. The response has been stronger support for nationalism and Euroskeptic policies. These policies are appealing in response to the EU because they address the underlying fear of loss of identity which grows as the independence of states is gradually lost. It makes sense that the earliest signs of such trends are most apparent in young states which are already insecure, like Slovakia, but they are increasingly evident in strong, established democracies as well.

These conflicts, if left unchecked, will have serious long-term consequences for the European Union. Indeed, it seems possible that such conflicts could spell its end. The sort of supranational governance that the EU would like to promote requires strong support from both individual states and from individuals in order to succeed. There must be strong political will backing sacrifices in national sovereignty, or such sacrifices will not be accepted. Citizens must view the positive impacts of such policies as outweighing the loss they cause in order to find them appealing, and the current situation would seem to indicate that support for such views is not clear. Perhaps the European Union has simply reached the boundaries of supranationality in Europe and can go no further, either physically or politically.

If the EU continues to try to extend its reach in spite of the growing negative impacts of such policies, it is likely that these early signs of national backlash will grow into much more serious opposition, and that this opposition will continue to spread. It is perhaps time for the European Union to reevaluate its goals and reconsider the final outcome that it would like to achieve. It is certain that the EU's current project still has a long way to go. If the EU wants to continue on its current path, it will need to try to resolve the contradictions present in the Slovak case, and increasingly in other European states as well. Whether or not these contradictions are resolvable or simply represent the final borders of Supranationalism today is something which will only become clear in the years to come.

The European Union's future success or failure seems to me to depend on its ability to find a balance between EU and member state goals, and between supranational control and national sovereignty. It may be that stronger supranational governance is not reasonable for Europe today, but the EU still has the opportunity to be an organization which creates greater security and stronger democracies through the cooperation of states. The future of the EU as an institution, of the values that it embodies, and of the structure of the European community is dependent upon the negotiation of the complex and often contradictory relationships between member states and the European Union.

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