The influence of state capacity on the speed of EU accession: the case of post-socialist states of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

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Abstract

This thesis considers the speed of EU accession of 19 candidate countries from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe through the lens of the factors of their state capacity. The primary data analysis method is Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values (QCAmv), which allows to identify the combination of factors that led to the acceleration or deceleration of the speed of EU accession in each of the cases under consideration. Two analytical models constructed for (1) current EU member states and (2) current EU candidate states demonstrate high explanatory power of the factors of fragmentation of the party system, ideological polarization of the national parliament, GDP per capita and governance efficiency. Another important finding of the study is that the "classical" theories of European accession (Lewis 2008; Renner and Trauner 2009; Schmidt 2006; Fink-Hafner 2007a, 2007b; Haughton 2009) are not fully adequate to explain the political reality of the post-socialist countries, and should be replaced by new theoretical models that take into account the level of party coalitions.

Key words: EU accession, QCAmv, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, post-socialism, state capacity

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List of Abbreviations

AA – Accession Agreement

ALB – Albania

BIH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

BUL - Bulgaria

CRO – Croatia

CVM - Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification

CZH – Czech Republic

EA - European agreement

EaP – Eastern partnership

EST - Estonia

GE – Georgia

HDI - Human development index

HUN – Hungary

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

LAT - Latvia

LIT - Lithuania

MAC - Macedonia

MD - Moldova

MONT - Montenegro

POL – Poland

QCAcs – Qualitative comparative analysis of crisp set

QCAmv – Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values

ROM - Romania

SAA – Stabilization and Association agreement

SER - Serbia

SLE - Slovakia

SLO - Slovenia

UA - Ukraine

Introduction

After the end of the political and economic turbulences of the 1990s in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and the beginning of the movement of the post-socialist states to the EU membership, the issue of full membership of these countries became the important subject in the literature devoted to the phenomenon of the EU accession. This debate, of course, has not lost its relevance today, because 11 of the 19 post-socialist countries that signed the Association agreement[1] with the European Union have already received the status of EU member state, while the remaining eight are still trailing behind on the way to the European Union membership (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. EU accession in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe

Country	Status	Stage of accession	Year
Albania	Non-member	Official candidate	2014
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Non-member	Implementation of Stabilization and association agreement (SAA)	2016
Bulgaria	Member	Full	2007
Croatia	Member	Full	2013
Czech Republic	Member	Full	2004
Estonia	Member	Full	2004
Georgia	Non-member	Visa-free regime	2017
Hungary	Member	Full	2004
Latvia	Member	Full	2004
Lithuania	Member	Full	2004
Macedonia	Non-member	Opening of the first chapter of Accession Agreement (AA)	2012
Moldova	Non-member	Association agreement signed	2016
Montenegro	Non-member	2 chapters of Accession Agreement (AA) closed	2016
Poland	Member	Full	2004

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[1] *Association agreement* is the basic treaty, which is signed by both the European Union (EU) and the potential candidate state, and sets the framework for economic and political relations between them.

Romania	Member	Full	2007
Serbia	Non-member	2 chapters of Accession Agreement (AA) closed	2016
Slovakia	Member	Full	2004
Slovenia	Member	Full	2004
Ukraine	Non-member	Visa-free regime	2017

Different authors give various, sometimes diametrically opposite explanations of this phenomenon. Bieber (2011) and Anastasakis (2005) say that only the current post-socialist member countries (i.e. Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) sufficiently developed political institutions to carry out structural reforms and implement *acquis communitaire* necessary for the accession to the EU. Noutcheva (2007) emphasizes the factor of ethnic fragmentation and tensions that still does not allow countries such as Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine to complete the European quest. Jano (2008) insists on the importance of the post-socialist factor of development: in his view, political traditions of the former autocratic regimes hindered the EU-oriented reforms in a number of Eastern and South-Eastern European states.

All of the above mentioned theories highlight the post-socialist political environment, but lose sight of the activities of actors and institutions that are directly involved in the creation of the conditions for the acceleration or deceleration of the European accession process in the candidate countries. It is the return of the *state level institutional decision-making* into the discussion about the phenomenon of European accession that is the main goal of this research.

The theory of *state capacity* in this study plays the role of the "umbrella-theory", which unites the theories that insist on the importance of single institutions and actors during the implementation of *acquis communitaire*[2] and EU-oriented structural reforms in the candidate

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[2] *"Acquis communitaire"* is a set of laws, regulations and rules, which is also known as "Common European law" (McGoldrick 1997; Eeckhout 2004). Every candidate for EU accession is required to incorporate the parts of

states: (1) parliaments and party systems, (2) central and regional authorities and (3) bureaucracy. This top-down theoretical structure creates a basis for the research question of this study: **What effects does state capacity of the post-socialist candidate countries have on their EU accession speed?**

The work is divided into four logically interconnected chapters. **Chapter 1: State of Art** is devoted to the operationalization of the key concepts of this work: *"EU accession"* and *"state capacity."* In this chapter I demonstrate the breadth of the research on the EU accession process and define the theoretical framework of the study. Then I go to the theoretically grounded hypotheses. **Chapter 2: Ways to Brussels** is devoted to the brief narrative description of the EU accession of the 19 post-socialist countries under consideration. I emphasize the critical junctures of the EU accession process, such as the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), the liberalization of the visa regime and the opening and closing of the Accession Agreement chapters. **Chapter 3: Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values (QCAmv)** describes the comparative design of this research and presents the key data analysis method, Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values (QCAmv), its applicability for the analysis of the chosen pool of cases and possible shortcomings of the process of variables encoding and the procedure of analysis itself. **Chapter 4: "Losers" and "Winners" of the EU Accession Race** demonstrates the empirical results of the research. For this purpose I construct two models that are devoted to (1) analysis of countries that are already members of the EU and (2) analysis of states that are still on the way to the European Union membership. The study finalizes by the **Conclusion** section that is devoted to the main theoretical and empirical conclusions from the analysis and presents several issues for further research.

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acquis into national legislation, or to replace specific parts of national legislation so that they do not conflict with *acquis*. The total size of *acquis communitaire* is estimated at 80,000 pages.

Chapter 1. State of art

This chapter addresses several fundamental questions that determine the vector of the further research:

1. *What is "European accession"?* In the first part of this chapter, I consider the main concepts that define European accession as: a) the unilateral process of Brussels' influence on the political reality of the candidate countries; and b) the bilateral interaction between Brussels and the national level of decision-making regarding accession to the European Union.

2. *What is state capacity and how can it be related to the European accession?* This part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the main works that determine the success and failure of the European accession of the candidate countries by the factors of state capacity.

3. *What influence does state capacity of post-socialist candidate countries have on the speed of their European accession?* In this part, I describe in more detail the theoretical models that were developed to analyze the process of European accession in the sub-regions of my interest - Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and form the theoretical framework of this research.

1.1.   EU accession: One-way street or two-way highway?

Despite the theoretical and empirical diversity of the works on the European accession, previous research can be divided into two semantic groups: (1) a group composing theories that view the process of European accession as a *unilateral path* of the EU influence on the candidate countries and (2) a group focusing on the *two-level* game, which put at the forefront the relationship between the political actors at the level of national states, which are presented not as simple recipients of the Brussels's policy, but as active participants of the two-level Euro-

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integration process. In turn, these two groups include several subgroups, which are described below.

The first group includes a single subgroup - *"conditionality mechanism"*. Bechev (2006) and Anastasakis (2003) claim that the European Union, during transition of the post-socialist states through the stages of the European accession, had a great influence on their domestic and foreign policies and could even interfere in the work of their political institutions. From this perspective, the success and the speed of the European accession process depends solely on the ability and willingness of Brussels to conduct such interventions in the policies of the candidate countries. Lippert, Umbach and Wessels (2001) add that the only simple and, most importantly, effective mechanism in the hands of the European Union is the prospect of the European membership itself, which is demonstrated to the candidate countries in various forms: from granting the status of a potential candidate to signing the Schengen agreement. These actions of Brussels in relation to the candidate country in the short and medium term motivate national political elites to carry out the necessary structural reforms and implement the parts of *acquis communitaire*.

This one-sided perspective seems unsatisfactory. Apart from the fact that it is quite rightly criticized by Haughton (2009) and Levitz and Pop-Eleches (2010), who note that the EU has very little potential for influencing the external (and especially internal) policies of the candidates, it is also necessary to point out that the "carrot and stick" model used by the EU to accelerate the process of European accession of the candidate countries has their direct recipient - the national elites. The recognition of the fact that the only determinant of the actions of the political elites of post-socialist candidate countries is the external political influence by Brussels makes it clear that the studies of the first group exclude from the sphere of their attention the political, economic and social characteristics of post-socialist countries, such as post-socialist nationalism, oligarchy or post-war economy. In reality these characteristics have a serious

influence both on the actions of the political actors and on public opinion, during the EU accession process. Thus, the rejection of the two-level analysis of the phenomenon of the EU accession leads to a sharp decrease in the explanatory power of the above-discussed theories.

The second group includes the studies of the "two-level EU accession," where the European Union is seen as an active participant of the accession process, that is capable of adjusting the integration path of the candidate state and setting the framework for this movement, but where the main field of action is the national level, where the combination of various factors determines the success of the European accession project.

The first subgroup could be called a *"value subgroup."* Cichowski (2000) and Kopecký and Mudde (2002) in their works demonstrate that the successful accession of the country to the European Union is determined by two factors: (1) absence of contradiction between the traditional values of the country and the values promoted by Brussels and (2) absence of contradiction between the ideas that are laid in the process of the EU accession (market reforms, regionalization, liberal democracy, etc.) and the political values that underlie the ideologies of the popular national political parties. In other words, according to this theory, the main players in the field of EU accession are both the political elites and the citizens, who carry the key values to which the political elite appeals.

The second subgroup is a *"geopolitical subgroup"*, which is largely related to the previous subgroup. Its outstanding representatives are White, McCallister, Light and Levenhardt (2002). They argue that the countries of Central, South-Eastern and, in particular, Eastern Europe are situated "between the two lights", that is, between the European Union and Russia. The political elite of these countries, which in terms of this perspective, is the main actor that influences the success or failure of the European accession, faces a choice - to maintain traditional political and economic ties with the major Eastern player, or to enter the path of rapprochement with Brussels and risk to lose or weaken these ties. It is this choice that

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determines the success and speed of the European accession process in the countries of the former socialist bloc.

The third subgroup is a *"bureaucratic subgroup."* Hille and Knill (2006) say that it is the quality and loyalty of the national bureaucracy that determines the speed of the European accession process in a particular state. Finally, the fourth *"subgroup of isomorphism"* includes the works by such authors as Kyvelidis (2000), who insists that the EU accession is nothing more than political isomorphism in which the EU requires the candidate states to unconditionally and fully adopt the rules of the *acquis communitaire*. In other words, the candidate countries are forced to completely reorganize their legislation, to adopt a pan-European legislative model and to reject most part of the original national legislation. Of course, the main role in this theoretical framework is played by national leaders and bureaucracy.

As one can see, the research field is extremely wide, as it always with such complex concepts as "EU accession." Nevertheless, it can be said with certainty that the researchers of the European accession in the candidate countries very rarely go down to the state level of decision-making, that is, to the level of parliaments, bureaucracy, regions and ministries, where the country's anti- or pro-European course is formulated. In order to fill this obvious gap, this thesis shifts the emphasis to the state capacity of the candidate countries and its role in the process of the state's accession to the European Union.

1.2. *Between compliance and sovereignty: dilemma of the EU potential candidates*

Before proceeding to consider state capacity as a key determinant of the success or failure of a country on its way to the European membership, it is necessary to find the answer to a non-trivial question: "Why states are interested in following the *acquis* rules and why do only few of these countries manage to finish the European quest?" Bauer, Knill and Pitchell (2007),

trying to determine possible options for the reaction of actors in the Europeanizing states to the EU interference in the national politics, suggest that in each case there are two models that determine the general logic of their behavior. Under the influence of the *coercive mechanism*, the states that are identified by the EU as "prospective candidates" act in accordance with the logic of the *"acquis conditionality"*, that is, the national administrations of the candidate states are guided by the desire to achieve full membership in the EU. It is important that state elites are guided by quite rational logic: the European Union gives the candidate a chance to join, only in case of its full compliance with the rules. In the cases of non-compliance with the required standards, membership may be either postponed or completely excluded from the pan-European agenda. Countries that are not considered by the European Union, even as potential candidates, are guided by a completely different logic. This is the logic of "persistence", which manifests itself in the desire of the national actors of such countries to reduce their costs when interacting with European structures.

The status of the "potential candidate" gives way to the *competition mechanism* that offers two strategic options. The promising "potential candidates" take the *performance logic* as their basis, trying to make the process of implementation of the European norms the most efficient and fastest in comparison with other candidate countries. In this case, the candidate country adopts market or competitive model as the core for its euro-oriented policy in order to increase the productivity of the ongoing reforms (Bauer, Knill and Pitchell 2007: 413). Unpromising "potential candidates" follow the same logic, but strive exclusively to maximize their own wins while maintaining a sovereign ability to make political decisions.

The *communication mechanism*, in turn, builds the behavior logic of the national actors in both prospective and non-prospective candidate countries based on legitimacy. This mechanism does not imply strict authorization by the EU, so promising candidates have the opportunity to freely adjust the reform plans, seeking to improve their Euro-oriented legislative

framework. In turn, unpromising candidates, through participation in a variety of dialogue platforms, can improve the prospects for economic and political cooperation with the EU, implementing some laws and regulations, i.e. parts of *acquis communitaire*.

The alternative explanation of the compliance/non-compliance to the EU rules by the candidate states is given by Schmidt (2002). She distinguishes five factors that can influence the degree of success of the implementation of the European standards by the national state: economic vulnerability, political institutional capacity, policy legacies, political preferences and discourse[3]. The various mechanisms discussed above, combined with these factors, lead to different results of the European policy towards the candidate countries: (1) *inertia*, that is, deceleration of the process of carrying out reforms or even resistance to change, (2) *absorption*, that is, no significant changes in the implementation of reforms or (3) *transformation*, when there are fundamental changes in the national political system.

The two above described theories provide a rationale for section of the analyzing pool of cases. All 19 countries of post-socialism were selected on the basis of their declared readiness to follow the logic of compliance, which was reflected in the signing of the Association agreement with the European Union and the implementation of the parts of *acquis communitaire*. Nevertheless, the prospects of the candidates are guided not only by decisions at the sub-national, but also at the national level. The following block is devoted to the main determinant of success and failure of the candidate countries' European Union quest - to their state capacity.

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[3] Discourse is a combination of the above listed factors. Schmidt defines it as the ability to change political preferences, while changing the model of the perception of economic vulnerability, and political legacy and thereby increasing the political institutional capacity (Schmidt 2002: 910).

1.3. *State capacity: An "umbrella" theory*

1.3.1. Defining state capacity

Defining the key concept of this work - *state capacity*, gives way for the theories that describe the process of EU accession of post-socialist candidate countries through the prism of specific factors related to the work of bureaucracy, relations between the center and regions and the characteristics of party system. There are two best-known and quoted authors who wrote on the topic of state capacity - Skocpol (1982, 1999) and Mann (1984).

The definition by Skocpol is formulated as follows: "state capacity assumes that state institutions exert a significant influence on outcomes such as economic development, civil conflict, democratic consolidation, and international security" (Skocpol 1982: 259). This definition seems too broad for interpretation, since it does not presuppose the dynamics of action. Through what mechanisms and institutions can the state influence the outcomes of the decisions? What actors control this process? These questions are extremely important for the topic of EU accession, especially in the light of the two-level game described in the previous section.

The alternative definition of state capacity by Mann (1984) looks more appropriate for the purpose of my research. Mann defines state capacity as the state's ability to implement its decisions using the existing political, economic and social infrastructure (Mann 1984: 190). The state is defined as an organization 'with its own internal structure and its own interests' (Mann 1984).

It should be noted that the concept of state capacity was originally used as a theoretical framework for describing the process of nation building and the creation of a modern state under the influence of the system of taxes' collection and wars (see Tilly 1992). In other words, the definition I use has no direct relation to the process of EU accession and does not appeal to

the relationship between subnational and national levels of decision making. Nevertheless, after the problem of EU accession has become a subject of great interest for historians, political scientists, sociologists and representatives of other areas of social sciences, state capacity has evolved into a kind of "umbrella" or *grand* theory that has been adapted to the specific research objects of theoretical and empirical reality. In this work, in order to link state capacity to the process of the EU accession I use the theoretical perspectives by Schmidt (2002) and Tsebelis (1995). Schmidt insists that the political institutional capacity of the state - the ability of the main actors to implement policy decisions - is seen as one of the main factors of the acceleration or deceleration of the European accession process in the EU member states. In turn, Tsebelis establishes the relationship between a small number of veto-players (in the case of my study: bureaucracy, parliament, president and central and regional authorities), and the faster and more efficient decision-making (implementation of *acquis communitaire*).

After I have operationalized the concept of state capacity, it is necessary to turn to medium-level theories that build causal links between the speed of EU accession and (1) the quality/loyalty of bureaucracy, (2) the relationships between center and regions and (2) the characteristics of party systems.

1.3.2. Bureaucracy and EU accession

In the previous section, I have already appealed to the "bureaucratic sub-group" that looks at the process of EU accession through the prism of the work of the national bureaucracy. In addition to the obvious factors of loyalty of bureaucracy and its ability to carry out the tasks set by the executive (Hille and Knill 2006; Kyvelidis 2000), some authors take into account the subsidies that Brussels allocates for the implementation of local (regional) and state administration reforms. In other words, the focus of these researchers' attention is again a two-level model of interaction between the EU and the candidate countries. On the one hand, the

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success of the European project depends on the activities of the national bureaucratic actors, but on the other hand, Brussels is also interested in ensuring that the national bureaucratic system has the opportunity to effectively interact with the executive authorities on supporting the implementation of structural reforms and the *acquis* (Hix and Goetz 2000).

The factor of effective bureaucracy, despite its importance, cannot exist outside the framework of relationships between actors taking decisions at the regional and national levels. The following section of this part of the chapter is devoted to them.

1.3.3. Center-regions relationships and EU accession

The most outstanding representative of this stream of literature is Börzel (2001). Börzel's research highlights the forms of influence of regions on the European policy of candidate states. In her view, Europeanization has the same effect on the two levels of territorial entities: the state level and the level of regions. Both central state body and the regions lose the ability to make independent political decisions from Brussels (say), as their competence in this matter is passed to the EU. However, the regions in most cases have to bear the lion's share of the costs for the implementation of policy, in the formation of which they had not formally participated (pay). In order to increase the profits and reduce costs caused by non-equilibrium mechanisms of power-sharing, the regions can use two strategies of behavior – *cooperate* or *confront*. The cooperative strategy presupposes the joint implementation of the say function by regions and the center. For example, certain regions may have representation in the EU and participate in negotiations on a particular issue on an equal basis with the representatives of their state. The strategy of confrontation is typical for systems where the center refuses to recognize the regions as full participants in the accession process, which is especially characteristic for unitary states. The regions can have the most serious impact on the process and speed of EU accession if the candidate country they represent is a federation. Nevertheless, even unitary states that provide their regions with a certain autonomy can seriously suffer if they failed to reach a compromise

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on the say-pay issue with the regional authorities, and the latter preferred a strategy of confrontation to the cooperation strategy.

1.3.4. Party systems and EU accession

One can distinguish three main approaches to describing the overall impact of the peculiarities of candidate countries' party systems on the speed of their EU accession.

The first theoretical model belongs to Marks, Wilson and Ray (2002) and Marks, Huge and Nelson (2006). They argue that the parties are involved in the decision-making process in the modern European parliamentary democracies as key actors. At the same time, the friction between the parties, the fragmentation of the parliament and the program settings of the core political players, as well as their belonging to the party families, come to the fore in this model. The core idea here is that the ideal condition for accelerating EU accession is the domination of the moderate left or right forces in the parliament of the candidate country, which party families are characterized by the ability to adapt to the changing economic and political conjuncture.

Another approach to the problem under consideration is the theory by Ladrech (2002). In his opinion, the determinant of the success or failure of the European accession of a particular state is not the domestic political struggle between the Euro-optimist and the Euro-skeptic parties, but the ability of the European party federations to support and provide the pro-European forces with political resources. In other words, Ladrech insists that countries where pro-European political parties were actively involved in the work of European party federations (had the status of observer or associate member) and enjoyed the advantages of their "European affiliation" were more likely to strengthen their positions on the national level of political competition than those parties that had no contacts in the "united Europe." This thesis also implies Ladrech's assumption that it was the influence of the European party federations that determined the drastic changes in the programs of many parties in the candidate countries,

which made them more attractive to the pro-European electorate. As can be seen from this description, the theoretical model by Ladrech fell victim to the problem of macro-level analysis, which I described in the first section of this chapter: the author does not take into account the local parliamentary specifics and determines his analysis by the assumption that the influence of European party federations has primacy over other possible factors influencing the choice of pro-European or anti-European strategy by the national parties.

Hooghe and Marks (2006), unlike Ladrech, were able to escape from the nets of macro-analysis and built their theoretical perspective on the assumption that parties, faced with the European accession agenda, act on the basis of two premises:

1. Rationality, based on ideas about electoral gains associated with the adoption of a decision;
2. Ideology.

The model proposed by these authors is extremely simple and at the same time empirically confirmed: in case if the Euro-optimistic mood in the society is high enough, even the most ideologically Euro-skeptical parties will eventually be interested in softening their position on the European question in order not to lose the next parliamentary elections. On the contrary, if there is a negative consensus in the society on the European agenda, the political forces advocating integration into the EU will be forced to abandon this item of their program or choose the option of leaving for an extra-parliamentary opposition sector. The line of the cleavage between Euro-sceptics and Euro-optimists in this case will pass clearly along the line of ideological cleavage: the extreme right and extreme left parties will oppose the entry of their country into "united Europe," while the liberal forces and moderate social- democrats, who are friendly towards all or most of the ideas promoted by the EU, will defend the right of their state to be integrated.

All the above described theories give a fairly general idea of what kind of relationship can exist between state capacity (considered from different perspectives) of the candidate countries and the process of EU accession. The next block is devoted to the theoretical models, most of which were developed specifically for the analysis of the regions that are included in the pool of this study - Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. It is these theories that underlie the theoretical framework of this work.

1.4.   Theoretical framework

After the demonstration of the great scope and variety of literature describing the subject and object of this research, there is a need to construct a theoretical framework that could build generalized causal links between state capacity and EU accession of the considered post-socialist countries.

The previously described theoretical literature on the subject allows to identify 4 key factors related to state capacity of post-socialist candidate countries. In addition, I introduce 3 auxiliary factors that relate to the socio-economic characteristics of the states under consideration, and form the basis of the control variables.

Factors related to the state capacity of post-socialist candidate countries:

(1) Fragmentation of the party system;

(2) Ideological polarization of the parliament;

(3) Quality of governance;

(4) Strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making.

Factors reflecting the socio-economic characteristics of post-socialist candidate countries:

(1) GDP per capita;

(2) Social capital;

(3) Human development index[4].

1.4.1. Fragmentation of the party system

Schmidt (2006) notes that in post-socialist states, the dominant parties play the role of helmsman in the issue of EU accession: it is their preferences that determine the success of the European agenda. This theoretical perspective must be supplemented by the theory put forward by Noutcheva (2012). She says that the strategies of the leading parliamentary parties, faced with the need to respond to the European agenda, are not based on their ideological convictions and political programs, but on the consolidated opinion of the society on the Euro-integration issue. Why is this theory important in this context? Because she is able to explain the numerous U-turns that the ruling political parties of the post-socialist candidate countries made during the process of their European accession.

1.4.2. Ideological polarization of the parliament

Fink-Hafner (2007a) and Haughton (2009) come up with the theories that has a sufficiently high explanatory power when one considers the speed of EU accession in CEE states through the prism of polarization of the party systems. The causal connection demonstrated by these two theories is simple: if there is an agreement in the parliament of the candidate country between the main political players on the question of accession to the European Union, the implementation of *acquis communitaire* comes without any troubles, and, therefore, the EU accession speed is at a high level. On the contrary, if the party system is polarized on the question of EU accession, and two or more significant parties cannot reach a consensus on the EU accession agenda, the country's path to the doors of Brussels is seriously slowing down. At the same time, Vachudova (2011) notes that the boundaries of such program

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[4] I thank my discussant at the European Union IAPSS World Congress panel, Florian Stolpe, for the idea of this factor.

polarization often coincide with the boundaries of ideological polarization, so it is not surprising that the radical left and right forces are always skeptical and even hostile to the prospect of European accession of their country.

It is from the theories of fragmentation and polarization of the party system that the first hypothesis follows:

H1. The higher the ideological polarization of the parliament and the fragmentation of the party system in the candidate country, the lower the speed of its EU accession.

1.4.3. Quality of governance

In addition to the previously described theories by Hille and Knill (2006) and Kyvelidis (2000), in order to justify the choice of this factor of state capacity, I take the World Governance Indicators (WGI) expert notes. The experts of WGI define the *effectiveness of bureaucracy* as a key factor that ensures the stability of state's structural development. This is a broad factor that includes a whole range of indicators - from the indicator of the effectiveness of the fight against corruption to the measure of freedom of speech and expression. However, I am interested in the indicator that reflects the quality of the work of state's institutions, since it is the exergy of the bureaucratic institutions that determines the speed of implementation of parts of the European legislation and, as a consequence, the speed of EU accession.

1.4.4. Strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making

As a basis for this factor, I take the already mentioned theory by Börzel (2001), devoted to the cooperative and confrontational strategy of the regions in relation to the center in the period of EU accession of their country. It is the balance of *say* and *pay* rights that could determine the speed and even the success of EU accession in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

1.4.5. GDP per capita

Lipset (1993) Przeworski and Limongi (1996) and many other authors connect the establishment and strengthening of democracy with the economic development of the state or, to put it simply, with its wealth. Despite the fact that this theoretical perspective has been repeatedly criticized (see Rice and Ling 2002; Cunningham 2002; Rowbottom 2010), I take it as the basis for the first control variable - GDP per capita. The GDP per capita indicator is not chosen by chance: firstly, it is a universally recognized indicator for measuring the wealth of a nation, which is used in particular by the World Bank (WB), which data I take to encode this variable, and secondly, GDP per capita is the indicator closest to the micro-level welfare, that is, to the well-being of individual citizens, which is traditionally taken as a basis in the intra-parliamentary debate in the area of economic policy. In other words, the choice of this factor determined my assumption that parliaments in countries, which GDP per capita is at a sufficiently high level will pay more attention to the foreign policy agenda, in the case of this study, the accession to the European Union, while the focus the attention of the parliaments of countries, which GDP per capita is at a low level is shifted towards domestic politics, which will make the European agenda a secondary one.

The theories of strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making and GDP per capita form the second hypothesis of this study:

H2. The higher the willingness of the regional authorities to choose the cooperation strategy and the higher the country's GDP per capita, the higher the speed of its EU accession.

In turn, the theories of quality of governance and GDP per capita form the third hypothesis.

H3. The higher the quality of governance and the country's GDP per capita, the higher the speed of its EU accession.

1.4.6. Social capital

The social capital factor is based on Putnam's (2001) well-known theory that a large number of social ties between people and a high level of group activity, primarily political, make the development and consolidation of democracy in the state more likely than in countries where these indicators are located at the low level. This factor is important for this study, as one of the key requirements of Brussels towards a country seeking to become the integral part of the EU is the strengthening of democratic institutions and the implementation of *acquis communitaire*, which again is possible only if key democratic institutions are able to function in a normal mode and have sufficient legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Thus, considering social capital through the prism of this factor, I emphasize the political activity of citizens and the strength of civil society, which lead to the gradual consolidation of the effectively working democratic institutions, first of all, the institution of people's representatives.

The theories of social capital and quality of governance are in the core of the fourth hypothesis.

H4. The higher the quality of governance and the country's social capital, the higher the speed of its EU accession.

1.4.7. Human development index

The Human development index (HDI) factor has been introduced to verify the validity of the GDP per capita factor. While GDP per capita is a non-ideal reflection of the level of the well-being of the population, since it takes into account only aggregated median data on the distribution of GDP per each citizen of the particular country, Human development index, in addition to this economic factor, focuses on education, life expectancy and other important determinants of the quality of life. It is HDI, not GDP per capita that is used as a control variable

in many studies on the EU accession of the CEE countries (see Tausch & Herrmann 2001; Noll 2002).

The theories of HDI and strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making that form the last, fifth, hypothesis of this study.

H5. The higher the willingness of the regional authorities to choose the cooperation strategy and the higher the country's HDI, the higher the speed of its EU accession.

This chapter described the basic theories that seek to explain the success and failure of EU accession in the post-socialist candidate countries by referring to the argument that prioritizes the analysis of different factors of state capacity of these states. The next chapter is devoted to the short narrative description of the EU accession process of the 19 post-socialist countries under consideration through the prism of their state capacity. This part of the work largely determines the framework for the fourth, empirical chapter, which focuses on the verification of the alleged relationship between the speed of the EU accession and state capacity factors in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

Chapter 2. Ways to Brussels

This chapter reflects the general characteristics of state capacity in 19 post-socialist countries under consideration and emphasizes the impact of these characteristics on the deceleration and acceleration of the EU accession process in these states.

Each sub-section is guided by two goals: (1) to briefly describe the state capacity characteristics of the analyzed cases in the context of EU accession and (2) to link the change in the EU accession speed with the political activities of the main national actors and institutions.

2.1. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina: Partisan Deadlock

Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout the period of their EU accession, demonstrate the low effectiveness of bureaucracy and the high level of polarization of the party system. It is these two factors that determine the lowest progress of these countries on the way to European membership among all other candidate countries from Western Balkans.

Despite the fact that both major Albanian parties, the Democratic Party of Albania (PD)[5] and the Socialist Party (SP)[6] already in the mid-1990s occupied the Euro-optimistic positions, they very rarely made a compromise with each other, especially in matters related to the economic reforms, fight against corruption and administrative reforms, which determined (and continues to determine) the constant instability of the Albanian parliament and the difficulty of making political decisions, as well as one of the lowest level of quality of governance among the EU applicant states (median of -0.45 during the period from 1997 to 2017). The main foreign policy result of the large-scale confrontation between the democrats and socialists is the small

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[5] Partia Demokratike (PD).
[6] Partia Socialiste (PS).

progress of Albania in the EU accession arena and the deceleration of the speed of Tirana's movement towards "united Europe" after the EU Questionnaire was filled in 2009.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina three leading right-wing radical parties, the Party of Democratic Action (PDA)[7], the Serb Democratic Party (SDP)[8] and the Croatian Democratic Party (CDU)[9], lost part of their political capital in the second half of the 2000s and were replaced by the multiple moderate left forces (median fragmentation of 6.36 during the period from 1993 to 2017) (Ćurak 2009: 71). However, under the influence of recurring nationalistically determined conflicts in the Bosnian parliament, the institutions of the European Union, as well as European party groups, had to interfere in the activities of the leading political parties (SDA and SDP) in order to restore the political system to a stable state. The signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2008 (Dzihic and Wieser 2008: 83) and the liberalization of the visa regime in 2010 can be seen as the pure EU strategy aimed at reconciling the conflicting parties in the Parliamentary Assembly.

2.2. *Bulgaria and Romania: Late beneficiaries of EU accession*

At the beginning of the 1990s the political field of Bulgaria was dominated by two parties - Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP)[10] and "Union of Democratic Forces" (UDF)[11]. However, by the end of 1990s-early 2000s, Bulgaria has become a multi-party state (fragmentation median of 2.71 during the period from 1995 to 2017). The polarization in the National Assembly was not subject to change until the mid-2000s, when the conflict arose not only along the ideological line, but also on the issue of the country's accession to the EU. The pre-history of the conflict was that in the late 1990s, the EU put forward an additional condition for the successful closing

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[7] Strana demokratske akcije (SDA).
[8] Srpska Democratska Stranka (SDS).
[9] Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine (HDZ(BiH)).
[10] Bulgarska sotsialisticheska partiya (BSP).
[11] Sayuz na demokratichnite sili (SDS).

of the Chapter of the Accession Agreement, dedicated to the energy sector. It was a requirement to close the Kozloduy nuclear power plant, which provided up to 45% of the country's electricity needs. This allowed BSP to openly criticize the pro-European course of the Democrat government (Spirova 2008: 488). In 2007 Bulgaria finally completed its long road to the European membership but had to join the EU Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification (CVM)[12]. (Tanasoiu & Colonescu 2008: 373).

The Romanian path to EU accession largely resembled the Bulgarian. The major part of the history of the Romanian Parliament during the EU accession period was marked by the opposition of the post-communists represented by the National Front of Salvation (NFS)[13] and anti-Communists, which included nationalist, liberal and conservative forces of the country. The Romanian political elite in the 1990s and early 2000s distinguished the low level of the political will in the matter of carrying out reforms necessary for European accession. If in the late 1990s the EU closed its eyes to this fact, guided by geopolitical considerations (Noutcheva and Bechev 2008: 118) then in the early 2000s Bucharest was faced with the "reforms for accession" ultimatum. This ultimatum, however, was adopted only in 2004 after the arrival of the liberal-conservative elite to power, which almost immediately initiated economic and political reforms in order to place Romania among the beneficiaries of the EU enlargement in 2007 (Noutcheva and Bechev 2008: 119).

2.3. *Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia: The vanguard Visegrad Four*

Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, the so-called "Visegrad Four", were the first countries of the post-socialist bloc to express their desire to join the European Union. Party

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[12] The post-accession monitoring program used for Bulgaria and Romania to verify the compliance of these countries with certain chapters of the Accession Agreement.
[13] Frontul Salvării Naționale (FSN).

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systems of all four countries were characterized by an average level of fragmentation (median of 3.72 for Czech Republic, 3.35 for Hungary, 3.60 for Poland and 4.17 for Slovakia in the period from 1991 to 2004).

After the signing of the European agreements (EA) between the EU and Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1990-1992, the European agenda in all four countries opened the battlefield for the market gradualist Euro-skeptics and the supporters of shock therapy who favored joining the EU. In Hungary, the "Hungarian Civil Alliance" (HCA)[14] and the Christian Democrats (PPCD)[15] opposed Democrats and Social Democrats (Agh 1999: 844; Navracsics 1997: 3). Poland faced a split between the "Electoral action Solidarność" (EAS)[16] and the "Union of Freedom" (UF)[17] (Zubek 2001: 926). For the Czech Republic, the victory of the "Civil Forum" (CF)[18] and its coalition allies over the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (CPBM)[19] was a turning point (Linek and Mansfeldová 2007: 27). Finally, after the victory of the "coalition of coalitions"[20] over the "Movement for Democratic Slovakia" (MDS)[21] of the PM Meciar, Slovakia managed to be among the countries that came under the 2004 enlargement of the EU (Henderson 2004: 652).

The main feature of all the above conflicts was their economic determinism: conservative and left-radical forces in the "Visegrad Four" countries have been building their programs on describing the negative effects of EU accession for the competitiveness of the national industry, business and trade (Batory 2002: 534; Bielasiak 2002: 1254; Hanley 2004: 709). Nevertheless, the difference from Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, is that the political elites of these

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[14] Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Szövetség.
[15] Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt.
[16] Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność (AWS).
[17] Unia Wolności.
[18] Obchanské forum.
[19] Česká strana sociálně demokratická (CSSD).
[20] The coalition included the Democratic Union (*Demokratická únia*), the Christian Democratic Movement (*Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie*), the Democratic Party (*Demokratická strana*), the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (*Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska*) and the Green Party of Slovakia (*Strana zelených*).
[21] Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko (HZDS).

countries were able to reach a consensus on administrative, tax, law enforcement and anti-corruption reforms - the basis of their long-term success in building effective bureaucracy (median quality of governance of 0.77 for Czech Republic, 0.94 for Hungary, 0.60 for Poland and 0.66 for Slovakia in the period from 1991 to 2004).

2.4.   *Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: Nationalist cards in the accession deck*

The main obstacle to gaining membership in the European Union for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was the confrontation between the pro-Russian (in the Lithuanian case, also pro-Polish) minority forces and nationalist-minded right-wing parties.

In Latvia, the government of the conservative coalition faced opposition from the pro-Russian Social Democratic Party, the Party of the National Agreement (PNA)[22] and "Equality"[23] in the 1990s and the party "For human rights in united Latvia" (FHRUL)[24] in the 2000s (Medvedevskina and Slakota 1998: 34).

In Lithuania, the question of the visa-free transit for the residents of the Kaliningrad region and the EU's demand for the closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant have been politicized by the parliamentary parties and used in the confrontational discourse of Euro-optimists and Euro- skeptics until the late 1990s (Zaremba 2013: 66).

In Estonia, the leading parties and coalitions, such as "Fatherland"[25], "Safe Home"[26], the Popular Front, and the Coalition Party (CP) opposed Estonia's accession to the EU, because they considered the EU "reincarnation" of the USSR - a bureaucratized repressive machine that will subjugate Estonia's cultural, political and economic independence (Mikkel & Pridham

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[22] Tautas Saskaņas partija (TSP).
[23] Līdztiesība.
[24] Par cilvēka tiesībām vienotā Latvijā (PCTVL).
[25] Erakond Isamaaliit.
[26] Valimisliit Kindel Kodu (VKK).

2004: 720). They were opposed by a few left (and pro-Russian) forces, as well as the only right-wing pro-European party - the Estonian Reform Party.

When in 2003, the agenda for sovereignty was again raised in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the nationalist forces once again tried to use it to convince the voters to vote against joining the EU in the accession referendum.

2.5. *Macedonia[27] and Serbia: Ghosts of the past disintegration*

Macedonia and Serbia, thanks to the appearance of the EU agenda, were placed between the Scylla of losing control over a number of national regions and the Charybdis of losing the prospect of becoming a member of the European Union.

After the main anti-European forces in Serbia - the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)[28] and the Serbian Radical Party (SRP)[29] have lost most of their seats in the Parliamentary Assembly in favor of the Democratic Party (DP)[30] and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS)[31], Serbia managed to get out of the echelon of outsiders of EU accession and take a place among the "potential candidates", which was fixed by the beginning of negotiations on the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement[32]. However, the issue of the extradition of Slobodan Milosevic and other war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the early 2000s and the separation of Kosovo from Serbia in 2008 split the modernist camp into a liberal and more conservative and nationalist wings. This hindered the prospects for European membership and the entire EU accession process and led to a

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[27] I use the name that was recognized by 120 states of the world, including most of the countries of the European Union. The only EU member state that does not recognize the name "Republic of Macedonia" or "Macedonia" is Greece, which insists that "Macedonia" is the name of an extensive historical region that is part of three countries - Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bulgaria (see the discussion in Gaber-Damjanovska and Jovevska 2007: 18; Siljanovska 2014: 486).
[28] Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS).
[29] Srpska Radikalna stranka (SRS).
[30] Demokratska stranka (DS).
[31] Demokratska stranka Srbije (DSS).
[32] DP and DPS were the largest parties in the "Democratic Coalition", which came to power in 2000.

"freeze" of negotiations with the EU in 2006-2007 (Djordjevic 2008: 90). The compromises of the left-centrist government, and then of the one-party government led by the Serbian Progressive Party (SRP)[33], allowed Serbia to reach the stage of closing the chapters of the Accession Agreement, but the unresolved issue with the breakaway region, as well as the demands for greater autonomy in Vojvodina and Sandjak that advocate for the increase in *say* power and lowering of the *pay* responsibility, became an insurmountable obstacle for Belgrade's closure of the third chapter of the agreement (Teokarevic 2011: 11).

The political system of Macedonia is also still under the influence of interethnic conflicts of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. The events of 1992[34] forced the Macedonian political elite to establish informal rules of the game, according to which at least one force representing the interests of the Albanian minority should have been included in any government formed after the elections. After the crisis in the south-west of the country in 2001, which almost turned into a full-scale civil war, the national factor began to play an even greater role in the formation of party coalitions: beginning from the 2002 elections, each of the leading parties of the country seeks to involve national minorities' parties in the coalition (Hislope 2003: 145). The main Macedonia's problem on the road to EU accession, starting in 2012, when the European Commission advised to begin negotiations on accession with this country, is the lack of political will on the part of the political elite and, above all, the dominant "Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity" (DPMNU- DPMNE)[35] for the implementation of the two most important reforms that were put by the EU as a pre-condition for closing the first two

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[33] Srpska napredna stranka (SNS).

[34] In 1992, the protest of the Albanian minority, which constituted 22.9% of the country's population, resulted in an armed confrontation between Albanian militants, informally supported by the Albanian government, who created their own state formation in the southwestern provinces of Macedonia, calling it the Republic of Illiria, and the Macedonian armed forces (Hislope 2003: 139; Schneckener 2002: 28).

[35] Vnatreshna makedonska revolutsionerniya organizatsiya – Democratska nartiya za makedonsko natsionalno jedinstvo.

chapters of the Accession Agreement: economic reform and administrative reform (median quality of governance at the level of -0.15 in the period from 2004 to 2017).

2.6. *Croatia and Slovenia: The first in post-Yugoslavia*

Croatia and Slovenia are the examples of the only two post-Yugoslav countries that have managed to gain membership in the European Union. The path of Slovenia, however, was less thorny than the path of Croatia.

The ideological polarization of the Slovenian Parliament was one of the lowest among the countries of the former socialist bloc (median of 0.45000 during the period from 1992 to 2004). In 1992 "the right-wing status quo" was formed in the parliament: most of the MPs were right-wing. All the parties had similar program items: market reforms, privatization, and the construction of a democratic state. Surprisingly, the points of the political program of the Social Democrats, which also managed to get into parliament were not much different from the declarations of the rightist parties (Golob 2010: 22). This program unity allowed Slovenia to avoid ideological divide in the Parliament. This, in turn, had a beneficial effect on the progress of reforms implemented immediately after the establishment of country's independence from Yugoslavia (quality of governance median of 0.89 during the period from 1992 to 2004). Slovenia is a classic example of a state where the leading political parties reached consensus on the European agenda in the early 1990s. The EU accession was part of a wider discourse on the country's independence, and therefore has been supported by both the society and political players (Krašovec 2008: 185).

Unlike the Slovenian case, in Croatia, nationalist discourse was opposed to the European agenda. In other words, if in Slovenia in the early 1990s the idea of building a national state and preserving sovereignty was in tandem with the consensus of leading political players about the need for the country to join the EU in order to strengthen its position as an independent

country, the Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (CDU)[36], on the contrary, saw in the EU a new "big brother" and it was for this reason that it treated the prospect of EU accession quite hostile. After the CDU made its program less radical in the early 2000s, the ideological context became again relevant in 2000-2003, 2003-2005 and 2008-2009 during the period of active parliamentary debates on economic reforms (Petak and Musa 2012: 17; Fink-Hafner 2007b: 36), cooperation with the ICTY (Jovic 2009: 3) and the decision on the border conflict with Slovenia (Jović 2011: 13), respectively. It is worth noting, however, that during the most serious crisis related to the process of Croatia's EU accession, traditionally Euro-optimistic parties (mainly the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDJC)[37] suddenly adopted the nationalist agenda as the basis for their rhetoric and advocated the primacy of national interests over the interests of the EU, while the CDU took a more moderate and pro-European stance (Jović 2006: 106).

2.7. *Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine: Newcomers to EU accession*

Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine belong to the group of "newcomers", that is, countries that have joined the European quest relatively recently. Nevertheless, even now one can note a significant gap between Macedonia and three post-Soviet republics in the matter of *acquis communitaire* compliance.

Montenegro that obtained independence from Serbia only in 2006, has already been able to achieve significant progress in the field of EU accession. The borders of polarization on the European agenda until 2002 completely coincided with the borders that divided the *unionists*, that is, the supporters of the preservation of the state union with Serbia, and the supporters of

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[36] Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ).
[37] Social-demokratska partija Hrvatske (SDPH).

independence, united around the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPSM)[38]. Nevertheless, after in 2002 all the leading unionist pariahs, first of all the Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (SPPM)[39], declared their adherence to the European course, the split on the European agenda has left the political life of Montenegro (Komar and Vujović 2007: 54). At the moment, parties that are simultaneously against integration into the EU and for the re-establishment of the State Union with Serbia are marginal enough and refer to the extra-parliamentary opposition. The consensus on the issue of EU accession of Montenegro, achieved between the DPSM and SPPM, allowed Montenegro to close already two chapters of the Accession Agreement - as much as Serbia, which began its European quest six years earlier than Montenegro.

Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine that were included in the Eastern partnership program (EaP) in 2009, in spite of the declared commitment to the European course since the mid-1990s, began to take real steps towards the implementation of the *acquis* and structural economic and political reforms only in 2013-2016 (Wolczuk 2004; Gogolashvili 2009; Hagemann 2013). The catalyst for changes was a sharp change in the party landscape in these countries.

In Georgia, following the Rose Revolution of 2004, the United National Movement (UNM)[40] led by Mikhail Saakashvili became the main political player for the next 8 years, advocating greater rapprochement with the EU and a comprehensive reform of the Georgian administrative apparatus. Effective reforms in the field of administration, fighting corruption and law enforcement allowed the "Georgian Dream"[41], the successor party of the UNM, to take advantage of Saakashvili's achievements in improving governance effectiveness (median of 0.48 during the period from 2014 to 2017) and demonstrate compliance with the pre-accession

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[38] Demokratska Partija Socijalista Crne Gore (DPSCG).
[39] Socijalistička narodna partija Crne Gore (SNPCG).
[40] Ertiani Natsionaluri Modzraoba (ENM).
[41] K'art'uli ots'neba (KO).

rules. As a result, in 2016 all EU member states ratified the Association Agreement with Georgia, and on March 8th 2017 Tbilisi gained the liberalization of the visa regime (Börzel & Schimmelfennig 2017: 290).

The events in Ukraine developed according to a similar scenario, but the EU decisions were determined by a slightly different logic than in the case of Georgia. After *Euromaidan* and the 2014 parliamentary elections, which dramatically changed the disposition of forces in the Ukrainian political arena, the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity"[42] became the leading party, which at various times was in an alliance with the People's Front[43] and "Self Help"[44]. Despite the pro-reform and pro-European views, the ruling coalition failed to achieve significant success in the field of economic and administrative reforms (quality of governance median of -0.31 during the period from 2014 to 2017), but Ukraine managed to obtain the same preferences from the European Union as Georgia - the ratification of the Association Agreement by all EU members and visa liberalization. Birchfield, Krige and Young (2017) note that as in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, the EU's logic in the Ukrainian case was largely determined not by the "technical" but by "ideological" and "geopolitical compliance."

Finally, the European prospects of Moldova, after the parliamentary dominance of the pro-Russian and Euro-skeptical Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM)[45] was consolidated by the victory of Igor Dodon, the leader of this party, in the presidential elections held in December 2016 are not so promising as Ukrainian and Georgian. In the period from 2004 to 2016, the presidents Vlad Filat, Mihai Ghimpu, Marian Lupu and Nicolae Timofti, which were the representatives of pro-European Democratic[46] and Liberal Democratic[47] parties,

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[42] Blok Petra Poroshenko "Soidarnist."
[43] Narodnii front.
[44] Ob'edinennya "Samopomich."
[45] Partidul Socialiştilor din Republica Moldova (PSRM).
[46] Partidul Democrat din Moldova (PDM).
[47] Partidul Liberal Democrat din Moldova (PLDM).

managed to keep the balance of power with an anti-European parliament under the leadership of the Communists (Hagemann 2013: 771). However, the violation of this ideological balance, can seriously damage the Moldovan European course and the desire of the political elite to carry out costly structural reforms that have made little progress even under the influence of the EU accession agenda (quality of governance median of -0.85 during the period from 2014 to 2017).

This chapter briefly described the quest for the 'Holy Grail of the EU membership' (Havrylyshyn 2017) of each of the 19 post-socialist countries. In countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova, ideology is at the center of the confrontation between the main political forces, that is, the political cleavages affected by the EU agenda are guided by the *logic of appropriateness*. In turn, in Hungary, Estonia, Poland, and other countries that were included in the 2004 EU widening, the focus was put in *logic of consequences*, that is, reflection on the future EU influence on the current political, social and economic status quo. In the next chapter, the main questions to be answered are formulated as follows: How can one measure state capacity and how to verify the relationship between the factors of state capacity and the speed of EU accession?

Chapter 3. Qualitative Comparative Analysis of multiple values (QCAmv)[48]

3.1. Post-socialist state capacity and EU accession: why QCAmv?

Insufficient for statistical research and too large for the case-study pool of cases, predetermined the choice of the main method of data analysis in this study - Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values (QCAmv). Qualitative comparative analysis is perfectly suited for the purpose of my research, because: (1) it is used to analyze cases with the same or similar socio-political conditions and different outcomes of certain political processes, (2) it is suitable for the analysis of the "medium" (more than 1 but less than 35) pool of cases, (3) it allows to set values for each condition leading to a certain outcome, using thresholds, thus, group the cases under consideration, (4) it has the great interpretive force since combines features of both quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, an important feature of QCA is that this method allows to standardize data. In other words, transferring this feature in the plane of this work, it is possible to increase the explanatory power of the analysis and interpretation of the results, with the encoding procedure based on the median values for each of the variables considered for each of the analyzed cases (Ragin 2014: 54).

Moreover, it should be noted that in this work I use Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values, rather than Qualitative comparative analysis of crisp set (QCAcs), since the latter encodes the variables taken by the researcher in a dichotomous form. For this research, this means serious losses during the direct analysis process, as well as in interpreting the results, since not all of the built variables can be clearly encoded as fictitious (for example, it may be difficult to encode the condition variable "fragmentation of the party system"). This problem is

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[48] Some parts of this chapter were previously published in an IAPSS paper entitled "The influence of state capacity on the speed of EU accession: the case of post-socialist states of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe" (Sorbale 2017) for the 2017 IAPSS World Congress.

solved by QCAmv, which allows to encode variables not just as values of 1/0, but to use more deployed encoding using the allocation of bigger amount of thresholds (Ragin 2014: 54).

3.2. Variables and data

The *outcome variable* in this study is "EU accession speed." The *condition variables* are (1) "strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making", (2) "quality of governance", (3) "GDP per capita", (4) "ideological polarization of the parliament", (5) "fragmentation of the party system", (6) "social capital" and (7) "Human development index."

The central concept of the work, which lies in the core of the outcome variable, is the *"EU accession speed."* In this study, it is measured in the amount of months that were taken by the post-socialist states to join the European Union, or, in the case of the 9 post-Yugoslav and post-Soviet countries, the number of months these states took to achieve a certain stage of European accession. The starting point for all states is the month of signing the Association agreement with the European Union. Two QCAmv models are constructed, based on these two types of cases under consideration: (1) current EU member states and (2) current EU applicant states.

Another important concept that is included in the first condition variable is the *fragmentation of the party system*. The fragmentation of the party system plays the role of an index characterizing the type of the party system and reveals the real significance of the parliamentary parties. I use the data obtained through calculating of the effective number of parties by Golosov's (2009) formula for each case on each stage of the EU accession process for encoding this variable.

Several sources are taken to encode the selected variables. Manifesto Project Dataset is used to encode the variable *"ideological polarization of the party system"*. The official portals of the CECs in the 19 countries under consideration are taken for the variable *"fragmentation*

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of the party system." The variable *"GDP per capita"* is encoded with the help of data from the reports of the World Bank (GDP per capita current US$), the variable *"quality of governance"* uses the data of The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). The encoding of the variable *"Human development index"* is made using the data of the Human Development Reports (UN Development Program) for the period from 1990 to 2017 for each post-socialist state in the pool. The aggregate data for encoding the *"social capital"* variable is taken from the World Values Survey (WVS) database for each case under consideration from 1990 to 2017 (variables Democracy, Confidence and Political action). Finally, for the encoding of the outcome variable *"EU accession speed"* and the condition variable *"strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making"* I use data from the official reports of the European Commission on the progress of reforms in the considered countries (EU Commission progress reports), decisions of the Council of Ministers, as well as screenings, conducted by the European experts to determine progress in the specific areas of national policy of the analyzed states.

3.3.   *Features and difficulties of the operationalization and encoding procedure in QCAmv*

3.3.1. Features of operationalization and encoding

The first important point is that all the values that are used for the variables' encoding are *median*[49]. In other words, I calculate the median values for each variable I use for studying each case under consideration. For example, in order to encode the variable *"ideological polarization of the parliament"* for Albania, I take the data for the political parties that had the

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[49] The most important advantage of using the median values in this work is that they level out the impact of emissions and deviant cases.

most weight in the People's Assembly of Albania during the period of the European accession

of the country (1999-2017), calculated the mean values of the attitude of these parties to various

socio-political issues that form the basis of their programs, and then aggregated this data to

obtain the overall median value of the ideological polarization of the Albanian parliament,

which is then used in QCAmv (see Table 2).

Table 2. Example of the mean value calculation for the encoding of the condition variable
"ideological polarization of the parliament" for the case of Albania

			Ideological polarization of the parliament			
Party	1997	2002	2005	2009	2015	**Mean**
PSD Social Democratic Party of Albania	2.372	2.083	0.656	0.656	0.656	0.8102
PD Democratic Party of Albania	0.478	1.883	0.91	0	---	0.6542
PRSH Albanian Republican Party	2.830	1.786	0	0	---	0.9232
PSS Albanian Socialist Party	1.460	2.083	1.311	1.714	1.714	1.3803
AD Democratic Alliance Party	1.093	1.289	1.289	1.289	---	0.992
PBDNJ Union for Human Rights Party	4.545	0.775	0	0	---	1.064

The similar operation was carried for the remaining cases under consideration when

coding the outcome and condition variables. For example, as in the case of the variable

"ideological polarization of the parliament," when encoding the variable "fragmentation of the

party system," I calculated the effective number of parties (ENP) in each electoral cycle that

was in the time interval of the European accession of Albania (1999-2017), and then the median

value[50], which was used in Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values (see Table 3

below).

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[50] The effective number of parties was calculated by the number of seats held by a particular party in the national parliament.

Table 3. Example of the mean value calculation for the encoding of the condition variable "fragmentation of the party system" for the case of Albania

	Fragmentation of the party system					
Country	1997	2002	2005	2009	2015	**Mean**
Albania	3.20	2.74	4.02	2.10	1.69	2.5072

It seems important to note once again that the data for the encoding of variables was taken exclusively for the time intervals of the EU accession of each state under consideration. In other words, Hungary signed the "European agreement" with the European Community[51] in 1991 and became a full member of the European Union in 2004. That is why for Hungary I take data from 1991 to 2004. In turn, for Bosnia and Herzegovina the time horizon is extended: the data is obtained from 1999 to 2017, because in 1999 the prospect of European membership appeared on the Bosnian political arena for the first time, and at the moment the country continues to move towards "united Europe" (see Table 12 in Appendix, pp. 62-63).

3.3.2. Difficulties of the encoding procedure

The chosen encoding method based on the median values can be subjected to multiple criticism. The weakest point is that the encoding of this type does not allow to track the dynamics of the process of EU accession of each particular country. Nevertheless, losing sight of the procedural dynamics, it concentrates on the general trend of the EU accession, which corresponds to the main empirical goal of the study. In addition, the previous chapter devoted to the narrative description of the EU accession process in the 19 post-socialist countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe complements the QCA analysis and partially solves the problem of the lack of procedural dynamics in this part of the work. Finally, it is necessary to point out the difficulties that do not allow to reflect the dynamic component in this empirical analysis:

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[51] The basic treaty before the introduction of the European Union Association Agreement (EUAA) that was signed by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland in 1991-1992.

1. The starting and ending points of the European accession of the chosen cases are different. This makes the construction of a single dynamic analytical model impossible;

2. The electoral cycles are not the same in the analyzed countries. This can cause the problems with the condition variables encoding;

3. All studied countries spent different amount of time on the stages of EU accession, which makes it impossible to group these states and incorporate them into one analytical model;

4. The case pool includes the states that have not yet completed their journey to the European membership, which would compel to create a separate model for clarifying the dynamics of their European accession compared to countries that are already members of the EU.

5. The outcome variable "EU accession speed" in the two models I designed is encoded in two different ways. This means that if one is to track the dynamics of each case, taking into account the previous comments, one would have to conduct dozens of qualitative comparative analyzes, which would lead to the problem of interpreting all the results that will be obtained.

Thus, despite the apparent unaccountability of the dynamics factor in the process of encoding the outcome and condition variables, the encoding with the help of median values allows to avoid those potential problems that were described above. It is also worth noting that despite the fact that the process of EU accession in each of the examined countries was held at different time periods, the chronological periods of EU accession of the chosen cases can be combined in the analytical models that are offered in this study. This is possible due to the fact that all 19 countries went through the same stages of EU accession, which are identified in detail in the second chapter: (1) obtaining the status of a potential candidate for EU membership, (2) obtaining the status of an official candidate for EU membership, (3) signing the Stabilization

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and Association Agreement (SAA)/Association Agreement, (4) closing the first chapter of the Accession Agreement, closing all chapters of the Accession Agreement, (5) holding the referendum on accession to the EU, (6) the official accession to the EU[52].

3.3.3. Encoding and setting thresholds for condition variables within QCAmv models

For the condition variable *fragmentation of the party system*, I set the thresholds at the level of 3 and 5. According to Golosov (2009), the ENP less than 3 demonstrates low fragmentation of the party system (value of 0), from 3 to 5 – average fragmentation (value of 1), and more than 5 - high fragmentation (value of 2). It should be noted that in the last category contains three cases - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia and Latvia.

When encoding the condition variable *ideological polarization of the parliament*, I set 3 thresholds - 0.5, 1 and 2. According to Manifesto Project, the polarization from 0 to 0.5 is insignificant (value of 0), from 0.5 to 1 - at the medium level (that is, for example, the leading parties do not converge on one issue, but are ready to reach a consensus on the other) (value of 1), and finally, from 1 to 2 - high (value of 2). Most of the cases fell into the second category, while Slovenia is the only case in the first group.

For the control variable *GDP per capita*, for the encoding of which the median values were used, the threshold values are also median. Since the focus of the study is the process of EU accession that took place in the post-socialist countries at different time periods, I turned to the World Bank data on the categorization of countries on the basis of per capita GDP into "rich", "medium-developed" and "poor" for the entire period from 1990 to 2017. Based on the obtained median values, I grouped the cases using the threshold values: a country, which GDP

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[52] The exceptions are Bosnia and Herzegovina, which at the moment has passed only the first three stages and the "newcomers" – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine that still did not manage to pass any of the listed stages.

per capita was less than $ 3,590.1 turned out to be in the category of "poor" (value of 0), a country, which GDP per capita was in the gap between $ 3590.1 and $ 12,694.21, was put in the category of "medium-developed" states (value of 1), and, finally, countries with GDP per capita over $ 12,694.21, fell into the category of "rich" countries (value of 2).

When categorizing the control variable *quality of governance*, the threshold values were set at the levels of -0.5 and 0.5. According to the World Governance Indicators, -2.5 is the minimum value for the Public Administration Performance indicator, which is used to encode this variable, while 2.5 is the highest value. None of the cases went beyond the interval of -1.5 - 1.5. Thus, all countries that have a value below -0.5 refer to the category of "poor quality of governance" (value of 0), which, however, is not the lowest category since WGI provides a category of "very low quality of governance": from -2.5 to - 1.5. States that fell between -0.5 and 0.5 entered the category of "average quality of governance" (value of 1), in turn, countries, which value exceeded 0.5 were classified as states with "high quality of governance" (value of 2).

As already noted in the theoretical part of the study, Börzel (2001), whose work is taken as the basis of the variable *strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making*, defines two strategies that can be used by the regions in their struggle with the center for the *say* right: confrontation and cooperation. The cooperative regional strategy is encoded by the value of 1, confrontational - by the value of 0[53]. Since this variable is encoded as a dummy, I set only one threshold.

For the control variable *Human development index*, two threshold values are set: 0.800 and 0.700. The first threshold in our sample separates countries with "very high HDI" (value of 2) from countries with "high HDI" (value of 1). The second threshold value separates the

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[53] The cases, where the level of devolution and decentralization does not allow regions to participate in negotiations on *say* and *pay* with the center on an equal footing, fall into the group of cooperative strategy.

states with high HDI from countries with "average HDI" (value of 0). None of the cases examined in the history of their EU accession has fallen below 0.600. The first group included Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania and Croatia. The second group included Latvia, Estonia, Macedonia, Serbia, Poland, Montenegro, Romania, Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Albania. The only country in the third group is Moldova.

Social capital variable proved to be the most difficult for encoding. To build it, 5 variables that were developed by the World Values Survey, were taken: Political action, Most people can be trusted, Confidence: Parliament, Confidence: Political parties and Confidence: the European Union. Having aggregated data on these variables, I calculated the median value of social capital for each country during the period of its EU accession. When setting thresholds, I was guided by the logic of WVS: all countries, which social capital level was below 30% fell into the category of "low level of social capital" (value of 0), countries, which social capital took the value between 30% and 50% were put in the category of the "medium level of social capital" (value of 1), and countries, which social capital level exceeded 50% fell into the category of "high level of social capital" (value of 2) (see the complete list of the encoding rules in Table 13 in the Appendix, pp. 64-65).

3.3.4. Encoding and setting thresholds for outcome variable within QCAmv models

As I put it above, the outcome variable "EU accession speed" is measured in the number of months that a specific country needed to obtain the status of a member of the European Union or in order to achieve a certain stage of European accession. The fact that the pool of cases contains countries that are still in the process of joining the "single European family" creates certain difficulties in the encoding, since in the case of these 8 countries the end point is not their accession to the EU, but the achievement of a certain stage of accession: the signing of the Stabilization and Association and the Association agreements, obtaining the status of an official

candidate for membership or initiating negotiations for the Accession Agreement. Thus, the indicator of the speed of EU accession gets smaller value in these countries than among the states that successfully passed all the stages of EU accession. The only logical solution in this case is the *double analysis*.

In the first case, I have to identify the factors that have determined the increase and decrease in the speed of European accession in the states that already gained the status of the member of the European Union. Slovakia is the country, which in just three years managed to reduce the large gap with other candidate countries for membership, which was caused by the opportunistic and ineffective strategy of the authoritarian dominant party. Thanks to the active and productive actions of the "coalition of coalitions", this country managed to shorten the time it took for all stages of European integration to reach 127 months and join the EU in 2004. That is why the threshold value dividing my sample into two parts, reflecting a *high* (value of 2) and medium (value of 1) speed of European accession is set at the value of 127[54]. In turn, in order to distinguish between the *medium* and *low* (value of 0) speed of EU accession, the threshold value of 141 is used[55]. This value equals the number of months that was spent by Croatia, the last candidate country, which became the member of the European Union in 2013, for the passage of all stages of accession.

In the second case, the task is to identify the factors that have determined the increase and decrease in the speed of EU accession in the states that are still on the way to the EU membership. The thresholds in this analysis are set at levels of 49 and 62. The threshold of 49, which reflects the number of months that Serbia spent to get to the stage of the opening of the chapters of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, divides my sample into *high* (value

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[54] All cases with values less than 127 fell into the category of high speed of EU accession.
[55] All cases with values from 127 to 141 fell into the category of the medium speed of EU accession.

of 2) and *medium* (value of 1) speed of EU accession[56]. In turn, the threshold value of 62, which represents the number of months that Albania required to sign and ratify the Stabilization and Association Agreement, distinguishes the *medium* and *low* (the value of 0) speed of European accession[57].

The next chapter is devoted to identifying the combinations of state capacity factors that have led to acceleration and deceleration of the EU accession speed in each specific case using the method of qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values.

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[56] All cases with values less than 49 were included in the category of high speed European accession.
[57] All cases with values from 49 to 62 were included in the category of medium speed of European accession.

Chapter 4. "Losers" and "Winners" of the EU Accession Race[58]

This section identifies the key factors of state capacity that contributed to the increase in the overall speed of EU accession in post-socialist candidate countries, or, in certain cases, to the slowdown of this process. The analysis is conducted with the help of two analytical models. The first model is applied to states that already enjoy the membership in the European Union, while the second model is constructed for the countries that are still on their way to the EU membership. This step is taken to separate the cases that have passed all the stages of EU accession and achieved the EU membership from the candidate countries that spent less time on achieving a certain stage of the accession process.

4.1. QCAmv: what increased and decreased the speed of EU accession in the states that joined the European Union?

4.1.1. Model 1(a)

After encoding the variables, the first stage of msQCA was conducted - the truth table for the "positive outcome" (1), that is, for the outcome of the country's *high* or *medium* speed of EU accession.

Table 4. Truth table for high and medium speed of EU accession. Model 1(a).

V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	O	id
0	1	1	0	1	1	0	BUL
1	**1**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**CZH, HUN, SLE**
2	**1**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**EST**
0	1	1	1	1	2	0	CRO
2	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**LAT**
1	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**LIT**
1	1	2	1	1	1	0	POL
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	ROM
1	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**SLO**

As one can see, the truth table demonstrates a rather unusual result: almost every case chosen for analysis is a separate version of a combination of factors that lead to the increase of the speed of EU accession. The exception is the group composing Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, whose medium speed of EU accession was determined by the combination of (1) medium fragmentation, (2) medium GDP per capita, (3) medium level of government efficiency (quality of governance), (4) non-involvement of regions in the decision-making, (5) medium level of ideological polarization and (6) a very high Human development index.

I need to reduce the number of putative combinations and remove combinations that contain the same implied factors of influence. The procedure of minimization according to the rules of Boolean algebra is used for this purpose. After removing 1620 repetitive and logically contradictory assumptions and minimizing the remaining combinations (simplifying assumptions), the following formula explaining the increase in the speed of EU accession in the cases under consideration is obtained:

polarization_ideology{0,2} + fragmentation{2}

In other words, the increase in the speed of EU accession depended on the low or high level of ideological polarization of the parliament OR high level of fragmentation of the party system.

The first part of this formula is true for Estonia and Latvia, and the second for Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia.

Table 5. Explanatory formula for high and medium speed of EU accession. Model 1(a)

Factors	Explained cases	Raw coverage	Consistency
polarization_ideology{0,2}	EST, LAT	0.62	1.00000
fragmentation{2}	CZH, EST, HUN, LIT, SLO	0.87	1.00000

Solution coverage: 1.0

Solution consistency: 1.0

Estonia came under the explanatory power of two formulas at once, which means that the medium speed of EU accession of this case can be equally explained by low ideological polarization of the parliament and high level of fragmentation of the party system.

4.1.2. Interpretation of the results: high and medium EU accession speed in current EU members

The first model showed that Hypothesis 1, which assumes the presence of the influence of party system fragmentation and ideological polarization of the national parliament on the speed of country's EU accession, was confirmed.

The main determinant of the acceleration of the EU accession speed in Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia was the high fragmentation of their national party systems. Here appears the paradox of the veto players (Tsebelis 1995) theory in Eastern and Central Europe. The political reality of post-socialist countries shows that with greater fragmentation, the parliament had more chances to make an effective and consolidated decision than with less amount of veto players. This was due to the fact that under the dominance of large anti-European and often unreformed parties (such as, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia), smaller liberal and post-communist forces were forced to use coalition tactics and stand for election as constituent parts of large coalitions to oppose revisionism and ineffective management of the ruling elite. This empirically driven addition to the theory by Tsebelis (1995) is best suited to explain the political processes in the above-mentioned candidate countries during the EU accession period. The coalition of the People's Movement and the New Era Party in Latvia, the union of the Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Congress in Romania, the "coalition of coalitions" in Slovakia are all examples of the unification of oppositional parliamentary parties to confront the course of the dominant authoritarian or inefficient authorities (Mikkel & Pridham 2004: 720; Henderson 2004: 652; Linek and

Mansfeldová 2007: 27). The Accession Agreement was an additional incentive for the opposition to join the major coalitions, because, unlike earlier documents, the closure of the AA chapters determined the achievement of the main foreign policy goal - joining the European Union.

In the case of Estonia and Latvia the main determinant of the medium EU accession speed was low and high ideological polarization of the national parliaments. In the political arena of both states throughout the 1990s, the left-wing, such as social Democrats and socialists opposed the right-wing - liberals and conservatives. Up to the early 2000s, the ruling Estonian and Latvian parties regarded the European perspective of their countries with great skepticism. The ideological confrontation leveled the economic factor: these countries had to go through the stage of market reforms that were on the agenda after the collapse of the socialist system. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the opposing political forces in Estonia and Latvia managed to reach a consensus on economic reforms. This was encouraging for Brussels, since one of the basic requirements for the candidate countries was the construction of a functioning market economy. Economic reforms became the beginning of the "spiral of cooperation" (Wallace, Pollack & Young 2004: 15) between the lefties and rightists, which resulted in the acceleration of the EU accession process in these countries and their accession to the European Union in 2004.

4.1.3. Model 1(b)

Now I turn to the cases of the "negative" outcome (0), where the EU accession speed was *low*: these are the cases of Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Poland.

Table 6. Truth table for low speed of EU accession. Model 1(b)

V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	O	id
0	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**BUL**
1	1	2	0	1	2	1	CZH, HUN, SLE
2	1	2	0	2	1	1	EST
0	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**CRO**

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2	1	1	0	1	1	1	LAT
1	1	1	0	2	1	1	LIT
1	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**POL**
1	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**ROM**
1	2	2	0	0	1	1	SLO

Unlike Model 1(a), here each case is a unique combination of factors that led to the inhibition of the movement of these candidate countries to the European membership.

After removing 1184 repetitive and logically contradictory assumptions and minimizing the remaining combinations, obtained the following formula explaining the decrease in the speed of European accession in 4 cases under consideration was obtained:

fragmentation{0} + GDP per capita{1}

In other words, the decrease in the speed of European accession depended on the low fragmentation of the party system OR medium GDP per capita.

The first part of this formula is true for Bulgaria and Croatia, and the second for Croatia, Romania and Poland.

Table 7. Explanatory formula for low speed of EU accession. Model 1(b)

Factors	Explained cases	Raw coverage	Consistency
fragmentation{0}	BUL, CRO	0.5	1.00000
GDP per capita{1}	CRO, ROM, POL	0.87	1.00000

Solution coverage: 1.0
Solution consistency: 1.0

In this model it is the case of Croatia that can be explained by two formulas at once: the low speed of Croatian EU accession can be explained by both the low fragmentation of the party system and medium GDP per capita.

4.1.4. Interpretation of the results: low EU accession speed in current EU members

The decrease in the EU accession speed is highly determined by the factors of fragmentation of the party system and a rather unusual factor of GDP per capita. This means that in this section, Hypothesis 1 once again found its confirmation.

The effective number of parties for Bulgaria and Croatia during the EU accession process did not exceed 4-4.5. According to the logic of "classical" theories (Fink-Hafner 2007a; Golosov 2009), such an indicator is not ideal, but acceptable for sufficiently rapid adoption of political decisions. What is the reason that Bulgaria and Croatia, having such party system characteristics, turned out to be among the outsiders of the EU accession process in this model? The answer lies in the paradox of the veto players theory, which I used to explain the success of the EU accession process in some post-socialist candidate countries in the previous section.

The determinant of the EU accession speed slowdown in Croatia, Romania and Poland was the economic factor, namely, the medium GDP per capita. The dissatisfaction of citizens of these countries with the economic situation led to an increase in political instability in the mid-1990s and early 2000s. A vivid manifestation of public discontent was the march of miners to Bucharest in 1999 (Mungiu-Pippidi 2001: 243). It is not surprising that the political parties elected to the parliaments of these states appealed, first of all, to the economic preferences of the electorate. A long period of economic crisis led to the fact that the economic agenda was taken out as a priority. Nevertheless, political parties that went to the parliaments of the states under consideration under the slogans of increasing the economic well-being of the population for a long time were unable to achieve significant economic success, primarily because of the inability to reach a consensus on the depth and direction of the necessary economic transformations. In addition, despite the fact that virtually all leading parties in these countries advocated EU accession, in the 1990s and early 2000s they took almost no steps to make the prospect of European membership closer, but, on the contrary, interpreted the process of EU

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accession as a relationship of "gratuitously giving and favorably receiving" (Spendzharova 2003: 152).

4.1.5. Model 1 conclusions

Qualitative comparative analysis of multiple values carried out in Model 1 made it possible to identify the factors that led to the acceleration of the process of EU accession in Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and its deceleration in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Poland.

The main determinant of the success of Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia on their way to European membership was high fragmentation of their party systems, while in Estonia and Latvia, it was low and high ideological polarization of national parliaments.

In turn, when analyzing countries whose EU accession speed was at a low level - Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania, I came to the unexpected conclusion that the slower accession process in Bulgaria and Croatia was affected by the medium GDP per capita, while the EU accession of Croatia, Poland and Romania was slowed by the low level of fragmentation of their party systems.

Thus, the conducted analysis confirmed the correctness of Hypothesis 1. However, the main result of the analysis in this model is the elaboration of the addition to the veto players theory that can be applied to the political realities of the post-socialist states in Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe. The corrected theory by Tsebelis (1995) is able to explain the reasons for the successful and relatively rapid EU accession of most of the post-socialist candidate countries.

Why is the addition to the theory of veto players turned out to be so important in this analytical model? The fact is that this model is devoted to the analysis of the EU accession of

the states that closed all the chapters of the Accession Agreement – the document that determines the prospects of the entire EU accession process and reflects the achievements and shortcomings of the concrete state at the previous stages of EU accession. At this stage the strategic initiatives of the leading political forces, aimed at winning the battle for the future outside the united Europe or in its composition, come to the forefront. The helmsmen in the process of closing the chapters of the Accession Agreement for the cases of high and medium EU accession speed were small pro-European parties that chose coalition tactics to oppose Euro-skeptical and Euro-realist hegemonic parties. This confirms the inconsistency of the theory by Schmidt (2006: 211), proposing the formula "low fragmentation - rapid integration" for post-socialist states.

An additional confirmation of the efficiency of my empirically driven addition to the theory of veto players and the inconsistency of the "classical" theories by Schmidt (2006), Tsebelis (1995), Lewis (2008) and Putnam (2001) in the conditions of post-socialist reality is an example of the low speed of EU accession in Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Romania, where the consensus on the European agenda and the average level of fragmentation of the parliament led to the slowing down of the EU accession process due to the absence of points of conflict in the relations between the leading political players, and, as a consequence, a decrease in the activity of the parties in the field of EU integration.

It should be noted that the theoretical perspective proposed by Fink-Hafner (2007) and Haughton (2009), which tells that the lower ideological polarization of the parliament leads to an increase in the speed of the country's EU accession, has proved its effectiveness in this model only partially. On the one hand, only one exceptional case namely Estonia, had a high level of polarization during the EU accession process. On the other hand, as the cases of high and medium EU accession speed showed, there is a direct relationship between the medium level of polarization (0.5) and the acceleration of the EU accession process. This dependence fits into

the logic of the addition to the theory of veto players. Thus, I recognized the second half of Hypothesis 1, based on the theories by Fink-Hafner (2007) and Haughton (2009), not confirmed in this model.

4.2. QCAmv: what influences the increase and decrease of the EU accession speed in the current candidate states?

4.2.1. Model 2(a)

This section identifies the factors that led to the acceleration of the EU accession process (1) in 5 post-socialist candidate countries: Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine. The first step is to construct the truth table.

Table 8. Truth table for high and medium speed of EU accession. Model 2(a)

V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	O	id
0	0	1	0	2	1	0	ALB
2	0	0	1	1	**1**	0	BIH
1	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**MAC**
0	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	1	**1**	**GE, MONT**
1	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**MD**
1	1	1	1	1	**1**	0	SER
1	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	1	**1**	**UA**

The analysis of the high and medium speed of EU accession in 5 cases under consideration demonstrates that Georgia and Montenegro share the common explanatory factors of (1) low level of fragmentation, (2) medium GDP per capita, (3) medium government efficiency, (4) non-involvement of regions in the decision-making, (5) medium ideological polarization of the parliament and (6) high Human development index. All other cases have a unique combination of factors. After removing 451 repetitive and logically contradictory assumptions, and minimizing the remaining combinations according to the rules of Boolean algebra, the following formula explaining the increasing speed of the process of EU accession in these five countries of the Western Balkan region and post-Soviet area was calculated:

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polarization_ideology {0,2} + government efficiency{1}*polarization_ideology{1}

In other words, the increase in the speed of European accession depended on low or high ideological polarization OR the medium government efficiency combined with medium ideological polarization of the national parliament.

The first part of the formula is valid for the cases of Macedonia and Moldova, while the second part is able to explain the relative success of the Euro-accession process in Georgia, Montenegro and Ukraine.

Table 9. Explanatory formula for high and medium speed of EU accession. Model 2(a)

Factors	Explained cases	Raw coverage	Consistency
polarization_ideology {0,2}	MAC, MD	0.75	1.00000
government efficiency{1}*polarization_ideology{1}	GE, MONT, UA	0.87	1.00000

Solution coverage: 1.0
Solution consistency: 1.0

As can be seen from this table, only the countries that have not yet received the seat of a member in the European Union were included in the group of the explained cases. In turn, Solution coverage demonstrates the fact that the resulting formula could explain the decrease in the speed of European accession in all cases chosen for analysis.

4.2.2. Interpretation of the results: high and medium EU accession speed in current EU candidate states

The analysis partially confirmed the validity of Hypothesis 1 that links low ideological polarization to the acceleration of the EU accession speed and Hypothesis 3, which assumes the importance of high quality of governance for the EU accession process. It is important to note, however that the factor of ideological polarization had a diametrically opposite effect on the cases of Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine and Moldova.

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As one can see in the cases of Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Ukraine, it was the low and medium ideological polarization of parliament that predetermined the increase in the speed of EU accession of these countries. In this case, the theory by Vachudova (2011), according to which in the countries of post-socialism the boundaries of ideological polarization are superimposed on the borders of polarization on the EU agenda, comes to the forefront. Almost immediately after the authoritarian dominant parties were weakened or simply pushed out of the political arena by new liberal political forces (in 2004 in Georgia, 2011 in Macedonia, 2008 in Montenegro and 2014 in Ukraine), the European agenda became the core of the foreign policy discourse of these states. The absence of serious programmatic differences and a common opinion on the EU future allowed Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Ukraine to consolidate their efforts in the implementation of the *acquis* and the necessary structural reforms, which led to the quite rapid passage of these countries through the stages of EU accession.

In Moldova, high level of ideological polarization, which, *ceteris paribus*, can be considered a serious problem for the Euro-optimists in the government, on the contrary, turned out to be a boon to the Moldovan prospects for EU accession. The two dominant forces of the Moldovan parliament - the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova and the Liberal Democrats, despite serious differences in the field of economic and social policy, were united by a single vision of Moldova as "a country inseparable from Europe" (Hagemann 2013: 770)[59]. The European agenda gave the Moldovan politicians a field for maneuver and cooperation, which facilitated the implementation of certain reforms necessary for the accession to the EU and the ratification of the Association Agreement in 2016.

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[59] PSRM became much more Euro-skeptical after Igor Dodon took the place of the chairman of the party in 2011, and then was elected president of Moldova in 2016.

4.2.3. Model 2(b)

The last part of the analysis is devoted to the cases that have made the least progress in the EU accession (0) in comparison with other countries included in the pool of this research. In these countries, the speed of EU accession is low, and my task in this final section is to identify the main determinants of this slowdown. The cases under consideration in this analysis are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Table 10. Truth table for low speed of EU accession. Model 2(b)

V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	O	id
0	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**ALB**
2	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**BIH**
1	0	1	0	2	1	1	MAC
0	1	1	0	1	1	1	GE, MONT
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	MD
1	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**SER**
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	UA

Each case in this truth table has its own combination of factors that determined its way to the slowdown of the EU accession process. After removing 182 repetitive and logically contradictory assumptions, and minimizing the remaining combinations according to the rules of Boolean algebra, I calculated the following formula explaining the decrease of the speed of EU accession in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia:

polarization_ideology{1} + fragmentation{0}*GDP per capita{0}*government

efficiency{1}

That means that the decrease in the speed of EU accession depended on medium ideological polarization OR the low fragmentation of the party system coupled with low GDP per capita and medium government efficiency.

The first part of the formula is valid for the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, while the second part justifies the slow EU accession speed in Albania.

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Table 11. Explanatory formula for low speed of EU accession. Model 2(b)

Factors	Explained cases	Raw coverage	Consistency
polarization_ideology {1}	BIH, SER	0.87	1.00000
fragmentation{0}*GDP per capita{0}*government efficiency{1}	ALB	0.87	1.00000

Solution coverage: 1.0
Solution consistency: 1.0

4.2.4. Interpretation of the results: low EU accession speed in current EU candidate states

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, Hypothesis 3, devoted to the influence of ideological polarization on the speed of EU accession, is partially confirmed. The slowdown in the process of EU accession in these countries is explained by the simple logic of confrontation between the parties (and party coalitions) of right and left wings during the electoral cycles of 2000-2012. The process of signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina and opening the first chapters of the Association Agreement for Serbia has become a kind of lever of pressure for rightist forces that were in opposition to the left-wing ruling coalitions. The main fear of the right-wings, highly supported by the Euro-skeptical Serbian Democratic Party (SDP) in BiH and Serbian Radical Party (SRP) in Serbia was that after Bosnia's and Serbia's accession to the European Union, the national producers and, above all, the farmers, will suffer heavy losses due to the fact that they will not be able to compete with importers from the developed countries of Western Europe (Cvijic 2009: 2).

In this regard, the right forces in both countries chose the tactic of "trade" with the ruling coalitions, where loyalty to the closure of the chapters of the Accession Agreement and ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement was exchanged for the provision of protectionist guarantees for national producers. The tactic of "trade" was beneficial for both

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sides, since the right parties, through exchanges with the ruling coalitions, seemed to be defenders of a fairly wide class of small entrepreneurs and farmers, which contributed to an increase in their political capital before the 2012 parliamentary elections in Serbia and 2010 parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the ruling elites were able to fulfill their campaign promises to make significant steps towards EU membership. However, the "trade" process took a very long time that conditioned by the need to take into account the interests of all political forces involved in the negotiations. As a result, the EU accession speed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia was among the slowest among the cases included into Model 2: BiH took 91 months to implement SAA, while Serbia needed 49 months to close the first two chapters of Accession Agreement.

In Albania in the period of its EU accession, by contrast, no parliamentary party opposed the EU integration. Two key Albanian parties, the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party, declared their full commitment to the European course of their country in the early 1990s. What was the reason for the slowdown in the speed of EU accession in the Republic of Albania? The "ideal situation" of the absence of a split on the European agenda has rendered deprived the Albanian parliamentary parties of the need to put the European agenda on the foreground in their pre-election and internal parliamentary struggle.

As a result, the issue of the EU accession has become a category of "immutable truth" for significant players in the Albanian political arena, the interest of political parties towards EU accession has begun to subside, since, starting from the default of 1997, and the economic problems have come to the fore in Albanian politics. The efforts of the main political players were targeted to withdraw from the crisis and almost no attention was put to the implementation of *acquis communitaire* and adoption of national legislation necessary to close specific chapters of Accession Agreement. Finally, after the recovery from the crisis, in the early 2000s, Albania found itself on the same footing with post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lack of reforms

and the weak level of development of democratic and market institutions led to the fact that in the period from 2008 to 2012 Albania three times received a negative decision on its application for membership in the EU, and only in 2014 this country was granted the status of an official candidate (Elbasani 2010: 41). Thus, in the Albanian case showed the validity of Hypotheses 2 and 4.

4.2.5. Model 2 conclusions

The analysis carried in this model has confirmed the conclusions presented in Model 1. The "classical" theories once again proved their small explanatory ability when targeting the successes and failures of EU accession in post-socialist countries and once again highlighted the problem of the lack of explanatory theories designed specifically to rationalize the knowledge of what really determines the increase and decrease in the speed of EU accession in this region. It seems that the addition to the theory of veto players, used in both models, is only the first step towards the creation of theoretical models of this kind.

The empirical results of the analysis carried out in the framework of the latter model highly overlap with the results obtained in Model 1. The increase in the speed of EU accession in Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Ukraine was due to the low ideological polarization of their parliaments and appropriate governance efficiency, while the unusual determinant of the acceleration of EU accession in Moldova was the high level of ideological polarization.

The addition to the theory of veto players had a reverse effect on Albania, which failure in the field of accession depended on the low fragmentation of the party system. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the slowdown of EU accession was due to the medium level of ideological polarization of the parliaments of these states. Thus, Model 2 showed the partial adequacy of Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 and refuted all other hypotheses.

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The main conclusion of the analysis in the framework of this model is that the characteristics of the national parliaments and party systems, which are contained in the condition variables, come to the forefront, while the socio-economic characteristics of the candidate countries, such as GDP per capita, are slightly left behind. Another important empirical point can be formulated as follows: in order to explain the political reality of the countries of post-socialism in the period of their accession to the "single Europe," the theories by Lewis (2008) and Renner and Trauner (2009), Schmidt (2006) and Fink-Hafner (2007a, 2007b) and Haughton (2009), who emphasize the importance of the level of political parties, during the EU accession of the state, should be replaced by more dynamic theoretical models that take as a basis the actions of collective actors - party coalitions. As it is shown in the third and fourth chapters, party coalitions became the real creators of the EU-related policies in their respective countries.

Conclusion

In this thesis I sought to determine the reasons for the different speed of EU accession in 19 candidate countries from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, considering this process through the prism of state capacity. I focused on such parameters as (1) fragmentation of the party system, (2) ideological polarization of the parliament, (3) GDP per capita, (4) governance efficiency, (5) strategies of the regions in the decision-making process and (6) HDI.

To avoid the problem of "determinism by the enlargement agenda" (Hughes, Sasse & Gordon 2004: 15) two analytical models were constructed. The first model included the current EU member states (i.e. countries that were accepted in 2004, 2007 and 2013), while the second model was devoted to the candidate states.

The combination of party systems' indicators came to the fore in both analytical models: the main determinants of the acceleration of the EU accession in **Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Slovakia** and **Slovenia**, as well as in such non-EU states as **Georgia**, **Macedonia**, **Montenegro**, **Moldova** and **Ukraine** were high and medium fragmentation of the party system and low and medium ideological polarization of the parliaments. In turn, the relative failure (and, in case of the current EU states, slowdown) of the European accession of **Albania**, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, **Bulgaria**, **Croatia**, **Poland**, **Romania** and **Serbia** was determined by the low governance efficiency, low GDP per capita and, once again, by the factor of ideological polarization. Thus, both models showed the adequacy of the theories by Vachudova (2011) and Hille and Knill (2006) and Kyvelidis (2000), which underlie the *Hypotheses 2* and *3*, to explain the reasons for the acceleration and deceleration of the process of EU accession in the post-socialist candidate countries. However, the political reality of the countries of post-socialism, which was characterized by a low level of consolidation of party systems and unstable political preferences of voters, showed that in

such countries as Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Slovakia, EU accession proceeded quite rapidly, despite the large number of veto players (political parties). This casts doubt on the theory put forward by Schmidt (2006), who argues that the greater fragmentation of the party system leads to a lower speed of European accession. It seems that for a more adequate assessment of political processes in post-socialist countries, it is necessary to abandon the linear logic contained in Schmidt's theory and develop a new theoretical model that would be more focused on the activities of the *party coalitions*.

From the methodological point of view, this analysis has proved the possibility of creating analytical models, where countries are treated as cases, whose party characteristics, first of all, electoral cycles, do not coincide in time frames. Nevertheless, the method of mean values chosen for variables' encoding seems to me rather limited in terms of reflecting the dynamics and variation of the condition and outcome variables. In subsequent comparative studies of the phenomenon of EU accession, this problem can be solved by choosing a more perfect encoding method that takes into account the time lags.

The main empirical contribution of this research to the broad field of EU accession study is the simultaneous tracking of the accession patterns of the whole pool of post-socialist states. The focus of the study on all former and current candidates for EU accession from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe allows to track the dynamics of accession in several sub-European regions and opens the way for their comprehensive comparison. In addition, I managed to move away from the problem of the determinism by extreme cases, which was common for the previous studies on this topic.

The results of the msQCA analysis allow not only to question the efficiency of the "classical" theories applied to the "new democracies" of the post-socialist bloc, but also to build a unique path to European membership for each of the analyzed cases. Further research in this

direction and testing of alternative hypotheses will help to increase the explanatory feasibility of the constructed models and to better understand the logic of the actions of national and supranational actors during the EU accession process.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Table 12. Encoding of the outcome and condition variable (Models 1 and 2)

Country	Fragmentation of the party system (**fragmentation**)	Ideological polarization of the parliament (**polarization_ideology**)	GDP per capita (**GDP per capita**)	Quality of governance (**government efficiency**)	Human Development Index (**HDI**)	Strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making (**region_strategy**)	EU accession speed (**EU accession speed**)
ALB	2.51	1.01000	1893.27	-0.45	0.752	0	62
BIH	6.36	0.74000	2709.59	-0.68	0.745	1	91
BUL	2.71	0.54000	3685.8	0.01	0.784	0	165
CRO	2.72	1.00000	9648.98	0.46	0.814	1	141
CZH	3.72	1.25000	11245.63	0.77	0.821	0	127
EST	6.12	1.74000	10468.18	0.74	0.791	0	107
GE	2.02	0.8765	3795.97	0.48	0.749	0	20
HUN	3.35	1.05000	8573.97	0.94	0.801	0	123
LAT	5.80	0.86000	8273.13	0.41	0.786	0	107
LIT	4.70	1.03000	8294.66	0.45	0.779	0	107
MAC	3.08	2.10000	2985.89	-0.15	0.748	0	21
MD	1.83	0.48000	1848.06	-0.85	0.697	0	20
MONT	2.23	0.99000	5000.27	0.08	0.805	0	48

POL	3.60	0.51000	7219.43	0.6	0.774	1	149
ROM	3.36	1.00000	4091.34	-0.34	0.749	1	167
SER	3.31	0.69000	3972.04	-0.32	0.748	1	49
SLE	4.30	1.56000	9696.99	0.66	0.778	0	127
SLO	4.17	0.45000	17556.27	0.89	0.822	1	91
UA	3.68	0.73900	2609.81	-0.38	0.743	0	21

Appendix 2. Table 13. Description of the encoding of the outcome and condition variables
(Models 1 and 2)

Variable	Description and encoding rules	Source
Fragmentation of the party system (**fragmentation**)	2 < N < 3 = **0** – low fragmentation of the party system 3 < N < 5 = **1** – medium fragmentation of the party system N >=5 = **2** – high fragmentation of the party system	Calculation of the effective number of parties (ENP) for each case under consideration by Golosov's (2009) formula
Ideological polarization of the parliament (**polarization_ideology**)	0 < N < 0.5 = **0** – low ideological polarization of the parliament 0.5 < N < 1 = **1** – medium ideological polarization of the parliament 1 < N < 2 = **2** – high ideological polarization of the parliament	Manifesto Project
GDP per capita (**GDP per capita**)	N < 3590.1$ = **0** – low GDP per capita 3590.1$ < N < 12 694.21$ = **1** – medium GDP per capita N >= 12 694.21$ = **2** – high GDP per capita	World Bank
Human Development Index (**HDI**)	0.600 < N < 0.700 = **0** – medium Human development index 0.700 < N < 0.800 = **1** – high Human development index N =< 0.800 = **2** – very high Human development index	UN Development program Human development reports
Quality of governance (**government efficiency**)	N < -0.5 = **0** – low government efficiency -0.5 < N < 0.5 = **1** – medium government efficiency N >= 0.5 = **2** – high government efficiency	World Governance Indicators
Social capital (**social capital**)	N < 30% = **0** – low social capital. 30% < N < 50% = **1** – medium social capital N >=50% = **2** – high social capital	World Values Survey

Strategy of regional authorities devoted to the state-level decision-making (**region_strategy**)	Cooperation strategy – **1** Confrontation strategy or no strategy - **0**	EU screenings and reports, local and national documents
EU accession speed (**EU accession speed**)	**EU Member States:** N < 127 = **2** - group of high EU accession speed 127 =< N <141 = **1** - group of medium EU accession speed N >= 141 = **0** - group of low EU accession speed **EU Candidate countries:** N < 49 = **2** – group of high EU accession speed 49 =< N < 62 = **1** - group of medium EU accession speed N >= 62 = **0** - group of low EU accession speed	The portal of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers of the EU

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