Euroscepticism and Europeanisation at a Margin of Europe

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Abstract

This chapter examines forms of ideological and political responses to European integration and Europeanisation that are either negative in form and function or that are projected as such for local and national purposes. The concept of 'Euroscepticism' is shown here as a useful linguistic and sociological starting point for examining the transformative power of the EU in the politics of all levels of European societies. The ways in which people express their support, opposition or ennui in regard to the role of 'Europe' in their lives delineates here the instrumentalism in the way they approach advancing European integration. The processes of resisting, negotiating and adapting (and adapting to) European integration are offered here as topics of anthropological significance in their own right. A case study from one former socialist country, Bulgaria, illustrates what may be suggested as a commonplace sentiment throughout the EU – a feeling of marginality due to the disconnection and disaffection that remain at the heart of Euroscepticism in all of its forms. Bulgaria offers a frame through which to reflect on the reformulations in local, regional and national political society as they relate to supranational and transnational forces throughout Europe, and to illustrate how an anthropological attention to the issues of post-socialism in Central and Eastern Europe may benefit from an examination of the new forces of European integration.

Keywords

European integration, Europeanisation, Euroscepticism, Bulgaria, post-socialism

In social and cultural anthropology over the last decades there has been a slow and increasing awareness of the significance of the European Union (EU, formerly the European Economic Community and the European Community)

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in all areas of social, political, economic and cultural life in the EU's member states, and also increasingly in non-member states both near and far. While in the past anthropologists might have been slow to recognise the importance of the EU to their theoretical, methodological and empirical concerns, today there appears to be little to inhibit anthropologists from seeing all matters of anthropological interest within a context of European integration and Europeanisation. This turn to the forces of integration and Europeanisation in much anthropological scholarship in Europe today has many causes. Their concerns with globalisation and transnationalism have led many anthropologists to look at levels of integration below and above that of the nation-state. Theoretical developments, fads and fancies have taken most ethnographers out of communities to multi-sited research with emphases on such things as mobility, movement, hybridity and cosmopolitanism, all forces with clear ties to many institutions and practices of the EU. And the EU itself has grown from a body of six members to the present twenty-seven member states, in a process that has involved all of them in many rounds of complex and far-reaching political, economic and social adaptation.

In the anthropology of Europe today scholars have regularly explored the growth in and impact of the twin forces of, on the one hand, European integration, a process of making the member states of the EU an 'ever closer union', and, on the other, Europeanisation, a process related to the EU but not synonymous with that of European integration. Europeanisation entails processes of making, people, ideas, practices and institutions more or less 'European', through various forces that result from more and more continued contact between European peoples and lands. As a result of this new ease with matters related to the EU and to other aspects of the new Europe, anthropologists have increasingly turned to studies of transnationalism, regionalism, territorialisation and de-territorialisation, to help them to recognise the redefinition of relations of power both within the EU and among peoples beyond its borders.

However, while there have been a number of influential and well-known studies of European integration as it occurs in the halls of power and politics in the EU, there still are relatively few ethnographic studies that examine international and global forces in the everyday lives of Europeans outside of elite circles. Even scarcer are anthropological analyses of local communities and their internal and external work, residence and association in the periphery and margins of today's EU member states. This essay seeks to introduce

some ways that might help to redress this imbalance which we perceive. Specifically we examine forms of ideological and political responses to European integration and Europeanisation that are either negative in form and function, or that are projected as such for local and national purposes by foes and allies of European integration.

We focus here on the concept of 'Euroscepticism', which has largely been a tool in the kit of political scientists, but which we proffer as a useful linguistic and sociological starting point to what we see as an important need in the anthropology of Europe: an increased attention to the EU as a transformative force for transnationalism – and here we include within the concept transnational culture – in the politics of all levels of European societies. In this chapter we take a closer look at the ways in which people express their support, opposition or ennui in regard to the role of 'Europe' in their lives, but we do so in order to delineate the instrumentalism in which many – we might offer as a hypothesis 'most' – Europeans approach advancing European integration, as a process that matters because of what it materially offers its citizens and residents.

Against this backdrop we aim in this essay to contribute to anthropology with some perspectives on reformulations in local, regional and national political society as they relate to supranational and transnational forces throughout Europe. We also seek to provoke more attention to these transformations as they are experienced in all twenty-seven member states, by cautioning that although there are many recent incentives to view European integration in terms of EU expansion and accession in post-socialist societies, we should not lose sight of the fact that as the EU grows, its role in the older member states also changes. In fact, the changes that have occurred in the Europe of the original Six, then the Europe of the Nine, the Twelve and the Fifteen, have been at a pace akin to that which has impelled the transformations that have affected all of the members in the recent rounds of expansion and accession.[1]

In this essay, however, we also seek to show that anthropological attention to the issues of post-socialism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) may benefit from an inclusion of the new forces of European integration. Thus, in the following essay we focus on post-socialist transformations related to nationhood and sentiments of belonging that are at the heart of reactions to the EU, and that in turn may be changing due to Europeanisation. In addition, we seek to contribute to the larger body of knowledge on European integration by exploring the processes of resisting, negotiating and adapting (and adapting

to) European integration as topics of anthropological significance in their own right, and in so doing perhaps open up some future directions for research.

We should also point out that by focusing on one new member state and its people, and examining them at least in part in terms of their place at a margin of more mainstream forces of European integration, we do so with the knowledge that in most aspects this marginality is rhetorical, and largely due to the geographical location of Bulgaria. In our original plan for this essay we sought to compare instrumental approaches to the EU in Bulgaria and Ireland (ethnographic research sites of the two authors, respectively), but it was a plan that space alone forbade. However, it was our intention in that original plan to highlight how feelings of marginality may very well be commonplace among European citizens and residents everywhere within the EU, including in its metropolitan centres and in its core economic and political zones, precisely because of the disconnection and disaffection that remain at the heart of Euroscepticism in all of its forms.

Euroscepticism

Although commonly used in many political circles, 'Euroscepticism' is a relatively novel concept in anthropology, despite its prevalent use in many other social sciences. It is used as an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of sentiments, political strategies, voting behaviours and opinion poll results that mark a degree of opposition to the project of European integration in both Western and Eastern European countries. Its use has glossed over the variety of ways in which participation in the European Union is imagined, experienced, endorsed and opposed. Based on data collected in Bulgaria in 2009,[2] this paper queries the adequacy of the term 'Euroscepticism' to encompass the variety of sentiments and manifestations constituting the different ways in which people comply with, negotiate or resist European integration. It also problematises the concept of Euroscepticism by focusing on the specific socio-political circumstances in the recent history of Bulgaria that may have affected the way in which the European Union is perceived, experienced and opposed there. By extension, we also question whether the reactions we discuss here may have parallels in other new member states in the region.

The overarching goals of this essay are three. The first one is to reveal some limitations in the application of the term Euroscepticism in social sciences so far. The predominant approach, as commonly used in our cognate

social sciences, seeks to assert the existence of a socio-political phenomenon that can best be defined as 'Euroscepticism', and then proceeds to explicate its emergence by referring to one or several types of motivation that prompted it. These motivations refer to political, economic and social factors that are seldom linked to cultural forces, or at least are not linked to culture in any meaningful way that goes beyond descriptions of how culture plays a role in European identity as it relates to integration. This logic has served to ossify Euroscepticism as a meaningful political concept while doing little to explain and analyse the broader socio-cultural dynamics that may be glossed under this term. Thus, the second goal of this paper is to suggest that the motivations behind different reactions towards European integration, often conflated under the term Euroscepticism, are a problem of anthropological significance. This is because the negative umbrella of 'Euroscepticism' under which many reactions to European integration gather often obscures remarkably effective ways to achieve economic and political goals for various interests in each of the member states. Though seemingly contradictory, Euroscepticism is in our view often a preeminently European Union way to use and advance various forms of Europeanisation and ever closer union. For many groups, peoples and institutions in member states, a good strategy to get things from the EU, or from national sources whose interests are tied to the EU, is to be sceptical about the values of increased integration, if not to downright oppose more integration. Yet we do not imagine for a moment that Euroscepticism is not also a transparent notion for many, as an honest reflection of the lack of certainty many feel about a political, economic and social process that has no clear end result, except perhaps, as is often expressed by the Eurosceptical, that this end game is a Federal Europe that will put paid to the nation-state and its related national sovereignty, identity and independence.

We therefore seek to address the simple notion that Euroscepticism and its related ideologies of political pragmatism and instrumentalism are in their own right problems of anthropological inquiry, because they involve complex manoeuvres of culture, history, memory and belonging, added to the political and economic machinations of governments, parties, corporations and NGOs who strive to achieve their ends within the shifting terrain of European integration. In this paper we examine some of the issues raised by instrumentalist approaches to Euroscepticism, but we do so by being mindful that there are many member states in the EU that, like Bulgaria, have long histories of being peripheral to much that transpired in European integra-

tion. Many of these are in Western and Central Europe. Each of these nations has had various convergent and divergent experiences of the EU and other forms of Europeanisation. We seek to draw attention to the social and cultural patterns which have emerged in nations at the margins of the EU through our introductory framing of the perceived threats, possibilities and opportunities posed by the European Union among people in Bulgaria.

The third goal of this article is to suggest ways in which an anthropological perspective on the notions of resisting, negotiating and adapting to the EU, and of adapting and moulding the integration process itself, can offer a deeper understanding of the manifestations and motivations of critical stances towards the EU project. We seek to interrogate ways for anthropologists to approach the varieties of political and social movements that are conflated under the category Euroscepticism. While the term Euroscepticism is not often used in the anthropological literature, its unquestioned recurrent use in other social sciences should not obscure the need for anthropological attention to the wide-ranging socio-cultural patterns in negotiating, adapting to or resisting European integration. Thus we suggest that the social attitudes towards the EU in Bulgaria which we discuss in this essay may have resonance elsewhere in Europe. Similar historical events in the territories of present-day Eastern European countries may serve as one set of factors to facilitate schemata of social cognition, perception and reaction. These in turn may result in recognisable patterns in the challenges to the processes of European integration and Europeanisation which are now emerging in the new member countries of the EU, and which have been present for some time in long-standing member states.

Euroscepticism: Origin and Uses

Despite its singular dictionary definition of a 'person who is not enthusiastic about increasing the powers of the European Union',[3] the adjective 'Eurosceptic' has increasingly been used to denote dissimilar manifestations and various rationales. The term entered the political lexicon in the mid-1980s, initially denoting an opposition to the economic dimension of European integration, particularly in association with a basic British opposition to participation in the EU. This meaning is preserved in the connotation of the most frequent usage of the term, as it seldom refers to a milder lack of enthusiasm for the European project. The term Euroscepticism eventually spread with

reference to other countries as well, particularly with the growth of more critical European discourse during the early 1990s Maastricht ratification debates, which represented a major advance in the integration process (Harmsen and Spiering 2004: 15–16).

The fact that the term gained salience in the context of the negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty deserves and has been rendered special attention. Although the initial uses of the term in Western Europe were cast in economic terms, it is important to keep in mind that the Maastricht Treaty presupposed deepening economic, administrative, political and cultural integration. The Treaty of the European Union (TEU), signed in Maastricht, laid out a plan for closer cooperation between the EU member states encompassing the areas of common economic, foreign and security, and justice and home affairs policies. As a result, many policy fields – previously within the authority of the member states – were shifted to a supranational level. Moreover, the TEU was the first document of the European Union which directly referred to the establishment of citizenship rights and values (Staab 2008: 21). In this regard, it is important to note that when in the 1990s the term Euroscepticism spread beyond the United Kingdom, its most immediate motivations may often have been measured and expressed in economic terms, particularly concerning the establishment of a single currency. However, some of the uneasiness about the extension of competencies of the European Union also may have been predicated on broader socio-cultural frameworks. Moreover, these socio-cultural structures were not then and still are not easily identifiable within the EU framework at the best of times, especially when they are compared with political and economic matters, but their visibility may be further obscured by the gloss-term Euroscepticism.

The Maastricht Treaty is perhaps the first European Union document which necessitates that all analysis of the reactions to it be based upon distinguishing between two intertwined processes presupposed by the Treaty: European integration and Europeanisation. European integration can be understood as a process guided by a specific agenda launched for the construction of a European 'whole' – this underlying structuring mechanism allows and encourages a one-dimensional analysis measuring 'how much' of it has been achieved (Harmsen and Wilson 2000: 19). Europeanisation, on the other hand, as Harmsen and Wilson suggest, lacks a common structuring principle as it involves a series of intertwined processes taking place on national and supranational levels which may simultaneously be complementing

and eroding the deepening of the union among European countries. These multiple processes encompass a redefinition of structures of power changing the balance between the local, regional, national, and supranational, as well as a complex reshaping of policy-making and other political and social adjustments in response to European integration. These adjustments can be interpreted by domestic institutions as a threat to their authority over making policy decisions but can also be seen as an opportunity to transgress the limitations of national competency in policy areas.

Europeanisation can thus be perceived as a mechanism for 'modernising' peripheral, less economically advanced areas, as was witnessed in Ireland in the period leading up to that country's Celtic Tiger miracle transformation. This modernising and Europeanising process, however, is achieved through a series of structural reforms predicated on Western European politico-economic models – a factor that no doubt has played a role in perceiving and experiencing Europeanisation and European integration in Eastern European countries. This twin process of change provides major challenges to the status quo: first, by demanding the incorporation of EU political and economic models into pre-existing structures in the new member states and, second, by projecting a sense of becoming part of an advanced economic and political system. As a result, it is not surprising that Europeanisation also presupposes a sense of transnational cultural integration entailing a degree of *relativisation* of national identities, by offering them as one of several identifications that can be chosen in a particular context determined by the varying spheres of everyday interaction (Harmsen and Wilson 2000).

All of these processes suggest different ways of imagining and experiencing the opportunities and effects of cooperation among the current twenty-seven member states of the EU. It would be reasonable to expect that the same intertwining processes inform not only the way the EU project is perceived, but also how it is accepted, opposed or challenged. Euroscepticism, as a term that gained international salience in the context of the negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty, has subsequently been applied more broadly in social sciences to a phenomenon that can be measured in degree and linked to financial and economic forces. This application is problematic as it limits the analysis of major political, economic and social forces to the diagnosing and measuring of a condition, linked to the country's most recent history or socio-political configuration. The multi-dimensional social reactions conflated under the term Euroscepticism may not only have different motivations

but may also take versatile forms. Those forms may come as a sentiment, a strategy, a rejection or a reservation, whose analysis may not be as successful unless we take into account, as Harmsen (2004: 33) suggests, the intricacies and differences in the processes of European integration and Europeanisation. In fact, as the debates surrounding the Maastricht Treaty illustrate, the processes of European integration and Europeanisation are not necessarily directly proportional to each other. On the contrary, the advancement of European integration may dilute Europeanisation as a process of broadening individual and group senses of belonging and allegiance.

EU Integration as Threat to Locality and Nation

Two case studies from Germany and the Netherlands may serve here to illustrate that the advancement of European integration can cause fluctuations of support for the EU even among its founding member states. These studies also suggest that the formation of common monetary policy is among the major threats to sovereignty feared by member states, suggesting also that the national framework is key to the assessments which EU citizens make about the most immediate repercussions that reconfigurations of the European project play in their everyday lives. Busch and Knelangen (2004) have studied statistical data compiled by Eurobarometer[4] to measure and analyse what they see as a shift of the German perception towards European integration during the negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty. Euroscepticism, they observe, is a phenomenon that has not been traditionally associated with Germany – a country where political elites, parties and public opinion have harmoniously supported the project of European integration since its inception. They link the negative shift in public opinion to the introduction of single currency, which is seen as posing a threat to the Deutsche Mark as a national symbol, and is further motivated by doubts regarding the economic stability and fiscal discipline of the other member states.

The enlargement of the European Union provisioned by the Maastricht Treaty is the second EU project that has been subjected to a more careful scrutiny in Germany, and is attributed to a fear that the influx of cheap labour may disrupt the national labour market (Busch and Knelangen 2004: 10–12). Similarly, the emergence of more critical opinion on European integration in the Netherlands seems primarily couched in economic terms as well, but other significant motivations emerge beyond the concerns about economy.

According to Harmsen, in The Netherlands – a country whose policy has historically been characterised as pragmatically supportive of supranational structures in areas where this corresponded to identifiable national interests – the shift from a pro-integrationist position to a more critical standpoint towards the European Union has been characterised by a more explicit discourse of national interest and careful cost-benefit analysis (Harmsen 2004: 122–124). In a subsequent study Harmsen linked the Dutch negative vote on the European Constitution to a critical discourse about the ultimate geographical and policy competence boundaries of Europe (Harmsen 2005: 14), and the need for 'more tightly defined limits' of the European integration project (Harmsen 2005: 5). Although couched in these terms, the negative results among Dutch voters, as one of us has suggested elsewhere (Wilson 2010), were not simply or solely an expression of opposition to European integration and the proposed Constitution, but also, or in some cases rather, a concern about the threat that the EU would pose to national identities. It was discomfort over their country's position within the proposed reconfiguration of Europe to which many Dutch citizens reacted by casting their negative vote to the European Constitution (Wilson 2010).

Therefore, uneasiness with some of the phases of the EU project may in some cases be motivated by deeper discomfort with the larger socio-political dimensions of European integration and Europeanisation which may not be easily (if at all) discerned through quantitative studies such as opinion polls and similar tools used by political analysts. In fact, as Hedetoft (1994) observes, the preoccupation with the economic and political aspects of European integration may obscure its important cultural perspectives, thereby largely neglecting identities, values, sentiments and cultural loyalties which are equally important. The dominant form of data collection in Euroscepticism studies – attitude surveys – are focused on finding out whether and to what extent public opinion is in line with the objectives of European integration. The studies themselves have been designed with a particular goal in mind: to facilitate the decision-making process on the level of European policy-design (Hedetoft 1994: 1–2). In other words, they have been designed to measure European integration as detached from the sentiments and experiences emerging in the process of an unfolding Europeanisation.[5]

Some tools developed among political scientists[6] to account for and measure support for the EU are necessary for capturing overall tendencies and for reflecting differences in degree of intensity of Euroscepticism, but they

are not sufficient for contextualising the phenomenon within the specific historical circumstances and cultural frameworks in which it appears. We suggest that anthropology is particularly well suited to explore the significance of nationally contextual and cultural differences in imagining, experiencing and reacting to European integration, and to study the variety of sentiments and reactions couched under the umbrella term 'Euroscepticism', revealing them as nuanced and contextually specific degrees of political and cultural resistance to both European integration and Europeanisation. The anthropological approach proposed here translates into exploring the extent to which any member state has adequate structures to support, facilitate and monitor European integration as administrative, legislative and economic processes. But the anthropological approach we favour also demands that we examine the impact of European integration and Europeanisation on such things as culture and identity, and the feedback impact socio-cultural forces within a member state have on the European project. Simply put, an anthropological approach must also ascertain whether member states can sustain European integration as a cultural process.

On this basis we expect the anthropology of European integration to discover inconsistencies, regional patterns and potential links to underlying historical and political factors, and to apply them to rigorous testing through qualitative data collection. The results of this would be a broader anthropological contribution to social scientific research, as well as a contribution to the designing of adequate policies adjusted to local needs. It is in this vein that we conclude, based on our assessment of the materials we now offer on Bulgaria, that the term Euroscepticism, as it refers to a unit of analysis and as an indicator of social attitudes, does not translate well with regard to the socio-cultural dynamics which constitute the processes of European integration and Europeanisation in Eastern Europe.

Eastern European Past and Present European Integration

Eastern European countries, which share former Ottoman subordination, specific experiencing of Enlightenment ideas, and a Soviet-socialist past, may be seen to experience a qualitatively different 'belonging to Europe', and to manifest regional-specific degrees of resistance to European integration, than their Western European counterparts. However, such patterns, if they exist, if they persist and if they are significant, should not obscure similar

and other patterns of resistance and acceptance among the citizens of the EU across the continent. We acknowledge that the conceptualisation of Eastern and Western Europe as binary oppositions has been soundly criticised for its obfuscation of differences between and within postsocialist countries, and for exaggerating the differences between the Eastern and Western parts of the continent (for the most recent perspectives on these issues, see Hann 2002; Forester et al. 2004; Todorova 2004; Todorova and Gille 2010). In that vein, recent scholarship points out that:

> the [Soviet] satellites themselves never ceased to feel distinct from one another despite some similarities in day-to-day existence within the bloc and clear internationalisation of the cultural and geographical hierarchies received from the West. Regardless of geography, Hungary was more 'Western' than Czechoslovakia, while Albania, just across the Adriatic from Italy, was most 'Eastern' of them all' (Forrester et al. 2004: 11).

At the same time, these and other critics do not deny the impact of imposed socialism on the 'former Soviet Bloc' and acknowledge that the persistence of the reductivist East–West conceptualisations for decades after 1989 'prove how important the Soviet bloc and communism were in perceptions of identity' (Forrester et al. 2004: 17).

Taking into account both the criticism of a reductionist East–West conceptual divide and the influence of the socialist regime on habits of thought, this essay operationalises the East–West divide and the idea of marginality as conceptually useful from two very specific perspectives. The first perspective is similar to Todorova's (2004) view of Balkan memory when she suggests that collective Balkan memory has never existed. Rather, nations, the largest entities that managed to maintain a kind of collective identity, have only gained meaning in opposition to each other. Therefore, it is of primary importance to elicit the political motivations for asserting the existence of such a collective Balkan identity, along with the radically different stakes of the actors in this process. Todorova opts for conceptualising 'Balkanness' as the conglomerate of features accumulated over the five-century long Ottoman rule, and over the half-century long communist rule. These historical continuities, according to her, are in the process of decline, as are the distinct features associated with them. These legacies are neither always at work or inherent. They, however, can be useful when conceptualised as simultaneous, overlapping, unevenly distributed and with waning effects (Todorova 2004). This

perspective has influenced our approach to current success and challenges in the processes of European integration in present-day Eastern Europe, as we group together countries which – though in varying degrees and ways – are experiencing the after-effects of Ottoman subordination, fluctuations of nationalism, and socialist and post-socialist transformations.

The second perspective which informs our grouping together of Eastern post-socialist European countries is based on shared peculiarities in the processes of transition to democracy and in the EU accession procedures. We choose to remember that much of the intellectual repository on the former countries of the Soviet bloc within anthropology and related social sciences is indebted to the analysis of comparable dimensions of the 'post' in the countries of Eastern Europe. The tumultuous events of 1989 puzzled intellectuals and social scientists on both sides of the Iron Curtain and shifted the attention of anthropological Europeanists to the transformations in what became post-socialist countries, enabling anthropologists to reflect on the socialist experiment.

The rapidity of the socio-political transformations in Eastern Europe determined much of their *post factum* nature. In the swiftness of the 1989 transformations, scholars and other critics simply did not have enough time to capture and analyse the events as they were happening. These specificities inevitably steered the anthropological research of Eastern Europe into the reflective domain of the 'post': the post-socialist, as in post-centralised economic production and knowledge-production, post-collective labour and land-ownership, and post-territorial and ideological enclosure. They also oriented social science sensitivity towards the questions of the 'unfinished', 'incomplete' and paradoxical transformations in these countries where for decades after the changes, the past, the present and the future are amalgamated in contradictory ways. This amalgamation was manifested, amongst other domains, in the operation of the economy, in administration, in the building of civil society and democratic institutions and in transforming the social model in Eastern European countries.

Thus, the main questions preoccupying scholarly research on Eastern Europe have been definitions of socialism: what it was, how it operated, how it is 'unmade', what its remains are, how the remnants blend with the present and – what is crucial to us in this essay – how this inhibits or enhances European integration and Europeanisation in Eastern European countries. Contained within this scholarship are definitions and analyses of the functioning

of socialist societies and their implications for the post-1989 period, including studies of socialist redistribution of social wealth, centralised planning, formal and informal rules and exchanges, the distinct operation of socialist property order, the recreation of private property, valuation of land and its symbolic meaning and so on. And while it is clear that the historical context for these events and processes may be different country by country, it is also clear that many are shared across national boundaries in Eastern Europe (for a range of such influential scholarly perspectives, see Szelenyi and Szelenyi 1994; Verdery 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1996, 2003; Humphrey 2002; Verdery and Humphrey 2004).

In varying degrees, former Soviet bloc countries share another specificity as well. While in the early 1990s relatively high proportions of Eastern European societies and their political leaders were eager to move to the post-socialist phase themselves, in retrospect it is clear that more efforts were placed on the symbolic obliteration of the past and the dismantling of socialism's more specific institutions, instead of on displacing the socialist logic of operation of the market, political morality and inter-societal workings, or on replacing the 'unmade' institutions and values with new ones. Therefore, in their post-Soviet phase, Eastern European countries produced specific and comparable renditions of democracy, nationalism and civil society.

It becomes increasingly clear that it is precisely the incomplete transitions, the amalgamates of socialist moralities and institutions with the logic and necessities of neo-liberal markets and democratic institutions, that contribute to what we term as the present marginality of Eastern European member states within the EU. Among its characteristic features are the strict conditionality of East European countries' EU accession process, and in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, the restriction of free access to the labour market and the establishment of an ongoing monitoring, as a part of the EU 'Cooperation and verification mechanism', in the areas of justice and home affairs. This latter specificity is the first instrument in the history of European integration which has been designed as a new policy instrument of conditionality, representing both an incentive as well as a sanctioning mechanism (Müller-Uri 2009). These all seem to illustrate an ongoing institutionalisation of marginality. An anthropological approach to these countries' integration processes would then inevitably necessitate the exploration and understanding of conditions and differing effects of being marginal, and being made to consider if not also change that condition of marginality in order to join the club of Europe.

With its different path to modernity and with the particularities of the political and social realities of socialism, Eastern Europe has been challenged in its moves to 'become European' on an EU model. The processes of European integration and of Europeanisation in Eastern European countries demand much more than the challenges normally expected of acceding countries; they entail challenges to accession in countries with different routes to modernity, and with 'different logics of social and system integration' (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 45). As a result, the phases of European integration of Eastern European countries represent a qualitatively different stage than the accession of European countries which had relatively longer histories of economic and democratic stability. Eastern EU expansion towards the post-socialist countries may also signify reconfiguration of European identity towards 'post-western Europe' identity, falling back on multiple modernities (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 46–49) or, as McCall and Wilson suggest with regard to Ireland, may potentially lead to a variety of ways in which specificities of local political, socio-economic and cultural (dis)integration affect Europe at the macro-level (McCall and Wilson 2010). Integrating multiple modernities with the expansion of the EU boundaries eastward can at the same time be seen to slowly engender transnational attachments to a European style and materiality of everyday life that can compensate for the cumbersome process of establishing 'thick loyalties' to an official EU identity (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 85).

This two-way process becomes particularly relevant if we take into consideration that the accession of member states from the former Soviet bloc seems to have placed social and system integration as indirectly proportional to one another. System integration in Delanty and Rumfold's terms refers to the integration of markets, law and technology. Social integration, on the other hand, refers to integration achieved though cultural and social structures (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 10). In Eastern Europe, substantial inconsistencies in system integration may entail challenges to social integration while particularities in the formation of social and cultural structures due to the legacies of the Ottoman and socialist pasts entail challenges to the process of system integration. A focus on one Eastern European country – Bulgaria – offers important particularities of belonging to Europe, of experiencing Enlightenment ideas, acceding to the EU, and identifying several trends in young people's experience of Bulgaria's integration.

The question of who belongs or should belong to the European Union provokes deliberation over the adjective 'European'. One common understand-

ing of European culture, as encompassing nations who are characterised by an inherited civilisation based on Judeo-Christian religion, the Greek Hellenistic ideas in the field of government, philosophy, art and science, and finally the Roman view concerning law, which as Pieterse suggests is the prevalent yet problematic equivocation of Europe with Rome and Christianity (Pieterse 1991: 3), comfortably fits Bulgaria in its framework. However, this understanding of European culture overlooks a variety of European regional cultures, contemporary multi-cultural realities, experiences such as decolonisation, migration and globalisation, and a spectrum of non-European origins to a European (as in Judeo Roman) tradition (Pieterse 1991: 4–5). With regard to Bulgaria, while such a definition does not serve to exclude the country, it is insufficient in that it conceals centuries-long accumulations of experiences influenced by the Ottoman empire. Thus, a tri-partite conceptualisation of 'European civilisation' as constitutive of western Judeo-Christian, Russian-Slavic, and Turkish-Islamic civilisations (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 37) would reflect more accurately the array of geo-political and cultural elements that make up European modernity. The European Union, however, is indebted to a particular model of modernity that has emerged within the western Judeo-Christian civilisation, wherein an assemblage of Enlightenment and Renaissance sentiments towards a universalistic culture of art, science and music surfaces as a common theme (Delanty and Rumford 2005: 38).

Whether we can talk of an analogy between the socio-cultural paradigms of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, on one hand, and the historical and ideological processes in Bulgaria, on the other, has been a debatable subject among Bulgarian historians and other social scientists for years. If one can talk of the Enlightenment in Bulgaria, it would be in very topical, local manifestations and would appear in the form of outside influences, not of an internally propelled movement. Enlightenment ideas only reached Bulgaria indirectly, and were mediated through neighbouring Greece, Serbia and Romania. These ideas lacked the universalistic pathos of French Enlightenment and its preoccupation with aesthetic and philosophical questions; they focused instead on the domestic aspiration to national liberation, and promoted education not merely as a tool for intellectual improvement but as a much-needed resource on the path to liberation from the domination of the Ottoman Empire. The specific context of Ottoman subordination and mediated permeation of Enlightenment ideas through neighbouring countries contributed to a very particular translation of Enlightenment pursuits of civil

liberties and political rights into a struggle for national liberation (Daskalov 2004).

The legacies from the period of Ottoman subordination and the peculiar ways in which Enlightenment ideas were transformed in Bulgaria can neither be dismissed as insignificant nor exaggerated and deemed to be the only important factor influencing the way Europe and the European Union are conceptualised, perceived and experienced. Rather, they should serve as a reminder to both social scientists and policy makers that belonging to 'European civilisation' and sharing a 'European heritage' does not equate to unproblematically subscribing to the specific combination of Enlightenment moralities and technocratic and economic mechanisms that are in the makeup of the European Union. Values and aspirations formed under the Romanticist impetus to uncover ethnic cultural traditions across the European continent have affected a deep sense of 'belonging to Europe', but due to socio-political circumstances in Eastern Europe this sense of belonging has been manifested to a great extent in the form of sentiment instead of invested in the form of institutionalised European democratic values.

Half a century of a socialist regime has left its hallmark on the ways Eastern European countries perceive and experience the aspirations to attainment and development of democratic values which have been espoused and institutionalised since the eighteenth century in the countries later forming the core of the European Union. Although informed by the particular national histories of post-socialist transformations, manifestations of criticism, opposition or outright rejection of the EU in post-socialist countries are nevertheless coloured by at least one common socialist legacy: a sense of deep rooted belonging to Europe, circumscribed and delayed by the half-century enclosure behind the Iron Curtain, and, therefore, a need to reunite and 'catch up' with Europe. Harmsen and Wilson (2000) discuss an application of the term 'Europeanisation' in this context where geographically and/or economically peripheral countries undergo structural reforms in order to match mainstream EU economic and political benchmarks. Acceding Eastern European members were expected quickly to embrace en bloc what has been achieved and transformed over six decades in Western Europe. The accession negotiations and compliance with the conditions for accession were condensed into a period of several years, which may not have been sufficient for developing the necessary administrative capacities and functions or for internalising the EU as both value-laden and technocratically operational.

The EU's enlargement to the East was orchestrated within a framework of strict and absolute conditionality. With very little room for negotiation, the process demanded implementation of EU legislation along with a strict list of accession conditions, which, as a review of Bulgarian pre-accession debates would reveal, were recurrently and variably used by political parties in attempts to strengthen existing party divides and garner support along the lines of singular issues arising from pre-accession clauses. The existence of the restrictive logic of the EU enlargement process has been noted in studies of the accession of Central and Eastern European countries elsewhere. Raik (2004) draws attention again to the inevitability of the enlargement process created both through the requirement for unconditional implementation of the *aquis communitaire* and through the significantly less room for negotiation provided in comparison with previous enlargements.

Leaving few decisions to be made on the level of domestic politics, the very logic of the enlargement mechanism in Eastern Europe turns the EU accession process into a matter of administrative implementation that conjures up little public interest. This predominantly technical and legislative process reduced domestic participation to administrative-level compliance and the implementation of the membership criteria (Raik 2004: 577–583). Moreover, due to the EU-identified discrepancies in economic indices and maturity of civil liberties of the post-communist Eastern European countries, the transmission of technical rules and procedures clearly demarcates relationships between the EU and candidate/new member states as non-reciprocal. Instead, the applicant position is cast in a number of subservient roles (Raik 2004: 583). One interpretation of Raiks's observations about the unequal relationship formed between the EU and its post-communist applicants suggests seeing candidate countries as 'clients', awaiting selective granting of access to the array of services and benefits provided by the EU, but also as 'pupils', immature and still learning the rules of proper conduct, whose deviations from the agreed-upon standards are subject to criticism and 'normalisation'.

Age, Occupation and Experiencing European Integration

It is not surprising then that during ethnographic research in the summer of 2009, many Bulgarian informants assessed the role of the EU in their lives primarily through the prism of bureaucracy, and the economic and political insecurities during the process of Bulgaria's democratisation.

Before turning to some research findings, however, we also wish to acknowledge that at least in part these findings may also be attributed to research methodology.[7] This case study, conducted by Ilieva, explored the way in which three age groups of Bulgarians conceptualise, experience and discuss European integration. Their respective ages during the fall of the socialist regime in 1989 was used as a marker to separate the age groups. The informants' age in 1989 was important as it largely shaped the extent and duration of their exposure to the then present regime. This in turn left more room to explore the extent to which the socialist experience affects their present-day perception and experience of Bulgaria's European integration. In an attempt to minimise the insufficiency or the lack of knowledge about European integration as a factor in informant responses, the study focused on informants who, due to their professional or educational occupation, were already engaged with the topic of Bulgaria's European integration. Thus, the age-groups of informants consisted of the following: teachers from high school disciplines who teach students about the EU and Bulgaria's integration; young adults – ages 18 and up – who had no direct experience of the socialist regime, but who are directly experiencing Bulgaria's European integration while also learning about it as a part of their school curriculum, and, third, professionals occupied with the local implementation of various EU policies and regulations at the level of state administration. This methodology was well suited to uncover significant age-group patterns in responses about informant perceptions, experiences and expectations regarding Bulgaria's EU accession, and the challenges and benefits they identify and link to the EU in their personal and professional lives. While this study did not place emphasis on uncovering gender and ethnic differences within and across generational lines, it identified interesting generational patterns in the sociocultural effects of Bulgaria's EU integration.

The concomitance of the EU-negotiation and accession processes with economic and political instability seems to have projected negative sentiments accumulated during the transition process on to the process of European integration. Both sceptical and optimistic accounts were articulated with an explicit temporal framework: stable and predictable benefits from democratic and economic reforms, and from Bulgaria's accession to the European Union, will most likely be tangibly felt in the future, but have so far been predominantly manifested in economic and social burdens. In addition, informants engaged in implementing EU policies and regulations at different

professional levels shared a negative sentiment with regard to Bulgaria's position vis-à-vis the core European member states. This sentiment was a general feeling of a well-regulated yet 'elegant' imposition of authority on the part of older member states over the newer members. This weakness was seen to resonate particularly in the perceived (in)ability to make and influence decisions in a context where the overarching frameworks regulating the functioning of the Union have been predetermined, leaving little to no room for adapting them to the needs and specificities of the newly acceding members.

As part of this process, the bureaucracy shaped how Bulgaria adapted to the accession procedure, which, as we have seen, in Eastern Europe was predicated upon the implementation of strict membership criteria, this way leaving little to no room for political choice or public discussion. At the same time the bureaucratic and legislative specificity of the accession process in Eastern European countries transposed the process of European integration entirely under the authority of experts, thereby placing a question mark next to the role of democratic choice (Raik: 2004: 582). Drawing on their professional experiences with the implementation of EU projects in Bulgaria in the domains of culture and legislation, respondents in Ilieva's research expressed scepticism towards the perceived tendency to impose 'ready-made' models, developed according to the needs of Western European countries (the core EU member states being commonly evoked here), and not adapted to local needs. Examples here included the following of predetermined procedures for improving efficiency in administrative and/or legislative sectors, often in contradiction with good practices established by Bulgarian institutions or set in place with the help of foreign (non-EU) aid. Such developments led to poor results in accession goals which in turn left behind negative sentiments on the part of local representatives. This in turn reinforced the circulation in public discourses of notions of immaturity and the backwardness of newly acceded Eastern European countries vis-à-vis Western European member states. Discomfort exists also about the narrow domestic political uses in which discussions of Bulgaria's membership conditions are entangled. At the very same time, however – as Tucker et al. (2002) note – due to their perceived economic and cultural 'backwardness', Eastern Europeans, both on an individual and party-level, may opportunistically embrace the European Union as a way to 'catch up' with the rest of economically advanced Europe, but often only to the extent needed for achieving personal goals or political party agendas.

The Bulgarians with whom Ilieva had the chance to discuss their experiences of the before and after in Bulgaria's European integration (all the while acknowledging that the accession process is still ongoing) provided many personal examples of such opportunistic engagements. In fact, the positive aspects of Bulgaria's EU accession predominantly referenced the common discourse of 'free' movement of goods, information and people, while also blending in the personal and professional benefits associated with accelerated technological developments and digitalisation of data. The ability to travel beyond national borders, to acquire a taste of an 'elite community and culture' transgressing national identification, and 'unrestricted'[8] access to information, along with the advantages of digitalising and accessing data electronically, were among the themes that reoccurred in identifying the positively assessed aspects of Bulgaria's European integration. At the same time, informants repeatedly showed awareness of the differences set by their individual current economic status and occupation, emphasising – still very much in line with the findings by Tucker et al. (2002: 558) – that not all member states and not all citizens of a nation-state bear equally the costs and benefits of becoming EU-citizens.

The two most recent Eastern European member states, Bulgaria and Romania, did not have full access to the EU labour market. Their accession treaties stipulate that for the first two post-accession years access to the labour market of the other EU member states would be decided on a national-level on the part of the other EU members or would be subject to bilateral agreements, if such be drafted. This situation can remain relatively unchanged for up to seven years following the accession date. Currently, the only citizens of Bulgaria and Romania who can fully benefit from mobility within the internal EU labour market are individuals with special skills and qualifications, while unskilled workers are at a disadvantage (Tucker et al. 2002: 558).

For this reason, plausible economic benefits pursuant to qualification, skills and occupation certainly appear to be a factor that can influence individual perception and experiences of European integration. This we argue needs to be considered when discussing opportunistic or instrumental approaches to integration, keeping in mind that in pure form they may not be as applicable to post-socialist member states (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2006: 147) as they are to developed industrial democracies. The magnitude and specificity of social and economic changes in Eastern Europe in the past twenty years have no equivalent in Western Europe and neither do the experiences in

forming an opinion with regard to the European Union (Tucker et al. 2002: 569). Thus analogies between the critical opinions towards European integration and Europeanisation on the western and eastern side of the continent have limited potential, unless they take into consideration the comparatively disadvantaged position of East European countries vis-à-vis the other member states during candidacy, accession and the first years of membership, as well as the other common factors contributing to the specific socio-cultural and economic framework impacting both ideological and utilitarian perceptions and experiences of European integration.

While evidence for the impact of these Eastern European specificities in experiencing the EU still abound, trends for a changing kind of mindset appear to be in the making in Bulgaria as well. The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science's Educational Programmes, which serve as guidelines for drafting and criteria for approving all school textbooks along with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science's Official Regulation for Educational Content, set grounds for a more active use of the opportunities that the EU has to offer and potentially also an allegiance to the symbolic dimension of the European project. For example, the content area 'Social Sciences and Civil Education' is designed as an integrated discipline charged with the 'key role in developing students' social culture' – pivotal for students' 'better orienting in, adapting to, and realisation in contemporary democratic society, along with developing their skills for active civil participation in social reality under the conditions of cultural diversity and globalisation'.[9] Education in History and Civilisation is burdened with the responsibility to 'help construct civil identity of the individual in the society', to form 'the rational and emotional basis for civil integration'. Introducing students to the 'geographical conditions of Eurointegration and incorporating Bulgaria into European economic, political and cultural space' is a task delegated to the discipline of Geography and Economy. Education in 'Philosophy', a heading including Logics, Ethics and Law, is designed to help every student 'self-identify as an autonomous personality and a free citizen' by introducing him/her to their 'inalienable rights, democratic values, and the strategies for efficient social participation in civil life'.

The curriculum in the discipline 'World and Personality' is represented as practically oriented – aiming at preparing students for participation in social life, for personal and professional realisation according to the democratic values of the contemporary world. Translated into the narratives of the detailed

Educational Programmes, these themes emphasise the need to prepare students for 'active' and 'efficient' participation in an 'incessantly changing contemporary reality' where individual initiative appears as a 'key civil value'. These texts define 'significant contemporary values' as comprising of: human rights, rule of law, democratic values, national and European identity. The individual is repeatedly referred to as 'the active agent in history' who needs to be engaging in mobility and personal initiative as ways to inhabit a changing and dynamic socio-political, economic, ideological and cultural reality in the contemporary world.

These texts emphasise that each student also needs to be aware of Bulgaria's belonging to Europe, of the continuity that exists between Bulgaria's and Europe's past, and that they are called upon to be able to give examples for Bulgarian contributions to the European cultural legacy with an awareness of the continuity in cultural processes. In these discourses Bulgaria is repeatedly represented as a part of both Balkan and European culture, seen to have continued from Antiquity (with Ancient Greece and Rome as the principal referents) to the Modern epoch, while also being able to represent the Bulgarian Revival as part of the modernisation of Europe. In tracing the continuity of the historical contacts between Bulgarian society and other European countries, students are also expected to see the link between these and Bulgaria's transformation into a fully fledged European nation.

With variable degrees of emphasis, these themes resonated in the representations of the European Union expressed by some of the informants who most perceptibly envisioned the EU in terms of activities and opportunities, referencing themselves as individual beneficiaries. 'My plans', 'my future' and 'my project' commonly referred to entering institutions of higher education; in these accounts universities in the United Kingdom, Germany, France and the Netherlands were cited as options along with Bulgarian institutions. Among younger participants, school and media overlapped as the most commonly identified source of information about the European Union, and most informants were able to give a brief outline of the major dates in the development of the Union, along with a fairly thorough account of its main institutions and references to their rights as European citizens (travelling, studying and working being the most common ones). Younger informants did not reference the socialist past when assessing Bulgaria's present and future in the EU, but nevertheless repeatedly emphasised the variety of educational, travel and employment opportunities they nowadays have as compared to their par-

ents at their age, along with the individual responsibility they each now have to use that potential.

The trends we have captured in the case of Bulgaria suggest that age and occupation are among the significant factors we need to consider when analysing the effects of European integration on daily experiences on a local level. In addition, these need to be studied against the backdrop of historical peculiarities of Bulgaria's Enlightenment ideas, democratic values and socialist past. Furthermore, the predominantly administrative and bureaucratic reality that the EU has embodied for some young people in Bulgaria may be triggering a degree of scepticism or, at the very least, precluding an engagement with the symbolic and emotional aspect of belonging to the European Union. The term 'Euroscepticism', however, does not offer the necessary sensitivity to local trends in their socio-cultural context. Therefore, it cannot adequately capture the variety of sentiments and rationales arising in the ways people engage with, think through, use and adapt (to) European integration, or the trends of a new kind of mindset that appear among younger people. Bulgaria's case probably shares many commonalities with other newly acceded Eastern European countries. It thus offers a productive base for an anthropological investigation of the comparable schemata of social cognition, perception and reaction which fill out categories of Europeanisation and Euroscepticism in scholarly critiques of local challenges to and uses of the EU emerging in the countries of Eastern Europe.

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Notes

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1. While we examine the issues we raise with particular attention to one nation in the EU, it is our view that the comparative anthropology of European integration runs a grave risk if it views any region as a special case of Europeanisation. Much may be gained in the continued investigation of the commonalities to be found in European societies and cultures across the continent, many of which can be related directly to the policies and programmes of the EU.

2. The case study which provides the bulk of ethnographic data in this essay is based on Polya Ilieva's ethnographic research in Sofia, Bulgaria, which was carried out in the summer of 2009.

3. The source is the Oxford English Dictionary – linked to a citation from a June 1986 article of *The New York Times* where the term is used interchangeably with 'anti-marketeer'.

4. Eurobarometer encompasses a range of surveys and studies, published on the website for the Public Opinion Analysis sector of the European Commission. They address major topics concerning European citizenship: enlargement, social situation, health, culture, information technology, environment, the Euro, defence, etc. Since 1973, the European Commission has been monitoring the evolution of public opinion in the member states, thus helping the preparation of texts, decision-making and the evaluation of its work (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm).

5. For a consideration of how qualitative methods may help to foster a better understanding of policy-related research, see Hedetoft's (1994) analysis of post-survey ethnographic interviews.

6. For an example of one such productive tool, see Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002).

7. For a further description of the research methodology and more detailed analysis of the case-study findings, see Ilieva (2010).

8. These quotes were offered to Ilieva by an informant in summer 2009.

9. All references to educational curricula in this essay are based on the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science's Educational Programmes, Part IV- designed for V, VI, VII and VIII grades' education in Social Sciences, Civil Education and Religion; the translations are by Ilieva.

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