Mimicking Euroscepticism: The Case of Turkey and Serbia
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Abstract

Euroscepticism is a topic that is becoming increasingly more important to study, and yet there is little research that explores its implications outside of the EU context, more specifically in the candidate states. This study aims to understand how Euroscepticism in the EU can create a mimicking effect on the Euroscepticism in the candidate countries. This study uses two case studies, Serbia and Turkey, who have similar onset but are on the opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of how likely they are to join the EU. By using content analysis to decode the government press releases in the years between 2017 and 2021, in-depth observation of how a country seeking membership to the EU can show skepticism about it. This study concludes that the rise of Euroscepticism in the EU increases the frequency and the severity of the Eurosceptic proclamations by the selected cases. The research finds that this link is caused by the candidacy status itself, regardless of their prospect of joining.

List of Abbreviations

EU - European Union

AKP - Justice and Development Party

SRP - Serbian Progressive Party

MoFAoT - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

MoEIoS - Ministry of European Integration of Serbia

Table of Contents

Introduction

Euroscepticism is going through one of its peaks with the most recent instance of Brexit becoming a reality. Even though this skeptic outlook on the EU has been initially coined as an exclusively British phenomenon (Milner, 2000) through the years it has spread to many more inner and outer actors of the EU. It is understandable that the political elite of members of the EU care to please their public and at times this could be at the expense of the EU, one can criticize the commitments of deeper integration it has made many years ago. How is the case for all those states who are trying to become a member of the EU? Their position as aspiring countries presumes that they ought to be supporters of the European Project. Yet there are candidate countries with Eurosceptic sentiments. In this globalized world, it is expected that states influence one another, and this is especially the case with the EU where for the accession procedure its institutions and members influence the candidate countries. It is however important to switch the question and think if the events that could potentially dissolve the EU contribute to the skeptical sentiments in the candidates as they seem to have contributed to how Euroscepticism has become mainstream in the EU itself. One must then ask: How do the Euroscepticism sentiments in the EU affect Euroscepticism in the candidate countries?

As Kopecký puts it, the conversation around Euroscepticism in the candidate states appears naturally as he proclaims: "However, of equal importance to the dynamics of Euroscepticism, in the candidate countries in general (…), is the nature of the enlargement process itself" (2004, 228). By using the cleavage theory developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and the typology of Rulikova (2004) on the experience of candidate countries, the divide between status, and the relationship between the members and the candidates have been explained. The mechanism of exportation of Euroscepticism has been explained by the norm diffusion theory by adapting it to be a concept that could be diffused onto others. This

study used two case study with content analysis to understand the government statements of candidate countries in their relationship with the EU especially in the light of Euroscepticism in the EU. According to the 2019 Eurobarometer results there appears to a general trend of candidate states becoming more enthusiastic for EU membership with Albania in 91%, Montenegro at 68% and Northern Macedonia at 61%, all of which have even considerably higher percentages with perceived benefit in joining the EU. Serbia and Turkey are the two least enthusiastic when it comes to EU membership with 40% and 50% support respectively (Eurobarometer, 2019). Serbia is the candidate country that is most advanced in their accession process with 18 open chapters whereas Turkey is going backwards from having 16 chapters open, with the last one opened in 2016. The study aimed to pinpoint how Euroscepticism as an imported notion affects two candidate countries who are Eurosceptic to begin with, but they are at the opposite stages of their membership journey. The uniqueness of this study lies in its exploration of the experiences of candidate countries by comparing two cases that have often been studied separately. This study drew upon a unique phenomenon of 'reactive skepticism', the skepticism one state feels towards a group they are trying to get in, but they are influenced by the negative feedback the group members have and thus they mimic the doubts the inside feels. By making inferences on the sentiments felt by candidate countries as well as having a post-modern approach to the public versus party-based divide to the discourse on Euroscepticism and operating through one government in a detailed manner. All of these qualities contribute are new attributes that those interested in this field could experiment with and the findings of the reactive skepticism could be further explored in the light of this project. Such a study is quite relevant at this time as the after-effects of the Eurocrisis, Brexit, and the migration crisis is still felt throughout the European continent and their power to influence others is a worthy endeavor. Another crisis that immensely impacted the world is the Covid-19 pandemic and although the Eurobarometer

results of 2021 show a %6 increase in the positive feelings towards the EU (European Commission, 2021a) many news outlets and researchers have pointed to the long-term effect it might have on the opinion towards the EU (Sanchez Margalef 2020, Dandolov 2021, Leigh 2020). There appears to be a need in the literature to focus on this link both due to the relevancy of this issue as well as the limited literature there appears to be.

This study laid out the pertinent literature in the field by which is followed by the theoretical framework which is laid out as the rivalling theory will be discussed and the theory chosen will be justified. A brief introduction to the methodology will be followed by the case selection as well as the background to the cases. The empirical analysis and the conclusion of the study with its implications for the literature as well as future areas of research will be added on.

Literature Review

Euroscepticism has been widely debated by scholars, yet the debate is often synonymous with the skeptic sentiments coming from the European continent and not so much with the rest of the world. This now mainstream phenomenon goes well beyond its European borders as the fluctuations in the Eurosceptic sentiments depicts an undesirable picture of the EU. The effects of such skepticism are rather important, specifically for the candidate states, as they are the ones who are on the road to commit to a union that its members are hesitant with. The candidate countries experience various levels of Euroscepticism and finding the reasoning behind this puzzling situation is essential for the future of the EU.

The debate on Euroscepticism has focused on different regions, but the literature about the experience of candidate countries only came to be with the Central Eastern European countries around the time of the Eastern Enlargement in 2004, (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004, Kopecký and Mudde 2002, Herzog and Tucker 2009). Alongside the Eurozone and migration crises, the biggest boom in the literature on Euroscepticism is

coming along ever since the decision of the UK to leave the EU has been announced (Belloni and Brunazzo 2017, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2018).

The most common divide between the scholars is the focus on where such skepticism is situated: whether it is studied in the political parties (Taggart 1998, Hooghe et al 2004, Kopecký and Mudde 2002, Marks and Wilson 2000, Marks et al. 2002, Ray 1999, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008) or in the public opinion. The pioneering definition is presented by Taggart as: "The idea of a contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration." (1998, 366). Later this definition was refined with Szczerbiak to develop binary terms like "hard" and "soft" Euroscepticism (2004, 3-6). Taggart's definition was criticized by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) on the grounds that it was too broad, and they proposed a new way of understanding skepticism of diffuse and specific support for European integration. This new definition married the dimensions of the support for the idea of the EU and the realities which presents a deeper understanding of skepticism due to grievance or because of outright opposition.

The candidate countries are those states that are willing to go through the rigorous accession process to become a part of the EU and even though they start with high levels of enthusiasm, their very position vis a vis the EU makes them very impressionable. The concept of Euroscepticism is an experience about the accession process (Kopecký 2004, Skinner 2013). The Western context's experience of switching from the autonomy of the nation-states to a political and economic union is certainly an experience that is different from the experience of the post-Communist states of CEE (Henderson, 2002). The literature on Euroscepticism in candidate countries heavily focuses on this dichotomy between the West and the Central East under the Copenhagen Criteria that created the *acquis communautaire* and how such criteria was not easily attainable by the candidates (Kopecký,

2004). Another source of which such skepticism is outlined is the lack of true knowledge about the European experience until the candidate countries are truly a member (Szczerbiak 2001, Rulikova 2004). This fact puts the candidate states into a vulnerable position as they are open to being influenced by the information they receive about the EU. Candidate countries as they are going through rigorous negotiation and accession periods, the attitudes of the governments and the political parties present towards the EU carry a great deal of importance. Szczerbiak (2008) demonstrates that the inherent political affiliation of a party is not the defining factor for their attitudes towards the EU and the membership, but it is their understanding of the costs of adhering to the requirements and the benefits they will acquire once they are a member (240). Therefore, when examining the stances of candidates, it would be worthwhile to consider the country as a whole and their government officials as those that will have the final say in the process.

Serbia and Turkey have distinct ways in which they showcase Euroscepticism mostly due to their different historical backgrounds which relate to their political positions in the present time. The Serbian experience of skepticism towards the EU is one born out of frustration with the requirements for negotiation and most importantly the manner that they are presented in and their level of severity (Bazic, 2019). The friction between the EU and Serbia has been caused on the topic of Kosovo and Metohija which has been an ongoing dispute of Serbia since the dissolution of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (Stojić, 2013). The EU has been consistent in its desires to resolve this issue before the actual process of accession happens and is willing to hold out Serbia's membership until the parties agree on a compromise. Due to the fact that this is seen as a point where the Serbian government would have to make a great concession, this issue relates to the crowd with Eurosceptic tendencies. Stojić (2013) also points to the fact that in terms of soft Eurosceptic parties, their attitudes are open to shifting in terms of the opinion of the public. The EU and the countries' membership

in the EU are regarded as two distinct but rather related points that parties and the people form opinions and the discussion for the candidates is one contingent on their views on their membership (Stojic, 2017). The ruling Serbian Progressive Party, with its leader President Vučić, has been coined as a Soft Eurosceptic party.

Turkish Euroscepticism stems from an even wider scope of skeptical sentiments called West-scepticism which is a combination of distrust to both the European states and the US. Yılmaz (2011) puts forward the term 'Sevres Syndrome' of Turkey which refers to the agreement signed by the Ottoman Empire and Western powers in 1920 where Turks are regarded as "illegitimate invaders and occupiers of European–Christian lands and the oppressors of European–Christian peoples". Thus, the relationship with Europe and thus the West has been strained with the ancient post-war situation. Although Turkey was once a great Euroenthusiast with the still ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), it has been affected by the problems with the future of Cyprus and then 'Turcoceptic' reactions of certain member states, its enthusiasm turned into bitterness (Yılmaz, 2011). This bitterness has found its shape in Euroscepticism, skepticism in the intentions and legitimacy of the union, as it does not benefit Turkey. The Euroscepticism in the EU serves as a self-serving prophecy for Turkey, a candidate that is very unlikely to join the union and thus it is a way to not treat this as a loss but as avoiding damage. Beyond the singlehanded proclamations of member states, the hurdles and blockages Turkish candidacy experiences also took their toll on the sentiments felt by Turkey. Gülmez notes the shift in the Turkish attitude as: "that change from eagerness to reluctance occurs as a reaction to the conditions put forward by the EU" (2013, 329). Turkey has been in a constant dialogue with the EU on Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean, the situation in Syria, and most notably the 2016 Migrant Deal which has exacerbated even more Euroscepticism in the current government. With its long-winded candidacy, Turkey does not show any intention of opting out of this status to a more

'partnership position' as the President of EU Commission Ursula Von der Leyen declared in her latest visit to meet with the Turkish President in April 2021 (European Commission, 2021b). Gülmez asks the very important question that could be applicable to all candidates and potential candidates with Eurosceptic sentiments: "If you are pessimistic about the EU's current or future projection, why would you wish to join the EU in the first place?" (2011,3). This brings out the discussion of why a state chooses to become an EU member. For the Turkish case, this desire has been for various reasons in the process of their candidacy. The first term of the AKP government subscribed to the idea that the EU and the West are where Turkey should gravitate towards for modernization and development. The Turkish efforts were not well received which has antagonized Turkey to the EU. With great levels of corruption and nepotism under an authoritarian ruler, the external relations and the Turkish economy crumbled (Pierini & Siccardi, 2021). The right-wing conservatism has ideologically distanced itself from the West, and the EU, thereby resisting Europeanization efforts (Hoffman, 2018). The current bilateral relationships, especially with regards to the 2016 Migration Deal, are a transactional basis therefore the EU membership for government officials appears to be for sake of the membership benefits, even though the officials believe that "Turkey belongs with the EU (Mutanoglu, 2021). Serbia, on the other hand, proclaimed that their own desire to join despite being skeptical was because they deeply identified with the norms and values the EU stood for such as peace, justice and human rights. They identify with the European identity and they follow along the footsteps of post-communist candidate states like them in pledging allegiance to the EU while also keeping their old ties with Russia. The reasoning of these two candidates for joining the EU might differ yet their own reasoning seems to be relevant enough that they go through with the accession process (Kopecký, 2004).

The rise of Euroscepticism and more importantly how mainstream it became over the recent years certainly has implications for those that are in the preparation stage of getting in the EU. Stojic, when commenting on the effects of Brexit on the accession process, notes: "The willingness of member states to genuinely support, encourage or, at least, not to block the candidates on this long and arduous journey further decreased following the 2016 British decision to leave EU" (2017, 41). This is tied to the fact that an internal crisis that delegitimizes the EU will tire out the member states to resolve but also it would significantly slow down the accession process of the candidate states. Whether these crises have a direct effect on the country itself due to their entanglement, such as with the candidate countries hosting refugees in partnership with the EU, or they feel the effects of it stemming from the EU set the grounds for inspection.

Rulikova puts this correlation as "candidates reflect their impatient and uncomfortable situation of being in abeyance, which itself creates motives for Euroscepticism" (2004, 31). This perspective is commonly accepted in the literature surrounding the candidate country Euroscepticism yet due to the advances in the topic is in need of a revision. In conclusion, the literature presents limited resources for understanding the overarching link between Eurosceptic candidates and what the main contributor to all those with different backgrounds could be. Different strands of Euroscepticism at the government level in candidate countries have been studied yet understanding the effects of Euroscepticism from the European contexts onto the Euroscepticism in the candidate countries would help illuminate the future of the European integration project.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that appears to be the best fit for explaining Euroscepticism in the candidate countries is the Cleavage theory developed by Lipset and Rokan (1967). Cleavages

in the sense of the theory, are politicized divisions among groups of different and usually opposing characters that reflect a collection of historical conflict in between (Pisciotta, 2016, 196). For the cleavage to be noteworthy in means of politics, Lipset and Rokan (1967) foresee that members of the group must have one uniting quality to them, and they ought to feel a sense of belonging to the group, and the cleavage must be institutionalized. The key feature of this theory is the center-periphery cleavage, which describes a power relationship between the 'center' that possesses might and influence and the 'periphery', one that is inferior and influenced by the center (Mabogunje, 1980).

This theory has often been useful in deconstructing the party positions in a given country (Hooghe & Marks, 2007). This dialectic understanding has also been useful in understanding the political structures and trends in the scope of the EU, particularly in the area of European integration (Marks and Wilson, 2000). With the rise of support to construct a new union, unlike any before, there came those who would be opposed to it. Treib describes the multi-national cleavage as: "The center-periphery cleavage taps into the internal political struggle over the appropriate division of authority between the central (supranational) level of governance and the apply parts (the member states)" (2021, 6). This very struggle thus explains why certain member states disapprove with the current trend of ever so deeper European integration.

As this theory has often been used to comment on the prospect of Euroscepticism in the EU, it can also be used to define the relationship between the EU itself and the candidate states. Between the EU and the candidate countries, there is a certain power dynamic that radiates from the center, the EU, to the candidates, the periphery. Pisciotta refers to the notion of 'space' in Rokan's work as: "It is very easy to cross geographical borders but not so easy to cross the membership line, which entails abandoning one's original cultural identity, adopting another and being accepted by the new group" (2016, 196). For one way or another,

the candidates are not in the EU until they are officially accessed as they cannot benefit from the privileges of membership. The EU, through the negotiations, influences the candidates to shape them into what the center is or what the center wants them to be (Pisciotta, 2016). The peripheries, the candidates, are susceptible to the provisions of the center and although there is a direct diffusion of the EU acquis, the candidates are also influenced by what happens in the center. Due to their natural states as the candidates, there is a clear will to be a member but as the outsiders, they are at the disposal of the EU. Beyond what is said and done, the EU also carries the potential to diffuse a lot of what it experiences internally to the outside peripheries.

To be better understand the diffusion of ideas in this cleavage setting, the norm diffusion theory becomes useful. Norms are traditionally understood to be shared understandings, standards of behavior, assessment methods of actions. (Checkel, 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink,1998; Kratochwil, 1984). Slobodchikoff (2010) makes the connection that the use of norms within the case of the EU, especially with regards to the Copenhagen Criteria, have been used as a tool for European integration. By this logic, the export of ideas from the EU to candidate countries is an integral part to the accession process. Börzhel and Risse (2009) find that norm or idea diffusion does not necessarily have to come out of direct efforts by the 'norm exporter' (Björkdahl, 2012) but by the byproduct of socialization in terms of emulation and mimicry. They also highlight how ideas like Euroscepticism can manifest themselves into other states alongside other norms that have been often used in positive and constitutive ways by proclaiming: "Ideas may become "contagious" (Myers, 2000,175) under conditions of uncertainty, policy failure and dissatisfaction with the status quo, rather than external pressure" (2009, 12). This would mean that the mainstreaming of Euroscepticism could potentially turn it into an idea, a norm, that would be diffused to others

and the those outside of the EU would be mimicking what has been going on inside unintentionally.

The other most popular theory explaining the origins of Euroscepticism is the politicization theory, defined as an 'increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced towards the process of policy formulation within the EU' (de Wilde & Trenz, 2011). Though including the citizens in the conversation of politics is an essential part of democracy, the question of the legitimacy of the EU has risen along with it (Rauh et al, 2020). This theory assumes a strong public and partisan contribution in the decision-making of the state officials concerning the EU. The limitations of this theory with regards to the focus of this project are its over-fixation on treating domestic affairs as an internal business in the context of the EU, an intergovernmental regional integration structure that grows deeper each day and it expands into new members every few years. As there is an undeniable tie between the public's influence on the parties that represent them, the political elite also has leverage in guiding the perception of the public. Wilde et al. find that through an assortment of academic work that there is now a growing trend of how both the political elite as well as the public influence whether there ought to be support for European integration (2018). These findings prove that there ought to be more to the process of decoding the source of Eurosceptic sentiments in a country than observing the public and party discourse separately.

Returning to the framework built by Rulikova (2004) on the experience of candidate countries with Euroscepticism, there is a lot of comparisons that would be useful to realize the aforementioned theories. The very condition of being a candidate itself is a defining part of the Euroscepticism these countries experience on 3 grounds: externality, uncertainty, and belatedness (Rulikova, 2004). Externality as she describes is the very fact that until accession is complete, a candidate is all but a candidate, it does not know more than mere snapshots

show the reality of being in the EU. Another part of the externality factors is the one-sided negotiations that rain upon the candidates from the EU and how the pre-accession process is a constant state of the EU leveraging on the candidates. The other important quality is uncertainty, and it refers to the ambiguity of the future of the candidate and whether it will even be successful. A pivotal point that connects with the first feature and one that a lot of the candidate countries experience is the question of whether the EU membership would be good for them. This is tied to both limited knowledge in the periphery but also since these states are so susceptible to new information about the EU. This very fact calls for an investigation on how the EU unintentionally affects the candidate countries with the information that gets diffused out the center. The last quality Rulikova touches on is the fact of belatedness, the fact that the member states have been integrating their policies for years, and raising the standards to be adhered to upon accession a lot more over the years would make the outsiders doubt if they can ever get in.

Through this framework, the cleavage theory sets the baseline for structure of the relationship where the EU, as the center that is powerful, influences the candidates, as the periphery. Their relationship is based on a diffusion of ideas and notions that the center aims to project. The norm diffusion theory aids in uncovering that, such a hierarchical relationship is in fact true and yet the center is not in full control of all the messages it shows onto the periphery. These theories explain that potentially destructive notions like Euroscepticism are also able to travel and be mimicked by their receiving end. Hence this paper takes the hypothesis of H1: The rise of Eurosceptic discourse at the government level in the EU increases the Eurosceptic sentiments in the EU candidate countries' foreign policy towards the EU

Methods

To examine the question of: "How does Euroscepticism in the EU affect Euroscepticism in the EU candidate countries?" A comparative case study of Turkey and Serbia as the candidate countries in question has been used to test the theories. This study followed a most similar case design as the main difference point between the cases is on the Euroscepticism on the government-level and relatively a considerable number of qualities of the cases are on a similar track. These cases are remarkable to study as they aid in demonstrating the whole range of experiences of candidates as they constitute the most likely and the least likely candidates to join. The time frame of focus was chosen to be between 2017 and 2021 since Euroscepticism compares these cases on equal grounds, both countries did not have any elections, and hence there was a single government. This time frame was also important for data collection as the Ministry of European Integration of Serbia was erected in 2017 as well as for the fact that a lot of cases that become synonymous with the rise of Euroscepticism in Europe, such as the migrant crisis, Brexit, and most recently speculated, the Covid-19 pandemic, have taken place in this frame of time.

To study these two cases, qualitative content analysis of the archival data has been made use for measuring the dependent variable. Government websites of the respective countries, in the matters of briefings, press releases, statements of the spokesperson were used as main sources of data. Public proclamation of audio and visual format such as speeches, public outings, interviews with news outlets sources will be observed for data extraction. The study was conducted by going through the press releases of both the Serbian and Turkish Ministry websites. A distinction between these two was that the Ministry of European Integration of Serbia had much more plentiful and in-depth proclamations on all the relevant events going on in the EU than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whereas the Turkish counterpart exhibited the opposite. To have the most accurate portrayal of both of the

cases, the ministry website with the most amount of data was chosen and as these ministries are both dependent on their respective governments, such discrepancy was justified.

The data, though it exists in Serbian and Turkish originally and has potentially valuable contributions to the research to include them in their original self, have been collected and analyzed in English. This is a drawback of the methodological choices yet for convenience in the research process, such a decision was made. Content analysis is the appropriate method of analysis for this type of research as the data in question represents the official stand of the respective countries which allows for exploration on how a government perceives a phenomenon. What makes this study unique, is the fact that similar studies that have been made on the topic focus on the public opinion or the perceptions of different political parties, yet by focusing on one government specifically a more in-depth look at foreign policymaking can be explained.

Content Analysis:

The process of content analysis has been conducted as follows, the ministry websites have been browsed between the years of 2017 to 2021, until the present day of writing. The thematic approach is the best fit for this study as the words with negative or critical connotations reveal themselves easily and in the context of this thesis, reveal the trajectory of bilateral relations with the EU and the candidate. The themes in common are seen as the Euroscepticism in the EU, lack of unity and bilateral dispute for both of the cases, and also other case-specific themes came up as the data has been analyzed. The coding and the categories have been created as a result of the open coding, which meant that there was not an exhaustive code, to begin with, but the data itself has produced repetitive patterns. Through this process key statements about these data have been compiled in an excel file which was then organized in terms of sentiments and the underlying narrative. As the main data consists of quotations from press releases, the categorization of the meaning of these statements has

been performed by the researcher. The focus was the EU- candidate relations and the subcategories that relate to the case were also produced. After all the data was coded, it was translated into tables for each case with the most relevant findings and these have been elaborated in the results section.

Case Study

Case Selection:

Serbia and Turkey are cases worthy of comparison as they both exhibit similar circumstances, except for their prospect of joining, and also have similarly Eurosceptic sentiments in their government. One of the most evident similarities in the fact that they both have a Eurosceptic public. As there should be a consideration for both hard and soft Eurosceptics, one needs to look at the support for the EU and see the remaining value of both opponents and neutrals as potential opposition. According to the public survey conducted by MoEUoS, favorable public opinion of the EU in the years after the start of the candidacy fluctuates between 41% and 55% which has been consistently increasing in the time frame of 2017 and 2019, as further polls have not been conducted in the last 2 years (The Republic of Serbia, 2019). Similarly, the Turkish side supports the EU membership of Turkey with 60% however only 23% believe that Turkey will be accepted, and at the same time, 57% of the population believes that Turkey has done its part in terms of negotiations (Tepav, 2020). These very findings showcase that support for the EU does not mean the support for the process of accession. Both of the countries had long term engagements with the EU as Serbia has been granted the candidate status in 2012 after applying in 2009 whereas Turkey, the oldest candidate country currently present, has been declared a candidate to the EU since 1999. *(European Commission, n.d.)* Another point in contact these two cases have is that both of their countries have rather authoritarian leaders, namely Aleksandar Vučić and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Günay and Dzihic (2016) attribute the rise in neoliberal authoritarian practices to the candidate's relationship with the EU. Stojic (2017) points out that authoritarian positions of governing parties tend to express Euroscepticism. Similarly, these have been accused of nepotism, corruption, and disrespect to the rule of law which are clear indicators of mismatch with the European project. Another very important point of similarity is the fact that both of the candidates have unresolved disputes with other states which undermine their positions vis a vis the accession, Serbia with Kosovo and Turkey with Cyprus.

One of the parts they differ in is their location and therefore the identity that stems from that. Serbia is in the European continent and it is usually considered as a Western Balkan country yet in recent years the government officials referred to themselves as a South Eastern European to reiterate their European-ness. Turkey, on the other hand, is in Eurasia, its location is heavily contested and politicized and it is often on the side that Turkey is not European (Yılmaz, 2011). On the matters of religious beliefs, Turkey is thought to be predominantly Muslim, with an assortment of different sects and other religious beliefs whereas Serbia is predominantly Christian, similar to those of its other European counterparts. The most relevant difference in the scope of these cases is their prospect of joining the EU. Serbia has opened 18 out of 35 chapters with a provisional closing of 2 and it is aiming to close all the chapters by 2024 to join in 2025 (Republic of Serbia Ministry of European Integration, 2019). Turkey, on the other hand, opened 16 chapters, none of which since 2016, and 6 out of the unopened are banned by the Greek Cypriot government and their destination is unknown but far from complete. On this matter, Belloni (2016) observes how the public opinion of candidate states differ: "In general, the states most advanced in the EU integration process—Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro experience the highest levels of Euroscepticism among candidate countries" (535). The reasoning behind the Eurosceptic

sentiments of various amounts in the cases might differ yet there is a consensus that they exist.

As Serbia has been noted as the leading country in the EU accession process among its Western Balkan counterparts, it sets a good example of the understanding of a candidate country in a similar situation. The only other candidate country that is not classified as Western Balkans is Turkey which shows great similarities to Serbia, but it has less chance of joining the EU. These cases contain generalizability to the whole category of candidate countries as the findings from this study will be able to comment on the whole range of feelings the political elite can feel towards the EU under the influence of the member state skepticism.

Background:

Serbia, with great prospects of joining the EU has been blocked in the process of integration both intentionally, with strict accession requirements, and unintentionally, with the events that have been testing the legitimacy of the EU, such as Brexit, Eurozone crisis, and the migrant crisis. Serbia appears to follow along the same foot of the previous candidate countries, the CEEs, whose integration period was one that was much harder than the first member states. Because of their candidate status, being both in and out of the union at the same time, the events that take place in the EU are key information about their own future as well. Since Serbia is a candidate with a high prospect to join, their reactions are born out of frustration and grievance with regards to the rise of Eurosceptic events in the EU. Starting from 2016 with the UK's decision to leave, many of the news outlets and experts have predicted that the Western Balkans and particularly Serbia would suffer a delay in the integration process (Bieber 2016, Poznatov 2016). It is useful to research how Serbia, as a candidate state, perceives and reacts to these changes in the EU and whether the

Euroscepticism in the EU will be emulated in a candidate country with a high prospect of joining.

Turkey is a case that has very little prospect of joining, many member states have expressed their desire of disactivating the accession process altogether (Euroactiv, 2020). Even though Serbia is known to be critical of the EU, the Turkish case is a lot more intense, mainly due to the fact that there is realistically no chance for Turkey to be ever admitted. The discourse between Turkey and the EU member states on the topic of accession have always been troublesome, where the Turkosceptic sentiments have become common practice. Turkey has, in retaliation, become Eurosceptic as well. Similar to Serbia, Turkey has been blocked intentionally, by member states who do not wish their accession as well as a set of rigorous accession requirements. Turkey is a case where their own lack of prospect of joining puts them in a position that is consistently in the search for retaliating on the Turkosceptic notion that runs through the EU.

Empirical Analysis

The findings of the content analysis reveal that both the cases have similar themes that come up in their press releases as well as case-specific themes that showcases information about their unique experiences. The analysis reveals that Serbia and Turkey have 7 and 5 categories respectively with 3 of the topics in common. The categories, the category definition as well as exemplary quotations are listed in the tables. The common topics among the cases are the Euroscepticism in the EU, Lack of Unity and Bilateral Dispute. The case-specific topics for Serbia are Enlargement Fatigue, Passiveness, Political Levelling and Partnership whereas for Turkey it is Otherness and Accession Suspension.

Euroscepticism in the EU and its effects on the candidate countries appears to be mostly measured through events and crisis-like situations that is associated with this notion.

No single pole or election results have been addressed by either of the states yet key topics like Brexit, the migration crisis, and most recently the Covid-19 pandemic are brought up in relation to referring to the EU. These events hold two types of meaning for a candidate state, one is that the union is in an unstable situation that frequently suffers crises and second, it is in a situation where the priority is survival and not growth, meaning a delay in enlargement efforts. As these events are rather loaded with Eurosceptic sentiments themselves, it has been observed that the more the EU does not address enlargement, the more the candidate states become suspicious of the EU's capacity to address its issues.

The Serbian interpretation of the Euroscepticism in the EU shows that the state experiences this twofold reaction with a heavier focus on the second part, the aftereffects of Euroscepticism in the EU. As a candidate country with high performance and equally high prospect of joining the EU, Euroscepticism in the EU means a more time in the exhaustive situation that they are in. Serbia reacts to the decisions about the future of enlargement made by the EU with high levels of skepticism and believe that EU is not doing what needs to be done. Similarly, the surge of such events also contributes to the overall feeling and skepticism felt towards the EU as they constitute disagreements within the EU as well as dysfunction as they last long. The events that the official mentions are the most key examples of the rise of Euroscepticism in the EU and this shift in attitude is a clear indication that Serbia has become skeptical of the legitimacy of the EU.

The way the Turkish counterpart experiences Euroscepticism in the EU in their own statements is rather similar but maybe with terms that are harsher than Serbia's. Turkey, as seen by the overall tone of the statements, has a particularly Eurosceptic government, which not only has reservations about the practices of the EU in the scope of membership negotiations but also to the credibility of the EU in general. Turkey does not react to the Eurosceptic events, as previously mentioned in the statements of Serbia, in

particular at most, but it brings up these events as constantly present concepts as well as general structural problems the EU faces. Similarly, Euroscepticism and its slowing effects on the enlargement are frequently referred to and it is usually brought up when the EU takes an action that Turkey does not appreciate. Turkey stands in an unlikely to join the EU and its foreign policy towards the EU is one that delegitimizes the capacity of the EU to overcome its own problems. As this is a case where the candidate country will take advantage to amplify and emulate the similar Euroscepticism that is in the EU with regards to the issues previously mentioned.

The commonality of Euroscepticism in the EU affecting the Euroscepticism in these two candidate countries with opposing prospects of joining, is shown to be due to their status as candidates. Although both of the states do exhibit Eurosceptic proclamation in line with the Euroscepticism updates in the EU, they are still in a position where they are formally desiring to be a part of the EU. The tiresome process of candidacy and the promise of membership benefits are motivating them to move forward yet their position as outsiders allows for suspicion.

Another common theme that runs through both of the candidate countries is that the European Union, lacks unity. A union of states, even after the efforts of Europeanization, appears to the candidates as a heterogenic group which will have clashing interests. This notion seems to get brought up when it is tied to the enlargement plans the EU has and as previously mentioned, Euroscepticism damages the perception of member states to the EU. Different member states interpret the strength and the preparedness of the EU for enlargement with different levels of trust which results into not having a strong unified front. The existence of Euroscepticism in the EU then travels to their interactions with candidate states who are dependent on the EU to set the agenda.

Serbia reacts to the notion of lack of unity in an optimistic manner and pointing to the norms and values of unity the EU has set out itself to implement. This statement falsifies itself when the topic of unity gets tangled up with enlargement and their own prospect of joining. Serbia believes that the EU ought to influence its member states strictly when it is their own membership that is potentially getting stalled. There are only a few remarks made by the Serbian side highlighting this mechanism in particular yet in the ones that exist are strongly tied to Serbia's performance in the accession process and the EU's reluctance to recognize it.

Turkey frequently states that certain 'self-centered, one-sided, biased and narrow-minded' (MoFAoT, 2017; 2018) member states block the flow of bilateral relationships and that it is the EU's responsibility to tame these states and put up a united front. In a lot of these statements, the EU's credibility is brought up and there is clear evidence that Turkish officials tie this division to how poorly they view the EU. This evidence touches upon both the intentional and unintentional channels that the EU influences the Turkish side. The Turkosceptic member states and other states who remain neutral which Turkey appears to judge that as inability rather undesired. This is an indication of the skepticism felt for the EU, even in the minor case of EU states not putting a unified front.

The topic of enlargement in the EU is the key point that the candidate countries care for and differences in opinion in this process will stall the process. The candidate countries wait for the EU to collect itself into a single decision which not only shows that the EU is not in a position to do that but also that it cannot convince its own members into making a decision. Being on the recipient end of this decision is a very sensitive position for candidates to be in.

The last common theme that came up is the Bilateral Dispute, which is more about the use of the EU conditionality than the cases itself. Both of the states are in border disputes

with another country which goes against the EU's preconditions for membership, therefore these candidate states are required to resolve their respective disputes before they are acceded. The EU's role as a mediator for candidate states in this situation comes into play which not only requires for the EU to be actively involved but also to decentralize the candidacy trajectory to be consumed by this dispute.

Content	Description	Example
Bilateral Dispute	Refers to the territorial and administrative dispute between Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija which has become an undisclosed precondition to Serbia's accession	• "In the process of negotiations between a candidate country and the EU, there are only two sides – the one of the candidate and that the EU. It is not realistic, nor fair, to introduce a third party into the process of Euro-integration, Priština, which can block us by its inactivity. I think that such a rigid and inflexible attitude is unsustainable in reality. However, the reforms and the Copenhagen criteria, the rule of law, good governance and the economic programme are the most important criteria, or they should be at least", the minister explained. • President Aleksandar Vučić: Serbia "will not be able to become an EU Member State without drastic changes in its relationship, as well as its overall position towards Kosovo and Metohija", Joksimović said that this does not mean that Serbia will have to recognize
Euroscepticism in the EU	Refers to the crises in the EU such as the migration crisis, Brexit, Eurocrisis and Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the EU - mostly refering there being less attention for enlargement	• "Bringing the European integration process closer to the citizens of Serbia today is a particularly challenging task because "an increase in Euroscepticism is evident not only in the candidate countries, but also in the Member States of the European Union." • In relation to the consequences of Brexit, the migrant crisis, the stalled implementation of the Brussels Agreement, and, if you want, the standstill in the enlargement policy, the Union itself did not have a definite answer a year ago. • She also pointed to the EUs everlasting political impulse - that the Union does not want to import problems, but at the same time she added that the EU had unfortunately shown that it was also capable of generating problems. "It is not always the most perfect message and best explanation that you do not import problems, as the EU produces them within itself as well," stated Joksimović. • Have the countries cheerfully and whole-heartedly valorised our progress through the process – well, no, because they are facing Brexit and blocking of the seven-year budget", explained the Minister. • No introvert moment in the EU may be ignored. It is focused on internal problems and challenges - including economic issues, Brexit, migration and generally complicated international relations that require the repositioning of the EU as an economic and political alliance, which certainly does not contribute to the essential regeneration of the enlargement policy agenda.
Partnership	Refers to solidarity and a sense of belonging to the norms and rules of the EU due to common desires of prosperity	• She reiterated that Serbia would be a credible and reliable partner of the European Union in the upcoming period, noting that it would continue to closely cooperate with the EU on resolving issues important for the EU, including the migrant crisis. • We have shown that we are a committed candidate country, that we have good results in many areas, and also a clear political will for partnership with EU countries. • She believes that Serbia should also be interested in its position in complex regional and European relations. "I think that European integration is a path that stabilises the position of our country at these two levels," the Minister has concluded.
Enlargement Fatigue	Refers to the unwillingess or lack of enthusiasm of the EU which ties into longer and harder negotiation period	• I think that the previous answer clearly suggests that if the political will for enlargement disappears in the EU, if weaknesses and implosive policies prevail, these will bring about the loss of motivation with candidate countries, including us. • There have been positive moments, when favourable disposition prevailed, resulting in big waves of enlargement, and then there's a phase when the Member States and the EU are disinterested and self-centred, which is the situation now," said Joksimović • Despite the fatigue from enlargement that is present in both the Member States and candidate countries, as far as we are concerned, if the EU starts giving up on the enlargement policy, I am certain that Serbia shall not", indicated Joksimović.
Political Levelling	Refers to the practices of EU on grouping the candidate countries in the Western Balkans together when addressing despite their various levels of progress in the negotiations	• We have nothing against the progress of the entire region on the European path and we support the progress of all candidate countries, but we do not agree with the principle of the so-called Western Balkan package that blurs the results of each country individually. Political levelling is not beneficial in the process of negotiations with the EU. • She estimated that the "political levelling" in the EU enlargement policy is not good because, as she explained, it can underestimate some candidates while overestimating the others. The minister said that, if a country started the accession process that implied transformations and reforms, one had to have a credible response from the other side as to the direction of the process and the anticipated moment of accession.
Passiveness	Refers to the passive attitude of the EU on negotiations, regional stability and dispute settlement	• According to her, the EU must clearly demonstrate that it is able to see things as they really are and to act accordingly. "Serbia is undeniably and sincerely committed to peace and dialogue, but the other side is not, which is why the EU must engage in an even more active and responsible manner," Joksimović has said. • She has further noted that, in the forthcoming period, she expects the European Union to show even greater capacity and responsibility in finding sustainable solutions for Belgrade and Pristina, which will be acceptable and not create a "constantly simmering conflict"
Lack of unity	Refers to the different opinions coming from EU member states on topics related to negotiations which causes disruption in the accession progress of Serbia	• The goal is to define common interests from the Arctic all the way to the Mediterranean, as the Charter of Paris for a New Europe 1990 envisaged, noting that Europe would be whole when it is united in peace, prosperous from the north to the south and from the east to the west of the European continent," she has stressed. • She has emphasised that "the decision of certain member states to not give consent for the opening of new chapters with Serbia – despite it having five chapters prepared for opening – is a political message whose direction we have understood, but at the same time, I believe it was not really necessary."

Table 1: Content Analysis Themes for Serbia

The dispute between Serbia and Kosovo and the EU's involvement, or lack thereof, in dispute settlement. has consistently pushed Serbian officials out of their EU-enthusiast characters. This was due to the fact that Serbian officials pointed to the solution of the problem to be concluded by not only their own efforts but Kosovo's as well as a main party and by the EU as a mediating power. The proclamations by Serbia point to both of these dependencies and due to this precondition, they get the short end of the stick. What can be taken away from the Serbia experience is that when the candidate state is in a situation where it is stuck in the integration process due to reasons that appear unfair to them, they revert to questioning the decisions of the EU. The inferior position of Serbia to the EU, as understood by norm diffusion theory, urges it to adopt more of a skeptical outlook on the EU, because they give an uncooperative demeanor. As a reaction to the EU's policy on this matter, Serbia consistently refutes and asks for revisions, clearly setting out its foreign policy that undermined the EU's decisions.

The topic of border dispute with between Turkey and Greek Cypriots is similarly very sensitive. The EU assumes the role of a referee and this time it is being questioned by Turkey for authenticity and credibility. The Turkish frustration with the EU's policies is expressed as a loss of credibility and distrust of the EU as a whole. A new level has been reached for this long-term problem where the Turkish officials denied the EU involvement in the matter altogether. With this long running dispute, Turkish side expresses that it will actively disregard any suggestion the EU makes, making its Eurosceptic stance on the role of the EU as a mediator all the more skeptical. The EU will not allow for any progress in the accession with a candidate country who is in a dispute with another state and Turkey does not trust their intentions.

The bilateral border disputes the candidate states have are a clear blockage in their access to the membership. Although this incidence is not rooted in the Euroscepticism in the

EU, it is an example for the communication the candidate and the union might have for difficult agenda. The findings show that when candidates are cornered in their accession process, they revert to Euroscepticism no matter how likely they are to join the EU without that blockage. This is what can be called as mimicry or reactive Euroscepticism where the candidate states who disagree with the provisions of the EU will mimic the Euroscepticism in the EU.

Content	Description	Example
Bilateral Dispute	Refers to the bilateral dispute between Turkey and Greek Cypriots over the outcome of the Cyrpus problem	•On Eastern Mediterranean: Furthermore, those who have not taken any steps towards the resolution of this issue for years do not have the right to give advice to us. •It is evident that the EU, on the contrary having lost a long time ago its credibility to stand as an impartial actor that could contribute to a solution in Cyprus, will never be able to take a constructive and helpful attitude in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a matter of fact, it couldn't be more ironic for the EU to make reference to the principle of good neighborliness after the launch of our off-shore activities as it has become deaf to our repeated calls since 2004 for respect for sovereignty and legitimate rights of both Turkey and TRNC. •We reject the biased and illegal approach that had to be adopted with the EU Council Conclusions of 10 December 2020, in particular on Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean, Aegean and regional issues. In fact, we are aware that the majority of the EU does not embrace these conclusions which are adopted through solidarity and veto pressure.
Euroscepticism in the EU	Refers to the crises in the EU such as the migration crisis, Brexit, Eurocrisis and Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the EU - mostly refering there being less attention for enlargement	•Instead of looking for allies against global challenges, stating that allies will be sought to completely disregard the legitimate rights of our country is also against political and diplomatic customs. These statements are pushing the boundaries of losing the friendship of Turkey. Once tried to be put in effect they will receive the appropriate response. •Accusing a country, which is hosting the largest number of refugees in the world in the best way possible, of using the migration issue for political purposes is a recent indication of the hypocritical approach we have been facing for years. The EU actually has itself politicized the migration issue by this Statement. •The EU is pushing Turkey away by not acting in a fair and honest manner. The EU is also losing credibility in the eyes of the Turkish people. In the face of global challenges such as terrorism, irregular migration and energy security, it will be to the EU's own interest to act with a strategic vision and to abandon its partial stance.
Lack of Unity	Refers to the different opinions coming from EU member states on topics related to negotiations which causes disruption in the accession progress of Turkey	•Adopting such conclusions with the pressure of some member countries will not contribute to the improvement of our cooperation. •It has been adopted solely for the sake of membership solidarity and serving the self centric interests of certain member states. This resolution is unacceptable in many respects. The EP is losing its credibility, due to its biased and unfair approach, as well as its one-sided and invalid interpretation of the maritime law, on which it has no jurisdiction. •It is seen that the report has been written with a one-sided viewpoint under the influence of narrow-minded allegations of a few member states.
Otherness	Refers to the unique experience of Turkey apart from the other candidate countries, due to its defining features that a lot of the member states have historically had reservations about	•We think it is wrong for the European Commission to have made a distinction between Turkey and the "Western Balkans" in the Enlargement Strategy Document. Creating such artificial distinctions between candidate countries is an example of the discrimination we have been subjected to in our accession process. •The EU should realize that the statement fuels extremism, such as xenophobia and anti-Turkish sentiments because the call to refrain from excessive statements and actions that risk further exacerbating the situation is made only to Turkey, instead of the countries that caused this situation by violating diplomatic conventions and international law. •It is our sincere wish that the EU approaches Turkey, a candidate country, taking into account our continent's greater interests and common vision, instead of the selfish and narrow interests of certain circles and develops Turkey-EU relations in all its dimensions in line with the EU membership perspective.
Accession Suspension	Refers to the talks of transforming Turkey's candidacy position to a priveleged partnership with the EU	•What is needed is not the suspension of Turkey's accession process, but removal of obstacles for the accession process. The accession process is to the benefit of both Turkey and the EU •The membership to the EU is a strategic objective for Turkey. The call to suspend the accession negotiations, which are the core axis of Turkey-EU relations, clearly demonstrates that the European Parliament lacks a visionary perspective and fails to respect the principle of "pacta sunt servanda".

Table 2: Content Analysis Themes for Turkey

The rest of the themes that came up in the content analysis are based on the cases themselves. Firstly, the Serbian case exhibit associating the EU to be very passive. This usually refers to the Kosovo dispute and the EU's role as a guarantor being perceived as an afterthought by Serbia, as they indicate they have taken considerable action. This is a concept

that only comes up from 2018 onwards and is reiterated in other forms throughout until 2021 as well. The passiveness of the EU in dispute settlement means for a slower accession period for Serbia, making the state frustrated with the EU. The passiveness is addressed as twofold, a lack of desire to work on the dispute or the lack of ability to resolve it. Both of which has been remarked by Serbia and they are contributing factors into exacerbating Euroscepticism in the candidate state, along the lines of mimicking Euroscepticism.

This very theme also presents itself in the shape of Enlargement Fatigue as well, which is categorized separately as though it does refer to passiveness but one that would directly affect the trajectory of the candidate states and their feelings of grievance which thus relates to Euroscepticism. The growing impact of Euroscepticism in the EU on the enlargement process, which has been demonstrated as one of the most important points for a candidate country, can also be seen as the frequency in which this impact has been voiced has increased more than twice between the years 2017 to 2019 and similarly in the year 2020.

Another theme that comes up is the Political Levelling, which refers to the practice of planning the accession trajectory of all the other candidate states in the Western Balkans on the same plank. This is a point of contestation for a state like Serbia, that is the most likely to join the EU and the new methodology by the EU has been contested a lot due to this very reason. Serbia views this as a backwards step and a poor calculation by the EU since they will receive similar treatment to other states who are in a less developed part of their journey to the EU. This has often been connected to Enlargement Fatigue as well.

The last theme is Partnership, which reveals a desire to be a part of the EU despite the previous hesitation and contestation that has been brought up. What needs to be noted here is that Serbia offers partnership to the EU on the grounds of solving the EU's crises like the migrant crisis, that had to be externalized to be remedied. Serbia as a candidate states believes that its capacity is adequate to solve problems that the EU itself could not, which

appears to be condescending coming from a candidate state. With regards to the foreign policy of Serbia, this is undermining the capacity and the prospect of the EU considering Eurosceptic events.

The Turkish case-specific themes are Otherness and Accession Suspension which are tied to each other. The Otherness of Turkey amongst other candidate states present or past, has been brought up which relates to the history of Turkoscepticism in some of the EU member states. This theme overlaps with Lack of Unity where Turkey criticizes EU to contain the exclusionary policies and language some of the states employ. This common understanding of Turkey by the EU is very apparent in that when referring to the enlargement strategies candidate states should follow, Turkey was set apart from its fellow candidate since it was titled "Western Balkans and Turkey". This distinction is made purely relating to the Turkish prospect to join and Turkey recognizes it and problematizes it.

As Turkey's accession talks are at a serious halt, when the government officials show distaste with the EU, it is related to their role as a partner, more than a candidate state. This is where the theme Accession Suspension comes up, where the historical 'special partnership' (MoFAoT, 2021) Turkey and EU has become a more favorable option for the EU again in 2020 and onwards. Even though Turkey agrees with the EU, they contest that it could substitute for a membership. Turkey clearly states that the membership negotiations are vital to the relationship and their alterations would deteriorate the bilateral relationship, making a clear indication that their foreign policy would go for a skeptical way than anything. This is due to fact that Turkish statements indicate that the EU would be choosing the easy way and not addressing bilateral issues properly.

Conclusion

This research aimed to understand the influence of Euroscepticism in the EU on the Eurosceptic sentiments in the candidate states. This study through the employment of the theories of norm diffusion and cleavage has hypothesized: "The rise of Eurosceptic discourse at the government level in the EU increases the Eurosceptic sentiments in the EU candidate countries' foreign policy towards the EU" which has proven to be true through an in-depth content analysis of the press releases of the cases Serbia and Turkey in their most recent government. This study contributes to the literature by exploring the diffuse effect of Euroscepticism in the EU in both direct and indirect means. What is understood as direct effects are the existence of Eurosceptic sentiment-induced activities decreasing the legitimacy of the EU and the indirect effects are how Euroscepticism occupies the EU far too much that it infringes enlargement. This is also coupled up with two ways Euroscepticism is shown in these cases, either overt skepticism about the future of the EU and their place in it or covert skepticism which is also addressed as 'reactive skepticism' is the mimicry of Euroscepticism in the EU when the candidate state is unsatisfied with the EU's policies. This study expected to find that there was a significant influence on the levels of Euroscepticism in the government level of candidate countries, coming from similar sentiments in the EU. It was found that by comparing cases that were quite similar but with different prospects of joining the EU, the candidates feel the effects of Euroscepticism differently yet significantly on both ends as they are both candidates. Through this classification, as in the cleavage theory by being the periphery, these dynamics were expected to be found at the end of the study. Similarly, the norm diffusion theory was used to operationalize the diffusion of Euroscepticism as concept, which proved to be a unique feature of this study. Other findings of this study include, which could be a suggestion for a future study, is how both states refer to the EU with regards to their bilateral disputes where one seeks out more involvement by

the EU as a guarantor the other prefers a bilateral resolution. The methodology used appears to be a right fit for this model of the research question and it allows the reader to peek behind the curtains of today's diplomacy. One of the shortcomings of this study was the fact that the time frame was limited to 5 years from 2017 to 2021, which although this study aimed to get a snapshot of how a government is influenced by external factors, it could have also benefited from a bigger data set provided by a longer time frame of focus. Returning to the original gap in the literature that would address the experiences of Euroscepticism in the candidate countries, this study has found contributing factors to understanding what could exacerbate these sentiments or even create them.

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