

Mobilizing Polish society

The referendum on Polish accession to the EU

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Paper presented at the POLIS 2005 PLENARY CONFERENCE, 17-18 June 2005,
Sciences Po, Paris
WORKSHOP 1 POPULAR CONSULTATION AND DEMOCRATISATION IN
THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

First draft – not for citation without author's explicit consent

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« Les référendums injectent une dose de drame
humain dans le processus technocratique
et aride de la construction européenne ;
ils améliorent la participation en attirant (leur)
attention sur l'UE et son fonctionnement »
Dan O'Brien et Daniel Keohane¹

Introduction

The referendum on the accession to the European Union became the most important political event in Poland in 2003. The campaign before this vote had mobilized the majority of actors of the Polish political scene: president, Prime minister, political parties, non-governmental organizations. The accession to the EU on the 1st May 2004 ended a long preparation of political institutions, Polish economy and society. After years of technical negotiations between European and Polish experts, a referendum was a new phase of the integration, because citizens were asked if they wanted that their country entry to the EU. European referendum is an example of direct democracy where voters have been asked to decide on accession of their country. Direct democracy can offer the EU what it most need: legitimacy and issue-related debate. And it is more important in the case of new members. Citizens can give their opinions about integration which is very often seen as technocratic, elitist and cut off from the ordinary people.

The exam of referendum on European issue is interesting, because it gives us the possibility to see whether European subject was in the heart of debate or if national level dominates. European questions are often seen like problems of elite. If the referendum on this subject is organised, that demands that all citizens take part in debate. We seek to analyse which actors took part into campaign, what was their arguments to mobilize Polish voters. This article examines the mobilization of different political actors in the campaign. Poles faced two challenges in passing the referendum: securing at least a 50 % turnout and ensuring the more citizens voted in favour of EU membership than voted against it.

¹ IRI Europe Survey 2003 on how the Initiative & Referendum Process Can Contribute to More and Better Democracy, cited Jacques RUPNIK, Les Européens face à l'élargissement, Perceptions, acteurs, enjeux, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris 2004.

This article deals with two parts. First, I will investigate the factors that determine how some political actors develop during the European debate in Poland. Because of growing interest in the role of European subjects in Poland in the consolidation of the political system I focus the paper's first section on the debate on membership into the EU and the role of political elite and the public support. Then, I will discuss the role of the referendum in this debate and its impact on the strategy of political actors. In the second part, I will analyse the mobilization of the Pro-European and anti-European camps.

I use a variety of primary sources to document this study, like programs and official statements of leaders of political parties, European debates in Polish Parliament², information from Polish newspapers³. In order to complete this study on mobilization, some posters will be also analysed.

1. European debate in Poland – elite's involvement and public opinion's shallow consensus

Just after 1989, in all East European countries, Western Europe was associated with liberty, democracy and prosperity (FAWN, 2003). The goal of political and economic reforms, often painful for Polish society, was the membership into all Western organizations⁴. Poland has realized pro-market and democratic reforms simultaneously (JACKSON, 2003), what is a major difference between East European transitions and those in southern Europe and south America (LINZ and STEPAN, 1996). The integration into the NATO and the EU was the priority of each government (PRIDHAM, 2000), because despite internal conflicts, foreign policy was based on political consensus (TAGGART and SZCZERBIAK, 2004). Poland signed an Association Agreement with the EU in 1991, formally submitted its membership application in June 1994 and began accession negotiations in March 1998. In this period European relations were in charge of government.

² www.sejm.gov.pl

³ Principally *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Polityka*, accessible www.wyborcza.pl and www.polityka.onet.pl

⁴ These organizations are the Council of Europe (COE), the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union (WEU), the security arm of the EU.

The opposition to European integration was very weak at the beginning of the preparation to accession. Members of the parliamentary committee on European integration tried to foster debate on EU accession, proposing that a plenary session be held regularly on the subject. In consequence, European debate in Poland can be described as very poor: politicians used to repeat the same vague arguments for integration (under the slogan “Return to Europe” (DELSOL, 2002)) and Poles used to show their willingness to enter into the European Union. Polish EU membership was the subject of an overwhelming political elite consensus and enjoyed extremely high levels of public support. Eurobarometer polls taken throughout the 1990s showed Poland to have one of the highest levels of support for EU membership among the post-communist candidate states.

(Plot 1)

As a plot 1 makes clear⁵, the majority of Poles were for accession to European Union, but mass support for EU membership was fluctuating (SLOMCZYNSKI and SHABAD, 2002). In May 1996, 80 per cent of Poles wanted to vote “yes” in referendum on membership into Union. However, in 1997 the support for European integration was weaker. In the late 1990s, Poland saw a significant fall in support for EU membership (KOLARSKA-BOBINSKA, 2003). The euro-enthusiasm was dampened, because the enlargement of the European Union was not the priority of governments of Western Europe and transitions to market economies divided more and more Polish society into “winners” and “losers” of reforms. At the beginning of 1997, only 18% of the Poles declared that they had no fears connected with Poland’s entry into the European Union (BODIO, 1999). Support of public opinion was analysed by many institutes because of referendum programmed on the end of negotiations. It is possible to analyse the association between voting patterns and four basic variables that, according to pre-referendum surveys, would influence the patterns regionally: general east-west location within Poland (and proximity to the pre-existing EU border), rural-urban residence, occupation (in agriculture vs. industry/services), and unemployment/income levels. Poles living in big cities, with high education and good incomes were more pro-European than Poles living in rural

⁵ Survey conducted by CBOS.

area without diplomas. Supporters of integration are least frequently found among farmers and people employed on farms. There are two groups where declarations of rejection are more frequent than support for the referendum.

(plot 2)

Another problem is that Poles believe that the relations between Poland and the EU are imbalanced (plot 2). They perceive that these relations favour the EU Member States more than they do Poland. In 1998 only 7 per cent consider these relations to be balanced i.e. equally advantageous for EU Member states and for Poland. Increasing anxiety about the possible impact of EU accession was confirmed by data on the effects that Poles thought that it would have on specific sectors of the economy and living standards more generally. In February 2002, for example, 53 % of Poles said it would have a negative effect on individual farms while only 26 % said that it would be positive (the analogous figures for June 1994 were 24 % and 40 % respectively). According to Polish studies, this support can be seen as a “shallow consensus” in favour of EU membership (SKOTNICKA-ILLASIEWICZ, 1998). Poland’s negotiations to join the EU have caused new conflicts between transitional requirements of integration and its psycho-social costs.

This high level of support was matched by an overwhelming political elite consensus in favour of EU membership. All parties supported European integration and their governments realized the same politics of rapprochement with the European Union. A “Pact for Integration”, a historical agreement in favour of European accession was signed in 2001 by the SLD (Democratic Left Alliance), the UW (Union of Liberty), the AWS (Solidarity Election Action) and the PO (Civic Platform).

After the period of an extreme party fragmentation (in 1991, there were 29 parties in Polish parliament) (WIATR, 2003), the first signs of the consolidation were visible around 1997. Two kinds of political parties took shape: a post-opposition right and a reformed post-communist left. The main cleavage consisted of the past: the post-Communist party transformed into a social democrat party under the name of SLD and the post-Solidarnosc parties much more numerous on the right (it can be mentioned AWS and UW). During the first decade of democracy, the alternation of power takes place regularly. However, the second half of the nineties

was characterized by the emergence of parties and organizations opposed to the European integration Samoobrona (Self-Defence)⁶ and Liga Polskich Rodzin (The League of Polish Families). In 2001, these two parties managed to gain seats in the Polish Parliament. At the same time, the UW, the most pro-European party in Poland polled only 3.10 per cent of the vote and did not manage to enter into Parliament.

The September 2001 Polish parliamentary election saw parties that were critical of, or openly hostile to, Polish EU membership win a significant share of the vote and substantial bloc of parliamentary deputies. This made some commentators link the result to changing Polish attitudes towards the EU and interpret it as part of a broader Eurosceptic backlash (SZCZERBIAK, 2002).

This situation can be explained by two factors. On the one hand, the end of negotiations with European Union demanded a lot of flexibility from Polish government, which wanted to take part at all cost in the first group of new comings in 2004 and had to give up its special requests. On the other hand, the perspective of the referendum on the treaty of accession gave a good opportunity to present the opposition to this project in order to reach a real visibility in Polish political life. During that period, thanks to referendum on joining the EU, held in June 2003, European subjects were more often tackled. In the following, I will examine the campaigns of the LPR and the Samoobrona. The emergence of these parties has changed the European debate in Poland, but it modified the Polish political system too. This evolution had an impact on pro-European parties and their strategy.

The impact of European referendum

Poles had to decide the accession of their country to the European Union in the referendum. It was held on June 7-8 2003. The question asked was “Sir, Madam, do you express your consent for the Republic of Poland to join the European Union?”. The referendum was the last stage of the process of integration.

The stability of the opinion polls during the campaign and in the four years leading up to the referendum suggested that most Poles had already made up their minds about the issue a long time beforehand. The turnout was important from

⁶ Samoobrona organized its first actions in 1992, but its real success was scored in general election 2001.

constitutional and political point of view, because 50 % or more is necessary for the referendum to be binding under the Polish law. It is well-known that electoral participation in Poland has usually been lower at referenda than at parliamentary elections, and both were lower than those in most European countries.

Low participation in elections

Since the end of communism a turnout in Polish elections was low, usually less than 50%. As the table 3 shows, the electoral participation is weak. Only the presidential election makes people vote. Although majority of people who were going to vote supported joining the EU, there was a fear that the Poles would just ignore the elections and a turnout would be less than 50% necessary to validate referendum.

(Table 3)

Low voter turnout in Poland was a subject of research since the beginning of democratic transition. These studies aimed at describing the whole process, identifying psychological, social and political determinants of electoral participation, explaining regional differences etc. The results of this analysis are not surprising. Like in other democratic systems electoral participation is a function of socioeconomic status (the higher the status, the more likely the person to participate). Also significant is the impact of political variables, such as efficacy, civic duty or party identification.

The studies on electoral participation in post-communist Poland the relation between low voter turnout and regime legitimacy. McManus-Czubinska argues that low turnout is not a threat to Polish democracy. The main argument is that low turnout does not threaten the legitimacy of the democratic regime in Poland because its legitimacy rests on the overwhelming public view that democracy is the only way to organise governance. It needs no support from anything outside its own internal logic. Its legitimacy is intrinsically high. Moreover, even the non-participants – and even the persistent non-participants- see no alternative for Poland (MCMANUS-CZUBINSKA et al. 2003).

The source of problem is in the decline of values of trust and reciprocity prompted, in turn, by the weakening of associational life of western democracies. According to work to Robert Putman, active membership in community organizations is said to generate trust in fellow citizens, which leads to greater civic engagement and forms the basis of “social capital” (PUTNAM 2000) Tworzecki.

The main problem of Polish democracy is that many citizens, in spite of accepting the idea of democracy with its main principles, values etc., do not accept the existing democratic system. Although Polish citizens still accept democratic rules of the game, they are less and less satisfied with the way democracy works in Poland. Thus their increasing disengagement, dissatisfaction and apathy must be a reason for anxiety (CZESNIK, 2004).

Referendum's experiences in Poland

Referendum is not a new phenomenon for Poles. Before 1989, the government used it to valid its decisions. Poles were asked about political and social transitions: in 1946 on changes after the Second World War and in 1987 on continuation of reforms. After the regime's change, Poles were appealed twice to vote in referendum; in 1996 a referendum on privatisation was organised and one year later another on Polish Constitution. These experiences, in spite of their differences, have some characteristics in common. First of all, a low level of trust in this kind of consultation. The results of referendum 1946 were falsified. Mistrust was tangible in low participation in these votes and it is true for the vote in 1987. In this referendum, only 67 % of Poles voted and this result is very low for a communist country. Participation in referendums organised after the regime change was also very low (below 50 % 32.4% in 1996 and 42.86% in 1997).

The European referendum was organised in Poland, because according to Polish Constitution the approval of transfer of sovereignty have to be voted by majority from both chambers with 2/3 of votes by presence of at least 1/2 of their members (Art. 90 II). Additionally, a referendum in accordance to Art. 125 of Constitution can be called, and its result is binding, if more than half of the number of those having the right to vote have participated in it (Art. 125).

The main challenge – make people vote

As we said, for a referendum to be legitimate, Polish law requires that at least 50% of registered voters cast ballots. As the referendum outcome was rarely in doubt, most attention focused on the question of whether it would achieve the 50 % turnout required to make it constitutionally valid. While polls show that 65% or more Poles back EU membership, “there's a real question over the turnout,” said Krzysztof Zagorski, head of Warsaw's CBOS Public Opinion Research Center. Predicted turnout figures were extremely high, but the government wanted to secure the turnout. Prime Minister who strongly supported joining the EU even extended the referendum time from one day to two days (Saturday and Sundays)⁷. In spite of that the turnout on Saturday was very low; Poles were just not used to vote on Saturdays. Majority of Poles showed up at the polls on Sunday. The turnout figures were published after the first day to mobilise Poles. Some facilities were introduced for people absent in their place of residence (students, patients in hospitals).

Voters could stay away from the polls for a host of reasons. Many believe the terms of the EU accession treaty discriminate against Poland. Other Poles may stay home - or vote no - to protest the government of Prime Minister Leszek Miller, which is campaigning heavily for EU membership. Poles blame Miller, who has a 10% approval rating.

A new referendum law that allowed parliament to approve the accession treaty by a two thirds majority in the event of the turnout falling below 50% was passed. But they were desperate to avoid having to fall back on this option. The legitimacy of Polish accession would be weaker.

2. The campaign before the EU referendum

All the Polish political establishment lined up solidly in favour of accession, there were, in fact several Yes campaigns running concurrently. Historical cleavage communist/anticommunist was still so important that pro-EU forces were unable to lead a campaign together.

The atmosphere just before elections in Poland (June 7-8, 2003) was uneasy, because of political and economic situation. In March 2003, Prime Minister Leszek

⁷ It was a proposition of Institute of Public Affairs.

Miller decided to rule out the Polish Peasants' Party (PSL) from the coalition, after the PSL's parliamentary refusal made it impossible to pass an important bill proposed by the government. "It is impossible to be in the government and oppose it at the same time" Miller said in justifying his decision to run the risk of a minority government. "As Prime Minister, I do not accept this and cannot tolerate it anymore. I am not and will not be anybody's hostage." Kalinowski (PSL) also issued a special statement to the press. In his opinion, PSL could not longer agree to a "vassal" position and the dissolution of the coalition was the only way to save face with the party's own electorate. PSL was preoccupied with opposing the growing influence of the radical Samoobrona.

Rywingate⁸ was also an important factor of difficult situation of Miller's government. The economic situation did not improve, because the unemployment concerned 18 % of population.

Polish eurosceptics were quite active in voicing their opinion. But there was not a real debate between pro-EU and anti-EU fraction in mass media. Pro-EU campaign also was seen as not very convincing, although it was conducted by president, Prime minister and many non-governmental organisations.

The mobilization of president

Poland's political leadership was very active in this campaign. The President Aleksander Kwasniewski runs his campaign on the slogan 'Yes for Poland (Tak dla Polski)'. With approval ratings of 70-80 % Kwasniewski was easily Poland's most popular politician and a formidable campaigner. During his campaign he visited a lot of small towns with public meetings and openings of computer's rooms in schools. This modernity associated to European integration was stressed very often by the pro-EU camp.

(Picture)

⁸ Rywingate is a corruption scandal in Poland, which began in late 2002. In exchange for a bribe of 17.5 million USD, Rywin offered to Adam Michnik (Gazeta Wyborcza) arrange for a change in a draft law aimed at limiting the print media's influence on radio and television.

A leaflet was delivered to every household putting the pro-EU case and a final televised broadcast appealing for a Yes vote. After accession to the NATO, Kwasniewski wanted to make entry Poland to the EU and it was the aim of his second term. The Yes campaign presented the referendum as a civilisational choice, with EU accession part of an inevitable historical process of ending Cold War divisions. President declared that “We are returning to the place which Poles and Poland have deserved to have in our 1,000 years of history”. Kwasniewski managed to invite Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jerzy Buzek former Primes ministers from Solidarnosc to run this campaign in order to stress the historical dimension of this vote. The main aim of the Yes campaign was encouraging people to turn out and vote. The argument that voting was a patriotic duty was repeated very often.

The mobilization of government

The government also ran a separate campaign untitled “Union without secrets”. Its objective was to inform the public about the facts and encourage Poles to vote. This campaign started the 9th May, The Day of Europe. Regional Centres of European Information were created in all Poland. In April 2002, Leszek Miller said that the negative result would have a consequence on his resignation from the post of Prime minister. Accession to the EU became the cornerstone of government of Leszek Miller.

The main target of his actions was all public, and some specified programmes were prepared for specified groups like farmers. The budget of this campaign was 3 millions of zloty. His title was ‘Union without secrets – yesterday, today, tomorrow’. The second part of this campaign was untitled ‘Our home –Europe’. Famous actors and singers took part into campaign.

The referendum's failure could lead to the government's collapse. The only way Miller could keep EU accession on track would be to win the backing of a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament - unlikely, since he leads a minority government. The negative result of the referendum could make impossible for Poland to join the EU on schedule.

(Picture)

The president's campaign and government's actions had some elements in common. First of all, European symbols were utilised, especially European flags were everywhere. The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven (the European anthem) was played in different ways (folk, rock, etc).

Another important theme in the Yes campaign was its emphasis on young people. It's important to stress that pro-European line of argument is based on the future. Accession to the EU is a preparation of good future for children and young people. It is a most frequently mentioned commonplace in the Polish public opinion that young people will be the real winner of Poland's EU-membership. First, majority of population understands joining the EU as long-term investment, so its benefits will be realised in the long-term future only. Secondly, people suppose that only the youth can be flexible enough to use the opportunities which will open up immediately. According to public opinion studies, young Poles were generally pro-European. Aleks Szczerbiak stressed that the focus on youth, including school children, in yes campaign publicity was also aimed as presenting the pro-EU case as future-oriented. This was important because many less enthusiastic pro-EU voters said that they would probably end up voting Yes because they thought that future generations would benefit from accession, even if they were dubious that they would gain much from it personally (SZCZERBIAK 2002)

As example, I can cite the picture of a young child with his mother with the slogan "Because our world can be better". In Silesia a picture of a young deputy pregnant with this sentence: 'This child wants to live in the EU' could be seen.

European subject was present in Polish schools – many events like exhibitions or minireferendums were organised. European clubs (Klub Europejski) are a good example of this mobilisation. Six thousand European clubs exist in schools; the first ones were created in early 1990s according to Portuguese model in order to give some information about EU, member States and European integration. Thanks to European Clubs, the problem of European integration was largely discussed in secondary schools and mini-referendums with the participation of pupils were organised. These clubs were helped by UKIE.

A special attention was paid to young people who had their the 18th birthday the day of referendum, thanks to a special dispensation, they could vote. Aleksander Kwasniewski, Polish president praised the results of referendum as a victory for the children and grandchildren of voters (PIENKOS, 2004).

Despite this “pro-tomorrow” strategy in the campaign, parties pro-European show reference to historical arguments as well. They pointed out the fact that thanks to the EU, the reconciliation of France with Germany was possible. This experience could be used by Poland in its relations with Germany and in the early nineties, some initiatives were inspired by this pattern (for example The Office of Youth Exchange).

European dimension of Polish vote was stressed thanks to the participation of foreign politicians. Polish president and Prime minister were supported by his European and American colleagues (Tony Blair, Goran Persson, Gerhard Schröder, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Jose Maria Aznar, Kostas Simitis, Gunther Verheugen and George Bush).

The campaign of political parties

As we said, the official campaign was conducted by government. In addition, both the governing SLD (Democratic Left Alliance) and UP (the Labour Union) ran separate party campaigns. The SLD mobilised 5 thousand voluntaries. This party presented accession as an invest for future. The participation of foreign politicians from PSE like Willy Brandt showed European contacts of this party.

The opposition parties also called for a Yes vote. They had to de-couple the issue of EU accession from that of general confidence in the government’s performance.

(Picture)

The Civic Platform (PO) ran a positive pro-EU campaign. This party did not want to be identifying to government Miller which was deeply unpopular. The main slogan was “Europe – our chance, Europe-our home”

The Law and Justice (PiS) called for a Yes vote, but this party contains a significant Eurosceptic minority and criticised the Miller government’s handling of the accession negotiations. Finally their slogan was “A Strong Poland in the European Union”.

The situation of PSL was difficult, because the question of integration became a salient problem for leaders of this party. The PSL used to be a traditional spokesman of Polish countryside. This party promised to maintain agriculture in its current state rather than force modernisation, which would have further harmed rural

areas economically, at least in the short run (JACKSON and other, 2003). The PSL opted for privatisation, fewer privileges for foreign capital, active governmental intervention (ZUKROWSKA, 1995). The members of this party oppose the presence of Western supermarkets in Poland, which, according to PSL members, are destroying small domestic traders. The PSL tried to represent the best interest of small peasants, as well as big food producers (RAGARU and HALAMSKA, 2001). The attitude of the Peasant Party towards integration was one of the aspects which distinguished it in the governing coalition⁹. Pawlak, the former Prime Minister, criticised the pro-European views of other politicians in Parliament. He said to Minister Bartoszewski (in charge of Foreign Policy), that he described himself more as a spokesman for the EU and NATO than as a Polish minister. The PSL firmly criticised the excessive submission to the wishes of the West (STADTMULLER, 1997). PSL's Janusz Dobrosz stated that his party supported Poland's Euro-Atlantic aspirations but warned that Poland might become a second-category member. Their leaders never openly rejected the idea of joining EU, but they were permanently critical of the agreements made between PL and the EU

Despite these critics, the PSL continued to form the coalition with the SLD and it took part in accession negotiations. Despite a strong opposition to European integration in the country, the PSL supported Polish integration to the EU before the referendum of June 2003. The impact of this decision was very important. The Polish elite have expressed a much greater belief in the ideas of Europe than the public has (FAWN, 2003).

Polish church and European integration

Even the Catholic Church supported the accession to the EU. In May 2003 John Paul said "Europe needs Poland and Poland needs Europe. He added From the Union of Lublin¹⁰ to the European Union". It was a huge boost to the Yes campaign and his intervention disoriented the anti-EU camp. The Pope's message was repeated by a letter from the Polish Episcopate that was read in every parish church on the Sunday before the referendum. In this letter, bishops did not back a Yes vote

⁹ PSL and SLD formed coalition twice (1993-97 and 2001-03).

¹⁰ Union of Lublin united Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Sixteenth Century.

explicitly; they said that participation in the referendum was a moral obligation. Bishops and priests were encouraging people to vote without taking the sides openly. Attitudes about Polish clergy were mixed. One radio station, Radio Maryja, run by a Polish priest, father Rydzyk, and very popular all around Poland was openly against it. Cardinal Jozef Glemp, head of the Polish church, pronounced: *I am not a Euro-enthusiast. I'm a Euro-fatalist. Europe is Poland's destiny.*

Mobilisation of civil society

The pro-EU camp was also able to engage the support of a wide range of local and national civic organisations. 88 organisations (parties, foundations, ONG) ran the campaign pro-European. The most significant was the umbrella grouping 'Civic Initiative Yes in the Referendum' which brought together local government, business and other non-governmental organisations. This example shows that those pro-EU organisations managed to present a 'non-political' face to the Yes campaign. Some of these organisations were born before the referendum.

The Yes campaigners presented the referendum as a civilisational choice, with EU accession part of an inevitable historical process of ending Cold War divisions and returning Poland to its rightful place at the heart of Europe. The economic benefits of accession were stressed by arguing that Poland was joining a club of the richest countries in the world. More negatively, they also highlighted the lack of realistic and attractive alternatives to EU membership. They stressed the danger of Poland becoming another Belarus.

The fact that according to the Treaty of Nice Poland has the same number of voices like Spain was stressed by many Yes campaigners. We could also see a dramatisation of this election, because some journals and the television informed every day how many hours or days rest to the referendum. "Referendum's decision is a turning point in European history," these kinds of statement were often repeated. The entry into the EU was shown like the last stage of democratic transitions, started in 1989.

Most opposition parties and a range of civic organisations campaigned for a Yes vote helped to de-couple the issue of EU membership from that of confidence in the extremely unpopular government.

The Miller's government, pro-EU opposition and Catholic Church hierarchy formed a relatively united front on this issue and presented the accession referendum primarily in historical terms as representing a major civilisation and geo-political choice.

The campaign of the anti-European camp

The referendum on accession has mobilised anti-European parties and groupings. We will examine two examples of these actions; the campaign of LPR League of Polish Families and Samoobrona (Self-Defence). These two parties obtained good results in general election in 2001 thanks to their opposition to European integration. Although these two parties were against the accession to the EU, their arguments were different. First of all, we have to say that the No campaign suffered from a lack of access to the public media.

Supporters of membership had a clear strategy: they should have turned out to vote. Opponents could have stayed home in an attempt to keep turnout below 50 %; or they could have participated in an attempt to increase the vote against membership. The leaders of the anti-EU forces did not actively promote such a "stay home" strategy. (This is not to say that there was no discussion of the strategy by public figures. The most notable example was Zygmunt Wrzodak (LPR), but he received almost no support from other prominent politicians in the party) (MARKOWSKI, 2005).

The campaign of the LPR - Recycling of historical symbols and heroes

The principal subject of campaigns of the League of Polish Families in 2001 and 2002 was opposition to European integration. According to the program of the LPR, Poland is in danger because of foreign threats. This program, published in 2001, was based on a report of debates about political and economical situation organized by think tank "Reflection for Poland". In the program's words, ten years after the political and economical transition, Poland is at the moment the most dramatic in modern history. This diagnosis concerns all sectors of life. Economic situation is serious and the state of public finances becomes grave. These problems are the results of foreign policy which lead this country to the European Union. In

the opinion of LPR's members, associated agreement between the EU and Poland costs twelve billion dollars every year.

The European construction is presented by the LPR like a new occupation of Poland by rich countries. For this party, the European integration was invented by German and, therefore the EU serves German interests.

The accession to the EU can cause the loss of sovereignty. During each campaign some slogans were repeated, for example: "We don't want to have a capital in Brussels, our capital is in Warsaw", "Yesterday Moscow, today Brussels", "EU = URSS", "Poland for Poles". The LPR recommends a development with respect of Christian values; Catholic dogma should be the basis of Polish politics. This party rather opts for Europe of sovereign nations or a confederation of independent states.

A factor which has to be stressed in the analysis of the LPR program, is its criticism of Polish politicians responsible for this difficult situation. Political elite originates from the communist party or from the agreements of the Round Table. For the LPR the common point of these people is corruption. This denunciation of traditional elite is a factor closer to other formations of extreme right in Western Europe (IVALDI, 2001). The non-participation of LPR to the government gives to leaders this image of new people in politics. It is known that in Eastern Europe voters are very disappointed with the political situation and they vote against the elite. This « protest vote » (VAN DER BRUG and other, 2000) can partly explain the success of the LPR. Other parties classified the League like a marginal party, but it wants to create this image of organization out of the system. In the first half of the nineties every political party was for European integration, so the position of opponents was stigmatized. But the LRP's leaders take care over this image with spoiled identity trying to change this marginality into a positive source (for example they repeat that media don't want to show their opinions). In 2002, when members of parliament from candidate countries were invited to take part in the first session in common with Members of European Parliament in Strasbourg, the LPR was the one party to decline this proposition. In the opinion of Marek Kotlinowski, this trip was too expensive for Polish taxpayers.

The success of the LPR was possible thanks to the support of ultra-Catholic Radio Maryja and its four million listeners. The station, founded and run by Father Tadeusz Rydzek, is owned by the Polish Province of Redemptorists. In 1994 the

station obtained a license for nationwide broadcasting. In addition to informative programs and current affairs, the station broadcasts religious ceremonies, masses, and a rosary prayer. It also airs catechism twice daily. There are no advertisements on the station and it is financed by donations from listeners.

Since it was established in 1991, Radio Maryja and its director Father Tadeusz Rydzyk have raised controversy. On numerous occasions, the station has been criticized for broadcasting nationalist and anti-Semitic statements. Representatives of the Catholic hierarchy have distanced themselves on many occasions from the opinions presented by the radio. Despite this, Rydzyk has earned a strong following among Catholic listeners. A powerful social movement called Radio Maryja Families has grown under the guidance of the station. At Rydzyk's request, Circles of Friends of Radio Maryja and parish offices of Radio Maryja were created throughout the country, usually without the express approval of Church authorities. This station managed to make a successful campaign in 1997, when 30 deputies were elected thanks to support of Radio Maryja Families from the list of coalition AWS.

The main element of the LPR's strategy to be stressed is that this party tries to compare the current situation of Poland with that during Partitions¹¹ and the Second World War. The Polish past is very painful: in 1795 Poland disappeared from the political map of Europe. In spite of its official incorporation in the empires of Germany, Austria and Russia, Polish 'society', as the Poles call the totality of organisations intended to replace the State of which they had been deprived, felt itself to be the heir and guardian of the lost national community (ROSS, 1966).

During the anti-European campaign of League of Polish Families, some historical events are reminded, some literal symbols recalled and real or imaginary heroes are used. The main idea is that the history repeats itself. Historical symbols are recycled in the name of superiority of Polish history (MINK and NEUMAYER, 2002). The accession of Poland to EU is shown like a loss of sovereignty, so a situation well known to Poles.

The campaign on the referendum was begun by a poster with the painting of Jan Matejko « Rejtan's Defiance », painted in 1866. Jan Matejko (1838-1893) devoted his later years to a marvellously tendentious sequence of heroic historical scenes. His works have been known ever since to every Polish school child

¹¹ The period of Partitions lasted 123 years (1795-1918)

(MUCHA, 2000). This painting chosen by the LPR presents Tadeusz Rejtan, deputy to the Sejm of 1773. This is an iconic painting of an emotional protest against the First Partition of Poland. Rejtan blocked access to the Sejm's debating-chamber in a vain protest against this inevitable decision. This event has become the most spectacular act of defiance, attaining near-mythological status in folk memory (LUKOWSKI and ZAWADZKI 2001). The goal of the exploitation of this historical symbol is to build an association between this partition of Poland by foreign countries and the accession to the EU. In order to continue this parallelism, politicians from the LPR want to be compared to Rejtan, the only man who said "no", despite a strong majority supporting the project. Heroes used by the LPR are chosen in order to be a pattern to follow. For this party, it is important to serve an independent Poland and remain faithful to its traditions.

Another element of the strategy of the LPR is that its politicians compare relations between Warsaw and the EU members with past links between Poland and Soviet Union (CZERNICKA, 2004). On the second poster, it can be seen that dependency of Poland after 1989 is presented in the same way as before the collapse of communism. Only the source of dependency has changed and the URSS was replaced by the EU. As this poster shows, Poland is exploited: Soviets fleeced Poland in the past and now European Union fleeces Poland. The idea of the Soviet domination replaced by the Brussels domination is very often repeated by politicians of the League. As it was shown: the slogan "Yesterday Moscow, today Brussels" was frequently used. Some politicians in their essays or interviews developed this idea. For Jan Lopuszanski, the European Union is an utopia, an artificial construction built by politicians who did not understand a historical reality of Europe and the importance of nations in the European identity. The Union imposed its system which did not respect this heritage. In his opinion, the European Union can be compared with the URSS for its structure and its method (LOPUSZANSKI, 2003).

The LPR makes very often a reference to the German-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939. The secret clauses of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, revealed only in 1946 but denied by the URSS until 1989, provided for the joint division of eastern-central Europe and the partition of Poland. This new division led to repressive rules of the Poles, deportation into the Soviet Union of the Polish Army from one side, destruction of intelligentsia, concentration camps from another side. Some tracts distributed by the LPR present a photo montage with Leszek Miller, Polish Prime

Minister signing the treaty of accession, near persons signing the Pact Ribbentrop-Molotov.

As it was shown, the LPR presents some historical events as a reference, but this party tries to use the style from the past for its posters. The next picture evokes the memory of social realism propaganda. It can be read: "Every Pole will have a job, so let's go to the European Union now. Every Pole will have a Mercedes ... to wash". The campaign of supporters of European integration is shown as an "europaganda". League tries to show that this pro-European campaign like socialist propaganda, known well by Poles, contains a lot of promises difficult to realize. On the other hand, if the language used by the LPR is analysed, it can be seen that some words or expressions created by communist propaganda in the early fifties have reappeared, for example the term Regained Territories (*Ziemie Odzyskane*) depicted regions in the west and the north of Poland, historically German, which were given to Poland after the war.

The League use historical events known by Poles and therefore easy to interpret ("we good and weak Poles and dangerous neighbours"). Partition of the Polish State is interpreted by an international plot. Entry into European Union is a script prepared by pink-red coalition (Post-Communist and post-Solidarity organizations), founded during Round Table discussions. Once again Poland will be betrayed like it happened at the moment of Partitions or a German-Soviet Pact.

The problem of purchase of Polish lands by foreigners was exploited by the LPR, which wanted to organise a national referendum on this question. The organisation charged to collect signatures was named *Placowka* (*The outpost*). It is reference to a book written in 1885 by Boleslaw Prus, under the same title *Placowka*. This novel, about the rivalry of Polish and German peasants over land, is known for strong anti-German undertone. This title is evoked by the LPR to show a parallelism between the situation from the past and this from today in order to influence people, their fears and worries. The aim of the use of this symbol is to radicalize the debate in introducing emotional elements. Besides references to *Placowka*, another symbol can be mentioned largely used by the LPR in this "battle for Polish land". This symbol is Michal Drzymala, one of the folk heroes of Prussian Poland from the time of the Partitions. In 1886, Bismarck created the Prussian Colonization Commission to encourage German settlers. In government eyes, this was a defensive measure designed to counteract the drastic 'Flight from the East'. In Polish eyes, it was an

aggressive measure designed to drive the Poles from their land. The Commission was empowered to purchase vacant estates and then to sell them to approved candidates. The campaign against Polish landownership produced a strong opposition with a hero, Drzymala. In 1904, he had succeeded in obtaining a plot of land in the district of Wollstein (Wolsztyn), but found that the rules of the colonization commission forbade him as a Pole to build a permanent dwelling-house on his land. In order to beat the rule, therefore, he set himself up in a gypsy caravan and for more than a decade tenaciously defied all attempts in the courts to remove him. The case attracted publicity all over Germany. It was highly typical of the national conflict in Prussia, where the Polish movement was dominated by peasants and where the state authorities confined themselves to legal methods of harassment. Kulturkampf and the colonization commission succeeded in stimulating the very feelings which they were designed to suppress. On LPR's posters, a gypsy caravan can be seen like a symbol of struggle by the Poles and their sacrifice in the name of Poland. The citation "*nie rzucim ziemi*" (*We will not lay down our land*) is a fragment from a patriotic song of Maria Konopnicka (1842-1910) wrote at the moment of children's strike in the Prussian zone against Germanization of schools. Drawing the experiences of Poland in the past, nationalist members of LPR have proposed this reference like a warning which became stronger with an importance of the Myth of holy Polish land which feeds Polish people.

Politicians from the League of Polish Families try to explain the geopolitical situation in 2003 by using the old schemes. Their opinion about European integration can be seen like hard euro-scepticism (TAGGART, 2004), because they refute all process of integration.

The actions of Samoobrona

In this part, I will analyse the phenomena of Samoobrona, the origins of its social power and possible results.

The first actions of Samoobrona were organised in 1991 in order to defence indebted small farmers. The Farmers' Trade Union « Self-Defence » was founded in 1992 and transformed into a party in 1999 (KUBIAK, 2003). Samoobrona is a movement which primarily represented the category of heavily indebted farmers, who were the most important immediate victims of the new economic situation.

The analysis of Self-Defence's results in elections is important to understand the success of this party. Lepper's organisation, which had taken only one per cent of the vote and no seats in 1997, increased its votes to over ten per cent in 2001 and won 53 seats. This was rather surprising, as only six per cent of respondents said that they had voted for Samoobrona in surveys. In the local election in 2002, this party was able to increase its votes from ten to 16 per cent.

It should be stressed that despite criticisms from a vast majority of politicians and observers for the lack of any real programme, Samoobrona is gaining new followers through the rhetoric of total negation. « We weren't in charge, we're not responsible for the crisis, » say Lepper and his activists. The non-participation of this party to the government gives to leaders this image of new people in politics. It is known that in Eastern Europe voters are very disappointed with the political situation and they vote against the elite. Samoobrona contests the legacy of the past 15 years—the entire post-communist period. For this party agriculture should be revived. Samoobrona introduced the idea of so-called « payable prices » for agricultural commodities into political discourse. The state should guarantee profit for every farmer in Poland (KOCIK, 1996). According to Samoobrona leader's opinions, the foreign policy pursued for the past 15 years aimed at “transforming Poland into a market for production surpluses of the West” and destroying Polish industry and agriculture.

Special attention should be paid to the impact of Polish integration into the EU. The exam of Lepper's views on this European issue shows that his attitude changed and after a long period of anti-European campaign (the European Union was compared to a big kolkhoz administrated by Brussels), he presented his party as “eurorealiste”. Lepper did not want to accept the conditions of membership of : “Today we are saying “no” to the Union, but this does not apply to the idea of our country's membership in the EU, but to the terms on which we are supposed to join the Union”. Poland should join the EU organisations on a partner-like and equal basis. This party presents some characterises of soft eurosceptic (TAGGART, 2004). He claimed that Poland should reach the economic level of Western European countries before launching the integration process. According to Lepper, Poland should concentrate on rebuilding good relations with the East, because today the EU is doing big business with Russia.

After Copenhagen and before Athens (signature of treaty), Samoobrona submitted the idea of renegotiating the Polish agreements with the EU in order to change production quotas, not only in agriculture, but for example in steel production and fishing. This could result in a rise in unemployment and an expansion of the poverty and misery zone.

Lepper used to repeat that Poles support integration, because of a lack of information in the society about the real costs of Polish entry into the EU. His argument focused on the charge that Polish farmers would pay a heavy price for accession and that hundreds of thousands of them would be forced out of business, as their land would be purchased by foreigners. As some observers stress, *this view, underscored by the well-publicised confrontational tactics Lepper and his followers adopted, in and outside parliament, had its effects* (PIENKOS, 2004). Lepper argued that his party was not opposed to Polish EU membership in principle but simply against the unfavourable accession terms negotiated by the government and Samoobrona campaigned on the slogan ‘The Choice is Yours’.

The anti-EU camp’s best hope is to frame the referendum debate in terms of a plebiscite on the socio-economic transition or on the government of Leszek Miller.

Conclusion

The turnout was much higher than expected and 58.85% Poles were voting. A majority of the Poles voted for accession to the European Union (77.41 %). President Aleksander Kwasniewski hailed the result, telling cheering crowds in Warsaw: *We have returned to the European family*. The pro-European camp managed to decouple the issue of the EU accession from that of general confidence in the government’s performance and Poles answered the question asked. This result reinforced the government Miller. Poland became the member of the EU in May 2004. But the mobilization on European issues was not repeated before the European elections...

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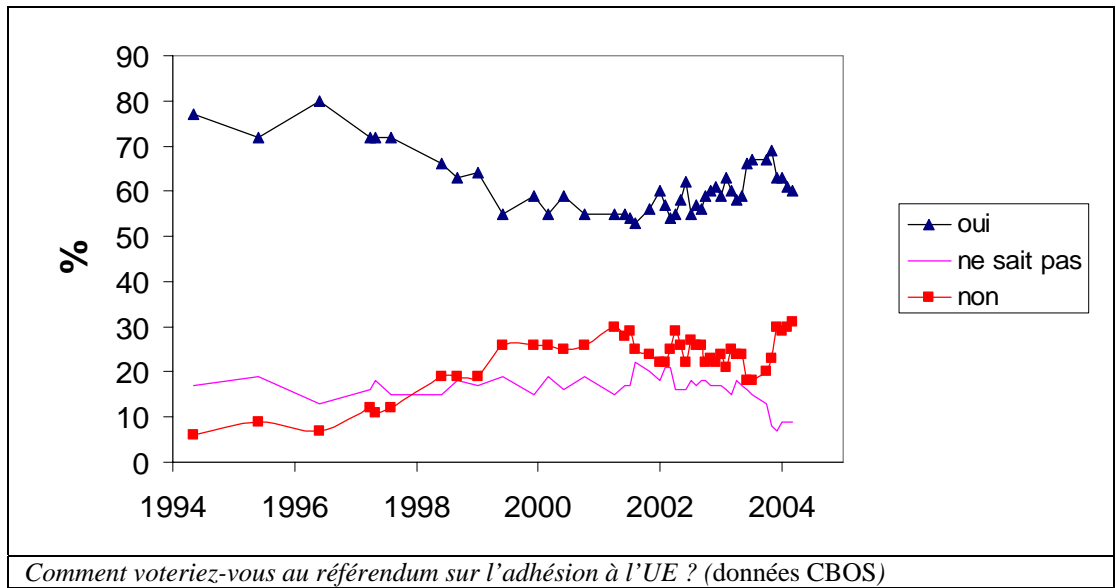
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Plot 1



Plot 2.

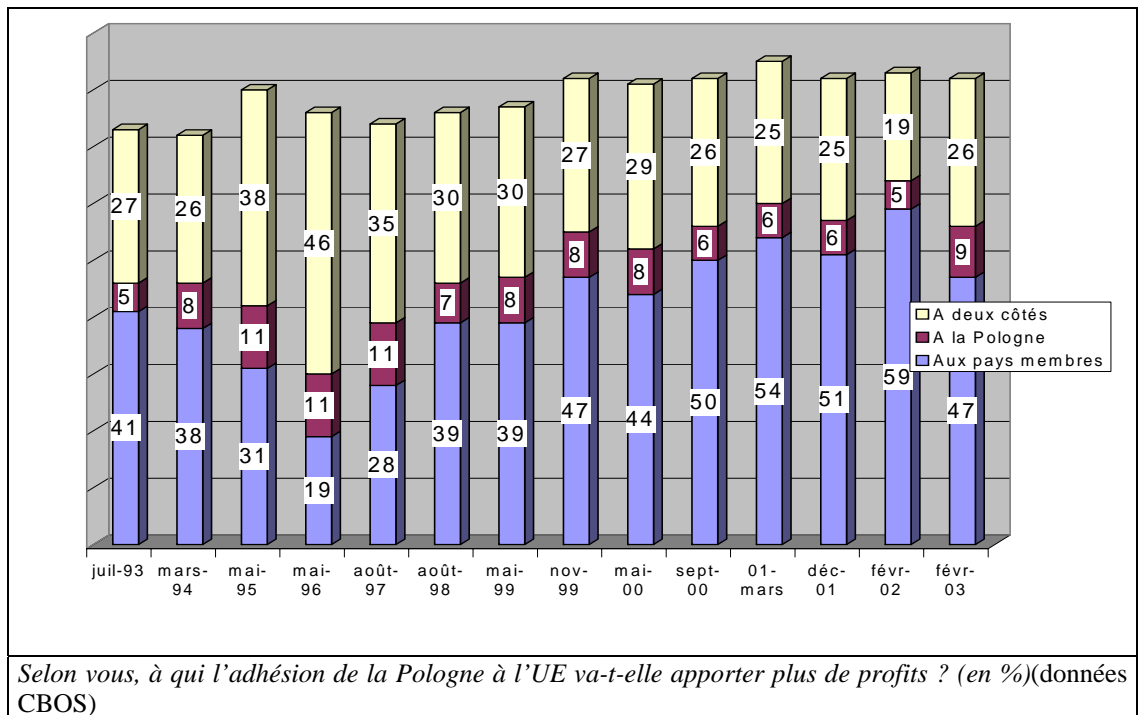


Table 3. Electoral participation in Poland (1993-2002)

<u>Vote</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Turnout</u>
General election	19/09/1993	52.1 %
Referendum on privatisation	18/02/1996	32,4 %
Referendum on Constitution	25/05/1997	42.8 %
General election	21/09/1997	47.9 %
Presidential election	8/10/2000	61.1 %
General election	23/09/2001	46.3 %
Local	27/10/2002	44.2 %

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