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EUROSCEPTICISM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

A micro-level analysis using cross-sectional data of Euroscepticism in the Western Balkan EU-candidate countries.

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Abstract

This Bachelor's thesis aims to contribute to the micro-level research on socio-demographic and attitudinal factors to Euroscepticism in the 4 Western Balkan candidate countries using a quantitative framework with cross-sectional data. The thesis focuses on utilitarian, political and identity-based factors. The hypotheses of this thesis were built around previous research on Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries, Euroscepticism in the former Eastern European candidate states, the EU member states' and research on economic voting. The results of this thesis indicated that all three of the factors researched had some levels of significance. Sociotropic utilitarian factors were shown to be stronger in predicting Euroscepticism than egocentric ones, higher levels of perceived internal political inefficacy at a country-level showed to increase levels Euroscepticism and individuals who identified with both Europe and its country were shown to be less Eurosceptic than those who only identified with Europe, those who only identified with their country were shown to be more Eurosceptic than both. Identity-based factors were shown to be strongest predictors of Euroscepticism. Albanians were indicated to be the least Eurosceptic nationality, whilst Serbians could in some instances be indicated to be the most.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Study field

Euroscepticism in the context of the Western Balkan (WB) candidate countries is an understudied subject. The majority of studies existing on the subject of Euroscepticism and European integration in the WB have been using a qualitative approach, with the majority of studies being one or two country-case studies (Stojić, 2006, 2017; Krastev, 2011; Konitzer, 2011; Subotic, 2011; Antonić, 2012; Hirkic, 2019), with Belloni, (2016) and Belloni & Brunazzo (2017) being exceptions were the entire WB was focused upon, or one country case studies using a quantitative framework (Damjanovksi & Kirchner, 2019). This research primarily indicates that identity, cultural-based, political party-based factors and the eurozone crisis contribute to Euroscepticism in the WB countries.

Damjanovski et al. (2020) stand out as the only example of quantitative research on Euroscepticism in the WB from a micro-level aspect, focusing on socio-demographic and attitudinal factors. Damjanovksi et al. (2020) employ a theoretical framework using three factors; (1) Utilitarian, (2) Political and (3) Identity/cultural-based to identify the strongest predicting factors to an increase of Euroscepticism within an individual being caused by socio-demographic and attitudinal factors. The results of Damjanovksi et al.'s (2020) paper showed that all three factors affected Euroscepticism in the WB countries, although cultural/identity-based factors seem to be particularly prominent. However, one study using a similar framework like this is not enough to fully comprehend the socio-demographic and attitudinal factors that lead to Euroscepticism in the WB, as it omits many important utilitarian, political and identity-based factors to Euroscepticism shown to be significant in other research on Euroscepticism for member-states, the at the time eastern European candidate states or theories not tested quantitatively yet.

This thesis will use data from 2019. Due to survey-data limitations, this thesis will only focus on the four official WB candidate countries: Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and North

Macedonia. Neither Kosovo nor Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are candidate countries yet (European Commission, 2020*a*).

This thesis's results indicate that sociotropic utilitarian factors are stronger than egocentric ones in predicting Euroscepticism, that increased internal political inefficacy felt within its country increases an individuals' levels of Euroscepticism, and that identity-based factors are the strongest micro-level predictors for Euroscepticism. Left/right-political leaning had seemingly no significant effect on an individuals' levels of Euroscepticism.

1.2 Aim

This study aims to add new dimensions to the limited research on the socio-economic and attitudinal factors that lead to Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries on a micro-level basis. This thesis aims to encompass both egocentric and sociotropic utilitarian micro-level factors to Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries. Sociotropic utilitarian factors as a cause of Euroscepticism have previously not been researched in the context of all 4 WB candidate countries (as far as the author of this thesis is aware). Egocentric utilitarian factors will be measured through an individual's perceived social class, whilst sociotropic utilitarian factors to Euroscepticism will be measured through an individual's opinion on its country's current economic situation. Previous research on economic voting has indicated that individuals more often vote with their country's economy in mind rather than their own (Kinder & Kiewet 1981; Anderson, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2007). This in relations to how economically dependent the WB candidate countries are on the EU could indicate that socoitropic utilitarian factors are stronger predictors for Euroscepticism than the previously researched egocentric ones. This paper aims to research the political factors how an individual's perceived levels of internal political efficacy within its own country (or *in*efficacy) and left/right political position affects its levels of Euroscepticism. Lastly, in connection to identity-based factors, this paper aims answer how an individual's perceived national and supranational (in this case, European) identity affects Euroscepticism, and to what degree exclusive and multiple identities affects it.

1.3 The lengthy accession process of the Western Balkan candidate countries

The accession process for the WB countries to become members of the European Union started back in 1999, with the Stability and Association Process (SAP). The EU-Western Balkan summit in Thessaloniki in 2003 fully confirmed that the SAP-countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia) were potential candidates to join the EU. One of the seven SAP-countries has successfully become a member of the EU since then, that being Croatia back in July of 2013. Many of the issues required to be solved for further accession for the WB countries that existed back in 2003 at the Thessaloniki summit are still on the agenda yet today (European Commission, 2020*b*). Böhmelt & Freyburg (2018) forecasts that only one of the WB countries will be compliant with the EU accession rules by the 2025 target that the European Commission has set for the candidate states, that being North Macedonia by 2023. Serbia looks likely to pass the threshold by as late as 2035 and Albania does not look likely to pass it until the 2050s (Montenegro was not researched). To better understand the micro-level effects to Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries could help us address the resistance to the accession process on an individual-level basis in a more effective way than previously. This could, in turn, help speed up the currently slow-moving accession process.

2. Theory and previous research

2.1 Previous literatures answers to Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries and its research gaps

The research field existing on Euroscepticism in the WB countries has given different answers to the phenomenon. Stojić (2006), when researching Euroscepticism in Serbia and Croatia, indicated that Euroscepticism was connected to the war crime trials which came as a result of the war-torn 1990s and the EU's role in them, with many Serbians and Croatians viewing the trials in a negative fashion at the time, although this was more an issue for Croatians. Stojić (2006) continues to add that the main advocates for Euroscepticism in Serbia were the populist, nationalistic and far-right parties alongside the far-right social groups of society. Stojić (2017) adds that a political parties' peripheral or core-position is not a primary reason behind and increase or decrease in Eurosceptic tendencies in the case of Serbia and Croatia, but Euroscepticism seems to be rooted in far-right nationalism and the opposition of the EU's "liberal agenda". At an individual-level, nationalism, a fear of losing national sovereignty, cultural heritage and a dismissal of the EU's core values are shown to be the most commonly occurring explanations for Euroscepticism in the WB countries in the qualitative research papers (Konitzer, 2011; Subotic, 2011; Antonić, 2012; Belloni, 2016; Hirkic, 2019).

Stojić (2006), Subotic (2011) and Antonić (2012) indicate in their research that social class could play a role in predicting Euroscepticism, with the higher-class urbanites and political elites being perceived as the biggest winners in the case of EU-membership. Krastev (2011), Belloni (2016) and Belloni & Brunazzo (2017) additionally point out the Eurozone crisis and its effects on the WB region as a focal point behind Euroscepticism amongst the candidate countries, with Belloni & Brunazzo (2017) additionally claiming that the Eurozone crisis (alongside Brexit) further decreased the accession speed which created a sort of "EU fatigue" amongst the WB candidate countries, further increasing indifference or negative views about EU-membership.

The strongest predictors for Euroscepticism at micro-level in the WB countries, according to Damjanovski et al. (2020) are shown to be religious affiliation, traditionalistic views, acceptance of authoritarianism and trust in state institutions. The identity-based factors were shown to be the strongest, with Muslims strongly indicated to be the least Eurosceptic whilst having traditionalistic views was indicated as the strongest predictor for an increase of Euroscepticism. Those who were accepting of authoritarianism were indicated to be more Eurosceptic than those who were not. In regard to political factors, so were those who trusted in state institutions indicated to be less Eurosceptic than those who did not. The egocentric utilitarian factors tested by Damjanovski et (2020) proved to be insignificant. Damjanovksi & Kirchner (2019) longitudinal survey-data research on opinions on EU-membership and the accession process in North Macedonia indicated that identity-based factors were the dominant predictors for an increase of Euroscepticism (with the country-specific issue of the name-change dispute playing a significant role, alongside the fear of losing national identity) with rationalistic utilitarian factors (expectations of improvements to the standard of living and added security and stability with EU-membership) being the strongest indicator for increased EU-support.

The strongest predictor of Euroscepticism in the WB countries, as indicated by previous research, appear to be identity-based ones. Utilitarian and political factors have been indicated to being significant, but to a lesser degree. There are however several research gaps yet remaining to fill when it comes to the studies of Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries. Previous quantitative research in the field has only focused on egocentric utilitarian factors which have shown to have limited effects on Euroscepticism, ignoring sociotropic ones. I theorize that sociotropic utilitarian factors will be significant in relations to an individual's levels of Euroscepticism. Damjanovksi & Kirchner (2019) researched rationalistic utilitarian factors, but only in the context of North Macedonia, meaning that the results cannot be generalized for all 4 WB candidate countries, along with rationalistic and sociotropic utilitarian factors being distinguishable from each other, with many rationalistic factors being egocentric. Egocentric utilitarian factors will be tested in this thesis as well, as previous research indicates that they could be significant. I theorize that the degree of internal political

efficacy (or inefficacy) an individual experience within its country will be a significant factor in measuring its levels of Euroscepticism. I alongside that test the theory that the furthest right-wing individuals are in fact the most Eurosceptic in the WB-candidate countries, which little research using quantitative models has been performed in the context of the WB candidate countries to prove. Lastly, I test the assumptions that those who identify with both Europe and their country are less Eurosceptic than both those who only identify with Europe or only with their country and that those who only identify with their country are significantly more Eurosceptic than those who identify with both Europe and country or only Europe. This assumption has not previously been fully tested in the context of using a sample consisting of individuals from all four official WB EU-candidate countries.

2.2 Utilitarian factors

One of the main issues concerning the EU and the WB citizens is the distance they feel to Brussels. Brussels seems too far away and technocratic to solve the pressing economic and social issues within (Belloni, 2016). Having a European identity and striving for EU-membership is mostly related to society's political elites and wealthier individuals. Previous research indicates that individuals of a higher socioeconomic class more often view themselves as "European" and can thus more likely be considered to be less Eurosceptic than those of a lower social class. These are individuals with their own business, individuals who frequently can afford the luxury of travelling around Europe for tourism, to study abroad and are in more frequent contact with people of other nationalities (Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Polyakova & Fligstein, 2016). The regular working-class man/woman living in the WB countries has other issues at hand than the middle to upper-class urbanities, issues that Brussels bureaucrats cannot or will not help with (Stojić, 2006; Subotic, 2011; Antonić, 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1= *Individuals of a lower social class will tend to be more Eurosceptic than those of a higher social class.*

Sociotropic utilitarian explanations to Euroscepticism in the WB countries have previously mostly been omitted, primarily due to lack of available data, a commonly occurring issue in research on Euroscepticism in the WB countries (Damjanovski et al., 2020). Previous research on economic voting has shown that socio-tropic factors are stronger than egocentric ones in many cases. Individuals have been shown to vote with their countries' wallet in mind, rather than their own (Kinder & Kiewet 1981; Anderson, 2000; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2007). Thus, it could be logical to assume that the average citizen prioritizes factors regarding its nations' economic situation as a whole, rather than its own personal economic situation when it comes to political matters. Christin (2005) writes that there was a strong correlation between an individuals' evaluation of the national governance and the economic situation and the desired speed for accession for the at the time eastern European candidate countries. It indicated that the worse an individual in a candidate country perceived its national governance and economy, the quicker they wanted the accession process to be. Sánchez-Cuenca (2000) means that the explanation to this is that the worse a country is perceived to perform politically and economically by its citizens, the lower the cost to transfer authority to the EU from the candidate country will be, given that they have less to lose than if their own government and economy was perceived to perform well without the help of EU-membership. Thus, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H2a: *The worse an individual view the national economic situation to be, the less Eurosceptic that individual will tend to be.*

However, given the indirect negative effects the eurozone crisis had on the WB countries and their strong dependence on the EU for economic support and trade, a case can be made for the opposite of ***H2a*** to be true. Between 2007-2015, 72,5% of the total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows and 72,8% of the total trade flows into the WB countries came from or were transferred to the EU (European Commission, 2018). The eurozone crisis significantly reduced the FDI inflow into the WB countries, most notably between 2009-2012. This in turn led to both increased political and economic unrest and instability, and an increasing "crisis of confidence", where important investors grew even further sceptical about investing long-term in the regions' economies, with unemployment levels reaching levels of around 30% in the worst hit EU-candidate country of the 4, North Macedonia (Zanelli, 2014). Some citizens of the WB countries directly blamed the EU for this, with EU-flags on occasions being burned

during protests against the national governments (Krastev, 2011; Zaneli; 2014; Belloni, 2016). EU-membership is seemingly not an as attractive perspective these days as it was back in 2003 when talks first began, with the Eurozone crisis somewhat diminishing the Greek-success story of a relatively backwards and underdeveloped country prospering with the help of EU-membership, which the WB countries candidates were aiming to emulate (Belloni & Brunazzo, 2017).

It is clear that the WB candidate countries' economic prosperity is heavily tied to the prosperity of the EU. If a citizen is unhappy with the economic situation in its country, it might view the EU as being directly to blame for it, thus being more sceptic towards European integration and against EU-membership. Hooghe & Marks (2004) indicate in their research that the more confident an individual feel about its countries' economy, the more likely it is that they will be positive to further European integration, further strengthening the idea that an individual with a negative opinion of its nations economic situation will tend to be more Eurosceptic. With this in mind, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H2b: *The worse an individual view the national economic situation to be, the more Eurosceptic that individual will tend to be.*

2.3 Political factors

Previous attitudinal political factors on a micro-level that research has on Euroscepticism in the WB have been related to the degree of trust in the state institutions. This is the case with Damjanovski et al. (2020), where the results showed that people with less trust in state institutions are more Eurosceptic. Other research papers on political factors, not necessarily directly connected to Euroscepticism per se, are on rampant corruption that still hinders further accession for the WB countries and the EU's inability to reduce it successfully with, such as with Kurtuglo Eskisar & Komsuoglu (2015).

Previous research on political-party level Euroscepticism Stojić (2017) asked if a political parties' governmental/opposition and core/peripheral position affect its approach to European integration. The results in that paper showed that opposition parties would occasionally criticise governmental parties for not being "pro-European" enough, instead of encouraging further Euroscepticism. A parties' peripheral position is not the primary driver for Euroscepticism either. Peripheral Euroscepticism is stated to be identity-driven and rooted in nationalism and opposition to the EU's perceived liberal democracy, rather than a deliberate strategic decision to be "anti-European", which in turn can strengthen the claim that identity/culturally based factors are important drivers of Euroscepticism in the WB countries. Previous to that, Stojić (2006) reached a similar conclusion about party-based Euroscepticism in the WB, concluding that the Eurosceptic parties often do not have any "genuine" opinions on the European Union itself, the levels of Euroscepticism a Eurosceptic party portrays is often mirrored in the state of the accession progression within the country and the country's predicted positioning within the EU.

The two political factors that focus will be put on in this paper are those of political efficacy (or its opposite, *in*efficacy) and an individual's own perceived left/right political leaning.

Political efficacy can be categorised into "external" and "internal" efficacy. "Internal" efficacy can be defined as an individual's own perceived ability to affect the political outcome and its understanding of the political system, whilst "external" efficacy how responsive the government is to act on its citizens' wishes (Madsen, 1987; Kim, 2004; Mierina, 2014). Both external and internal political inefficacy have in previous research been correlated with political cynicism. However, due to limited data availability, internal efficacy will be the primary focus of this thesis. Political inefficacy has been connected to the desire for structural and institutional reform alongside lower trust in the current incumbents (Miller, 1974; Brehm & Rahn, 1997). Alongside this, higher levels of political inefficacy in an individual have shown to correlate with an increase of Euroscepticism in previous research by Abts et al. (2009) in the case of Belgium. High efficacy has in the past been correlated with higher levels of trust in the incumbents in former Soviet states, or "new democracies", which is what many of the WB countries are today (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006). Previous research, however, indicates that political inefficacy is still significantly more common in post-communist states

than in the mature, established democracies in western Europe. In turn, this political inefficacy leads to distrust in the national political elites (Mierina, 2014).

For these reasons, higher levels of political inefficacy can be assumed to correlate with distrust in the EU's political elites and be against further European integration and membership. The following hypothesis can thus be formulated regarding Euroscepticism in the WB countries:

H3a= *The higher the level of inefficacy an individual experience within its country, the more Eurosceptic that individual is expected to be.*

However, given that internal political inefficacy correlates with the desire for structural and institutional reform, which EU-membership would bring to the WB countries, this following hypothesis can be formed;

H3b= *The higher the level of inefficacy an individual experience within its country, the less Eurosceptic that individual is expected to be.*

The far-right, or in some cases, the far-left, being classified as the biggest Eurosceptics within citizens of a country, is a previously well-researched scientific area. However, scholars are not in complete unison regarding it, and several theories exist. Previous research indicates that right-wing voters tend to be more sceptic towards European integration in residual welfare states, fearing that further European integration will lead to further convergence towards creating a continental welfare state. In social democratic states, the opposite can be said, as the left fear that further European integration will threaten their domestic welfare regime (Hooghe & Marks, 2004; Brinegar & Jolly, 2005). The far-left has historically opposed the EU, because of its perceived neo-liberal objectives and dismantlement and a threat to the welfare systems. The far-right has primarily framed the EU as a supranational threat to the national identity, sovereignty and national borders (Van Elsas & Van der Brug, 2015; Pirro et al., 2018). Halikiopoulou et al. (2012) claim that both far right and left parties' express economic and territorial nationalism in a similar fashion, and that high levels of nationalism are often connected to higher levels of Euroscepticism. However, the paper concluded that far-right parties, unlike far-left ones, express nationalism through the ethnic and cultural factors of a nation. This coincides with the historically and currently more Eurosceptic parties

of the WB, which often focus heavily on cultural and ethnic identity factors, often expressing what could be considered a far-right ideology. The far-left Eurosceptic parties in the WB have been largely irrelevant, compared to these far-right nationalistic ones (Stojić, 2006;2017). This leads us to believe that individuals with Eurosceptic tendencies in the WB are significantly more likely to identify as far right-wing politically than left-wing. Thus, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H4= *The more right-wing an individual identifies itself to be, the more Eurosceptic that individual will be.*

2.4 Identity based factors

In the research by Damjanovski et al. (2020), the results showed that more traditional oriented and authoritarian oriented individuals tend to be more Eurosceptic, whilst Muslims tend to be less Eurosceptic than non-Muslims in the WB. The hypothesis in Damjanovski et al. (2020) stating that Muslims are expected to be less Eurosceptic than individuals with other believes in the WB is, however, a rather shallow hypothesis to make in the first place. A country like Albania in the WB has a population of almost exclusively Muslims, whilst Serbia has one of almost exclusively Orthodox Christians, showing rather skewed results in testing the hypothesis in question. A more interesting approach to religion and Euroscepticism in this context would be to assess how the degree of religiosity an individual possesses correlates with Euroscepticism. Is a devote Orthodox Christian more or less Eurosceptic than a devote Muslim? Is a more "casual" Muslim actually more Eurosceptic than a "casual" Orthodox Christian? Unfortunately, due to the lack of variables measuring this in the existing survey-data bases, hypotheses like these cannot currently be tested in this thesis. Hirkic (2019) adds that Muslim countries might have a harder time becoming EU-member states, even though they can perhaps be shown less Eurosceptic than the orthodox Christian states, due to the "Christian revival" happening in the EU and the anti-Muslim sentiment created by mostly the far-right parties of the EU-countries.

Subotic (2011) argues that a European identity, or a willingness to *converge* to the European identity ideals is crucial for a country wishing to progress in their accession process. This, for example, largely explains why two historically similar countries like Serbia and Croatia have progressed at such different rates in their accession process. Serbia has experienced a process of *identity divergence*, being hesitant to or refusing to accept "European ideals", sticking to the purely nationalistic Serbian identity, whilst Croatia experienced *identity convergence*, accepting European ideals and values to a greater extent, significantly speeding up the accession process with it (Subotic, 2011). The traditionally Eurosceptic parties in the WB countries take an extremely nationalistic and identity-based approach, as previously stated, focusing on national identity and the threat that further European integration brings to it (Stojić, 2017; Konitzer, 2011). McLaren (2002) shows that Euroscepticism is often connected to the perceived threat to national and cultural identity that the EU brings with it. The threat of cultures that are not your own. The EU, is thus, perceived as a threat to the national identity. Damjanovski & Kirchner (2019), using longitudinal data, which rarely is available in the context of the WB candidate countries, found that identity-based factors in North Macedonia were perhaps the largest factor to increased Euroscepticism amongst individuals. This was partly due to the fear of losing national identity, but also due to the name-change dispute with Greece.

This "threat to national culture and identity" can, in turn be theoretically related to derivations of what is known as "social identity theory" (Tajfel, 1982). Lubbers & Scheepers (2007) writes that this type of derivation of social identity theory connected to that of cultural and national identity can be formulated as follows and that: "*individuals have the fundamental need to perceive their in-group as superior to many out-groups (i.e., in-group bias). Subsequently, they apply favourable characteristics to themselves they perceive among members of the in-group via a mental process labeled 'social identification', and they value out-groups negatively via mechanisms of 'social contra-identification'*". This derivation of social identity theory coincides well with previous research on identity-based Euroscepticism in the context of EU-member states. Individuals harbouring only one exclusive identity that they perceive themselves as, in this case, that of a national identity, will in term be more Eurosceptical and hesitant to further European integration than those with several identities,

viewing their nationality and cultural heritage as being superior to any other and in turn feeling threatened by the idea of an "European" identity and culture undermining their own (Carey, 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; Polyakova & Fligstein, 2016). Hirkic (2019) adds that further European integration EU-membership represents "nothing less than a wholesale handover of national sovereignty to an overbearing EU bureaucracy that regulates every aspect of life", from the perspective of hard Eurosceptics in the context of the WB countries, and EU-member states. Damjanovksi & Kirchner (2019) adds that exclusive national identity in the case of North Macedonia was not shown to be a clear generator of Eurosceptic attitudes within an individual, but it was indicated that those who identified with both Europe and North Macedonia were more supportive of the EU than those who only identified with North Macedonia.

Hooghe & Marks (2004) adds that individuals with a strong national identity have shown to be more likely to identify as "European", thus most likely be more positively opinionated on further European integration. Abts (2009) found that individuals who only identify as European in Belgium were more Eurosceptic, not less, than those who identified as both Belgian and European. Most people harbour multiple types of "identities", and not an exclusively national identity, which can have different effects on their perceived "Euroscepticism" (Hooghe & Marks, 2004; Klandermans et al, 2004). Carey (2002) for example found that those in the United Kingdom who identify themselves as "English" are more Eurosceptic than those who would identify themselves as "Scottish", "Welsh", "Northern Irish", "Irish", "British" or a mixture of them. Due to difficulties in assessing different types of sub-national identities in the WB countries because of lack of available data, focus will instead be solely put on an individual's perceived national and European identity.

The previous research on national identity in connection to Euroscepticism presented means that only looking at degree of national identity an individual feels as a factor to Euroscepticism is not enough, as more nationalistic people have in many cases been shown to identify as more European than those who do not identify with their country. Individuals in

the WB candidate countries with exclusively national or European identity should then instead theoretically be more Eurosceptic than individuals with multiple identities, with those who only identify with their country being more Eurosceptic than both the other mentioned alternatives. Given this, the following two hypotheses can be formulated:

H5a= *An individual with exclusive attachment to its country, will in turn be expected to be more Eurosceptic than those with exclusive attachment to Europe or attachment to both its country and Europe.*

H5b= *Individuals who possess multiple identities and feel an attachment to both Europe and its country are expected to be the least Eurosceptic.*

3. Material and variables

3.1 Material source, limitations and composition

The material used to test this thesis's hypotheses is cross-sectional data from the standard Eurobarometer 92.3 survey, which was undertaken between November-December 2019. Internationally recognized survey research institutes run the standard Eurobarometer surveys on behalf of the European Commission. The Eurobarometer surveys are all set up to be statistically fully representative of the countries' socio-demographic set-ups, but due to this thesis omitting cases in which respondents replied "do not know" or refused to answer the items used in either the index, as control variables or hypotheses-testing variables, the sample composition of the cases used in this study will be less representative of the socio-demographic realities of the countries compared to that of the available cases in the dataset. This is most notably the case with the Serbian cases, for which the original valid case count was 1017, but only 564 of them is used in this study.

Panel analysis (known as longitudinal analysis) is not possible in the case of assessing the micro-level attitudinal and socio-demographic factors to Euroscepticism in the WB, due to the data necessary to perform does not exist readily available, meaning that a cross-sectional analysis is the only realistic option. Considering the severe lack of available survey data covering all of the six WB countries, whilst offering an adequate availability of variables needed to answer my hypotheses, only the four main WB candidate countries will be covered in this paper. These are Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Kosovo and BiH are, therefore, regrettably, omitted from research in this paper.

This survey data set was chosen due to it being the most recent dataset available that covers the largest amounts of variables needed to answer the hypotheses of this thesis, whilst not excluding too many of the WB countries. The entire case count for the sample size used is

2661[1]. Due to BiH and Kosovo not being included in the dataset used, a complete picture of Euroscepticism in the WB region and its micro-level socio-demographic and attitudinal effects will not be presented in this paper. However, the results will be encompassing the 4 official WB EU-candidate countries, due to neither BiH nor Kosovo officially being candidates as of yet.

3.2 Variables

3.2.1 Dependent variable: Index measuring "Euroscepticism"

The dependent variable is a measurement of the term "Euroscepticism". Euroscepticism can be defined as scepticism (soft Euroscepticism) or outright rejection (hard Euroscepticism) to the furtherment of European integration and EU-membership (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004; Abts et al., 2009). A "soft" Eurosceptic individual in the WB candidate countries does not necessarily completely reject potential EU-membership and further European integration, but is more likely critical of the accession process, against certain EU-policies or want to stand up for national interests that potential EU-membership can be thought to harm. "Hard" Euroscepticism is meanwhile considered a complete rejection of potential EU-membership (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004; Belloni, 2016). Belloni (2016) insinuates that the former of the two, that of "soft" Euroscepticism, is significantly more common than that of "hard" Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries.

To measure the concept of "Euroscepticism" an index containing 5 ordinal items will be created. In this instance, some concepts, like Euroscepticism, are too multidimensional to measure with only one questionnaire item, hence the creation of this index in an attempt to better contextualize, capture and measure it (Greenstein, 2006, p. 115-126). What score an individual would need to get on the index to be considered to be a "soft" Eurosceptic, contra a

[1] For basic demographic statistics of the sample size used, please see appendix 3.

"hard" Eurosceptic is not entirely clear, meaning that the index is better suited to instead help us understand what factors (independent variables in the regression) contribute the most to an individual's levels of Euroscepticism, and in what fashion they contribute. An index is a better option to use as compared to only using one of items as the dependant variable, as it safeguards against potential measurement errors that could occur if only one of the questionnaire items were to be used as the measurement for "Euroscepticism" (De Vaus, 2014, p. 131, 157).

The 5 questionnaire items used to conceptualize "Euroscepticism" are 1). "EU image – positive/negative" measured through a Likert-type scale 1=very positive, 5=very negative, 2). "EU membership – good/bad", 1= a good thing, 2=a bad thing and 3=neither good nor bad. Values "2" and "3" are switched places for use in the index. 3). "EU membership – country benefit", 1=would benefit, 2=would not benefit, 4). "EU concept: efficient" uses a 4-point forced Likert-type scale with 1=Describes very well and 4=Describes very badly. 5). "EU concept: democratic", use the same type of scale as item #4.

To make the re-scaling and index function in the easiest and clearest way possible, the range for the items used and then the index will be re-scaled to be from 0-100, giving all the items in the scale the same upper and lower limits. 0=the least Eurosceptic answer (which would have been =1 in the items original coding) and 100= the most Eurosceptic answer (which is =3, 4 or 5 in the original coding depending on the item in question). To create an index for all the five items measuring "Euroscepticism" that uses a scale of 0-100, they are computed together as follows:

(EU image – positive/negative + EU membership – good/bad + EU membership – country benefit + EU concept: democratic + EU concept: efficient) / 5

This combines all the cases responses to the items into one unison index with a max range of "100" and a minimum range of "0".

Cronbach's alpha for the entire index was shown to be at .856, which signalizes that the index has a rather high internal consistency. An alpha value of .70 is generally speaking the minimum benchmark for an acceptable index (Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Esaiasson et al., 2012, p. 388). However, Lance et al. (2006) and Connelly (2011) argues that a Cronbach's alpha value of .80 should in many be considered the bare minimum one should aim for in basic research, which this index surpasses. Cronbach's alpha is shown to decrease if any of the items are removed from the index, which indicates that it is most likely not preferable to remove any of them. A factor analysis was run on the items as well, in which the results indicated that the scale items were unidimensional[2].

3.2.2 Argumentation of item choices to use in index

These specific items from the dataset used were chosen for the index because they were the most apparent items to measure the attitudes individuals feel towards the EU and their opinions on potential EU membership and further European integration. This can most clearly be seen with items 1 through 3 in the index. The "concept" items, however, items 4 and 5, can in the case of the WB candidate countries, given the current attitudes towards the accession process, the effects of the eurozone crisis and the distance the WB citizens feel to Brussels contribute just as much to measure the concept of "Euroscepticism".

The lengthy accession process the WB candidate countries are currently going through can be said to have made individuals feel increasingly more indifferent and even some cases, more negative to EU-membership compared to when the negotiations first began (Belloni, 2016; Böhmelt & Freyburg, 2018; Damjanovksi et al., 2020). This leads us to believe that individuals who perceive the EU as more inefficient are more Eurosceptic. In line with the "democratic deficit" theory that exists within the studies of the European Union, can individuals who perceive the EU as being fundamentally "un-democratic" and unable to

[2] For further data on the internal consistency of the items used in the index and the factor analysis, please see appendices 4 and 5.

respond to the citizens' needs be considered to more Eurosceptic (Abts et al., 2009). The EU's democratic output, more precisely its ability to provide benefits to its citizens that the states no longer can deliver, has been said to be the EU's main claim to democratic credentials (Scharpf, 2006; Murdoch et al., 2018). Although the WB candidate countries' citizens are not citizens of the EU as of yet, their countries and themselves still heavily rely on the EU for both economic support and further democratization (Zaneli, 2014; Kurtoglu Eskisar & Komsuoglu, 2015; Belloni, 2016). This all points towards that those who view the EU as being either un-democratic or inefficient to be classified as being a certain dimension of "Eurosceptic", in the context of the WB candidates and explains the necessity to include items "4" and "5" in the index.

3.2.3 Independent variables for utilitarian factors

All the independent variables used to present the results of this paper will be dummy coded, and a reference category will be used. They are all either ordinal or nominal variables. The independent variable used to answer H1 is "Social-class – self-assessment". It is an ordinal-level variable with 5 categories measuring the individuals self-perceived social class, with 1=The working class of society, whilst 5=the higher class of society.

The variable used to answer H2a and H2b is **"**Situation: national economy" and uses a 4-point forced Likert-type scale with 1= "Very good" and 4= "Very bad".

3.2.4 Independent variables for political factors

H3a and H3b are answered using the variable "My voice counts – In (our country). The variable uses a 4-point forced Likert-type scale where 1= "Totally agree" and 4= "Totally disagree".

H4 is answered with the help of the variable “Left-right placement”. The variable uses a scale of 1-10 to measure an individuals’ own perceived placement on the left/right-scale. 1= the furthest left possible, whilst 10= the furthest right possible. However, the variable used to test the hypothesis has been coded into 5 categories to determine the individuals political leaning, with values “1” and “2” in the original 10-point scale being coded into value “1” for the 5-category scale used, and so forth.

3.2.5 Independent variables for identity-based factors

H5a and H5b is answered with the variables “Attachment to: country” and “Attachment to: Europe”. These are aimed to measure an individuals’ levels of perceived nationalism and feeling of “European-ness”. They both use forced 4-point Likert-type scales with 1= “Very attached” and 4= “Not at all attached”.

These two variables will be combined to create variables for individuals who only identify as their nationality, identify with Europe, identify with both their nationality and Europe or who identify with neither their country nor Europe. For example, the variable for individuals who only identify with their country and not Europe would encompass all the cases where an individual answered the values “1” or “2” for the item “attachment to: country”, and answered value “3” or “4”, for item “attachment to: Europe”. The new variables created are thus as followed:

- Individual feels attached to Europe, but not country
- Individual feels attached to country, but not Europe
- Individual feels attached to both country and Europe
- Individual feels attached to neither country nor Europe

Individuals who feel neither attached to their country nor Europe will be used as the reference category to be compared to the other categories in one of the models. It can be logically assumed that those who identify with neither Europe nor their country to be rather dismissive or unbothered about further European integration, meaning that focus should instead be on the other three categories for which the results are more uncertain.

3.3 Control Variables and additional variables included

3.3.1 Control variables

To ensure that the relationship in the results between the dependant variable and the independent variables used is not due to outstanding variables as best as possible, a few control variables will be included in the regression. This is to as best as possible mitigate the problem of omitted variable bias in the regression, to ensure, at least to some degree, that the correlations that occur between the dependant variable and the independent variables are not due to spurious relationships with outstanding variables. However, due to the research design being used in this thesis, omitted variable bias cannot be ruled out completely. Both demographic and sociodemographic control variables that have been connected to Euroscepticism in previous research will be included and used as controls in the regression presented as the results (Esaiasson et al., 2012 p. 382-383; De Vaus, 2014, p. 125, 296-297, 354).

The demographic control variables to be used are the variables for age, gender and type of community. The sociodemographic variables to be used as controls cover the age of when the individual stopped their full-time education and employment status. These both showed to have little to no effect in predicting how Eurosceptic an individual will tend to be in the study on sociodemographic and attitudinal factors to Euroscepticism in the WB by Damjanovski et al. (2020). However, education level has shown to be a significant factor to Euroscepticism in other research and is thus worth including as a control variable. Alongside education level, employment status has been predicted to play a factor to an individuals' perceived levels of Euroscepticism, with the unemployed being seen as potential "losers" in further European integration in many situations (Gabel 1998; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Hakhverdian et al., 2013; Hooghe & Marks, 2018). However, an argument could be made that the unemployed in the WB countries could be less Eurosceptic than those who are employed, due to the

improved welfare systems that EU-membership would bring with it, as opposed to the rather poor welfare systems currently existing within the WB candidate countries, as compared to those of the EU states, especially the more developed ones (Matković, 2019).

The demographic control variables used all represent factors that have shown in previous research to have various degrees of effects on the perceived levels of Euroscepticism in individuals, depending on the study or are factors that have been included as control variables. Younger individuals can be expected to be less Eurosceptic than older ones due to them being perceived to have a more "cosmopolitan" outlook (Carey, 2002; Polyakova & Fligstein, 2016). The individuals' gender is a standard control variable to take into consideration in studies like these. Results in studies were gender was used as a control variable have shown mixed results, with results showing that men tend to be more Eurosceptic than women in some studies (Abts et al. 2009), whilst other have shown that the opposite may be true (Carey, 2002; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Polyakova and Fligstein, 2016). Type of community the individual resides in is perhaps not the most obvious factor for an increase or decrease of Euroscepticism levels in general. However, in the case of the WB candidate countries, it is worth including. Individuals who tend to identify themselves as "European" and are more positive to further European integration and EU-membership have been thought to be mostly urbanites. Meaning that those who live in larger cities in the WB candidate countries can perhaps tend to be more positive to further European integration and could affect the results **(**Stojić, 2006; Subotic, 2011; Antonić, 2012).

The variable for "gender" is dummy coded, as are all control variables except for one, where *man=1* and *woman=0*. The non-dummy coded control variable is "age", which is a scale variable. A value of "20" would indicate that the individual is 20 years of age, for example. "Type of community", "Age education" and "Employment status" uses the same values as described in the table for basic demographics[3].

[3] Please see appendix 3 for basic demographics of sample used.

3.3.2 Country-based dummy variables

To assess the results of each country (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) and how they compare to each other within the sample used, these countries will be dummy coded (1=it being the country in question, whilst 0=it not being the country) and included in the regression as independent variables, with one country, Montenegro, being the reference category the other countries are tested against.

4. Method

4.1 Choice of method and statistical model for paper

This paper's method of choice is a quantitative research method using cross-sectional observational data, with the data observed being from 2019. The statistical model used in the method is that of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression.

Each item included in the index used as the dependant variable in the OLS regression, except for one, will be run as the dependant variable in an Ordinary Logistic Regression (OLR) together with all the control and hypothesis-testing variables included in the OLS regression used to present the results. The odd item out, which is "EU membership – country benefit", only has two categories, meaning that a binary logistic regression (BLR) will be used to run a model for that item as the dependent variable. The results for these models are presented in the appendix to give a greater insight to the reader how each index item correlates with the explanatory independent variables[4].

4.2 Critical assessment of method choice, statistical model and alternatives to method

The main issues faced when using this type of research method with cross-sectional survey data are related to causality, or the inability to determine causal relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. We can only clearly determine that statistical correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variable exist, not

[4] The results of the OLR's and the BLR for the index items indicated at somewhat similar results to that of ***model 5***, but vary to some degree. Please see appendices 1 and 2 for the full results of the logistic regression models run for the index items.

causality (Esaiasson et al., 2012, p. 81-85). The strongest and most statistically significant correlations found between the independent variables and the dependent variable could point to a causal relationship existing. However, it by no means implies that there is causation. Hypotheses testing research using cross-sectional survey-data, like the research design used in this thesis, cannot determine causality. Far more research and in-depth knowledge about Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries alongside randomly assigned independent variables is needed to fulfil the criteria that exist to establish causal relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable measuring Euroscepticism. (Hill, 1965; Warner, 2017).

We alongside not being able to determine causality cannot rule out the possibility of reverse causality existing between the independent variables and the dependent one. The dependant variable (an individuals' level of Euroscepticism) could be what is actually causing changes in the independent variables and not the other way around, as is presumed in this thesis (Vancouver & Warren, 2012). Further, we cannot rule out omitted variable bias. The control variables included in the statistical models can somewhat help to mitigate this problem. However, they cannot remove the possibility of spurious relationships occurring or clearly establish the ability to assess the degree of omitted variable bias existing in the results (Warner, 2017). As we cannot control for everything, we can only presume that the control variables included are enough to make sure that the results for the hypotheses testing variables are not biased and that the micro-level utilitarian, political and identity-based factors are in fact what is causing an increase or decrease in an individuals' levels of Euroscepticism.

A problem existing when using a quantitative research design, in this case, is that there is no clear way of separating "hard" from "soft" Eurosceptics in the results. If a qualitative interview-based method was chosen instead, it would perhaps have been possible to differentiate "hard" from "soft" Eurosceptics amongst the study subjects more clearly by asking more in-depth questions. However, using a quantitative method, in this case, can give us more generalizable results of what factors cause an increase or decrease to an individual's

levels of Euroscepticism, which the study field of Euroscepticism in the WB countries currently lacks.

Using an OLR regression as a statistical model to present the results as opposed to an OLS regression was an option. However, a scale measuring the level of Euroscepticism in an individual that includes several items can be assumed to be better equipped to measure Euroscepticism's multi-dimensional concept than if only one of the index's ordinal items were to be used as an independent variable. The usage of an OLS regression as the statistical model with an index produces more concrete and presentable results to which of the independent variables lead to an increase or decrease in an individual's level of perceived Euroscepticism, and to what degree.

5. Results

5.1 How to interpret the results of the models

Standardized beta coefficients (ß*) have been presented in the models to make comparability between models and the independent variables possible and to understand better which types of factors have the greatest effect on the independent variable of Euroscepticism. With the index used as the dependant variable using a scale of 0-100, with 0=the least Eurosceptic value and 100=the most, a negative ß* value for an independent variable indicates that it contributes negatively to an individual's levels of Euroscepticism (i.e. they are less Eurosceptic), whilst a positive ß* value indicates the opposite.

All the models run in the results were checked for any signs of multicollinearity. The categories "*age education*" and "*employment status*" suffered from significant multicollinearity between each other when the two items were run in a model together. To mitigate this, the category "16-19" from "*age education"* was excluded from the models, as it was perceived as being redundant and to reduce multicollinearity. This does not affect the results of this paper in any significant way, as including all the categories in the regression would not bring any additional information to the models. However, one should take caution when interpreting the results of the control variable "age education" in the models presented below.

Table 1. Results of regression (standardized regression coefficients)

	Categories	*Model 1*	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*
Utilitarian factors:						
Social class	Working class		0,050*			0,021
	Lower middle-class		0,027			-0,008
	Upper middle-class		0,004			-0,001
	The higher-class of society		0,012			0,013
	(ref. middle-class)					
Situation: national economy	Very good		-0,012			-0,019
	Rather bad		0,112***			0,041*
	Very bad		0,187***			0,098***
	(ref. rather good)					
Political factors:						
My voice counts in my country	Totally agree			-0,040+		-0,019
	Tend to disagree			0,104***		0,087***
	Totally disagree			0,211***		0,140***
	(ref. tend to agree)					
Left/right placement (1-10 scale)	1-2 (Left)			0,019		-0,005
	3-4			-0,009		0,005
	7-8			0,058**		0,041*
	9-10 (Right)			0,038*		0,013
	(ref. 5, 6. Centre)					
Identity-based factors:						
Individual attachment to Europe and country	Attached to Europe and country				-0,483***	-0,425***
	Attachment to country, but not Europe				-0,098**	-0,073*

	Attachment to Europe, but not country				-0,195***	-0,204***
	(ref. attachment to neither Europe nor country)					
Control variables:						
Gender	Male *(ref. female)*	-0,016	-0,021	-0,019	-0,024	-0,026
Type of community	Rural area or village	-0,056*	-0,055*	-0,056*	-0,029	-0,031
	Large town	0,030	0,027	0,030	0,040+	0,034+
	(ref. small/middle town)					
Age education	Up to 15	-0,010	-0,009	0,000	0,048*	-0,040*
	20+	-0,113***	-0,105***	-0,115***	-0,060**	-0,069**
	No full-time education	-0,036*	-0,050*	-0,026	-0,031+	-0,035*
	(ref. still studying, 16-19 excluded due to multicollinearity issues)					
Age exact		0,115***	0,100***	0,109***	0,124***	0,109***
Employment status	Student	0,044	0,059+	0,061*	0,066*	0,080**
	Unemployed	0,105**	0,108**	0,119**	0,097**	0,113**
	Retired	0,112**	0,126***	0,131***	0,125***	0,141***
	Self-employed	0,106**	0,110**	0,130***	0,113**	0,132***
	Employed	0,148**	0,166**	0,173***	0,168***	0,190***
	(ref. responsible for ordinary shopping)					
Country dummy-variables:						
	North Macedonia	-0,028	-0,084**	-0,062*	0,019	-0,030
	Serbia	0,101***	0,064*	0,070**	0,032	-0,004
	Albania	0,231***	0,242***	-0,251***	-0,227***	-0,247***
	(ref. Montenegro)					
R^2 $_{Adj}$:		0,114	0,144	0,167	0,263	0,301

Significance levels: +: p<0,1, *: p<0,05, **: p<0,01, ***: p<0,00. (Dataset source: European Commission, Brussels (2020): Eurobarometer 92.3 (2019))

5.2 Categorical assessment of results

5.2.1 Presentation of model results

Table 1 above demonstrates the results of the paper with 5 different models being run in an OLS regression tested. ***Model 1*** tests only the control and dummy country variables, which will be used as a baseline in the remaining models. ***Model 2*** tests the utilitarian factors, ***model 3*** tests the political factors, ***model 4*** tests identity-based factors and ***model 5*** tests all of the factors together.

Model 1 shows the results of an OLS regression with only the control and dummy-coded country variables in it. This model in itself plays no real significance in rejecting or accepting the hypotheses of this paper. However, it serves as a baseline to the rest of the models and explains what degree of correlation is explained by the non-hypotheses testing independent variables. What then can be said about the results in ***model 1*** is first that gender does not seem to affect levels of Euroscepticism. Age, type of community, age of education, employment status, and country are all shown to be significant to some degree. But it is important to interpret the results of the variable "age education" with caution, due to the category "16-19" being excluded due to reasons relating to multicollinearity. "20+" is shown to be significant with a ß*= -.113 ($p<0,001$). The results for "no full-time education" are shown to be significant (ß*= -.036, $p<0,05$) but can mostly be dismissed throughout the models due to the ß* value being as weak as it is. The variable for age shows that for every full standardisation of movement we see within age, the dependant variable for Euroscepticism increases by .115 std. deviations (Age ß*= .115, $p<0,001$). Thus meaning, the older an individual is, the more Eurosceptic that individual will tend to be. Those living in rural areas can be considered to be slightly less Eurosceptic than those living in large or small towns, but only marginally so as the ß*= -.056 ($p<0,05$). Looking at employment status, all the categories except for "student"

are shown to be significant. Perhaps a bit surprisingly are the employed individuals shown to be the most Eurosceptic with a ß*= .148 (p<0,01), with the retired following in second place with a ß*=.112 (p<0,01). Both unemployed (ß*= .105 p<0,01) and self-employed (ß*= .106, p<0,01) are shown to be significant. Looking at the country dummy-variables (ref. Montenegro) so can the variable for Albania be shown to be highly significant with a ß*= -.231 (p<0,001). Serbia is significant with a ß*= .101 (p<0,001), but the main takeaway is that Albanians are in this model shown to be significantly less Eurosceptic than citizens of the other WB candidate countries. It can be stated that 11,4% (R^2 adj=.114) of the variance in the dependant variable for Euroscepticism is explained by the control variables and country-based dummy variables alone.

Model 2 tests the utilitarian factors of social class and opinion on the current economic situation of an individual's country and their effects on Euroscepticism. An individual's social class seems to be rather insignificant in relations to measuring Euroscepticism. The category measuring working-class individuals is shown to be significant. However, it has a rather low ß* at .050 (p<0,01), indicating that the working class can perhaps be indicated to be the most Eurosceptic of the social classes, but only slightly so. The sociotropic factor, which is that measuring an individual's opinion of the current economic situation in their country is significantly more potent. An overwhelmingly positive opinion on its countries' current economic situation does not seem to affect an individual's levels of Euroscepticism. However, the categories for negative opinions on the countries' economy are both significant and somewhat strong indicators for an increase in Euroscepticism. The ß* for those who believe that the economic situation is *rather bad* is = .112 (p<0,001), whilst the predictor for those who believe the economy is *very bad* has a ß*= .187 (p<0,001), when compared to those who think it is *rather good*. This in turn predicts that the worse an individual views' the national economy, the more Eurosceptic that individual will tend to be. ***Model 2*** explains 14,4% (R^2 adj= .144) of the variance in the dependent variable, meaning that the utilitarian factors do not explain that much more of the variance in the dependant variable of Euroscepticism than that of the control and country-based variables tested in ***model 1***. The control variables remain rather unchanged from ***model 1***, however now in ***model 2***, one can see a slight shift in the country dummy-variables ß* values on levels of significance. The ß* value still remains high

and at roughly the same level for Albania, but the variable for North Macedonia is now significant and has a ß*= -.084 (p<0,01), whilst the variable for Serbia is less significant and impactful with the ß*= .064 (p<0,05).

Model 3 tests the political factors of the perceived levels of internal inefficacy an individual experience and its left/right political leaning. Looking at the variable measuring political efficacy we can see that there is significant proof that those who feel like their voice does not count in their country are more Eurosceptic than those who do. The predictor for those who answered *tend to disagree* has a ß*= .104 (p<0,001) whilst the one for those who answered *totally disagree* has a ß*= .211 (p<0,001). The significance levels for the category *totally agree* are not high enough to draw any concrete conclusions from. However, it indicates that those who feel the highest amount of internal efficacy within its country are marginally less Eurosceptic than those who only somewhat feel internal efficacy (ß*= -.040, p<0,1). The results of ***model 3*** indicate that the more internal political inefficacy an individual experience, the more Eurosceptic that individual will be. The left/right political leaning of an individual can be shown to indicate somewhat that those who lean right politically are the most Eurosceptic, but it is not that straight-forward. The margins between the ß* values for category "8-9" (ß*= .058, p<0,01) and "9-10" (ß*= .038, p<0,5) are rather minuscule, and the predictors are weak in themselves, meaning that they are hard to draw clear conclusions from. Those who identify as being the most right-wing are alongside that not indicated to be the most Eurosceptic. ***Model 3*** explains 16,7% (R^2 adj= .167) of the variance in the dependant variable, meaning that the political predictors overall are slightly stronger than the utilitarian ones tested in ***model 2***. The control variables in ***model 3*** remain rather unchanged from those in ***model 2***. The country-based dummy variables change slightly from ***model 2*** to ***model 3***. The Albanian predictor remains at roughly the same strength and significant levels as previously. However, the predictors for North Macedonia and Serbia change slightly, North Macedonia becomes slightly weaker and less significant (ß*= -.062, p<0,05), whilst the variable for Serbia changes slightly in the opposite direction (ß*= .070, p<0,01).

Model 4 test the identity-based factors to Euroscepticism, which in this thesis is an individual's attachment to Europe and its country. Looking at the results, one can clearly see

that an individual who feels attached to both its country and Europe are predicted to be significantly less Eurosceptic than individuals who are not, with a ß*= -.483 (p<0,001), even more so than individuals who only feel an attachment to Europe, where the ß*= -.195 (p<0,001). There is significance for the category measuring those who only identify with their country (ß*= -.098, p<0,01), indicating that those who only identify with their country are more Eurosceptic than those who identify with only Europe or both Europe and their country, but slightly less Eurosceptic than those who identify with neither country nor Europe. ***Model 4*** predicts 26,3% (R^2 adj= .263) of the variance in the dependant variable, meaning that the identity-based factors are by far the strongest predictors for an individual's levels of Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries when compared to the other factors tested. The control variables remain mostly unchanged in ***model 4*** as compared to ***model 3***. Albania's predictor is the only country-variable that is now significant, indicating again that Albanians are the least Eurosceptic.

Model 5 includes the effect parameters of all the factors tested in the previous models. Comparing ***model 2*** with ***model 5*** shows that the predictors are less powerful in ***model 5***. The class of an individual, as shown in ***model 5*** has no significance on the level of Euroscepticism an individual has. When testing for how an individual's views on its countries economic situation affect its levels of Euroscepticism in ***model 5***, the predictors' strengths have decreased. However, significance can still be found for those who believe it is *very bad* (ß*= .098, p<0,001) and *rather bad* (ß*= 0.41, p<0,5). This still indicates that those who view the national economy as being in a bad state are more Eurosceptic than those who do not. When comparing the results of the political factors in ***model 3*** to those in ***model 5*** it is still evident that individuals who experience internal inefficacy are more Eurosceptic than those who do not. The predictor for those who *tend to disagree* that their voice counts in their country has a ß*= .087 (p<0,001) and the one for those who *totally disagree* has a ß*= 0.140 (p<0,001). The result for the predictors of those who totally agree that their voice counts in their country is insignificant. Left/right placement is less significant in ***model 5*** as compared to ***model 3***, and "9-10" is no longer significant, and the predictor for "7-8" is now weaker, however still significant (ß*= .041, p<0,5). The results of ***model*** 5 further weaken the claim that those who identify as the furthest right-wing are the most Eurosceptic in the WB candidate countries.

When comparing the results of the identity-based factors in ***model 4*** to those of ***model 5*** no significant change is noticeable. The predictor for those who identify as both European and with their nationality remains the strongest predictor of all the independent variables with ß*= -.425 (p<0,001), whilst the predictor for those who identify with Europe, but not their country remains a significant and strong predictor with ß*= -.204 (p<0,001). The predictor for those who only identify with their country is weaker in ***model 5*** but still significant (ß*= -.073, p<0,05). It still indicates that those who only identify with their country are more Eurosceptic than the other two categories in focus. Model ***5*** explains 30,1% (R^2 adj= .301) of the variance in the dependant variable of Euroscepticism. This is not significantly different from the variance of the dependant variable that ***model 4*** explains (R^2 adj= .263 in ***model 4***), which strengthens the claim that the identity-based factors are by far the most dominant predictors to Euroscepticism in an individual, when assessing the 3 factors analysed in this paper. The results for the control variables remain similar to those in ***model 4***. Once again, it is predicted that Albanians are overall the least Eurosceptic people of the WB candidate countries.

5.2.1 Hypotheses acceptance/rejection

Starting with the utilitarian-based factors and looking at results of models 2 and 5, ***H1*** cannot be accepted. Those who identify as being *working class* are shown to be slightly more Eurosceptic than the rest of the classes, but barely so, and only in ***model 2***. It cannot with certainty be said that ***H1*** is factual. Thus, it must be rejected, even with Stojić (2006), Subotic (2011) and Antonić (2012) suggesting that the upper class could perhaps be more inclined to accept further European integration in the WB candidate countries. Alongside Eichenberg & Dalton (1993) and Polyakova & Fligstein (2016) suggesting that the less travelled lower classes be more sceptic towards further European integration than the upper classes of society. It is clear that ***H2a*** can be rejected, whilst ***H2b*** can be accepted when looking at the results of models 3 and 5. This can perhaps be due to the citizens of the WB candidate countries blaming the EU for the eurozone crisis and the severely negative effects it proved to have on the region's economy, considering how economically dependent the WB candidate countries are on the EU, as stated by Krastev (2011), Zaneli (2014) and Belloni (2016).

Moving on to the political factors, and looking at models 3 and 5, can the conclusions be made that ***H3a*** can be accepted and ***H3b*** be rejected. The results here correlate with the conclusions reached by Abts et al. (2009) when researching Euroscepticism in Belgium. An individual experiencing higher levels of internal inefficacy within its own country will be shown to be more Eurosceptic than those who experience it less, or not at all. ***H4*** cannot be accepted, as models 3 and 5 do not indicate that those who identify as being the furthest right-wing are the most Eurosceptic. This is rather surprising, as previous research has indicated that the predominantly Eurosceptic parties of the WB candidate countries throughout history have been considered to be "far-right" (Stojić, 2006;2017).

Lastly, looking at the identity-based factors and models 4 and 5, both ***H5a*** and ***H5b*** can be accepted. It was rather expected to find that those with exclusive attachment to their country to be more Eurosceptic than those with exclusive attachment to Europe or those with attachment to both Europe and country, even though Damjanovksi & Kirchner (2019) did not find that an exclusively national identity to be a clear-cut predictor for an increase in levels of Euroscepticism in the case of North Macedonia. But it was perhaps less obvious that those who identified with both Europe and their country to be less Eurosceptic than those who exclusively identified with Europe[5]. But this coincides with previous research on Euroscepticism by Carey (2002), Hooghe & Marks (2004) and Abts et al (2009) that indicates that multiple identities can result in lower levels of Euroscepticism, as opposed to an exclusively European one.

[5] The results of the OLR's and the BLR run for the items used in the index somewhat contradict this claim. However, the results of the models presented in the main text are indicated to be more reliant than those in appendices 1 and 2 and uses a dependant variable that combines all of the dependent variables used in the OLR's and the BLR into one measurement, meaning that accepting ***H5b*** is the logical conclusion.

6. Concluding remarks and discussion

This thesis set out to further expand the research field of the micro-level socio-demographic and attitudinal factors to Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries. The factors researched were that of utilitarian, political and identity-based factors. The reason for this was the seemingly lacking research existing in the area and the importance to better understand the underlying micro-level factors to Euroscepticism in what could be the next EU-member states in the future to come.

This paper's results indicate that all three types of factors tested have some, but varying degrees of effects on an individual's levels of Euroscepticism. Sociotropic utilitarian factors were shown to be more significant than egocentric ones, indicating that individuals may put its countries economic interests over their own when considering potential EU-membership. Regarding political factors, so were individuals perceived to experience internal inefficacy within its country shown to be more Eurosceptic than those who did not. The identity-based factors were shown to be the most significant of all the three types of factors tested, with individuals who identified as both European and with their country predicted to be even less Eurosceptic than those who only identified with Europe. Those who only identified with their country were shown to be more Eurosceptic than those who identified with both Europe and their country or only Europe. Lastly, Albanians were consistently shown to be the least Eurosceptic people of the WB candidate countries, with some of the models suggesting that Serbians might be the most Eurosceptic.

Further research on Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries is still necessary. It remains a rather understudied field compared to how much research exists on Euroscepticism in the EU-member states. Especially lacking are studies using a quantitative framework similar to what this study has used. Future research papers could delve deeper into researching how religion and degree of religiosity affects an individual's perceived levels of Euroscepticism. Damjanovksi et al. (2020) focused on religion as a factor to Euroscepticism in the context of the WB countries. However, they only found Muslims were less Eurosceptic

than Orthodox Christians, not how the degree of religiosity affects its levels of Euroscepticism. Geographical factors to Euroscepticism could also be an important factor to further research. How does proximity to an EU-border affect an individual's levels of Euroscepticism? Further research on "soft" contra "hard" Euroscepticism in the WB candidate countries could be shown to be important, as this study could not clearly differentiate between the two with the method used. Lastly, so are longitudinal micro-level studies scarce in the context of WB Euroscepticism research, with an exception being Damjanovski & Kirchner (2019) when researching factors to Euroscepticism and opinions on European integration in North Macedonia. Longitudinal studies could, in turn, help us further establish causality between Euroscepticism and its assumed underlying causes, even more so than studies using cross-sectional data. However, the ability to perform these types of studies depends on available datasets or the ability to collect new data. As of now readily available datasets covering the WB countries are rather limited.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ordinal Logistic Regression results for ordinal-scale index items as dependant variable

Index item used as dependant variable:		EU – image positive/negative	EU membership-good/bad	EU concept: efficient	EU concept: democratic
Threshold:					
Value 1 (Least Eurosceptic)		1,741	-0,224	0,911	-0,36
Value 2		4,577***	1,057	3,179*	2,694+
Value 3		6,275***		5,204***	4,450**
Value 4		7,561***			
Value 5 (Most Eurosceptic)					
Location:					
Utilitarian factors:					
Social class	Working class	1,082+	-1,740**	0,816	-0,693
	Lower middle-class	1,020+	-1,830**	0,776	-0,810
	Middle class	1,041+	-1,715**	0,589	-0,886
	Upper middle-class	0,899	-1,323*	0,483	-1,219*
	The higher-class of society	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Situation: national economy	Very good	-0,678***	-0,209	-0,113	-0,942***
	Rather good	-0,728***	-0,634***	-0,044	-0,438**
	Rather bad	-0,491***	-0,047	-0,235*	-0,343**
	Very bad	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Political factors:					

My voice counts in my country	Totally agree	-0,784***	-0,631***	-1,088***	-0,825***
	Tend to disagree	-0,737***	-0,918***	-0,262*	-0,189
	Tend to disagree	-0,486***	-0,324*	-0,233+	0,022
	Totally disagree	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Left/right placement (1-10 scale)	1-2 (Left)	-0,312*	-0,476*	0,156	0,236
	3-4	0,044	-0,045	-0,177	0,075
	5 (Centre)	0,056	-0,259	-0,023	0,204
	7-8	0,276+	0,175	0,120	0,397*
	8-9-10 (Right)	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	
Identity-based factors:					
Individual attachment to Europe and country	Attached to Europe and country	-1,211***	-1,691***	-1,604***	-1,686***
	Attachment to country, but not Europe	0,093	-0,220	-0,391**	0,416**
	Attachment to Europe, but not country	-2.277***	-1,518***	-2,005***	-2,850***
	Attached to neither country nor Europe	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Control variables:					
Gender	Male *(female=0)*	-0,076	-0,069	-0,072	-0,125
Type of community	Rural area or village	-0,351***	-0,414**	-0,239**	-0,076
	Small/middle town	-0,167+	-0,254*	-0,166+	0,029
	Large town	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]

Age education	Up to 15	3,721***	0,613	2,270+	2,858*
	16-19	3,910***	0,577	2,492*	2,787*
	20+	3.584***	0,355	2,267+	2,527+
	Still studying*	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
	No full-time education	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Age exact		0,015***	0,015**	0,012***	0,012**
Employment status	Responsible for ordinary shopping	-0,447*	-0,596*	-0,910***	-0,834***
	Student	3,814***	0,528	2,466+	2,636*
	Unemployed	-0,299**	-0,192	-0,023	-0,194
	Retired	0,072	-0,070	-0,71	-0,062
	Self-employed	0,095	0,259	0,106	-0,103
	Employed	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Country dummy-variables:					
	North Macedonia	0,934***	1,892***	0,120	0,310**
	Montenegro	0,762***	1,958***	0,433***	0,671***
	Serbia	1,047***	2,127***	0,381**	0,412***
	Albania	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]	0[a]
Pseudo R^2:	Cox & Snell	0,237	0,252	0,182	0,190
	Nagelkerke	0,255	0,321	0,199	0,213
	McFadden	0,103	0,188	0,083	0,094

Significance levels: +: p<0,1, *: p<0,05, **: p<0,01, ***: p<0,001. a= parameter is redundant (comparison category).

The category "Still studying" in the variable "age education" is included in the category "student" for the variable "employment status", thus becoming redundant*.

Interpret the results with caution, the assumption of proportional odds were not shown to be satisfied in any of the models.

Appendix 2: Binary Logistic Regression results for binary index item as dependant variable

Dependant variable:		EU-membership – country benefit (1= would not benefit, 0= would benefit)
Utilitarian factors:		
Social class	Working class	-0,920
	Lower middle-class	-0,999
	Middle class	-0,910
	Upper middle-class	-0,537
	Ref. category "The higher-class of society"	
Situation: national economy	Very good	-1,246**
	Rather good	-0,856***
	Rather bad	-0,319*
	Ref. category "Very bad"	
Political factors:		
My voice counts in my country	Totally agree	-0,576**
	Tend to disagree	-1,176***
	Tend to disagree	-0,301
	Ref. category "Totally disagree"	
Left/right placement (1-10 scale)	1-2 (Left)	-0,329
	3-4	-0,309
	5 (Centre)	-0,462*
	7-8	0,060
	Ref. category" 8-9-10 (Right)"	
Identity-based factors:		

Individual attachment to Europe and country	Attached to Europe and country	-2,090***
	Attachment to country, but not Europe	-0,406*
	Attachment to Europe, but not country	-2,290***
	Ref. category "Attached to neither country nor Europe"	
Control variables:		
Gender	Male *(female=0)*	-0,091
Type of community	Rural area or village	-0,302+
	Small/middle town	-0,078
	Ref category "Large town"	
Age education	Up to 15	0,466
	16-19	0,683
	20+	0,116
	Still studying	0,357
	Ref category "No full-time education"	
Age exact		0,019**
Employment status	Responsible for ordinary shopping	-1,165**
	Unemployed	0,016
	Retired	0,147
	Self-employed	0,376+
	Ref category "Employed"	
	("Student omitted due to being included in "Age education")	
Country dummy-variables:		
	North Macedonia	2,194***
	Montenegro	2,439***
	Serbia	2,080***
	Ref category "Albania"	
Pseudo R^2:	Cox & Snell	0,223

	Nagelkerke	0,381
Constant:		-1,334

Significance levels: +: p<0,1, *: p<0,05, **: p<0,01, ***: p<0,001

Appendix 3: Demographics of sample used

		MKD	MNE	SRB	ALB	Entire sample
n		698	411	564	988	2661
Gender	Male	50.3%	54.3%	52.7%	53.5%	52.6%
	Female	49.7%	45.7%	47.3%	46.5%	47.4%
Age	Median	50	42	44	42	44
	Mean	49.31	41.7	44.43	42,71	44.63
	Standard deviation	16.965	12.934	14.378	13.932	15.014
Type of community	Rural are or village	40.4%	27%	37.1%	41.2%	37.9%
	Small/middle town	33.1%	43.3%	23%	19.8%	27.6%
	Large town	26.5%	29.7%	39.9%	39%	34.5%
Age education	Up to 15	21.8%	4.9%	3.9%	14.8%	12.8%
	16-19	39%	65.2%	58.3%	48.8%	50.8%
	20+	33%	24.1%	30.9%	29.1%	29.7%
	Still studying	5.6%	5.8%	6.9%	7.3%	6.5%
	No full-time education	0.7%	0%	0%	0%	.2%
Employment status	Responsible for ordinary shopping	5.2%	9%	1.1%	4.3%	4.5%
	Student	5.6%	5.8%	6.9%	7.3%	6.5%
	Unemployed	20.2%	7.5%	10.3%	14.3%	13.7%
	Retired	27.1%	6.3%	12.4%	9.5%	14.4%
	Self-employed	9%	6.3%	9.2%	16.3%	11.3%
	Employed	33%	65.5%	60.1%	48.4%	49.5%
Social class (self-perceived)	Working class	27.8%	13.9%	28.9%	3.7%	16.9%
	Lower middle-class	18,5%	15.6%	22.3%	27%	22%
	Middle-class	49,3%	60.6%	44.5%	65.3%	56%

Upper middle-class	3,3%	9.7%	3.9%	3.8%	4.6%
The upper class	1.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0,5%

Appendix 4: Internal consistency of items used in the index

	Index for Euroscepticism	1. EU image – positive/negative	2. EU membership – good/bad	3. EU membership – country benefit	4. EU concept: efficient	5. EU concept: democratic
Cronbach's alpha:	.856					
Cronbach's alpha if item deleted:		.823	.814	.815	.846	.828
Corrected item-total correlation:		.707	.718	.723	.589	.671
Mean:	27,513	35,907	19,723	16,001	34,834	31,088
Std. deviation:	24,268	24,585	34,788	36,675	28,204	26,243

Appendix 5: Factor analysis on index items

	Eigenvalue	Total % of variance accounted for
Component 1	3.229	64.575
Component 2	.802	16.033
Component 3	.399	7.984
Component 4	.311	6.213
Component 5	.260	5.195

Appendix 6: Descriptive statistics for hypotheses testing independent variables

	1. Social – class – self assessment	2. Situation: national economy	3. My voice counts: in our country	4. Left-right placement	5. Attachment to: country	6. Attachment to: Europe
n= 2661						
Mean:	2.50	2.72	2.40	2.82	1.59	2.44
Median:	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
Mode:	3 *(The middle class of society)*	3 (R*ather bad)*	2 *(Tend to agree)*	3 *(5, 6. Centre)*	1 *(Very attached)*	2 *(Fairly attached)*
Modal percentage:	56%	46%	41.5%	38.7%	54.7%	43.3%
Std. Deviation:	.842	.818	.887	1.183	.757	.886
Skewness:	-.495	-.201	.164	0.114	1.166	.204
Minimum value:	1 *(The working class of society)*	1 *(Very good)*	1 *(Totally agree)*	1 *(Furthest left)*	1 *(Very attached)*	1 *(Very attached)*
Maximum value:	5 *(The higher class of society)*	4 *(Very bad)*	4 *(Totally disagree)*	5 *(Furthest right)*	4 *(Not at all attached)*	4 *(Not at all attached)*

Appendix 7: Items and categories used from *ZA7601: Eurobarometer 92.3 (November-December 2019): Standard Eurobarometer* as originally coded

	Values/categories	Variable name in dataset
Country-based variables:		
North Macedonia	0=Not mentioned (all other) 1=Mentioned	q1.31
Montenegro	0=Not mentioned (all other) 1=Mentioned	q1.32
Serbia	0=Not mentioned (all other) 1=Mentioned	q1.33
Albania	0=Not mentioned (all other) 1=Mentioned	q1.34
Variables used in dependent variable (index):		
EU image – positive/negative	1= Very positive 2= Fairly positive 3= Neutral 4= Fairly negative 5= Very negative	d78
EU membership – good/bad (candidates)	1= A good thing 2= A bad thing 3= Neither good nor bad	qa9a
EU membership – country benefit (candidates)	1= Would benefit 2= Would not benefit	qa10a
EU concept: efficient	1= Describes very well 2= Describes fairly well 3= Describes fairly badly 4= Describes very badly	qa8_4
EU concept: democratic	1= Describes very well 2= Describes fairly well 3= Describes fairly badly	qa8_2

	4= Describes very badly	
Hypotheses testing variables:		
Social class - self-assessment (5 cat)	1= The working class of society 2= The lower middle class of society 3= The middle class of society 4= The upper middle class of society 5= The higher class of society	d63
Situation: National economy	1= Very good 2= Rather good 3= Rather bad 4= Very bad	qa1a_2
My voice counts: In (our country)	1= Totally agree 2= Tend to agree 3= Tend to disagree 4= Totally disagree	d72_2
Left-right placement - recoded 5 categories	1= 1 - 2 (left) 2= 3 - 4 3= 5 - 6 (centre) 4= 6 - 7 5= 8, 9, 10 (right)	d1r2
Attachment to: country	1= Very attached 2= Fairly attached 3= Not very attached 4= Not at all attached	qc1a_2
Attachment to: Europe	1= Very attached 2= Fairly attached 3= Not very attached 4= Not at all attached	qc1a_4
Control variables:		
Gender	1= man	d10

	2= woman	
Age exact	Exact age of respondent	d11
Type of community	1= Rural are or village 2= Small/middle town 3= Large town	d25
Age education (recoded 5 categories)	1= Up to 15 2= 16-19 3= 20+ 4= Still studying 5= No full-time education	d8r2
Occupation of respondent (5 through 9= self-employed and 10 through 18 = employed in recoded variable used in thesis)	1= Responsible for ordinary shopping, etc. 2= Student 3= Unemployed, temporarily not working 4= Retired, unable to work 5= Farmer 6= Fisherman 7= Professional (lawyer, etc.) 8= Owner of a shop, craftsmen, etc. 9=Business proprietors, etc. 10= Employed professional (employed doctor, etc.) 11= General management, etc. 12= Middle management, etc. 13= Employed position, at desk 14= Employed position, travelling 15= Employed position, service job 16=Supervisor 17= Skilled manual worker 18= Unskilled manual worker, etc.	d15a