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To cite this article: Nikola Petrović (2019) Divided national memories and EU crises: how Eurosceptic parties mobilize historical narratives, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 32:3, 363-384, DOI: [10.1080/13511610.2018.1523710](https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1523710)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2018.1523710>



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Published online: 25 Oct 2018.



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Divided national memories and EU crises: how Eurosceptic parties mobilize historical narratives

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(Received 3 March 2018; final version received 11 September 2018)

Historical grievances of different political groups in the EU contributed to the rising opposition to “Brussels”. This opposition is often framed through memories that contest the official EU narrative of the peaceful and prosperous continental integration that was able to overcome the destructions of the two world wars and the Cold War divisions. Based on the analysis of the development of some of the most prominent Eurosceptic parties (le Front National, die Alternative für Deutschland, Syriza, Podemos, Fidesz, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), it is argued that recent EU crises and especially their interpretations have been influenced by the legacies of some of the most important periods of twentieth-century European history. The legacy of the Second World War and its aftermath in two founding member states (France, Germany), the legacy of right-wing dictatorships in two Southern European member states (Greece, Spain) and the legacy of communist dictatorships in two Central and Eastern European member states (Hungary, Poland) still shape narratives and stances towards European integration.

Keywords: historical grievances; divided societies; Eurosceptic parties; founding member states; Central and Eastern Europe; Southern Europe; EU crises

Introduction

“My grandfather was gravely wounded in the Second World War while fighting for a united Europe.”

Remain campaigner

“My father was not fighting for a united Europe. He was fighting for England.”

Leave supporter from the audience

(Brexit debate, Beeston, June 2, 2016)

The opening quotes show that even in British society, where one would expect a relatively unitary narrative of the Second World War, opposing interpretations of such major events can occur from time to time and be employed in political battles. Towards the end of the Brexit debate, which was organized in the suburbs of Nottingham, a young Remainer used an ultimate argument and said that her grandfather sacrificed his health for a united Europe. A Leave supporter from the audience stood up and gave a different interpretation of the Second World War, one in which the battle his father fought was primarily about the destiny of England.

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This kind of rhetoric emphasizing the notion of “Britain alone”, i.e. the importance and solitude of British resistance against Nazism was used by Margaret Thatcher when she was beginning her crusade against socialism and the European Community. “Is this the nation that stood alone in 1940 against the collapse of European civilisation?” Thatcher asked herself when she criticized what she saw as Labour governments’ abysmal economic record (1979). Thatcher in her invocations of the Second World War usually emphasized the Battle of Britain, ignored the Soviet and even American role in the war and the large-scale industrial mobilization or so-called “people’s war” of the later years of the war. The concept of the “people’s war” on the other hand emphasized social inequalities and the contribution of unknown working people during the Second World War and was used in the 1980s to oppose Thatcher’s image of the Second World War and her libertarian and individualistic ideology (Vinen 2013). As in the 1980s, this major historical event resurfaced again during the Brexit debate. Four Second World War veterans campaigned for keeping Britain in the European Union (EU) on the premise that they were fighting for a united Europe and some British veterans from other wars opposed their reasoning (Dathan and Robinson 2016).

The Brexit referendum result was a major shock to pro-EU elites and indicated the importance of different visions of national and European history that are transmitted to new generations. Also, other recent EU crises and especially their interpretations have been influenced by some of the most important periods of twentieth-century European history. The Eurozone crisis which helped the rise of the radical left parties in Southern Europe, the migrant crisis which caused conflicts between the European Commission and the governments of some Central and Eastern European member states, as well as the rise of the radical right in France and Germany, all caused fears about the future of the EU. They also brought the return of history to the European public sphere.

The recent surge of Eurosceptic forces has been attributed to various factors: economic, institutional (European and national level), cultural, geographic and geopolitical. Comprehensive overviews of the recent rise of Euroscepticism can be found in special issues of the *Journal for Common Market Studies* (Usherwood, Startin, and Guerra 2013) and of the *International Political Science Review* (Brack and Startin 2015). It is argued in this paper that historical grievances and memories of different political groups within particular EU member states, but also within European society, are also causing opposition to “Brussels”. This opposition is often framed through a series of memories that contest the official EU narrative of the peaceful and prosperous continental integration that was able to overcome the destructions of two world wars and the Cold War divisions.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, social democrats and greens, became more pro-EU and projected their values such as antinationalism, social cohesion, pacifism and environmentalism in the EU’s official narrative (Petrović 2016, 2017). However, recent EU crises have very clearly showed that not all European political actors and party families share these values and narratives, but want to project their own values and narratives at the EU level. Political parties on the radical right and the radical left use memories of their national histories in order to oppose the official EU narrative and promote different narratives of the turbulent twentieth-century European history.

Theoretical and methodological framework

While reifying EU member states and their national identities, Thomas Risse concluded that Germany, France and Spain were able to replace traditional national identities with Europeanness. In Risse’s argument especially nation-states with troubled pasts such as

Germany or Spain reached a consensus on accepting European identity (2010). On the other hand, many of the EU member states have often been reified as Eurosceptic unitary actors and their behaviour interpreted through awkward expressions such as Eurosceptic Britain, Denmark, the Czech Republic or more recently as Eurosceptic Greece, Hungary or Poland. Instead of using a contested concept of national identity (see Malešević 2006) analyses of ideologies and grievances of various groups within member states, but also at the EU level, could provide a more nuanced picture. Every European nation-state has a troubled past that can be used to support or oppose European integration. Europeanism and anti-Europeanism in EU member states are contingent on relatively recent historical events and on how various political actors and groups adapt to these events and interpret them (Petrović 2017). Historical grievances of various political groups have not been overcome by the deepening of European integration or by the entrance of their states into the EU. Contrary to that, these historical grievances have been recently used to attack the EU not just by fringe parties, but also by some national leaders.

This paper analyses the use of memories by various European political actors, i.e. when and for what purpose are they brought up in debates on the past, present and future of the EU. The method used here to establish why and how historical grievances influence Euroscepticism in different European societies is the focused comparison. Focused comparison as the intensive comparison of a small number of cases that is sensitive to historical changes (Hague and Harrop 2004), provides the focus for the development of different cases of Euroscepticism. Here the number of cases is three, as the units of analyses are prominent Eurosceptic parties from three waves of European enlargement, which mark the end of an important historical period. Due to the lack of space, the focus of this article is on similarities of Euroscepticism in each of these three groups of states.¹ A “most different” design is used in the search for an explanation of the emergence of Euroscepticism inspired by historical grievances in different parts of Europe that are characterized by different post-World War II experiences and by different periods when these groups of states entered the EU. Following Sewell’s plea for eventful sociology (2005), the influences of major historical events on the Eurosceptic narrative and memorialization are analysed.

Three groups of nation-states are differentiated in this research, as the most prominent Eurosceptic political parties from one of these groups have similar mechanisms of memory contestation, which are based on similar historical legacies. First, the legacy of the Second World War and its aftermath in two founding member states (France, Germany); second, the legacy of right-wing dictatorships in two Southern European member states (Greece, Spain); and third, the legacy of communist dictatorships in two Central and Eastern European member states (Hungary, Poland) are analysed. Member states are grouped by the time when they founded or joined the European Community (EC) or the EU and this was influenced by the end of an important historical period, whose legacies still have a major influence on certain political actors in those member states. Starting or joining European integration was also meant to indicate closure on a troubled past. However, legacies of troubled pasts often reappeared in national and European debates and still play an important role in contemporary politics.

All European societies are divided societies, with cleavages dating back to national and industrial revolutions. Classic Lipset’s and Rokkan’s cleavages pitting secularists against clericals or workers against employers (1967) are said to be losing their relevance for an emerging party system. A new transnational-national cleavage is created by the deepening of European integration and rising trade and immigration, thus changing the European party system through the rise of radical right and left parties opposing European integration (Hooghe and Marks 2018). However, the influence of significant events and divided

historical memories on the emergence of this cleavage is largely ignored. The argument here is that the use of traumatic events from national histories also contributed to the development and the success of Eurosceptic parties. Confronted groups interpret national history in different ways, which subsequently influences their views on European integration. Eurosceptic groups' uses of memories tend to imply that their grievances have not been settled yet and that their battles, either real or imagined, still continue. This is important not just from the memory studies perspectives, but also for the cleavage theory, because "in certain contexts, parties can have significant influence on the development of cleavage structures" (Evans and Whitefield 1993).

The end of empire is often mentioned as a factor in describing Euroscepticism in Britain (see Spiering 2004), but the question arises if it could also be applied to Euroscepticism in other European nations that failed to keep their empires after the Second World War. Whether losing their recently acquired territories through Nazi and Fascist expansion (Germany, Italy) or their mostly pre-1918 acquired African or Asian colonies (France, Holland, Belgium), most of the founding member states found themselves in a completely different world order compared to that of the pre-Second World War period. In two of the biggest founding member states, one can find direct links between two groups that have strong grievances regarding the end of empires and two Eurosceptic parties analysed here.

The notion of Western betrayal is an important factor in understanding the ambivalent relationship of particularly rightist political groups in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with the Western liberal order. The Treaty of Trianon in 1920, when the Kingdom of Hungary lost large parts of its territory, the Munich agreement which allowed Nazi Germany to annex parts of Czechoslovakia in 1938, Yalta Conference in 1945 as a symbol of Central and Eastern Europe being sacrificed to the Soviet Union are some of the earlier symbols of Western betrayal. They are used in CEE to present Western powers as ignoring their interests (Bohle and Greskovits 2012; Judt 2006). But the notion of Western betrayal could also be used when analysing Southern Europe and particularly leftist groups. The non-intervention of Western powers in the Spanish Civil War is the most prominent example of the Southern notion of Western betrayal. However, this paper is mostly focused on notions of Western betrayals after the Second World War as some of the political groups that are active today have their roots in that period and use memories from that period.

Finally, after the Second World War the question of collaboration with Nazi Germany in all parts of occupied Europe was swept aside by the myths of heroic national resistance and suffering, even in East Germany (Judt 1992). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that resistance to memories emphasizing the role of their collaborating compatriots and quisling governments in crimes and atrocities of the Second World War is still present within radical right Eurosceptic parties.

The development of the memory contestation is analysed using Berger's and Luckmann's concept of intersubjective sedimentation or the creation of a common stock of knowledge through shared biographies and experiences. Berger and Luckmann argued that:

intersubjective sedimentation can be called truly social only when it has been objectivated in a sign system of one kind or another ... when the possibility of reiterated objectification of the shared experiences arises. Only then is it likely that these experiences will be transmitted from one generation to the next, and from one collectivity to another. ([1966] 1991, 85)

In this article intersubjective sedimentation is objectivated in sign systems such as public statements and commemorations. They are used by members of social movements

and political parties to transmit traumatic experiences from national history into contemporary political battles. Biographies and narratives of some of the most prominent contemporary Eurosceptic politicians are analysed and placed in broader historical, social and group contexts. Their personal grievances can be consequences of a direct or family trauma, but can also be transmitted by the group to which a person belongs. This can help explain how certain memories are transmitted to future generations, but also shared by Eurosceptic groups in different member states.

The turn towards transnational memory studies provided significant insights into the processes of the use of memory in ongoing political battles at the EU level. An important early contribution to this emerging genre accentuated the importance and longevity of divisions created during the Second World War. Jan-Werner Müller argued that “the memory of national divisions during the war itself became translated into opposing post-war party political memories”, and even more relevant for today’s EU that “the past returns with a vengeance during times of political crisis” (2002, 3–5).

The legacy of the Second World War, founding member states and the rise of the radical right

It can easily be forgotten that the creation of the EU in 1993 caused fierce opposition and was depicted as national treason even in France and Germany, the leading EU member states. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 was a path-breaking event and the end result of the relaunch of European integration in the mid-1980s. This relaunch was symbolized by the remembrance of the shared European experience of the First World War. Two national leaders that contributed most to the relaunch, the French President François Mitterrand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, commemorated the Battle of Verdun in this small French town in 1984. On this occasion, the iconic photo of two leaders holding hands was taken and it became a symbol of the Franco-German reconciliation and of a new impetus to European integration (see the photo on <https://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2010/05/29/mitterrand-and-kohl-at-verdun/>).

The battle between French and German armed forces in 1916 resulted in 700,000 casualties and 300,000 deaths. Helmut Kohl’s father participated in this battle and some of Kohl’s family members died there, which led to his preoccupation with the battle. Mitterrand was wounded near Verdun during the Second World War and afterwards ended up in German captivity (Black 2012; Köhler 2014). Jacques Delors’ father participated in the Battle of Verdun adding to the influence of this infamous place on the memories and Europeanism of the most prominent contributors to European integration from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. The relaunch also represented a growing convergence of socialists and Christian democrats in their pro-EU stances. The creation of the supranational EU, the introduction of European citizenship and the convergence criteria for the common currency, which the Maastricht Treaty brought to the member states, however proved to be too much of a political and social change to radical right and some Gaullist politicians.

Before the Maastricht Treaty, quite a few radical right parties were in a peculiar way pro-European integration emphasizing ethno-Europeanism, the establishment of an external European border or common defence (Almeida 2010; Mudde 2007). However, in the run up to the election for the European Parliament in 1994 the German far right party *Die Republikaner* promoted a slogan which proclaimed that “Maastricht is for Germany as Versailles without war” (cited in Kailitz 2009, 120). This metaphor was part and parcel of their political goals of overcoming national humiliation and of the return of Germany to its 1937

borders. These anti-EU and extreme nationalist discourses became especially prominent in the party during the leadership of a former SS soldier, Franz Schönhuber.

On the other side of the Rhine, Gaullist politician and former member of the French Resistance Michel Debré interpreted the Maastricht Treaty with references to two protagonists of the Second World War. In 1992 Debré claimed in a public letter that “Laval would have said yes to the Maastricht agreement ... de Gaulle would have said no” (cited in Gildea 2002, 70). De Gaulle, arguably the fiercest opponent to European federalism in the early days of European integration, was a standard name in the discourse of the neo-Gaullist opposition to the deepening of European integration. However, a reference to Pierre Laval, the Prime Minister of France in the Vichy regime who negotiated terms of surrender to Nazi Germany, was used to defame socialist opponents who were deepening European integration. Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the *Front National* (FN), went back further in history and compared the Maastricht Treaty to the “infamous Treaty of Troyes” (cited in Fieschi, Shields, and Woods 1996, 248), which proclaimed in 1420 that the King of England would inherit the throne of France.

Similar to the Brexit debate, in France the memories of the Second World War were used in different arguments. Debré’s use of the memory of the Second World War celebrated French resistance as the symbol of national sovereignty. As in the Brexit debate, other resistance fighters and victims of Nazism (Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Pierre de Bénouville, Simone Veil) used their Second World War roles in a public appeal to oppose this kind of criticism of the Maastricht Treaty, which they depicted as the “ultranationalist madness” (cited in Pozzi 2014, 137). So, even in the resistance camp, different war experiences and ideologies created different views of the EU. However, the Vichy regime legacy, which was preserved in the FN, could not be reconciled with the EU which was hailed as surpassing European nationalisms as well as the horrors of Second World War, and which especially after the Maastricht Treaty was eliminating national borders. Although Jean-Marie Le Pen was not a member of the Vichy regime (but allegedly a Resistance fighter and certainly a French paratrooper in the Algerian War of Independence), his party was founded with significant influence from former Vichy regime members and Le Pen became especially infamous due to his minimization of the Holocaust in 1987 (Marcus 1995).

Gaullism as an ideology that is opposing European integration has been losing its strength for quite some time. Most notably as Jacques Chirac, who in the end of the 1970s labelled pro-European forces as the “party of the foreigners”, supported the Maastricht Treaty and after becoming the French president in 1995 contributed to deeper European integration. *Die Republikaner* lost their political relevance and Le Pen was expelled from the party by his daughter Marine Le Pen in 2015 because he restated that the Holocaust was “a detail of history”. However, the visions of national humiliation caused, among others, by the EU, re-emerged during the Eurozone crisis with an increasing electoral support.

In Germany, a new party, *die Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) was founded in 2013 on an anti-Euro platform, protesting against the monetary union being salvaged by the Eurozone member states sending money to Greece. One of the founders of the party and its main representative during the early days, Bernd Lucke was an economics professor who left *die Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands* (CDU) in 2011 because of its Euro policy. However, his economic platform was soon replaced by issues such as opposition to immigration, Islamization and negative portrayal of German history. Frauke Petry became the leader of the party at the beginning of the migrant crisis in 2015. In an interview, Petry recalled her upbringing in the socialist

German Democratic Republic (GDR) where her family has been under surveillance of the Stasi and where she took religion classes “as one of just two children in the entire class” (Petry, Beyer, and Fleischhauer 2016). Her most controversial statement, which reflected a new emphasis in the AfD narrative, was that a border policeman “needs to prevent an illegal border crossing, if necessary with the use of firearms” (Petry, Mack, and Serif 2016, author’s translation).

However, the most controversial statement came from the AfD politician and history teacher, Björn Höcke, in his speech in Dresden in January 2017. Indicative of his speech was that the controversial statement came after he invoked suffering of Germans during the Second World War and its aftermath. He emphasized his family’s grievances declaring that he “descends from a family of the expelled” (Höcke 2017, author’s translation).² And, he went on to explain how these memories and grievances were passed on:

My father told me from very early on – I come from a really politically and historically conscious family home – what happened in Dresden at the end of the Second World War. The outcome of the war was already decided, the city was overflowing with countless refugees from the eastern German territories. ... The bombing of Dresden and the subsequent firestorm destroyed the Florence of the Elbe and the people that lived there. The bombing of Dresden was a war crime. (Höcke 2017, author’s translation)

He then infamously criticized the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin by saying that “We Germans ... are the only people in the world that have planted a monument of shame in the heart of their capital” (Höcke 2017, author’s translation).

A similar narrative against bashing of one’s national history was heard in the same year during the French presidential campaign. Although Marine Le Pen as the FN presidential candidate was trying to abandon her father’s anti-Semitism, she made a controversial statement on the Vel’ d’Hiv roundup of Jews in Paris by the French police in 1942:

I don’t think that France is responsible for the Vel’ d’Hiv. I think that in general ... if there were those responsible, it was those who were in power at the time. This is not France. France has been mired in people’s minds for years. In reality, our children are taught that they have every reason to criticize her, to see only the darkest historical aspects. I want them to be proud to be French again. (cited in McAuley 2017)

This statement could be read as a message with a double meaning. It should have appealed to both Gaullists, as it implies that Vichy France was not representative of France, and to Vichy nostalgics as it gives the promise of abandoning the narrative of French guilt. Another controversy during the presidential campaign was Marine Le Pen’s attack on Emmanuel Macron’s apologies for French crimes during the Algerian War of Independence and her claim that French colonialism was beneficial for Algeria.

Regarding the transmission from previous generation, as in the case of Höcke, Marine Le Pen also comes from a really politically conscious family in which she could hear all about the national humiliations that France went through from the Algerian War to the Maastricht Treaty. There was potentially a further early grievance that could have contributed to her radical views of politics. Marine Le Pen was sleeping in her family home when unknown attackers targeted her father with a bomb during the night. This happened in 1976 when she was just eight years old and, according to her autobiography, this event had a transformative influence on her: “I fell asleep the day before like all the other little girls of my age. But when I woke up, I was not a girl like the others” (Le Pen 2006, 18, author’s translation).

Marine Le Pen has been trying to de-demonize the FN since she took over the party in 2011. Nevertheless, the siege mentality implying that France is jeopardized by various forces remains omnipresent in the FN's narrative. One of the architects of the de-demonization of the FN was a young Gaullist, Florian Philippot, but thanks to him the new FN put a strong emphasis on anti-EU politics and campaigned for leaving the Eurozone. Marine Le Pen started her campaign with a promise to "release France from the tyranny of Brussels" (NEOnline 2017). All of the elements of hard Euroscepticism were present in her 2014 interview where she stated:

I believe in a Europe of nation-states. ... But I don't want this European Soviet Union. ... In our glorious history, millions have died to ensure that our country remains free. Today, we are simply allowing our right to self-determination to be stolen from us. (Le Pen and von Rohr 2014)

She recalled an old de Gaulle concept of *L'Europe des patries*, combined anti-Communism with an anti-EU attack and juxtaposed glorious national history and sacrifices with current national humiliation which she deemed as a sort of occupation of France by the EU. The comparison with the Soviet Union was also present in the statements of AfD politicians. However, one should differentiate between comparisons with the Soviet Union done by the more or less radical factions. For instance, anti-Euro faction member, former employers' representative and now former member of the AfD Hans Olaf-Henkel, compared the EU to the Soviet Union due to his pro-minimal state stances (Arzheimer 2015). A member of the more radical faction, Siegbert Droese, who was born into a religious family in the GDR, compared the EU with the Soviet Union from a different ideological background. Droese recently said that contemporary Germany looks more and more like the GDR and that Merkel is a post-Stalinist (Banse and Müller 2017). He also branded anti-AfD protesters as "those left terrorists" (Droese 2015, author's translation).

The cases of the AfD and the FN show important similarities. They had recent electoral success with Marine Le Pen receiving 33.9 percent of votes in the second round of the French presidential election in May 2017 and the AfD becoming the third political party in the German federal election in September of the same year with 12.6 percent. This electoral rise in both cases was boosted by their success in the 2014 European Parliament election. Especially shocking to the European public was that their rise is happening in countries that were considered as the engines of European integration. Their use of memories from national history showed their resolve to fight against what they see as constant humiliation and bashing of their nations because of historical crimes. Contrary to the EU official narrative that seeks reconciliation and coming to terms with the past crimes done in the name of nation-states, these radical right parties emphasize national pride and sovereignty. Instead of a focus on their nation's crimes they emphasized grievances and sufferings of their ethnic brethren. In the case of the AfD, these were the Germans expelled after the Second World War and in the case of the FN, French settlers (*pieds-noirs*) who came to France after the end of the Algerian War of Independence in 1962.

These events, which were more or less direct consequences of the Second World War, marked the end of imperial dreams in both countries.³ They also created groups whose members or descendants are either overrepresented in voting for the FN, in the case of *pieds-noirs* (Veugelers, Menard, and Permingeat 2015), or are relatively highly represented in the leadership of the AfD, in the case of expelled Germans (Raos 2018).

Right-wing dictatorships, the Southern enlargements and the rise of the radical left

Right-wing dictatorships that ruled Spain (1939–1975), Portugal (1926–1974) and Greece (1967–1974) were most oppressive towards left-wing activists. Especially from the leftist perspective, Western betrayal during the Cold War was an obvious state of affairs. While they were hoping to see the return of democracy or were prosecuted by rightist regimes, Western governments were building constructive relations with these same regimes in order to contain the USSR. Salazar's Portugal was one of the founders of NATO and Greece joined in 1952. When Greek middle-rank military officers staged a coup d'état in 1967 "the USA, along with other NATO countries, adopted a 'wait and see' policy". Soon "Washington accepted the fait accompli and decided to carry on normal relations with the junta" (Chourchoulis and Kourkouvelas 2012, 504). Although Franco's Spain was not a NATO member, the USA had started building military bases there in 1953 after the signing of the Pact of Madrid. Spanish foreign minister Fernando María Castiella, in 1960, defined Spanish foreign policy as "anti-Communist, Atlantic and Western". Since the beginning of the 1960s, Spain moved towards closer relations with the EEC, in order not to be left out of European markets (Crespo MacLennan 2000, 46). These historical circumstances help explain anti-American and Western sceptic stances of some of the today's Southern leftists.

In 1974 and 1975, following the collapse of right-wing dictatorships, all three countries began their transition towards democracy and eventually joined the EC in 1981 (Greece) and 1986 (Spain and Portugal). All historical grievances were meant to be resolved by joining the EC. Despite the ruling Greek socialist party, PASOK, opposing European integration and NATO in the 1980s, by the beginning of the 1990s the most relevant political parties on the left were converted to pro-European integration stances. Even the Greek communists, KKE, accepted EC membership while participating in a coalition government at the end of the 1980s. However, KKE's conversion was short lived and overall the Europeanism of more radical leftists towards European integration is best described as "reluctant Europeanism" (Almeida 2012, 69). On the other hand, in the 1990s, Southern social democrats, PASOK, the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in comparison with other European social democrats exhibited "comparatively strong support for European integration" (Almeida 2012, 62), leaving the space open for left Eurosceptic movements and parties. As Susannah Verney argues, "the idea of a South European historical consensus around European integration may be closer to myth than reality" and it refers to the second half of the 1980s "when both party and popular euroscepticism reached their nadir" (2011, 24–25).

Eurozone crisis amplified historical grievances of leftist groups in these three Southern European societies and gave radical left parties broader electoral support and an opportunity to employ anti-imperialist rhetoric. In 2015, six years after the Eurozone crisis began, Syriza came to power in Greece, Podemos was challenging socialist PSOE's dominance on the left of the Spanish political spectrum and, in Portugal, the rise of the Left Bloc resulted in their support for the PS-led government. It is indicative that Ireland and Italy, in contrast to the other Eurozone indebted countries (the so-called PIIGS), did not have a radical left government or a new major radical left contender disrupting the political scene.⁴

Grievances of leftist organizations and activists were transmitted to new generations through intensive group memorialization. For instance, the current Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, came to prominence in the circles of the radical left Synaspismos party when on the twentieth anniversary of the 1973 Polytechnic uprising he organized his fellow Synaspismos students not to allow the other parties appropriate this event

(Spiegel 2015). He had one of his first major public appearances while speaking at the 1999 press conference against police suppression of protests during the visit of the American president Bill Clinton. In his speech Clinton acknowledged mistakes of US foreign policy during the time of the military junta (Glastris 2016). Nevertheless, various leftist organizations protested against American imperialism arguing that it inflicted many injustices to their country throughout history and saw the continuation of American imperialism in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Tsipras was then the political secretary of the youth organization of Synaspismos which would in 2004 transform into Syriza.

Although Tsipras was born in 1974, the year of the end of the military dictatorship, all of the Synaspismos' leaders before him were members of the resistance movements against military dictatorship. Including his political mentor, Alekos Alavanos, who he succeeded in 2008. In a 2012 interview with the Guardian, when talking about the Eurozone crisis, Tsipras promoted an image of conspiracy against Greece and Greek people: "Greece has become a model for the rest of Europe because it was chosen as the experiment for the application of neoliberal shock, and Greek people were the guinea pigs" (Tsipras and Smith 2012). Syriza won the 2015 election on an anti-austerity platform, criticizing the EU and especially Germany for their economic prescriptions. Tsipras became the first prime minister in 40 years since democracy was restored supported by neither the PASOK nor the centre-right New Democracy.

In his first act as the prime minister, Tsipras paid homage at the Kaisariani Memorial to Greek communists executed by Nazi forces in 1944. This act was domestically and internationally interpreted as a sign of defiance to Germany and its politics towards the Greek debt crisis. The crisis was interpreted in the narrative of national defiance which could be especially connected with historical struggles of the Greek left against Western imperialism. Kaisariani, the place where Tsipras paid his homage, has a strong symbolic meaning even for the contemporary Greek leftists. For instance the brother of Manolis Glezos, who is the icon of the Greek left and former Syriza member of the European Parliament, was killed there (Angelos 2015). Tsipras was certainly aware of the symbolism as he laid red roses on the memorial just minutes after he was sworn in as the new Greek Prime Minister. He was sending a provocative message to Germany, but also reassuring Greek leftists who were observing his gesture and carried red flags that he will stay on his ideological course (Katsourides 2016; see the photo on <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/26/alexis-tsipras-greece-syriza-kaisariani-nazi-german>). The anti-imperialism of the Greek left survived many political transformations and came to represent a national narrative with the Syriza government opposing the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Eleftheriou 2016).

A radical left party also disrupted the Spanish party system. In this case it was a completely new party which was built on the anti-austerity protests and the Indignados movement which started in 2011. They showed the potential for mass-mobilization on a radical left narrative confronting the EU and national elites. Podemos was founded in 2014 by a young political science professor Pablo Iglesias and it soon became the third political force in Spain, receiving 20.68 percent of vote in the 2016 general elections, which was just 1.5 percent less than PSOE. Iglesias' family background and narrative also indicate a strong influence of historical grievances on the rise of the radical left in Spain. He was named after the often-prosecuted founder of PSOE, Pablo Iglesias Posse. Iglesias' grandfather was jailed and received a death sentence during Franco's reign and his father was a professor of history and a member of the illegal anti-Francoist organization (Dawber 2015). Here is how he presented his broader family history:

My great-uncle was shot dead. My grandfather was given the death sentence and spent five years in jail. My grandmothers suffered the humiliation of those defeated in the [Spanish] Civil War. My father was put in jail. My mother was politically active in the underground. (cited in Ross 2015)

Iglesias was born in 1978 and claimed that his “earliest political memory is the anti-NATO demonstrations of the 1980s” (Hancox 2015). Spanish socialists under Felipe González replaced socialism with Europeanism shortly after Spain joined the EC (Wigg 1988, 115). Podemos’ rhetoric has therefore been branded as new patriotism as Iglesias accused previous governments of not being patriotic (Bassets 2015). Iglesias used powerful references to Spanish history when he addressed the crowd at the Podemos rally in Madrid in January 2015. He emphasized four historical moments that define the “new, left-wing version of patriotism”. First, he mentioned the rebellion by the citizens of Madrid against Napoleon’s troops in 1808, then “the Second Republic of the 1930s”, third the resistance of students and workers during the Franco regime and, lastly, the fourth event: the May 2011 demonstrations which spearheaded the Indignados movement (Bassets 2015). Podemos supporters in the audience also used powerful historical and contemporary symbols as they mostly waived flags of the Second Spanish Republic (used in Spain in the period 1931–1939, also used by the Spanish Republican government in exile in the period 1939–1977) and Podemos party flags with occasional Greek and Syriza flags. These flags symbolized jettisoning Franco’s legacy and participating in the same battle, as Greece and Syriza, against the austerity measures imposed by “Brussels”. After the 2015 general election, Iglesias played the card of German imperialism, as he sent a message to Europe promising, in English language, that “never again, never again Spain as a periphery of Germany ... We are going to work in order to retake the meaning of sovereignty in our country” (Iglesias 2015). Contrary to PSOE’s well-established links with European social democrats, Podemos leaders valued links with Venezuelan socialists which, under the leadership of Hugo Chávez, became a symbol of the fight against American imperialism.

Not only were traditional party politicians using commemorations and historical references to express their radical politics. Ada Colau Ballano, a citizen activist and mayor of Barcelona supported by Podemos, disclosed that Franco’s violent dictatorship and the execution of the Catalan anarchist Salvador Puig Antich in 1974 left a crucial mark on her political upbringing. Also, one of her major symbolic acts was commemorating the Catalan anarchist Francisco Ferrer y Guàrdia who was executed by the King of Spain in 1909 (Hancox 2016).

The fight of Portugal’s radical leftists against austerity was also presented as the continuation of the Carnation Revolution in 1974. As the analysis of anti-austerity protests shows, hardly “any demonstration has not included the call for the construction of a ‘New April’ (Vamos construir um Novo Abril), referring to the date of the Revolution” (Baumgarten 2017, 56). The success of the Left Bloc in the 2015 parliament election was akin to the rise of Podemos and Syriza, as this loosely structured radical left party profited from the anti-austerity social movement and became the third political force in the Portuguese Parliament. But it was the Portuguese Communist Party that used nationalism in their campaign slogan “For a patriotic and left-wing policy” (Lisi 2016) and in their media outlet used the Carnation Revolution and its commemoration to protest against the sitting right-wing government (Baumgarten 2017). Portugal became another example of the Southern defiance to “Brussels” in 2015 when the Socialists formed a government backed by the Left Bloc and the Portuguese Communist Party.

The radical left parties from Southern European countries, with recent histories of right-wing dictatorships, rose in opposition against austerity policies imposed by the centre-right or centre-left governments, the EU and the IMF. In this opposition they invoked historical grievances of their political predecessors and presented their resistance to neoliberal politics as a continuation of previous resistances. This indicates that events such as the Spanish Civil War or the Greek military coup of 1967 could still be conducive not just to cleavages in those societies, but also to interpretations of European politics.

Communist dictatorships, the Eastern enlargement and illiberal democracies

On the other hand, in the post-socialist CEE EU member states most of the historical grievances are located in anti-communist and clerical political groups who were the main targets of communist oppression. These forces are also the main critics of “Brussels” and they often use historical references in order to express their opposition.

Contrary to the right-wing dictatorships of Southern Europe, the communist dictatorships of Central and Eastern Europe under Soviet domination did not have military relations with Western governments. Therefore, instead of the narrative of Western betrayal one can find a narrative of the inaction of the West regarding their unwillingness to help revolts against communist rulers and the Soviet Union, for instance the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In that case, the US president Dwight D. Eisenhower did not want to risk a nuclear war with the Soviet Union and was more occupied with the Suez Crisis, so he did not intervene as the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was crushed by Soviet armed forces (Fink 2017, 99).

The commemoration of the 1956 Revolution and the reburial of Imre Nagy became one of the decisive moments during the transition towards democracy. Current Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, came to prominence exactly during the 1989 commemoration of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In his speech, he presented himself as a spokesperson of the Hungarian youth, rejecting communist elites and demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.

The significance and meaning of the 1956 Revolution continued to be modified with political changes. Zoltán Csipke demonstrated how Orbán’s *Fidesz*⁵ and other conservative and far right organizations organized parallel commemorations to oppose the ruling socialists’ official commemorations. In particular, during the two consecutive socialist governments (2002–2010), socialists were accused of being the direct successors of those who crushed the 1956 Revolution and the rightist 1956 counter-commemorations for the fiftieth anniversary turned into counterdemonstrations (Csipke 2011). The narrative of the 1956 Revolution preserved also a broader international context and Orbán would eventually use it for the attack against the EU. A member of the conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum, Géza Jeszenszky, gave critical remarks of the Western inaction in 1956 in a 1998 interview to CNN. At the time of the interview Jeszenszky was the ambassador to the USA. It was indicative how, after he recalled his experiences as a 15-year-old participant of the 1956 Revolution, he described the role of the USA:

When I say that I don’t think that the U.S. betrayed, I’m not simply being diplomatic. But I do think that the U.S. had made a big mistake. ... the problem was the U.S. did not even try to stop the second Soviet invasion. (Jeszenszky 1998)

One other participant of the 1956 Revolution took a more radical stance towards the West. István Csurka was interned after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 for six

months. Csurka was one of the founding members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1987, but after he was expelled in 1993 he founded the radical right Hungarian Justice and Life Party. His attacks against the EU were similar to those of the radical right in the founding member states, as he was especially concerned with national sovereignty after the Maastricht Treaty stating that “when the common Europe of Maastricht arises, then the Hungarian ethnic community (Volk) cannot continue to exist as an independent subject” (cited in Mudde 2007, 160). He also criticized the deeper European integration with an anti-Western and anti-communist addition, as he stated that “the European Constitution is a new Soviet system of centralization that was prepared in the West” (cited in Mudde 2007, 161). However, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party eventually lost all seats in the Hungarian Parliament in the 2002 election.

In the 2003 referendums, 83.8% of Hungarian voters, 77.6% of Polish voters and 77.3% of Czech voters supported joining the EU. The Eastern Enlargement of 2004 was represented as CEE societies “coming back to Europe” and this also implied resolving the traumatic communist past. However, recently the three biggest member states of the 2004 EU enlargement, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have been mentioned in the context of leaving the EU. So, what has changed since the much celebrated 2004 Eastern enlargement? Firstly, the accession process required economically and culturally liberal transformation of CEE societies. The former communist parties reformed to become modern pro-European social democratic parties and their governments made economic reforms and led their countries to the EU. This opened the space for conservative parties to move further to the right on cultural issues and to the left on economic issues (Vachudova 2008). Also, there was a process of political radicalization on the political scene in all three countries (Mungiu-Pippidi 2007). Thirdly, Central and Eastern European states were joining the EU during the great debate about incorporation of God and Christianity into the EU constitution. In particular, Poland unsuccessfully lobbied for the inclusion of European Christian roots (Ross 2009) and after the accession to the EU the Polish Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) party attacked the proposal for the constitution (Beacháin, Sheridan, and Stan 2012).

The PiS came to power in 2005 and was thereafter engaged in reconstruction of historical memory with the Catholic Church and further de-communization as its central tenets. This reconstruction was reflected, for example, in the adaptation of the monument to the victims of the Poznań 1956 protests against the communist government. The original wording on the monument “For Freedom, Law and Bread” received an additional slogan “For God” above the original sign during the fiftieth anniversary of the protests. As in the Hungarian case, the various commemorations of the victims of the communist regime “led to a Polish-Polish memory war” (Stańczyk 2013, 134). In addition, a recent memorialization further ignited this memory war. The 2010 plane crash in Smolensk which killed the Polish president Lech Kaczyński and other Polish dignitaries has been used by the PiS to accuse the ruling Civic Platform and the Prime Minister Donald Tusk of complicity in the coup d'état. The PiS also organized protest marches and boycotted commemorations organized by the Civic Platform (Kasprowicz 2015). This national memory war has been recently transposed to the European public sphere, especially as Tusk is now the president of the European Council and the leader of the ruling PiS is Lech Kaczyński's brother, Jarosław.

Finally, the radicalization of the discourse between the European Commission and some of the leaders from Central and Eastern Europe came during the migrant crisis and especially because of the EU's mandatory migrant quotas. In the beginning of the European migrant crisis in the summer of 2015, Orbán, now as the prime minister and the

self-proclaimed supporter of illiberal democracy, explained the erection of the fence on the Hungarian border with a reference to the Christian roots of Europe:

Those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture. Most of them are not Christians, but Muslims. Europe and European identity is rooted in Christianity. Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? (cited in Traynor 2015)

The European Commission has launched legal proceedings against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland for refusing to take relocated refugees in 2017.⁶ In the 2017 commemoration of the 1956, Orbán continued his ongoing fight against the West and the EU, arguing that the West could not understand the 1956 Revolution (see the photo on <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/pm-orban-on-the-anniversary-of-the-1956-revolution-if-we-lose-our-freedom-if-we-lose-our-national-independence-we-will-be-lost-too/> on how Orbán was visually presented as part of the 1956 protesters):

Though Westerners may have admired the Hungarian Revolution, they did not understand it. They didn't understand the force that animated us. They didn't understand why, so heavily outnumbered, we fought against a force that, according to human logic, we had virtually no chance of defeating. They did not understand that we fought because we insisted on our own culture and way of life to the end, and refused to be dissolved in anyone's melting pot. We want to be respected for who we are and what we are. We have guarded Europe's borders for a thousand years, and have fought for our national independence. We are a brave and combative nation which realises that those who are not respected are despised. We are not understood in Brussels today, just as we were not understood back then either. (2017)

Here Orbán implicitly compared Soviet dissolution of national character to what is done by the EU. He also used the historical metaphor of Hungary as the protector of Europe's border, most likely implying that as Hungary was fulfilling this role during the Ottoman expansion, it also has the same role during the migrant crisis.

Jarosław Kaczyński shared Orbán's narrative as he said that letting large groups of refugees into Europe would result in a "liquidization of the civilization that grew out of Christianity" (DW 2017). Except for the fear of Islamization, there is another characteristic that Eurosceptic Fidesz and PiS share with radical right parties of founding member states. Both Fidesz and the PiS protested against bashing of their nations and accordingly tried to construct a new and more positive national historical memory. The controversial monument to the victims of Hungary's 1944 occupation by Germany in Budapest was criticized as diminishing the role of Hungarians in the Holocaust and emphasizing Hungarian victimhood, although until the occupation, Hungary was aligned with Nazi Germany. Also, recently the PiS government has been involved in fighting the "pedagogy of shame" or what they see as the unfair emphasis on Polish collaboration in crimes against Jews during the Second World War (Grabowski 2016, 483).

Lech Kaczyński was prosecuted by the communist regime in the early 1980s and the PiS is a strongly anti-communist party. Comparing the EU with the Soviet Union is something that can be analysed from the perspective of former dissidents, as they see themselves as fighting the old battle for national sovereignty, but against a new enemy.⁷ Orbán expressed this when he described his meeting with Jarosław Kaczyński as:

a special meeting, which I could also say was like a club meeting for two old boys and former freedom fighters. There are not many of us left from the old resistance – the resistance to the

communist regime – who represent real political power, or who have some kind of position of power. (Orbán and Kocsis 2016)

Also, after coming to power the PiS changed Polish foreign policy resulting in the deterioration of the, up until then, warm relations with Germany (Szczerbiak 2012). Both parents of the Kaczyńskis’ “participated in the Warsaw uprising of 1944 and wanted to pass on their patriotism to the brothers. In this they succeeded – their mother recalled her sons singing the national anthem each night after saying their prayers” (Adamowski 2010). Jarosław Kaczyński recently made a reference to the Polish history of resistance, when saying that Poland appreciates EU funds, but that does not mean that they lose rights to their “views on historical and economic context. Poland was the first country that opposed Nazi Germany, followed by the invasion of the totalitarian Soviet regime. Have we been compensated for that? No” (cited in Strzelecki 2017).

The memory wars from Hungarian and Polish public spheres were transposed to a European public sphere following the migrant crisis. Radicalizing right-wing parties have increasingly been accusing their political opponents as being non-reformed descendants of communist regimes. After they became governing parties and especially when they opposed the migration to the EU they presented themselves as protectors of national sovereignty and of Christianity in Europe.

Conclusion

The national memory wars are easily translated in the European public sphere as various member states have connected histories. The proliferation of transnational European political groups and pan-European media also facilitated these translations. Analysed nationalist parties of the right whether from founding member states or from Central and Eastern Europe were especially opposed to memories that present their states or ethnicities as perpetrators of Second World War crimes. They protested the loss of sovereignty along with bashing of their nations through the remembrance on the dark side of their national histories as both were due to supranational forces in their respective countries and in Brussels. Nationalist parties of the right tended to focus on grievances of their nations and evoke memories of national suffering in order to promote the importance of national sovereignty. This recipe is particularly rewarding in post-socialist countries with a recent history of communist oppression which these parties emphasize in their narratives.

The former GDR shares similar recent history and similar ideological polarization that benefits parties such as the AfD. Recently, the AfD member of the German Parliament said that Orbán should receive the Charlemagne Prize (AfD Kompakt 2017) and Hungary’s minister for human resources Zoltán Balog, talked about the bitterness of East Germans, “righteous, good, honest, Christian people and politicians”, because of their treatment by Westerners (Bayer 2017). Another characteristic that East Germany shares with the post-socialist Eastern Europe is the absence of publicly coming to terms with its Second World War history and of asking difficult questions about the role of their fathers in the Holocaust, a process that the 1968 generation helped develop in West Germany (Judt 1992).

Analysed radical left parties from Southern Europe protested against economic exploitation of their nations by core EU countries while they evoked the past resistances to various imperialisms. As the Southern centre-left parties have long moved to a pro-EU position, Southern radical left parties seized the opportunity and became highly prominent during the Eurozone crisis. They were especially keen to present Germany as the enemy

of a Europe of solidarity and thus made references to events from their national histories, such as the Spanish Civil War and the Nazi occupation of Greece.

Eurosceptic political actors use national memories, because they are predominately oriented towards national electorates. However, these memories also have common transnational ideological threads that are understood in other member states and thus contribute to the development of the European public sphere. A sense of shared destiny strengthened links between Eurosceptic parties of similar profiles as seen in the cases of Syriza and Podemos or the PiS and Fidesz. The cooperation of the FN and the AfD is more complex as European cooperation of radical right parties has always been strained, to say the least. The illegitimacy and illegality of referring to the similar grievances associated with groups that were on the losing side of the Second World War constrains radical right parties in envisioning a shared history and destiny.

Biographies and narratives of some of the most prominent contemporary Eurosceptics indicate that not just structural factors, such as a prolonged austerity in Southern Europe or the lack of contacts with non-European immigrants in Central and Eastern Europe, explain the rise of Eurosceptic parties. Marine Le Pen, Tsipras, Iglesias, Orbán and Jarosław Kaczyński are ideological entrepreneurs motivated by personal or group grievances and they used national histories to give broader historical meanings to contemporary crises. They tried to mobilize recent societal grievances (the Eurozone crisis, the migrant crisis) and interpret opposition to the EU as the continuation of historical national struggles and grievances.

The more recent historical grievances are more likely to produce massive resistance against the EU, which is perceived as imposing similar unacceptable values and measures on sovereign nations. Orbán and Kaczyński can present and perceive themselves as fighting a new battle against a supranational empire, a battle they already fought against the Soviet Union. Tsipras and Iglesias, who were not participants in their societies' democratic transitions, are less convincing in these quasi-historical roles, although it should be noted that austerity measures imposed during the Eurozone crisis in Greece and Spain created much more societal pressure than the planned relocation of several thousand migrants in CEE during the migrant crisis. The FN under Marine Le Pen and the AfD do not have such recent historical grievances (except for the AfD in the case of the former GDR territory) that can be used in mobilizing the electorate. On the other hand, the centre-right and centre-left parties from their countries have been, for some time, major drivers of European integration and protectors of the Western liberal order and thus convenient targets of their Euroscepticism and anti-liberalism.

Analysed examples show how interpretations of national histories can be incorporated into contemporary EU politics. Historical grievances of various political groups, through years reiterated in public commemorations and protests, have recently been reinterpreted and used in EU crises. The Eurozone crisis and the migrant crisis were major events, intensively covered by media, which helped the development of the European public sphere. One recognized major deficit that limits the development of the European public sphere is the lack of politicization (Perez 2013). Ideological conflicts especially when accompanied by the memory wars certainly contributed to the politicization of the EU. The use of national memories in European debates can draw new publics, those previously preoccupied with their national histories and national issues, to the emerging European public sphere. In particular, national leaders used their visibility and employed national memories for symbolic resistance to the EU. They also used their power to mobilize anti-EU sentiments, as Tsipras and Orbán have done, while organizing referendums on European issues in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

However, the presented Eurosceptic parties are not unitary actors as there are various factions within them with different levels of Euroscepticism and the importance of national historical memory. The presented parties are in a constant struggle between more and less radical forces. Especially important for the outcome of these struggles are the effects of the forming of a government and subsequent constraints imposed by the EU. For instance, Tsipras managed to impose his softer Euroscepticism on his party, as some of the harder Eurosceptic groups left the party, after he accepted the terms of the EU bailout. On the other hand, Orbán and Jarosław Kaczyński are still able to dominate their national European narrative with hard anti-EU rhetoric, although there are technocratic forces in both PiS and Fidesz that perceive the EU in less adversarial terms. All in all, visions of history that Eurosceptic leaders partly impose on and partly share with their electorate are having a major impact on the state of the Union. Various political groups within nation-states always contest official national historical narratives. Similarly, an official European historical narrative is contested by various political groups within member states, but also within the emerging European society.

It has been stated in the theoretical part of this article that the return of history is connected with political and social crises and that parties can have significant influence on the development of cleavage structures (Evans and Whitefield 1993; Müller 2002). Thus, various geopolitical and geoeconomic contingencies as well as the actions of party leaders could determine whether the EU will survive this return of history or whether new crises will deepen the transnational-national cleavage, making political settlements at the EU level, but also at some national levels unachievable. Certainly, ideological differences of Eurosceptic parties will also play an important role in the unravelling of current crises. Attacks on the Western liberal order from the radical right and attempts to forge illiberal democracies by CEE national leaders are more of a challenge for the EU than soft Euroscepticism of the radical left, which is more inclined to reform the EU than to celebrate the nation-state as the highest form of political organization. This soft Euroscepticism, moreover, is often on the verge of transforming into Europeanism, as witnessed by Tsipras' role in the resolution of the Macedonia naming dispute.

The presented similarities and differences of the use of historical memories in contemporary Eurosceptic parties could indicate the importance of analysing historical grievances in understanding their recent electoral success. These findings certainly do not imply that family grievances connected with national or group grievances inevitably lead to radical right or radical left resistance to the EU. Many of the past and present cases in the history of European integration indicate that national or group grievances can have a different outcome and forge pro-EU individuals. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this is also usually done through the process of intersubjective sedimentation objectified in sign systems of pro-EU parties and EU institutions. Therefore, combining actor oriented micro-sociological and macro-sociological approaches could provide a deeper understanding of social and political change in the EU.

Notes

1. For differences within different waves of European enlargement, see Álvarez-Miranda (1996) for comparison of Southern European parties and Vachudova (2008) for comparison of CEE parties.
2. Also, Wilhelm von Gottberg, a former vice president of an association of expelled Germans: the Federation of Expellees (1992–2012), became a representative of the AfD in the German Parliament in 2017. In 2001, when he was a CDU member, he wrote a controversial article claiming

- that the Holocaust was used as “an effective instrument for criminalisation of Germans and their history” (Schobert, 2005).
3. The Sétif massacre in then French Algeria started during the parade marking the end of the Second World War and it had a long lasting impact on the process of the decolonization of Algeria (Horne [1996] 2012).
 4. Irish elections in 2011 and 2016 showed rising support for Sinn Féin, but more to the left alliances like United Left Alliance in 2011 and Anti-Austerity Alliance-People before Profit in 2016 did not receive enough support to challenge the pro-EU consensus of the main parties. Italy saw a rise of the anti-establishment Movimento 5 Stelle which was founded in 2009 and in 2018 Italian Parliament elections received 32.7 percent of the overall vote. Its swift rise to becoming the leading party in Italy seriously undermines the pro-EU support of the main parties in Italy, but on an ideologically less coherent platform than that of Southern leftist Eurosceptics. Italy had a strong communist Eurosceptic party, but it went through “conversion to Europe” in the 1970s (Quaglia 2011, 40). Compared to other Southern European countries analysed here, Italian leftists did not face such recent grievances and the sense of Western betrayal. Quote reminiscent of Mussolini and the anti-immigration narrative of the far right Lega leader Matteo Salvini are more similar to the FN or the AfD Eurosceptic narrative, and Lega has overtaken Movimento 5 Stelle in August 2018 polls.
 5. Fidesz changed its ideological platform from being a group of young dissident liberals during the end of communist rule to being a soft Eurosceptic governing party with emphasis on national interests in the beginning of the 2000s (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2001).
 6. Slovakia eventually backed down from its opposition to relocation measures and accepted a number of migrants. The ideological background of the ruling government, but also the power of the member state and its level of integration in the EU should be taken in the consideration when analysing oppositions to the EU. Although both the Czech Republic and Slovakia during the crisis had social democratic governments which were both against the EU quota plan, Slovakia was the smallest Visegrád member and the only Visegrád member of the Eurozone.
 7. Another famous Eurosceptic from Central Europe who repeatedly compared the EU with the Soviet Union, was the second president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus. Although his anti-EU narrative was also nationalistic, it was even more that of a Thatcherite libertarian attacking what he saw as the top-down bureaucratic Brussels.

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