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The Politics of EU Accession: Ideology, Party Strategy and the European Question in Hungary , by A. Batory

Reviewed by E Butler

With the five-year anniversary of the EU's 2004 eastern enlargement approaching, there is renewed interest in the new Member States, with a number of books due for publication over the coming year. As such, Agnes Batory's book is a timely publication which, now that the 'dust' of the 'big bang' enlargement has settled, leads the way in demystifying the politics of EU accession in the new Member States.

Batory provides us with a competent analysis of the attitudes Hungarian political parties have held on the notion of Europe and the EU from the early transition period through to the successful referendum on Hungary's accession to the EU in 2003. A number of questions are dealt with in this analysis, including what is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book – how Europe and EU accession influenced inter-party relations and coalition building.

The book is divided into eight chapters with a separate introduction and conclusion. There is a logical division between the chapters, with chapter 1 providing a clear outline of the conceptual framework Batory employs. Chapters 2 and 3 provide some of the historical background on the development of the political party system in Hungary and of the various political parties in terms of their formation and ideological development. Chapters 4 and 5 deal primarily with public attitudes towards Europe and its influence upon the relationship between the political parties and their electoral base. Chapters 6 and 7 look at the issue in terms of how it has impacted on government in Hungary, focusing on the contest between parties in government and those in opposition and the relationship between parties in government coalition. Finally, chapter 8 looks back at the referendum on EU accession with a detailed examination of the campaigns, and the main arguments for and against accession, as well as the final outcome of the referendum in light of the low turnout (45.62 per cent).

This book is a welcome addition and will be useful to a variety of groups, including those with an interest in EU enlargement, political parties or Hungarian studies. While Batory is quite clear from the beginning that the book is a study of only the accession period, the reader cannot help but feel a little short-changed that, in fact, the book only provides the first half of the story, particularly in light of what has happened since 2004. As Batory proves, EU accession was an undoubted ideological driving force for Hungary's political parties, but how has this changed post-2004? Does it have the same influence on party development, or are other issues, such as nationalism, becoming even more prevalent? Putting a positive spin on this sense of disappointment, Batory has set a standard and her book provides a clear background and framework for the development of a wider research agenda.

The leaders of the Hungarian Socialist Worker and Peasants' Party (USAP) were perceived in Western Europe as convinced supporters of European integration (which they were " but only after 1988). In contrast, there is much less sympathy for those who respond to political questions in an atavistic or fundamentalist manner even when they are not responding to their own private interests but rather against modern developments that appear to be about to destroy their previous way of life. to western Europe, while other regions fell behind. Since EU accession, four of the seven Hungarian regions (Southern Transdanubis, Northern Hungary, the Southern and Northern Great Plains) are some of the poorest of the EU's 271 regions. Bibliography at end of chapters. Notes. narrow margins. There are no reviews yet. Be the first one to write a review. 4,773 Views. DOWNLOAD OPTIONS. ideology, party strategy and the European question in Hungary. This edition was published in 2008 by Manchester University Press, Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave in Manchester Parties and voters. The government-opposition relationship. The politics of coalition-building. The referendum on EU membership. Edition Notes. Includes bibliographical references (p. [154]-171) and index. Series. Europe in change. CS Career Questions in Europe. Header Image. Normal mode. Morning in a Pine Forest. By Ivan Shishkin and Konstantin Savitsky, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. RES Night mode. Chimera. Imagine the veto frenzy if all balkan countries were EU members, half the resolutions would be put down out of spite because "that country that owes us 3 villages" has either proposed or would benefit from something. permalink. embed. save. parent. report. give award.