



Robert Schuman

*Poland Divided:  
Spatial Differences in the June 2003  
EU Accession Referendum*

- Ralph S. Clem and Marek Jan Chodakiewicz



Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series  
Vol. 4 No. 1  
January 2004

**This publication is sponsored by the EU Commission.**

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The Jean Monnet Chair  
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Miami, Florida  
January 2004

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+ The authors gratefully acknowledge research support from the Miami European Union Center and wish to thank Sebastian Bojemski and Ksenia Ivanenko for their assistance.

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Marek Jan Chodakiewicz

## **POLAND DIVIDED: SPATIAL DIFFERENCES IN THE JUNE 2003 EU ACCESSION REFERENDUM**

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### **Introduction**

A potentially tectonic geopolitical shift has started in Central and Eastern Europe, a shift that may very well have an even greater impact on these societies than the end of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact and the demise of authoritarian regimes, the launching of economic privatization and pluralist democracy, and/or the expansion of NATO: we refer to the accession of most states in the region to the European Union (EU). As Gregorz Ekiert and Jan Zielonka stated, "...enlargement is not just a trivial bureaucratic exercise; it is a powerful generator of historical change in the region".<sup>1</sup> Although elites in the candidate countries have been largely pro-accession, everybody understands that whereas the benefits of joining the EU almost certainly outweigh the costs for the country as a whole, there will be winners and losers *within* the acceding countries, assuming that these new member states are up to the many and difficult demands of accession and that their institutions are viable enough to withstand the process.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it must be recalled that even in the more established democracies of Western Europe, rejection of membership in the euro currency zone and even of the EU itself is not unknown.

Of the ten recently acceding countries, Poland is the largest and arguably the most important and problematic case. With close to 39 million citizens, Poland's population is about the same as Spain's, and is greater than the other nine new EU member countries combined; in terms of area, Poland is over three times larger than the next largest new member, Hungary.<sup>3</sup> Further, Poland's large agricultural sector poses a particular challenge in the context of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the implementation of the EU's strict regulations on food processing.<sup>4</sup> Finally, as Jack Bielasiak said with regard to the significance of EU membership for Poland, "The 'return to Europe' is thus not only a symbol of the transition but also the guarantor of the systemic reconfiguration of the post-communist decade."<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the case of Poland's accession to the EU warrants special attention both in the study of European Union enlargement and as an example of post-communist transition politics.

After a lengthy and difficult period in which Poland and the EU negotiated the terms of Poland's membership, a national referendum on accession was conducted on 7-8 June 2003. The referendum was important not just for the obvious reason of deciding a vital national issue, but also, as Bielasiak points out, because it publicly legitimates accession and provides further validation of "...the consolidation of the democratic process."<sup>6</sup> Despite initial optimism about a positive outcome, as the referendum drew nearer it became ever more clear that there were pronounced differences within Poland regarding the merits of accession; these differences manifested themselves along social and economic lines, and to some degree had political implications as well. Public opinion polling exposed these fissures within Polish society, but as always the only survey that really counted would be the one done via the casting of ballots. With the ballots now tallied, the results allow us to employ the methodology of aggregate data analysis (i.e., by utilizing data arrayed in spatial units) to investigate further the socioeconomic underpinnings of support, or lack thereof, for Poland joining the EU and to assess the extent to

which public opinion on accession varies from place to place across the country. Thus, our purpose here is to describe and analyze geographical patterns within Poland of approval, disapproval, and abstention from this crucial vote on joining the EU, and to link those outcomes to the social and economic situation obtaining in the regions. From these associations we can shed additional light on how Poland divided on this pivotal issue and posit some challenges for both Polish and EU policy makers in the years ahead.

To guide us we refer to several studies of the emergence of electoral politics in former-Soviet states (notably Russia and Ukraine) and in Central and Eastern Europe that have pointed to the salience of geographical differences in voting outcomes and voter turnout in the post-communist period.<sup>7</sup> Complementing research based on individual level, or survey, data, these geographic studies using aggregate data relate variations in the social, economic, and demographic traits of regions to party, candidate, and issue preferences across these same units. For example, it has been almost universally the case in the post-communist countries that rural, older, agricultural populations have voted mainly for parties of the left and against reform, while urban, better-educated, white collar areas have, for the most part, favored parties and candidates that have advocated reform and privatization. These outcomes match very closely the kinds of divisions within societies that we find in surveys. Clearly, however, we must recognize the limitations of aggregate data analysis, especially the need to avoid imputing individual action from collective figures. Surveys, of course, have advantages over one-time aggregate data, including their ability to probe attitudes and to conduct sampling over time. However, polling results have their own limitations especially that they tend to be a-spatial (and therefore cannot usually be used to illuminate important regional issues), and that respondents are not always truthful, particularly on sensitive subjects. But taken together, survey and aggregate data provide us with a higher degree of confidence in the analysis of the correlates of voting behavior.

Following the methodology used in these other geographic studies of post-communist states, here we will test several propositions relating to the affinity for EU membership within different segments of Poland's electorate. We will do this by cross-tabulating results of the June accession referendum with key social and economic variables among the 373 *powiaty* of Poland. According to the administrative reform of 1999, Poland is divided into 16 provinces (*województwa*, or voivodships), which are in turn divided into sub-regions (*podregiony*) and further into the *powiaty*.<sup>8</sup> The *powiat* scale of analysis is ideal for our purposes; *powiaty* are "county" level units or individual cities "with *powiat* status" (what we will call here "urban *powiaty*") that provide an excellent degree of spatial resolution and, most importantly, for which the Polish government provides superb, detailed socioeconomic data and electoral results.<sup>9</sup> *Powiaty* typically range from 50,000 to 150,000 inhabitants and between 500-2,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Urban *powiaty* range from relatively small to medium-sized urban centers with populations around 100,000 people to the largest cities such as Poznań (572,000), Wrocław (624,000), Kraków (741,000) and Łódź (786,526). The Warsaw conurbation comprises the *powiat* of Warsaw (1.610 million).<sup>10</sup> As will be seen, there is a remarkable diversity within Poland—not unexpectedly in such a large and heterogeneous country—with regard both to social and economic conditions and to the demonstrated preferences of voters, with the two being related.

It has also been evident in studies extant of post-communist states that within these countries certain regions are better situated geographically for making the economic transition;

resource-rich areas and those places located better for international trade are examples. People in these areas might reasonably be expected to be more supportive of reform or, in the case at hand, of EU membership. Jacques Rupnik suggested that among potential EU candidate countries those in closer geographic proximity to the EU would be more viable entrants (e.g., Poland)<sup>11</sup> Would it then follow that *within* Poland regions that adjoin the existing EU states (in this case, Germany) are more likely to be in favor of EU membership, while those that are most remote from EU territory are opposed? Given the size and power of the German economy and the fact that its contiguity with Poland has resulted in a huge growth of trans-border economic ties and the migration of large numbers of Poles to Germany as guest workers, will voters in Western and Southwestern Poland see EU membership as providing even greater economic opportunity and opt for it to a greater extent than their fellow citizens in Eastern regions? Would the EU's INTERREG program for cross-border economic cooperation, which has thus far funded three Germany-Poland regional development projects totaling some €221.7 million linking the German regions of Brandenburg, Saxony, and Mecklenburg with the Polish Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie, and Zachodniopomorskie *województwa*, respectively, have demonstrated the advantages of closer ties with Europe? By controlling for social and economic traits within the *powiaty* and contrasting those regions bordering Germany with those more removed, we may be able to provide an answer to these interesting and important questions.

### **The Run-up to the Referendum**

Poland and the EU have been engaged for years in establishing the groundwork for an eventual entry by the former into the latter. In the post-communist era, Poland's commercial and financial ties with the EU grew apace, until by 2001 the EU was, by far, Poland's largest trading partner. Negotiations between Poland and the EU on agriculture, fisheries, trade liberalization, labor markets, and specific sectoral problems such as the iron and steel industry made considerable progress, and the EU, through its various directorates, established with Poland an ongoing effort to smooth the path to full integration. Importantly, going back to 1989 the EU provided to Poland considerable financial aid and technical advice (several hundreds of millions of euros) under three main development schemes, notably the PHARE program (Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy in the areas of public administration and institution building), SAPARD (aid for agricultural and rural development), and ISPA (to finance infrastructure projects in the areas of environment and transportation).<sup>12</sup> The EU also found other, very specific means by which to channel funds to Poland, such as disaster relief aid following the catastrophic flooding along the river Vistula in 1991, and some projects timed nicely to influence the EU accession referendum, for example the agreement in May 2003 to contribute €3 million to conduct a feasibility study for extending the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline to the Polish port of Gdańsk.<sup>13</sup>

Even given these longstanding ties to the EU, Poland's road to formal EU membership has been a long and difficult one, starting in May 1994 when the country first applied for membership in the EU, through the complex *acquis communautaire* process beginning in March 1998 (whereby each acceding country negotiates with the EU on 31 separate chapters dealing with economic, social, legal, environmental, trade and other issues), then through the difficult deliberations at Copenhagen in December 2002 (where the most intractable points were

hammered out), and finally to the signing of the Treaty of Accession in Athens in April 2003. Complicating matters still further was the need to arrive at an agreement dealing with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which borders Poland and would therefore have presented serious practical difficulties of frontier controls once Poland (and Lithuania) joined the EU's "Schengen" visa-free travel zone.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of both the torturous EU *acquis* and the vagaries of Polish politics, by early 2003 the stage had been reached where citizens of Poland and the other candidate members were to be asked (in most cases via a national referendum) whether or not they approved of accession. Beginning with referenda in Malta and Slovenia in March, Hungary in April, and Lithuania and Slovakia in May, all had approved of joining the EU, however in most cases with low voter turnout.<sup>15</sup> With the vote in Poland scheduled for June, the case of Hungary was especially closely watched, and anxiety in the pro-EU camp increased when only 45.6 percent of Hungarian voters cast ballots, because the Polish constitution requires a 50 percent turnout to validate a referendum.<sup>16</sup> Fears of a sub-threshold turnout in Poland escalated still further when neighboring Slovakia managed to attract only 52.2 percent of its voters to the polls. Given that parliamentary elections in Poland in the post-communist era have typically featured low voter participation (the most recent, in 2001, registered just 46 percent), by the time of the EU vote the only real question was turnout.

### **Expected Voting Patterns**

Poland has a very extensive survey-taking establishment, including the Center for Research on Public Opinion (*Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej*, or CBOS) that, along with similar organizations, has conducted regular and in-depth studies on attitudes toward EU membership among Poles. It is beyond the scope of this paper to report on these polls in detail; rather, we refer the reader to the excellent work by Bielasiak, Szczerbiak and others.<sup>17</sup> Instead, other than noting the general trends in approval and disapproval, for our purposes here we need to glean from the CBOS and other surveys evidence of where the differences were within Polish society regarding the accession question.

Since the mid-1990's, support for EU membership among Poles has been high (in the vicinity of 75 percent), but from 1998 on the percentage of survey respondents who said that they favored accession for Poland declined steadily to around 55 percent by mid-2002.<sup>18</sup> This erosion of support for joining the EU resulted from several factors, notably the increasingly more public debate on the costs and benefits of membership, the negative press given to the concessions that Poland was required to make as a condition of acceptance into the EU, and the breakdown of the pro-EU elite consensus. As Szczerbiak notes, this political posturing was not so much over "...whether or not the country should join *per se* but about the terms on which...it should join."<sup>19</sup> However, in succeeding months the EU approval numbers rose again, such that the last polls taken just prior to the referendum showed between 69-83 percent in favor of EU accession, 16-24 percent opposed, with the balance undecided, and over 70 percent indicating that they would vote.<sup>20</sup>

Again, however, our interest centers on how one might expect the EU referendum results to divide along regional and socio-economic lines, and how we can utilize the aggregate voting

data to investigate these differences. Here, the pre-referendum surveys suggest several hypotheses to test. First, we are interested to see if “geography matters”; that is, if those provinces of Poland that border the EU (Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie, and Zachodniopomorskie *województwa*) or are relatively close to it (Opolskie and Śląskie *województwa*) manifested, *mutatis mutandis*, a higher “yes” vote on accession than other provinces. To answer this question, we will present results for these five provinces separately as “Western/Southwestern Poland”.

Secondly, surveys consistently indicated that residents of villages and the countryside were more opposed to joining the EU, whereas residents of towns and cities were more in favor.<sup>21</sup> Obviously, this mirrors to a large extent the occupational character of such places. We would expect, therefore, a *positive* relationship between the size of places and the “yes” vote. Among the *powiaty*, we will use the percentage of the population of *powiaty* residing in towns and cities (the level of urbanization) to measure this, the hypothesis being that more urbanized *powiaty* will register a higher “yes” vote than the more rural *powiaty*. Further, we can also examine the referendum outcome by size of towns and cities for the urban *powiaty*, our assumption being that relatively more voters in the larger places will cast “yes” votes than voters in smaller places.

Surveys also suggested that farmers would be most threatened by EU accession and would, therefore, vote overwhelmingly against it.<sup>22</sup> If this proved to be true in the referendum, then there should be a *negative* relationship between the percentage of the work force in agriculture and the “yes” vote across the *powiaty*. On the other hand, the same surveys showed that white-collar workers and businessmen were overwhelmingly (over two-thirds) in favor of Poland joining the EU. If true, then there should be a *positive* relationship between the percentage of the work force in these occupations and the “yes” vote across the *powiaty*.

Pre-referendum surveys in Poland suggested that people with higher incomes tended to support EU membership more than those with lower incomes.<sup>23</sup> The linkage between an individual’s economic well-being and/or the individual’s evaluation of the larger national economy on the one hand and his/her support for existing or proposed institutions on the other is, of course, one of the dominant research themes in electoral studies writ large. This relationship has been investigated in existing member states of the EU and, more recently, in the acceding countries of Central and Eastern Europe. For example, in a landmark study of public opinion on the question of EU membership in five aspirant countries (including Poland) based on the 1996 Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, Rachel Cichowski found that in bivariate analyses “...individuals possessing positive evaluations of their household financial status are more likely to support future membership in the EU...[in that] they view integration as an extension of the positive benefits they have so far received from the liberalization and transformation of their national economies.”<sup>24</sup> This relationship, however, degrades considerably in a multivariate analysis, but is superseded by a significant impact of positive attitudes toward the free market economy (and democratic institutions) on the one hand and support for EU membership on the other. Likewise, in a major, cross-national study of “winners and losers” in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (again including Poland), Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky found exceptionally consistent links between support for a free market economy and support for EU membership.<sup>25</sup>



Although intuitively it may seem that positive attitudes toward a free market economy and individual assessments of well being ought to be tied to income, this is not always substantiated by research in the transitional economies of Central and Eastern Europe. But in the case of Poland specifically, Bielasiak traces over time both income levels and perceptions of the economic situation, and finds "...citizens in a better material situation and with higher evaluations of their own economic situation opting for accession in significantly larger proportions."<sup>26</sup> Usually probed via surveys, we can test the relationship between economic conditions and support for the EU by relating income levels (an index of average monthly gross wages and salaries) in the *powiaty* to the percentage of "yes" votes in the referendum. Here we are assuming that such differences among these large-scale units translate into differences among individuals and household residents therein. Then, we would expect that those *powiaty* with higher incomes would be those with a higher percentage of "yes" votes, and vice versa.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, we can examine the relationship between unemployment and the EU accession vote. Unfortunately, the pre-referendum surveys do not provide us much insight into opinions about the EU among the unemployed. Those responses that were reported put the unemployed around the national average in terms of support for Polish EU membership. We might infer that those without work would be more inclined to vote "no", assuming that the unemployed have low incomes and have demonstrably lost out in the transition to a market economy. To see if there is a relationship between unemployment and the "yes" vote on EU accession in the aggregate data, we compare the two across the *powiaty*.

## **Results of the Referendum**

### ***Provincial Patterns***

The Polish national referendum on EU accession was conducted on 7-8 June 2003, the government opting for the two-day span to maximize voter turnout. The combination of a 77.4 percent "yes" vote and a 58.9 percent turnout officially validated the result and empowered the government to proceed with the accession treaty.<sup>28</sup> Note that turnout was considerably less than the approximately 70 percent predicted by the survey organizations (not an uncommon occurrence in such instances). At the provincial scale, it appears at first glance that the outcome was solidly pro-EU, with the lowest "yes" vote at 63 percent (in Lubelskie voivodship) and most of the others well above that (Table 1). But the percentage voting "yes" was never the issue in this referendum; rather, as we discussed above, the key was voter turnout, and here the results become more ambiguous.

**Table 1.** Support for Poland's accession to the EU and voter turnout, referendum of June 2003, województwa

<b>Macro-Region/Województwa</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%Yes of Eligible</b>	<b>Turnout (%)</b>
<b>West/Southwest</b>			
Dolnośląskie	83.7	50.1	60.2
Lubuskie	84.0	48.6	58.2
Opolskie	84.9	46.0	54.6
Śląskie	84.5	51.6	61.4
Zachodniopomorskie	84.4	49.1	58.5
<b>Center</b>			
Kujawsko-pomorskie	76.6	44.3	57.9
Łódzkie	71.3	40.8	57.7
Mazowieckie	74.2	44.2	59.9
Warsaw City	83.6	58.3	69.7
Pomorskie	80.2	50.1	62.8
Warmińsko-mazurskie	81.7	44.3	54.7
Wielkopolskie	77.1	46.7	60.9
<b>East/Southeast</b>			
Lubelskie	63.3	34.8	55.5
Małopolskie	76.2	45.3	59.9
Podkarpackie	70.1	39.8	57.3
Podlaskie	68.6	35.9	52.7
Świętokrzyskie	75.7	39.2	52.1

Sources: Electoral data are from Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Referendum 2003*, available from <http://referendum.pkw.gov.pl/sww/kraj/indexA.html>

However, the national “yes” tally and, to a large extent, the provincial-level results disguise significant geographical differences *within* Poland as to the extent to which the country’s electors actually supported EU accession. When voter turnout and the “yes” vote in Poland’s EU accession referendum is taken together, a very different picture emerges, particularly at the provincial level. Nationally, 45.3 percent of those eligible to vote actually went to the polls and voted “yes”. But in some of the provinces (notably in Lubelskie and Podlaskie voivodships) this number drops to around one-third, in two others is below 40 percent (Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie voivodships) and in only three cases is it above 50 percent (Dolnośląskie, Pomorskie, and Śląskie voivodships) (Table 1). Thus, in most Polish provinces less than a majority of *eligible* voters voted “yes” for EU accession, and in some cases considerably less. This is due primarily to differences in voter turnout combined with the percentage voting “yes”. How one interprets the intent of those who stayed away from the polls is, of course, a key question in its own right, and is usually not answerable in any concrete way. Even survey data are not especially helpful in this regard, because respondents are often reluctant to admit that they will not, or did not, vote.

Further, like most countries, Poland’s electors are not evenly distributed among the provinces; 57.4 percent of all eligible voters reside in the six most populous of the country’s 16 provinces (in descending order: Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie, Małopolskie, Dolnośląskie and Łódzkie voivodships). Combining the size of the provincial electorates with the

percentage voting “yes” and with voter turnout allows us to have a more accurate picture of where the base of support for EU accession comes from. As it turns out, over one-half of all eligible Polish voters who went to the polls *and* voted “yes” came from just five provinces: Śląskie, Mazowieckie, Wielkopolskie, Małopolskie, and Dolnośląskie voivodships. Notice that whereas the percentage of “yes” votes in these provinces is relatively high, it is the fact that they all rank in the top six in turnout that really generates the large number of absolute votes that propelled the referendum to a positive outcome (Table 1).

This means that there were extensive areas of both pro- and anti-EU sentiment (or at least apathy) across Poland. It also means that geography does, indeed, matter. Clearly, as the figures in Table 1 show, the three eastern-most provinces of Poland (Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, and Podlaskie voivodships) and Świętokrzyskie (which borders Lubelskie and Podkarpackie voivodships) are the most euro-skeptic. In some *powiaty* in these provinces, less than one-quarter of eligible voters cast ballots in favor of EU accession. On the other hand, there were several provinces, notably in the west and southwest of Poland, where support for joining the EU was much higher, and it was extremely high in certain *powiaty*. Support was also relatively strong in Opolskie voivodship, which adjoins Śląskie voivodship to the west, and in the three western-most provinces, Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie, and Zachodniopomorskie *województwa*. Among the *powiaty* of these provinces, the percentage “yes” vote of eligible voters ranged from the low 40’s to the low 50’s, with even higher levels in the towns and cities.

Grouping the provinces into macro-regions gives us an even better view of this electoral landscape (Table 2). Looking at either the percentage of “yes” votes of valid ballots or the percentage voting “yes” of eligible voters, one sees that the West/Southwest macro-region was between 13 and 10 percentage points higher respectively than the East/Southeast macro-region, with the Center macro-region between the two and almost exactly at the national average.

**Table 2.** Support for Poland’s accession to the EU and voter turnout, referendum of June 2003, Macro-regions

<b>Macro-Region</b>	<b>%Yes</b>	<b>%Yes of Eligible</b>	<b>Turnout (%)</b>
<b>West/Southwest</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>59.4</b>
Cities	86.3	54.6	63.3
<i>Powiaty</i>	82.7	46.9	56.8
<b>Center</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>59.1</b>
Cities	83.4	55.3	66.3
<i>Powiaty</i>	71.1	39.2	55.1
<b>East/Southeast</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>56.0</b>
Cities	80.5	51.8	64.3
<i>Powiaty</i>	67.5	35.9	53.3
<b>Poland</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>58.9</b>
Cities	83.9	54.4	64.8
<i>Powiaty</i>	73.3	40.4	55.0

Sources: Electoral data are from Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Referendum 2003*, available from <http://referendum.pkw.gov.pl/sww/kraj/indexA.html>

## The Urban-Rural Gradient

As we expected, there was a pronounced urban/rural divide in the voting outcome, with cities evidencing a higher percentage “yes” vote than the countryside, but with some important regional differences. Actually, and more interestingly, we found not so much a divide as a remarkably consistent *gradient* of levels of support from the most rural places right up to the largest cities. First note that the “yes” vote was higher in cities (urban *powiaty*) than in the other *powiaty* in all macro-regions (Table 2). But in the West/Southwest macro-region that gap is considerably smaller than that in the other two macro-regions owing to a relatively high “yes” vote and high voter turnout in the non-urban *powiaty*; in fact, the percentage “yes” vote of valid ballots was higher in the non-urban *powiaty* of the West/Southwest than in the urban *powiaty* of the East/Southeast, underscoring the influence of location vis-à-vis the EU. Consider also the percentage of voters approving EU accession by size of urban place (Table 3). Here we find support for EU membership highest in the largest cities and falling with declining size of places; of the 13 largest cities in Poland (i.e., those with more than 250,000 inhabitants), in only two cases did the “yes” vote fall below 80 percent of valid ballots, and these were two cities in the euro-skeptic east, Lublin and Białystok.

**Table 3.** Support for Poland’s accession to the EU and voter turnout, referendum of June 2003, by level of urbanization and city size

	%Yes	%Yes of Eligible	Turnout (%)
<u>Powiaty (% Urban)</u>			
0-24.9	65.9	34.3	52.0
25-49.9	71.5	38.6	53.9
50-74.9	79.2	45.3	57.3
75+	82.6	50.0	60.4
<u>Cities</u>			
<250,000	84.6	52.6	62.2
250,000-499,999	83.3	54.7	65.7
500,000-999,999	83.3	55.9	66.4
Warsaw	83.6	58.3	69.7

Sources: Urban data as of 2001 for *powiaty* and cities are from Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Rocznik Statystyczny Województw 2002* (Warsaw, 2002), 134-205. Electoral data are from Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Referendum 2003*, available from <http://referendum.pkw.gov.pl/sww/kraj/indexA.html>

Even more interesting is the virtually linear positive relationship between the level of urbanization among the *powiaty* and the size of cities on the one hand and the “yes” vote and voter turnout on the other (Table 3). In other words, support for Poland’s accession to the EU was at its lowest in the least-urbanized *powiaty*, rose progressively along with higher levels of urbanization, continued to rise through smaller and medium-sized cities, and peaked in the

largest cities. Note also that the percentage voting “yes” of all eligible voters increased more than did the percentage voting “yes” of those who voted owing to the higher turnout in more urbanized areas and cities.

Given its large size and prominence in Poland, a special reference is in order regarding the EU referendum vote in Warsaw. Larger than the next two largest cities (Łódź and Kraków) combined, Warsaw exerts an enormous influence on national electoral outcomes and dominates its province (Mazowieckie). Almost one million ballots were cast in Warsaw out of a national total of 17.5 million. In this referendum, Warsaw was notable not only for the high percentage of those voting “yes” (83.6 percent) but also for a much higher than average turnout (69.7 percent compared with the national average of 58.9 percent), thus contributing about six percent of all “yes” votes country-wide.

### ***The Agricultural/Non-Agricultural Factor***

We hypothesized earlier that areas in which the share of the work force in agriculture and other rural occupations is higher would manifest lower levels of support for EU accession, and vice-versa. Obviously, we would expect this relationship to mirror to a large degree the urban-rural trend line, and clearly it does so. Grouping the *powiaty* according to the percentage of the work force in agriculture, hunting and forestry, and fishing (excluding the urban *powiaty*, of course), and calculating the referendum results accordingly, we find (Table 4) that those areas with a relatively large rural occupational work force were much more opposed to EU accession than were areas with smaller farming and related populations. Further, abstention runs in the same direction, with voter turnout lower in the more agricultural *powiaty*.

**Table 4.** Support for Poland’s accession to the EU and voter turnout, referendum of June 2003, by percentage of the work force by sector

	<u>Agriculture*</u>			<u>Industry**</u>		
	%Yes	%Yes of Eligible	Turnout (%)	%Yes	%Yes of Eligible	Turnout (%)
<u>Powiaty (% of Work Force)</u>						
0-19.9	83.8	50.9	60.7	65.2	33.5	51.4
20-29.9	81.1	48.2	59.5	76.5	42.9	56.0
30-39.9	79.2	45.4	57.2	80.0	47.2	58.9
40+	68.3	36.1	52.8	81.8	48.8	59.6
	<u>Non-Market Services</u>			<u>Market Services</u>		
<u>Powiaty (% of Work Force)</u>						
0-9.9	60.1	29.9	49.9	64.4	33.3	51.2
10-19.9	73.3	40.5	55.5	77.4	43.9	56.7
20+	81.9	47.3	57.7	81.0	48.3	59.6

\* Work force in agriculture, hunting and forestry, and fishing

\*\* Work force in industry and construction

Sources: Work force data as of 2001 for *powiaty* are from Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Rocznik Statystyczny Województw 2002* (Warsaw, 2002), 240-261. Electoral data are from Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Referendum 2003*, available from <http://referendum.pkw.gov.pl/sww/kraj/indexA.html>

On the other hand, and not unexpectedly, just the opposite tendency is true with regard to the share of industrial-construction and service workers (in both state and private sector services) and the “yes” vote among the *powiaty*; that is, the higher the percentage of the work force in these occupations, the higher is the percentage of those voting for EU accession (Table 4). Voter turnout also increases in those *powiaty* with higher proportions of industrial-construction and service workers.

### ***Income and Unemployment***

Our hypothesis as regards income and the vote for the EU among the *powiaty* was that higher income areas would tend to be more supportive of accession than poorer areas. Here the relationship was positive, but not emphatically so. (Table 5) Among those *powiaty* with wages and salaries above the national average, approval for EU membership was between five and six percentage points higher than in the least well-off *powiaty* (those with wages and salaries below 80 percent of the national average).

With regard to unemployment and approval of EU accession, the results of the referendum analyzed in spatial units generally do not validate the pre-referendum survey findings. Rather, among the *powiaty*, those with higher levels of unemployment typically had a higher percentage of “yes” votes, although that relationship was not linear. (Table 5) Unemployment is especially high in the western provinces adjoining Germany that, as we have seen, registered the highest approval vote for EU membership, making it difficult to parse the influences of geography on the one hand and unemployment on the other. These last patterns are clearly very complex and require additional study using multivariate statistical analysis to control for other factors that might be influencing the vote, and which would include urban populations as well. Although beyond the scope of the present work, an understanding of how unemployment and income color one’s judgment about Poland’s membership in the EU has obvious importance for policy makers and for the social and political dynamics of the country going forward.

**Table 5.** *Support for Poland’s accession to the EU and voter turnout, referendum of June 2003, by level of unemployment and income*

<i>Powiaty</i> (% Unemployed)	Registered Unemployed		
	%Yes	%Yes of Eligible	Turnout (%)
0-9.9	70.7	39.9	56.5
10-19.9	70.3	38.8	55.2
20-29.9	75.4	41.3	54.8
30+	82.7	44.8	54.2

## Wages and Salaries

### Powiaty (Index\*)

100+	76.3	42.3	55.5
90-99.9	75.9	43.0	56.7
80-89.9	75.2	42.1	55.9
<80	70.8	38.1	53.8

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\* Poland = 100

Sources: Unemployment and wages and salaries data as of 2001 for *powiaty* are from Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Rocznik Statystyczny Województw 2002* (Warsaw, 2002), 240-261. Electoral data are from Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Referendum 2003*, at <http://referendum.pkw.gov.pl/sww/kraj/indexA.html>

## **Conclusions and Implications**

Just prior to the June referendum, the Office of the Committee for European Integration, which was shepherding the Polish government's campaign for approval of EU accession, issued an upbeat press release citing CBOS and other polls reporting that "...79% of respondents said they would participate in the accession referendum..." and that "...among those who intend to vote, an overwhelming majority (74%) support accession to the European Union."<sup>29</sup> The last number is very close to the actual result, but in the event, the first number is badly off. As a consequence, as we have made clear above, less than half of Poland's eligible electors approved of EU accession in the only manner that counts: by going to the polls and casting an affirmative vote. But because it is extremely difficult to sort out the motives of abstainers, we can only guess at what the consequences might be for Polish politics and society in the years ahead.

There are some indications that political party preference is linked to opinions on EU accession.<sup>30</sup> Although most of the larger parties supported accession, or at least acquiesced to it, some were clearly opposed, and those that did take an anti-EU stance have constituencies that our evidence suggests were strongly euro-skeptic. Just how this plays out in the next *Sejm* elections will, no doubt, depend on how people perceive EU membership as benefiting the country and themselves, which in turn will be a function of economic conditions and the impact of adopting EU policies and practices.<sup>31</sup>

Most importantly, what our study points to is the salience of the regional factor in understanding the relationship between Poland and the EU. Poland is clearly a land of internal contrasts in terms of economic and social conditions, and we have shown that these differences translate into very different opinions as regards EU accession. Bielasiak, expanding on Marody's "Three Polands" idea—the three being the private, state, and welfare segments of Polish society—found different attitudes in each regarding EU accession.<sup>32</sup> We have also found "Three Polands": a pro-EU West/Southwest, a euro-skeptic East/Southeast, and a Center that lies between the two both geographically and attitudinally. The differences between the two regional

extremes with respect to EU accession, as manifested in the actual vote, are far greater than those that Bielasiak found in the survey results among the private, state, and welfare groupings.

Experience has shown that other countries acceding to the EU have had to contend with the danger of exacerbating inter-regional inequalities; indeed, the EU has long promoted and funded inter-regional economic and social development programs intended to ameliorate such imbalances.<sup>33</sup> As we have seen, such initiatives are already operative in Poland's Western and Southwestern provinces, but henceforth Eastern and Southeastern Poland, where wages are lowest, will require such special handling to avoid falling further behind. With an emerging democracy and privatizing economy, Poland can ill afford the challenges to its stability that a widening gap between haves and have-nots would generate.



## Footnotes

1. Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Zielonka, "Introduction: Academic Boundaries and Path Dependencies Facing the EU's Eastward Enlargement," *East European Politics and Societies* 17:1 (2003): 9-10.
2. David R. Cameron, "The Challenges of Accession," *East European Politics and Societies* 17:1 (2003): 24-41. See also Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, "The EU Accession and Strengthening of Institutions in East Central Europe: The Case of Poland," *East European Politics and Societies* 17:1 (2003): 91-98.
3. Poland is the sixth most populous of the 25 countries of the enlarged EU (behind only Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Spain).
4. See, for example, Elizabeth Dunn, "Trojan Pig: Paradoxes of Food Safety Regulation," *Environment and Planning A*, forthcoming.
5. Jack Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion Differences on EU Accession In Poland," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54:8 (2002): 1241. See also: Jacques Rupnik, "Eastern Europe: The International Context," *Journal of Democracy* 11:2 (2000): 115-129.
6. Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion," 1241.
7. See Ralph S. Clem and Peter R. Craumer, "The Politics of Russia's Regions: A Geographical Analysis of the Russian Election and Constitutional Plebiscite of December 1993," *Post-Soviet Geography* 36:2 (1995): 67-86; John O'Loughlin, "The Regional Factor in Contemporary Ukrainian Politics: Scale, Place, Space, or Bogus Effect?" *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 42:1 (2001): 1-33; Ralph S. Clem and Peter R. Craumer, "Urban-Rural Voting Differences in Russian Elections, 1995-1996: A Rayon-Level Analysis," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 38:7 (1997): 379-395; Peter R. Craumer and James I. Clem, "Ukraine's Emerging Electoral Geography: A Regional Analysis of the 1999 Parliamentary Elections," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 39:1 (1999): 1-26; Jan Fidrmuc, "Economics of Voting in Post-communist Countries," *Electoral Studies* 19:2/3 (2000): 199-217.
8. For a discussion of the background of the changes in Poland's political-administrative structure, see: Jennifer A. Yoder, "Decentralisation and Regionalisation after Communism: Administrative and Territorial Reform in Poland and the Czech Republic," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55 (2), 2003, 263-286.
9. *Powiaty* are Level 4 units within the European Union's Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes taxonomy. *Powiaty* in turn are subdivided into municipalities (*gmina*) There are 308 *powiaty* and 65 cities with *powiat* status in our study. In January 2003, seven new *powiaty* were created, the *powiat* of Warsaw changed to city status, and the city of Wałbrzych lost its "urban *powiat*" status and is now combined with the *powiat* of the same name (in Dolnośląskie voivodship). Results of the EU accession referendum are reported in these (now) 379 units. We have retrofitted the results into the 373 units because our socio-economic database cannot be adapted. This has no influence on the analysis.
10. These and all other population, social, and economic data are from: *Rocznik Statystyczny Województw* (Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2002). Population data are as of 31 December 2001.

11. Rupnik, "Eastern Europe", 124.
12. European Commission, "Interreg programme: European Union contributes EURO 96 million for cross-border co-operation between Germany (Brandenburg) and Poland (Voivodship Lubuskie)", Press Release IP/01/1444, Brussels, 18 October 2001; "Structural Funds: Commission adopts an INTEREG programme for Germany (Saxony) and Poland (Lower Silesia) of euro 42.7 million," Press Release IP/01/1090, Brussels, 25 July 2001; "Interreg programme: European Union contributes EURO 83 million for Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg) and Poland (Voivodship Zachodniopomorskie)", Press Release IP/01/1445, Brussels, 18 October 2001.
13. "Ukraine, Poland get EU money to work on joint pipeline project," *RFE/RL Newswire*, 28 May 2003.
14. The situation was resolved when Russia and the EU agreed on a system of multi-entry transit documents that Kaliningrad residents would use to travel to and from Russia proper. See: "EU and Russia reach Kaliningrad deal," *BBC News*, 11 November 2002 and Ahto Lobjakas, "EU: Commission Mulls Different Visa Regimes for Kaliningrad, Other Eastern Neighbors," *RFE/RL Newswire*, 27 September 2002.
15. Approval ranged from 53.5% in Malta, 89.6% in Slovenia, 83.8% in Hungary, 91.5% in Lithuania, and 92.5% in Slovakia. For all EU enlargement referendum timetables and results, see: <http://europa.edu.int/comm/enlargement>
16. Hungary's constitution mandates approval by only 25 percent of registered voters to validate a referendum. In this instance, 38 percent approved. (see: "Hungary: An Overwhelming Yet Lukewarm Yes", *Transitions on Line Week in Review*, 14 April 2003). Poland's government installed a backup plan for EU approval by passing a new law that enabled the *Sejm* to override the referendum result with a two-thirds majority vote (see "Poland sets EU entry safety net," *CNN.com*, May 27, 2003). In the event, this was not needed.
17. Aleks Szczerbiak, "Polish Public Opinion: Explaining Declining Support for EU Membership," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 39:1 (2001): 105-122; Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion."
18. CBOS, "Poparcie dla Integracji z Unią Europejską po Szczycie w Kopenhadze," Warsaw, January 2003: 4.
19. Aleks Szczerbiak, "After the Election, Nearing the Endgame: The Polish Euro-Debate in the Run Up to the 2003 EU Accession Referendum," *Sussex European Institute Working Paper No 53*, May 2003: 10.
20. Poland, Office of the Committee for European Integration, Department for Economic and Social Analysis, "Public attitude towards Poland's integration with the European Union," Unpublished working paper, Warsaw, May 2003. Results from four different polling organizations, including CBOS, are included.
21. CBOS, "Poparcie dla Integracji," 5; CBOS, "Optymizm i pesymizm w myśleniu o efektach integracji europejskiej," Warsaw, February 2003; CBOS, "Społeczne poparcie dla integracji z Unią Europejską," Warsaw, April 2003.
22. CBOS, "Poparcie dla Integracji"; CBOS, "Optymizm i pesymizm". In the last CBOS survey prior to the referendum ("Społeczne poparcie"), over half of farmers who intended to participate declared that they would vote "no".

23. CBOS, "Poparcie dla Integracji"; CBOS, "Optymizm i pesymizm"; CBOS, "Społeczne poparcie"; Szczerbiak, "Polish Public Opinion", 115.
24. Rachel A. Cichowski, "Western Dreams, Eastern Realities: Support for the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe," *Comparative Political Studies*, 33:10 (2000): 1243-1278.
25. Joshua A. Tucker, Alexander C. Pacek, and Adam J. Berinsky, "Transitional Winners and Losers: Attitudes Toward EU Membership in Post-Communist Countries," *American Journal of Political Science*, 46: 3 (2002): 557-571.
26. Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion," 1245.
27. The index of average monthly gross salaries and wages (Poland = 100) ranges from the low 70's to a high of 152.2 (Warsaw).
28. This and all other referendum results are from the official web site of Poland's electoral commission, Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, <http://www.pkw.gov.pl>
29. Poland, Office of the Committee for European Integration, Department for Economic and Social Analysis, "CBOS polls respondents on manner of voting in accession referendum," 28 May 2003.
30. Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion," 1246-1252.
31. Szczerbiak, "Polish Public Opinion," 109-114.
32. Bielasiak, "Determinants of Public Opinion," 1258-1262.
33. The EU has a Directorate-General for Regional Policy that administers structural and cohesion funds and the programs themselves (ISPA, Phare, and Sapard).