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EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

If we observe the electoral results in (Central) European countries in recent years, one of the common characteristics would be problems with the establishment of stable, ideologically consistent and efficient government. Above all, the electoral results might be regarded as “balanced” – two large camps in the society, represented by one large political party or group of political parties, win approximately the same number of seats in parliament. This situation might be observed in Germany or the Czech Republic, but also in Italy. The second type of “problematic” electoral result is connected with the situation where the winning political party is not able – or even prepared – to find coalition partners; such a situation could be recognized – with necessary simplification – in Poland, but also in Slovakia in 1998 (at the time of writing the editorial we are only two days from the parliamentary elections in Slovakia and expect the victory of the new social democratic party, Smer (Direction), led by its populist Chairman, Róbert Fico; a party without any clear affiliations towards other political parties in the system).

A Second important characteristic of the Central European parliamentary election is the development towards bipolar division of the political scene and society. When we observe the electoral campaigns and the rhetoric used by the party leaders, we see that the elections are presented as the fatal clash of two irreconcilable views of the world. On one side such a clash might positively influence electoral turnout. Nevertheless, one has to ask if such “motivation”, based on the fear of “fatal defeat”, is really eligible. What is more, after the elections the rivals stay mostly before three rather bad options – to establish 1) a weak minority government (Poland after elections 2005); 2) a minimal-winning coalition including small or even large radical political parties (currently Poland, Austria after 2000), single issue parties (Czech Republic) or one use parties (Slovakia) or (3) large or even a grand coalition (Germany).

Politicians and political scientists have been intensely discussing (together????) the remedies that might lead towards stable and efficient governments. On one side the possible change of electoral systems is discussed, but the attempts in some countries are showing that such change may not necessarily lead necessarily to the expected result. The attempts to make the party systems bipolar or even bi-partial failed mostly and were by understood by large sections of society as non-democratic. This position is strongly connected with the strengthening opinion that the political parties in (Central) European countries are becoming an oligopoly that seems to be detached from society and voters. The number of party members is continually shrinking, and volatility became one the characteristic features of voter behaviour.

For these reasons mentioned above we decided to dedicate the first issue of the POLITICS IN CENTRAL EUROPE – *The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association* in 2006 to the phenomenon of elections and party system stability in Central

European countries. In their essays the authors present an analysis of the situation and development trends in five Central European countries – Austria, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Poland. We hope that the essays bring new stimuli and the observations will form a basis for your own research and study.

At the end we would like to express our gratitude to the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Prague, which supported the publication of this issue of POLITICS IN CENTRAL EUROPE – *The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association*.

Ladislav Cabada & Šárka Waisová
Co-editors

ESSAYS

**Europeanisation of the Slovenian party system
– from marginal European impacts to the domestication
of EU policy issues?***Danica Fink-Hafner and Alenka Krašovec*

Abstract: *While more general research findings on the impact of European integration on party system competition in post-socialist EU countries remain inconclusive, some studies have shown direct interdependence between the deepening of democratisation and its Europeanisation. Whereas in successfully democratising new EU members EU pressure to satisfy the political criteria did not create deep tensions between intergovernmental and domestic levels, this was not the case in Slovakia. Based on Slovakian experiences and taking the unfinished process of EU enlargement into account, the authors suggest: a) a theoretical model encompassing a two-level game; and b) a greater variety of research units (allowing a bigger variety of national political characteristics as well as EU-impacts) to be included in further research efforts. The model was tested on Slovenia. While in Slovenia (like most recent post-socialist EU member states) the EU's relatively weak impact on political parties and party competition could be observed in the accession period, full EU membership has created greater space for EU-policy related cleavages on the basis of the domestic pattern of party system competition (left-right, government-opposition parties).*

Key words: *political parties, party system, Europeanization, post-socialist countries, Slovenia*

Introduction

So far, two main approaches have developed in the study of political parties' Europeanisation. The first one (Mair, 2000) focuses on Europe's impact on national party systems while the other (Ladrech, 2002) includes a broader range of five areas of political parties' Europeanisation – policy/programmatic contents, organisation, patterns of party competition, party-government relations and relations beyond the national party system. Research into old member states to date has not shown a significant impact on party system competition (Mair, 2000), while research findings in EU accession countries remain inconclusive (Pridham, 2002; Lewis, 2005). Still, some studies reveal interdependence between the deepening of democratisation and Europeanisation in Slovakia (Harris, 2004) as well as between Europeanisation and party system changes at the Slovakian national level (Henderson, 2005).

We believe that a systematic »error« in the research has prevented the development of any more exhaustive model for understanding the idiosyncratic processes of Europeanisation and its impact on party systems in post-socialist candidate and accession countries. Namely, it has so far been overlooked that all the recent EU candidate countries have been under the careful monitoring and assessment of the EU (European Commission) regarding many criteria, including political ones. It is exactly those countries that were the most successful in their transition to a democracy and in their post-socialist transformation (with the partial exception of the more troubled Slovakian transition) that were also granted full EU membership. Therefore, it should be noted that the question of meeting the EU's political criteria was not crucial for domestic party system developments in the post-socialist states which have become full EU members – except in Slovakia. In Slovakia, the unsatisfactory fulfilment of the human rights criteria led to direct EU political pressure in order to influence the outcome at national election.

With the only exception of Slovakia, where meeting the political criteria was a key issue for continuation of the accession process and final EU membership, there were no comparable EU political pressures aimed at national party competition in the other post-socialist accession countries. Yet they could be observed in some other candidate countries facing problems in building democracy such as Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Taking this broader picture into account, we present two arguments in favour of further development of the research model of the EU's impact on national party systems by encompassing two aspects – one conceptual and the other methodological.

First, we argue that a theoretical approach to a two-level game could give better insights into the dynamics and mechanisms of the EU's impacts on national party systems. So far, the Slovakian case has been presented as a special case. In fact, it shows that it cannot be understood without analysing the push-pull relationship between the EU and Slovakia in the accession process. Here, a two-level game was taking place. At the intergovernmental level, (relations between the EU and Slovakian government) Slovakia's government led by Mečiar kept integration with the EU and meeting of the EU accession criteria as a national priority, while in the national-level game it sought electoral support through extreme right policies.

Second, a methodological re-thinking of the samples of units to be included in empirical research on EU impacts on national party systems is called for. We argue in favour of a much broader scope of research units involving a greater variety of units than has been the case so far. Namely, it is only by incorporating a greater variety of units that we can build a more profound causal research model. It is possible to achieve such a variety of units if we also include countries seeking integration with the EU (current candidate countries as well as new post-socialist EU members) in the sample or even the whole population of all currently eligible units.

This article's purpose is twofold: a) to sketch out a preliminary theoretical model in line with the presented arguments; and b) to test it for the case of Slovenia. The article

is primarily based on the following research projects: a) in Slovenia (in the framework of the Centre for Political Science Research at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana): ‘Relationships between European Party Federations and Slovenian Political Parties’ (headed by Alenka Krašovec) as well as the research programme on political science research (headed by Danica Fink-Hafner); b) a bilateral research project between Slovenian and Czech researchers called ‘Relationships between National Political Parties and European Party Federations – the Case of Slovenian and Czech Parliamentary Parties’ (headed by Alenka Krašovec and Ladislav Cabada); and c) two international research projects – one in the framework of the British Academy called ‘the Impact of EU Enlargement on Central European Party Systems and Electoral Alignments’ (headed by Paul G. Lewis) as well as an international project called ‘Euro-scepticism and EU Referendums within the European Parties and Election Research Network’ (headed by Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart).

The following sections in the article include: a) theoretical considerations on the EU’s impact on party system developments, while taking into account the idiosyncrasies of post-socialist countries’ Europeanisation paths; b) an overview of research findings on the EU’s impacts on the Slovenian party system’s development; and c) a confrontation of the newly developed theoretical model and Slovenian experiences with Europeanisation’s impacts on national political parties and their interactions.

Theoretical considerations regarding the EU’s impact on party system developments

Two »Western« theoretical frameworks

Research into the EU’s impacts on national parties is a relatively underdeveloped area in the old member states. This is even more so for the new (newly integrating) states. To date, two theoretical frameworks for this kind of research have been developed. In Mair’s theoretical framework (2000: 29-31), we can potentially expect some European impacts on the format of national party systems (the number of parties in the electoral arena, the existence of parties with the explicit and primary intention of mobilising support for or against the EU) and on their mechanics (modes of interaction between the (relevant) parties). Taking a different path, Ladrech (2002: 396) exposes five research dimensions of Europeanisation’s possible impact on national political parties: a) changes in party programmes; b) internal organisational changes; c) changes in national party competition; d) changes in relations between the government and parties; and e) changes in relations beyond the national party system. In spite of their differences, we can see a certain overlap between these two concepts in the ways political parties interact in the national party system (Figure 1). Still, neither of the two authors has developed a deeper insight into two-level, EU-related games of candidate/accession countries’ political parties in power.

Figure 1: Areas and variables of the Europeanisation of political parties according to Mair (2000) and Ladrech (2002) – a synthesised view

AREAS OF POLITICAL PARTY EUROPEANISATION	VARIABLES
political parties	
policy/programmatic content (L)	modifications in party programmes including the EU as a reference (factor of pursuit), expressing European expertise, mentioning the EU and/or European institutions
organisation (L)	organisational modifications, statutory changes
national party system	
format (L)	L: fragmentation of the party system, formation of new parties
format (M)	M: formation of new parties
patterns of party competition (L) / mechanics of interactions between parties (M)	L: politicalisation of the EU in national politics, change in tactics and strategies by parties designed to capitalise on the »EU issue«, the presence of a strongly pro- or anti-EU party; the nature of a party's »dominant coalition« (Panebianco, 1988) M: competition on the pro- vs. anti-European integration dimension
party-government relations (L)	changes in party-government relations on EU matters, new forms of interaction between party and government on EU matters (e.g. the role of the party's EP delegation in government policy-making)
Transnational	
relations beyond the national party system (L)	transnational party co-operation; contacts, co-operation and integration with EU-level party organisations; engagement of party personnel in partisan networks in extra-national forums; recruitment of active individuals from national parties for EU appointive and elective offices

L... (Ladrech's definition)

M... (Mair's definition)

Empirical research into the European impact on the pattern of party competition has so far been quite rare, even in the old member countries. While such research tends to show no significant direct impacts of the EU on the national party system, one of the few more detailed case studies in old member countries by Andeweg (1992) revealed something else. Namely, according to his research in the relatively fragmented party arena and coalition governments of the Netherlands, the national pattern of party

interactions indicates a long-term tendency of a spill-over of domestic party cleavages into the field of the domestic management of EU affairs.

The idiosyncratic political context of accession states (in comparison to the old EU member states) challenges the existing theoretical models. In the article we argue that a more exhaustive model of the EU's impact on national party systems in post-socialist countries should be developed. Some of the key (so far missing) components to be included in the model are: a) the gap between the EU political criteria and the national political context; and b) characteristics of transitions to democracy involving various levels of a (mis)fit regarding the EU political criteria and therefore also various levels of political disagreement on domestic reform changes related to EU requirements.

Post-socialist countries' idiosyncrasies along the Europeanisation path and their meaning for theoretical frameworks

The type of integration with the EU does matter. While in the accession stage the general goal of achieving full EU membership has 'national interest' status, Europe confronts domestic politics in the circumstances of full EU membership in the form of many specific EU policies. Usually, in these circumstances issues of intergovernmental decision-making hold the status of big or significant political questions (e.g. decisions on new common European policies, the European budget, EU foreign policy).

Like old(er) member states, the newcomers have also passed through several stages of Europeanisation (Lippert, Umbach and Wessels, 2001). While old(er) EU members were involved in creating the EU in terms of its polity and policies, the latest newcomers had to incorporate EU policies and adapt institutionally *before* having any say in their formation. Under the pressure of the EU's constant monitoring and evaluation, 'foreign affairs' (relative to the EU) were in a way made 'domestic' before formal EU membership. An evaluation of accession states and their achievements relative to various political and economic criteria set by the EU was taking place. Henderson (2005: 5) stresses that »no country with extremists in government was recommended for the commencement of accession negotiations by the Commission, and while accession negotiations were in progress, they were shunned as coalition partners by the other parties«.

In the accession process no specific 'EU model' has been suggested for the development of accession states' party systems – in spite of monitoring the fulfilment of the political criteria for EU membership. For the candidate and accession countries there have been no direct recommendations regarding their domestic political system developments such as for the electoral system, pattern of party competition or government formation. This has been left up to the domestic processes of consolidating these young democracies with some partial exceptions of EU pre-election political pressures, e.g. in the cases of Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, the publishing of critical Commission reports also created very persuasive indirect pressure. Henderson (2005) describes the dynamism in case of Slovakia through the relationship between attitudes to post-communist reforms and to the EU.

Initially, in Slovakia views on the EU corresponded to levels of support seen for the post-communist reform project. As being accepted by the EU and the international community became identified with governmental competence, anti-reform parties were either politically marginalised or changed their political outlook and hence also their coalitional potential. Of course, this shift was only possible when a satisfactory proportion of voters accepted the conscientious connection between national reform policies and EU accession requirements and in that way made the alternation in power come true.¹

Figure 2: The EU's impacts on national party system competition

The EU's impact on national party system competition	no / minor	big
fulfilment of the EU's political criteria		
minor gaps	a candidate /accession country with little/no EU impact on national party competition (national political consensus)	
significant gaps	a country has not expressed any interest in integrating with the EU	significant EU impact on national party competition (a two-level game)

The case of Slovenia provides the opposite case of »missing« a two-level game due to parties' political unanimity on EU integration as well as the majoritarian EU integration support on behalf of voters in the accession stage.

The EU's impact on the national party system – the case of Slovenia

Our contention is that in Slovenia two periods in its European integration process should be distinguished: the first stage is before full EU-membership and the other

¹ The Slovakian national stage had been divided into the left-centre part and nationalist/reformist right, bringing two opposing views on EU membership. Consistently, in the 1994-1998 period the Mečiar government favoured EU integration in relation to the EU while refusing to moderate the domestic political programme that would make Slovakia a credible candidate for the EU and NATO. On the national level this was in a way rational since (according to public opinion polls) the supporters of parties in the nationalist 1994-1998 government were either indecisive, different or even clearly opposed to EU accession (Henderson, 2005:7). The Commission's negative assessment of Slovakia in 1997 marked a turning point in re-thinking the Slovakian political direction among the majority of voters as well as in Slovakian national politics. The international community offered a clear hint that having Mečiar's party in government would prevent an invitation for Slovakia to join the EU and NATO. Still, it was not until supporters of the reformist parties enabled the formation of two Dzurinda governments (1998-2002 and 2002-) and the synchronisation of Slovakia's internationally declared policy of integration with the EU and its national post-communist reform policies.

stage is after full EU membership. In the first phase, no significant problems in the consolidation of democracy, no significant EU-related cleavages in the national party arena and no direct EU-political pressures in relation to national party competition in Slovenia took place. This is why we also could not observe significant signs of a two-level game regarding the fulfilment of the EU's political criteria. In fact, we could talk about an »asymmetrical« Europeanisation effect: there is some impact of Europeanisation on party manifestos as well as changes in party organisational structures, while some more direct changes in party organisational structures may also be observed (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print). But there have been no significant direct impacts on the format and mechanics of party competition at the national level seen in the formation of a (successful) Eurosceptic party. Full EU membership represented fulfilment of the national interest and was supported by a special agreement between Slovenian parliamentary parties. Nonetheless, this agreement could also be treated as the EU's direct impact on the mechanics of party competition since it reduced potential disagreements over EU issues.

The new stage of membership has opened up a new space for European impacts on the national party system's format and the mechanics of competition while also allowing the continuation of other aspects of political parties' Europeanisation. So since Slovenia's full EU membership the relationship between parties when discussing EU issues has changed – EU issues have been drawn into nationally specific domestic ideological cleavages and party struggles.

Idiosyncrasies of the Slovenian party system's development

As Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix show, Slovenian parties and the party system have been maturing in »a natural way« while also developing party links with kindred political organisations at the European level. Gradualism, a lack of any clear-cut ideological shifts or electoral engineering, as well as a combination of ideological polarisation with broad governmental coalition-building with the same party in the centre was taking place for most of the 1990-2004 period, which ended with the 2004 centre-right electoral victory (Fink-Hafner, 2006; Fink-Hafner and Krašovec, 2006-in print; Ramet and Fink-Hafner, eds., 2006-in print). The Slovenian party arena is often perceived as bipolar for it involves competition between the cluster of old (centre-left) parties and the cluster of new (predominately centre-right) parties. Especially in pre-election periods, the Slovenian party arena behaves in a bipolar way even though it is quite fragmented – the average effective number of parties in the 1990 to 2004 period is 6.5 (Fink-Hafner, 2006).

In the process of the transition to a democracy, political parties in Slovenia achieved a high level of consensus on the four basic values: respect for human rights, parliamentary democracy, the welfare state and joining European integration processes (Fink-Hafner, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2001). The organisational format of the Slovenian party system has not been significantly affected by European integration processes.

The establishment of the New Party, the only truly Eurosceptical party, in 1996 was an early consequence of the growing salience of EU issues and falling public support for EU membership. Establishment of the New Party can be identified as a minor EU impact on the format of the Slovenian party system since the party received less than one percent of votes at the 2000 election.

Party manifestos

In the 1990-1992 period parliamentary parties several times mentioned the EU and Europeanisation as a reference point for certain major reforms exposed at the time in Slovenia. More frequently, EU membership was mentioned as a future and distant goal of Slovenian foreign policy (Podmenik, 1993).

An analysis of party manifestos in the 1993-2004 period shows that the majority of Slovenian parliamentary parties, especially those which are members of their European counterparts, devoted slightly more attention to EU issues in that time, especially by mentioning with increasing frequency the EU in the context of European policy as well as in referring to other policy areas formally considered a purely domestic concern (Krašovec and Lajh, 2004: 178-179). Yet, it seems Slovenian parties have not faced a strong challenge to more elaborately or more decisively develop their stances on particular EU policies (at least on more exposed policies like for agriculture or the environment).

One interesting indirect impact of a European party federation is seen in the Slovenian Democratic Party which dropped the 'Social' from its former title of Social Democratic Party of Slovenia in September 2003. This name change was partly the result of co-operation with the European People's Party, which indicated at least informally that it expected such a name change. However, it is important to emphasise that the EPP neither formally demanded the change nor made it a condition of full membership (Lajh and Krašovec, 2004: 173). Still, it is a fact that the name change and quite radical change in ideological stances of the Slovenian Democratic Party towards liberal economic values (indeed an innovation in the Slovenian party system) overlap in the time perspective with the party's membership of the European People's Party. Hence the change in the party manifesto may be seen as an indirect consequence of its Europeanisation.

Salience of EU-related ideological cleavages (conflicts) in the party system

General overview

Slovenia began to pursue integration with the EC/EU in the early 1990s but it only signed the European Agreement in 1997 after several heated discussions in the National Assembly. Namely, one current member state (Italy) objected to the prohibition on the purchase of real estate by non-Slovenian citizens that was then included in Slovenia's Constitution. Slovenia was pressed to change its Constitution to allow non-citizens buy land in Slovenia. The events connected with acceptance of the European Agreement and the prominence of these events in both the Slovenian political arena and the public

at large more generally produced at least a partial change in the attitudes of certain parties and the public to accession.

As a consequence of the abovementioned events and changes in the public feeling toward Slovenian accession, in 1997 Slovenian parliamentary parties right across the ideological spectrum, except for the Slovenian National Party, decided to sign an Agreement on Co-operation in the Accession Process with the EU and to support accession as soon as possible. Since the Agreement on Co-operation in the Accession Process with the EU remained in force till the end of 2000 it is not surprising that the election 2000 were also characterised by the almost complete absence of Eurosceptic parties. Nevertheless, this was an excellent opportunity especially for non-parliamentary parties to increase the share of their votes by using Eurosceptic rhetoric.

In addition, one important EU policy, namely monetary policy, has been obviously deeply rooted in politicians' minds. During the last two years there have been clear aspirations of the old government (led by the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) as well as the new government (led by the Slovenian Democratic Party) to adopt the euro in 2007. Indeed, all parliamentary parties have supported the necessary economic measures to be taken to make this possible. Further, some representatives of political parties even argue that parliamentary parties should sign a similar agreement on co-operation to that which was drawn up in 1997. Yet it seems a new written agreement will not be signed but it is obvious that the parties do not actually need one for this particular issue. It is different when looking at the national government's proposals for implementation of the Lisbon strategy in Slovenia since here major disagreements between parties have emerged.

Marginal Euroscepticism

The New Party was established in 1996 and was evidently trying to take advantage by using hard Eurosceptical rhetoric. Its representatives emphasised their disagreement with the basic principles of the EU. On the other hand, the Slovenian National Party – the only parliamentary party not to sign the mentioned agreement – also showed its opposition to accession through its promotional billboards where the party leader held up a plucked chicken surrounded by EU stars. In the context of decreasing public support for accession and the mentioned agreement among other parliamentary parties both parties obviously saw a possibility of increasing their share of the vote at the 2000 election and entering parliament by adopting a Eurosceptic position. However, they were not very successful in achieving these goals as they only received a combined 5.0 percent of the vote on a joint platform (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

The EP and parliamentary election in 2004 were marked by the absence of any real Eurosceptic parties. Namely, the New Party did not even contest the EP election nor the parliamentary election held a few months later. At the same time, the Slovenian National Party has also significantly reduced the strength of its Eurosceptic rhetoric and begun to be (self-)identified as Eurorealists. Quite surprisingly, some other parties

(including the Slovenian Democratic Party and the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) stressed in their rhetoric the importance of different aspects of the Slovenian national identity while simultaneously stressing the importance of active co-operation in the framework of EU projects (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

The first European Election (2004): the »nationalisation« of debated issues

At the EP election held in June 2004 the EU was unexpectedly not among the most ventilated topics since the ratio of EU to national issues seen in the parties' programmes was 25:65, and 10 percent of them could not be classified in either group (Kustec Lipicer, 2005: 49). This may be indirectly connected with a party's interest in or preparations for the national parliamentary election subsequently held in October 2004.²

On the other hand, an analysis of television debates (TV confrontations) also showed that the presentation of programmatic standpoints greatly depended on the media's own preferences. Parties hence did not have much opportunity to develop their own ideas when journalists were in the position of selecting the key topics on which they were expected to comment, a process that only indirectly gave them the chance to develop their programmatic positions. The issues selected by journalists can be divided into those national in character and those concerned with the EU, although it seems that the national ones were more visible than the latter (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print). Indeed, we may conclude that the campaign failed to generate much interest in the EU.

The 2004 parliamentary election: the continuous prevalence of domestic-oriented campaign debates

Developments in the parliamentary election were similar to developments at the EP election. Party debates were organised in public and on the biggest commercial TV station. But the EU was not explicitly raised as an important topic. Despite this, the EU was mentioned by almost all party representatives in an instrumental way – party representatives namely claimed they would regard EU membership as an important fact to be considered and used as a negotiating factor in some open questions between Slovenia and Croatia.

An analysis of the electoral manifestos for the 2004 parliamentary election paints a slightly different picture. EU topics were important if not very clearly specified. It was common to the majority of the parliamentary parties that they presented Slovenian membership as both a challenge and opportunity for faster economic, social, security and cultural development. They also used the EU to legitimate their views and policy solutions, mainly in economic, agricultural, educational and social fields (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006).

² When contesting the EP election the candidates of some non-parliamentary parties quite openly connected their current position with an interest in the national election to be held a few months later.

Internal organisational impacts

Potentially, the EU's impact on the party system can be a direct or indirect consequence of changes in party organisation. Although we could say that some Slovenian parties (especially those that are members of European parties) have experienced changes in their internal organisational structure, it should be stressed that in most cases they have been relatively minor. A common denominator of changes in practically all parties is the enhanced role of international co-operation secretaries. In all parties they have become permanently invited to all relevant party bodies. However, so far this has more been reflected in party practice than in any explicit statutory change (Lajh and Krašovec, 2004: 173). Other innovations in the internal organisation of the Slovenian Democratic Party, the (United List of) Social Democrats,³ the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, the Youth Party and the Democratic Party of Retired Persons include a formal definition of relations between the party and its MEPs through their *ex-officio* inclusion in various party bodies (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

A significant change to the internal organisation of the (United List of) Social Democrats occurred when its party leader was elected as an MEP, which led directly to the establishment of a new party position. This took the form of a permanent deputy position being established for the party presidency, its occupant being nominated by the party's president. In mid-October 2005 the newly elected president of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia also became an MEP, thereby raising the question of whether the party will consequently introduce a similar organisational change to that made by the (United List of) Social Democrats.

Currently, some of the presented internal organisational changes can at least indirectly be connected with the mechanics of the party system. Namely, both of the most important opposition parties, the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the United List of Social Democrats (recently renamed the Social Democrats) are led by MEPs who are frequently abroad and therefore not in constant touch with events in the Slovenian parliament.⁴

Conclusion

EU issues do not seem to have the same level of prominence in all the countries that have become EU members or are still candidate states. Especially where expectations that EU political criteria (defined only for the last wave of enlargement!) allowing closer integration with the EU in fact mean deep (often simultaneously unpopular) social and political reforms, the elite (party or parties in government) find themselves between a rock and a hard place. If they want to push unpopular reforms forward to satisfy EU conditions they risk their governing position in the national party system where anti-reform/Euroscptic parties could take advantage of voters' related dissatisfaction.

³ The party changed its name in 2005 to the Social Democrats.

⁴ Slovenia has introduced the incompatibility of positions of an MEP and other public offices.

So far, the EU has clearly played a role in these dynamics in several cases (among the recent EU members it is Slovakia that stands out here). The EU's impact could be seen in limiting the strength of extremism, forcing larger parties to moderate their behaviour and helping pro-reformist forces. This is why we think that the proposed theoretical approach involving a two-level game could be helpful in further research into the EU's impact on candidate/accession countries' parties and party systems.

Slovenia is the case of a relatively successful transition including its main reforms, the absence of EU-related conflicts in the national political arena as well as in national party system competition. On the whole, we can even say that the EU had a minor or limited impact on the Slovenian party system (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Areas and variables of the Europeanisation of political parties according to Mair (2000) and Ladrech (2002) – a synthesised view

AREAS OF POLITICAL PARTY EUROPEANISATION	Research findings in Slovenia
political parties	
policy/programmatic content	slight modifications in party programmes including the EU mainly as a positive reference
organisation	mostly marginal organisational modifications in most parliamentary parties
national party system	
format	marginal impact: only one clearly Eurosceptic party was formed and one parliamentary party being »Eurorealist« in its rhetoric
patterns of party competition / mechanics of interactions between parties	marginalisation of EU-related issues in national politics most of the time – with one clear exception which demanded the Constitutional amendment during the negotiating stage with the EU; predominance of a special agreement among parliamentary parties not to politicise European issues at home; a spill-over of domestic cleavages into the field of EU-related issues since Slovenia's full EU-membership with the sole exception of Slovenia joining the European Monetary Union (part of the previous agreement between the parties)
party-government relations	predominantly collaborative relations by the time of full EU membership: the recent birth of government-opposition cleavages in the case of EU matters
transnational	
relations beyond the national party system	contacts, co-operation and integration with EU-level party organisations by most parliamentary parties; engagement of party personnel in partisan networks in extra-national forums; recruitment of active individuals from national parties to EU appointive and elective offices

While in Slovenia in the accession stage and the first two years of full EU membership a relatively weak impact of the EU on the party system and party competition can be observed, it seems the EU has clear potential in national party competition. Full EU membership has brought about more space for EU-policy related cleavages on the basis of the domestic pattern of the party system structure (left-right, government-opposition parties). The most prominent cluster of policy issues relates to implementation of the Lisbon strategy for strengthening the EU's competitiveness in Slovenia (such as tax reform, cutting down the welfare state, government attempts to avoid social partnership decision-making on socio-economic reforms, privatisation of the public sector). In addition, some Slovenian MEPs have also already tried to use the EU arena (especially the European Parliament) to influence national party system competition on the left-right and government-opposition axes. Therefore, we have ultimately not only created a draft proposal for future academic debate on the EU's impact on national parties and party systems, but we are also putting forward some additional research questions: why, when and how do EU-related issues become domesticated and transformed into indigenous ideological cleavages in national party systems?

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Appendix 1

Figure 1: Slovenian parliamentary parties' ideological family links by the 2004 parliamentary election

Parties	Party family	Formal links with European Party Federations	No of MEPs in the EP in 2004	In Parliament after 2004
United List of Social Democrats (in spring 2005 renamed Social Democrats)	social democratic	Party of European Socialists (PES) since 1996	1 (PES)	Yes
Democratic Party of Pensioners	no clear party family affiliation – party of pensioners' interest group with a social democratic orientation	/	2 common MEPs with the Liberal Democracy (ALDE)	Yes
Party of Youth of Slovenia	no clear family affiliation until 2003; stress on interests of youth and some liberal issues; shift towards green issues in the 2004 campaign	European Federation of Green Parties / European Greens (EFGP/EG) since 2003	/	No
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	liberal	European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR – renamed ALDE) since 1994	2 common MEPs with the Democratic Party of Pensioners (ALDE)	Yes
Slovenian Democratic Party (former Slovenian Social Democratic Party)	conservative (previously anti-communist social democratic)	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	2 (EPP)	Yes
Slovenian People's Party	conservative/ agrarian	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	/	Yes
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party	conservative / Christian democrat	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	2 (EPP)	Yes
Slovenian National Party	elements of extreme right and left	/	/	Yes

Figure 2: Results of parliamentary election in Slovenia in 1990-2004

		1990 ^a	1992 ^b	1996 ^b	2000 ^c	2004
Liberal Democratic Party; since 1994 Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	No of votes	156.843	278.851	288.783	390.797	220.848
	% of votes	14.49	23.46	27.01	36.21	22.80
	No of seats	12	22	25	34	23
	% of seats	15	24.44	27.77	37.77	25.55
Social Democratic Party, since 2003 Slovenian Democratic Party	No of votes	79.951	39.675	172.470	170.541	281.710
	% of votes	7.39	3.34	16.13	15.80	29.08
	No of seats	6	4	16	14	29
	% of seats	7.5	4.44	17.77	15.56	32.22
United List of Social Democrats, since 2005 Social Democrats	No of votes	186.928	161.349	96.597	130.268	98.527
	% of votes	17.28	13.58	9.03	12.07	10.17
	No of seats	14	14	9	11	10
	% of seats	17.5	15.56	10	12.22	11.11
Slovenian Christian Democrats	No of votes	140.403	172.424	102.852	-	-
	% of votes	12.98	14.51	9.62	-	-
	No of seats	11	15	10	-	-
	% of seats	13.8	16.66	11.11	-	-
Slovenian People's Party*	No of votes	135.808	103.300	207.186	102.817	66.032
	% of votes	12.55	8.69	19.38	9.53	6.82
	No of seats	11	10	19	9	7
	% of seats	13.8	11.11	21.11	10	7.88
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi)	No of votes	-	-	-	94.661	88.073
	% of votes	-	-	-	8.76	9.09
	No of seats	-	-	-	8	9
	% of seats	-	-	-	8.89	10
Slovenian National Party	No of votes	-	119.091	34.422	47.251	60.750
	% of votes	-	10.02	3.22	4.38	6.27
	No of seats	-	12	4	4	6
	% of seats	-	13.33	4.44	4.44	6.65
The Greens of Slovenia	no of votes	95.640	44.019	18.853	9.712	6.703
	% of votes	8.84	3.70	1.76	0.90	0.69
	No of seats	8	5	-	-	-
	% of seats	10	5.56	-	-	-
Democratic Party of Pensioners	No of votes	-	-	46.152	55.696	39.150
	% of votes	-	-	4.32	5.16	4.04
	No of seats	-	-	5	4	4
	% of seats	-	-	5.56	4.44	4.44
Democratic Party	No of votes	102.931	59.487	28.624	8.102	2.670
	% of votes	9.51	5.01	2.68	0.75	0.28
	No of seats	8	6			
	% of seats	10	6.67			

Party of the Youth of Slovenia	No of votes	-	-	-	46.719	20.174
	% of votes	-	-	-	4.33	2.08
	No of seats	-	-	-	4	
	% of seats	-	-	-	4.44	
Slovenian Craftmen's Party	No of votes	38.269	-	-	-	-
	% of votes	3.54	-	-	-	-
	No of seats	3	-	-	-	-
	% of seats	3.8	-	-	-	-
Socialist Alliance of the Working People	No of votes	58.082	32.696	-	-	-
	% of votes	5.37	2.75	-	-	-
	no of seats	5	-	-	-	-
	% of seats	6.3	-	-	-	-

* On 15 April 2000 the Slovenian People's Party and the Slovenian Christian Democrats united in a new party, SPP+SCD – Slovenian People's Party'. Just before the 2000 parliamentary election a group, mostly from the former SCD, left the new party and competed at the election as a new party, New Slovenia.

- a) Parliamentary election in April 1990, Socio-political Chamber, proportional system, number of seats: 80 (78 for parties, plus two for the representatives of (Italian, Hungarian) national minorities.
- b) Parliamentary election in December 1992 and November 1996, National Assembly, proportional system (d'Hondt's system and Hare quota), number of seats: 90 (88 for parties, plus two for representatives of (Italian, Hungarian) national minorities.
- c) Parliamentary election in October 2000, partial change of the electoral system: introduction of a 4 per cent national threshold and the Droop formula instead Hare quota.

Sources: *Uradni list Republike Slovenije*: 17/90; 60/92; 65/96; 98/2000 compiled by Alenka Krašovec and Tomaž Boh, in Fink Hafner and Boh, (eds.) (2002); *Republiška volilna komisija* – <http://www.rvk.si>.

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The limited Role of Electoral Game Rules: the Austrian Party System in “Post-Rokkanian” Settings*

Vít Hloušek

Abstract: *The article deals with the potential impact of the electoral system on the party system. The general discussion, based on Duverger’s and Sartori’s electoral rules, concludes with an assessment of the Austrian case. Austrian party system development is examined with regard to the evolution of the country’s proportional representation electoral system. The author tries to find more relevant explanations for the changes within the Austrian party system’s logic of functioning other than the electoral system, such as the de-alignment of voters and the changing structure of cleavages. In order to show another factor shaping the Austrian party system arrangement, the author tries to discuss not only recent development since the mid 1980s, but he also evaluates the Austrian First Republic and the period from 1945 to 1986. The article concludes with the argument that Duverger’s and Sartori’s electoral rules could be useful in discussing party system format but they have very little to say when party system mechanics is concerned.*

Keywords: *Austria; electoral system; party system; Duverger’s and Sartori’s electoral rules*

Introduction

Austria was traditionally seen as one of the best examples confirming the classical theory of Stein Rokkan’s cleavages, and a model of the emergence of mass political parties and a competitive pluralist party system. On the other hand, it was rather overlooked by scholars focusing on electoral systems in order to find “laws” that describe and analyse electoral systems’ effects on the format and mechanics of party systems. The reason was obvious. Austria embodied an excellent example of pillarized polity (cf. Lijphart 1969; Lijphart 1977) divided into two main camps (*Lager*)⁵, Social Democratic and Catholic-conservative, which competed with the smaller National-Liberal (or Third) camp, which had a less complex structure. The electoral system was rooted in the principle of proportional representation (PR) and enabled two large parties – the Socialist (Social Democratic since 1991) Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) – to maintain control over “their” electoral bases. The ÖVP represented rural, religious, and employers’ interests more, while the SPÖ was a party defending urban, secular, and employees’ interests (cf. Deschouwer 2002:

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⁵ Austrian historian Lothar Höbelt says that: “Austrian politics were tribal” (Höbelt 2003: 6).

200-207). For a long time Austrian parties were able to encourage a high level of formal political participation (partisan membership) and election turnout (cf. Caramani 2004: 68). As Caramani (2004: 144-146) pointed out, Austria was one of the most nationalized systems in Western Europe, meaning that electoral behaviour measured according to electoral outcomes in different constituencies became more and more homogenous. This situation continued at least until the 1980s, although there were certain signs of a radical change as early as the 1960s.

We can observe the processes of Austria's shift from consociation to a competitive version of democracy from the mid-1980s (cf. Luther 1992; Luther, Müller 1992; Ulram 1990, and Plasser, Ulram 2002)⁶; these processes were symbolically completed by the 1999 election and the subsequent formation of an ideologically coherent and *minimal-winning* coalition of the right and the centre-right. This is connected with the transformation of the traditional Austrian two-party system from the 1940s to the 1970s, first to a temporary version of the two-and-a-half party system at the turn of the 1970s, and then to the format of limited pluralism after 1986, that opened the way to formation of the moderate pluralism type in Sartori's model (cf. Müller 2000: 5-9).

This article attempts to discuss the limited impact of the electoral system on the party system. A theoretical discussion based on Sartori's concept of mutual relations of both the electoral and party systems will be tested using the example of Austria, a specific Central European country with experience of more than 50 years of unbroken democratic development. This example enables us to go beyond analysing only recent developments, and provide an evaluation more focused on development and rooted in history. The author is not disagreeing with Sartori's concept of electoral "laws", but he wants to discuss its relative importance *vis-à-vis* other aspects that form the shape and patterns of party competition and party systems generally.

Duverger's electoral "laws" or Sartori's electoral rules?

A systematic effort to examine relations between electoral and party systems could be traced back at least to the famous "laws" first discussed by Maurice Duverger in 1951. He formulated two hypotheses: 1) PR and a two-ballot majority⁷ system opens the way to multipartism; 2) a plurality rule creating and maintaining a two-party system. Duverger devoted great attention to the tendency of PR to maintain: "virtually without change the party system existing at the time of its adoption" (attributed to Duverger 1986: 71; for theoretical discussion concerning Duverger's "laws" cf. Farrell 2001: 153-174; Shugart 2005: 29-36). Let us discuss briefly these findings in the Austrian context. The "magic" ability to maintain the existing party system could not be easily confirmed if we take the Austrian case into consideration. Austria adopted

⁶ Even though the Austrian public's willingness to accept the competitive/conflict models of politicians' behaviour rather than the consensual approach is at least disputable (Plasser, Ulram 2002: 147-150)

⁷ Duverger later somehow refined the tendency produced by a two-ballot majority, postulating that multipartism resulting from a two-ballot majority will be "tempered" by alliances.

the PR formula in 1919, and this meant at the same time that it took a decisive step towards modern mass politics, crossing over the third threshold of democracy, the threshold of representation (cf. Rokkan 1999: 244-260). Nevertheless, the beginning of the PR period went hand in hand with a complex reconstruction of the Austrian party system, which started after the introduction of male universal suffrage in 1907. To put it clearly, the Christian Socialists succeeded in attempting to become part of the establishment as early as the pre-First World War era (the election of 1907 and 1911 were held according to the first past the post system) thanks to cooperation with the conservative Catholic representation of the aristocracy and officials of the Catholic Church. However, the strongest party measured according to electoral support was the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP). The introduction of the PR formula was the means which opened the way for the Social democrats to play the role of a major opposition party and to transform popular support into parliamentary seats after 1919. On the contrary, many elite parties declined with the introduction of the PR formula. The clearest indication of this is the example of small parties of the “Third Camp” (National-Liberal Camp) that almost lost all importance and that were forced to unify under the label of the Pan-German People's Party (GDVP) in 1919. The electoral system kept its PR form after 1945, but it only allowed the continuing predominance of the two major parties until the late 1960s.

Duverger later examined cases such as Germany or Austria, that showed a clear tendency towards the two-party system in spite of a PR formula (cf. Duverger 1986: 71-76). Unfortunately, Duverger paid more attention to German (and Irish) cases and left the Austrian example almost untouched. He briefly argued that the system of Austrian *Proporz* was the reason why his “law” of PR systems did not work there (Duverger 1986: 73, 75-76). Duverger's argument that a similar two-party system would remain the same under the conditions of the plurality rule is theoretically correct, but it does not answer our basic questions concerning the relation between the electoral system and party system.

In order to defend and improve Duverger's “laws” Sartori formulated more precise conditions in which different kinds of PR work. He put more emphasis on the size of a constituency than on mathematical translation formulas: put simply, the smaller the districts the lower the proportionality (Sartori 1986: 53). He also pointed out that most of the real PR systems are impure, and some of them could even be very non-representative due to the size of constituency, electoral threshold, and/or mathematical translation formula (Sartori 1986: 54). Another important change outlined by Sartori was the consideration of the level of structural consolidation of the entire party system (cf. Sartori 1976; Sartori 1997). Sartori's arguments are important for our case study because Austria is seen as an important example combining two-party mechanics with PR, thus it embodied (until the mid-1980s) exceptions which hindered the formulation of electoral “laws” (Sartori 1986: 57). Sartori concludes the discussion by postulating that pure PR is a “no-effect” system and thus he is theoretically close to Duverger's

comments devoted to the “virtually no change” impact of PR systems. Finally, Sartori formulated four rules (Sartori 1986: 58-59; reprinted in Sartori 2001: 93-94) improving Duverger’s “laws”. Only the fourth one mentions PR systems and it reads:

PR systems also obtain reductive effects – though to a less and less predictable extent – in proportion to their non-proportionality; and particular whenever they apply to small constituencies, establish a threshold of representation, or attribute a premium. Under these conditions PR, too, will eliminate the lesser parties whose electorate is dispersed throughout the constituencies; but even a highly impure PR will not eliminate the small parties that dispose of concentrated above-quota strongholds (Sartori 1986: 59).

This rule cannot be left aside without further discussion concerning its system conditions. Sartori presumed that impure PR formulas could turn a two-party system into a system of moderate pluralism, but only under the condition that politics/public opinion are not highly polarized. Pure, or almost pure PR could lead even to a system of extreme pluralism and thus to the “mechanics” of moderate or polarized pluralism. It is, however, important to judge whether both party as well as electoral systems are weak or strong. Sartori correctly presented Austria until the beginning of the 1980s as an example of a strong party system and weak electoral system, concluding that the party system is blocking the potential multiplication effects of Austrian PR (Sartori 1986: 60-63).

It seems at first sight that Sartori’s rules fit quite well the reality of *Proporz* in Austria as well as the reality of changing patterns of inter-party competition since 1966. We will see that two well-structured major parties (ÖVP and SPÖ) maintained a comfortable parliamentary majority without huge problems. Another clear observation shows that the small but virulent forces of the Third Camp were able to survive as a relevant political minority in Parliament, and their potential to form coalitions was constantly uncertain and changing. Still, two problems remain that should be discussed later: 1) the Austrian party system was a two-party *format* but hardly ever two-party “mechanics”; 2) how could we explain the changes that occurred in Austrian party system after 1986?

Austrian party system changes – in format and in the logic of functioning

If we compare the structure of party competition before 1933 and after 1945, we can observe significant changes from the model of polarized pluralism to moderate pluralism patterns of competition. Polarization was even aggravated by the antagonistic position of both main parties represented in all four of Rokkan’s cleavages before the Second World War. While the Christian Socialist Party (predecessor of the ÖVP) represented the interests of rural areas, landowners, peripheral areas, and the Catholic

Church, the Social Democratic Workers’ Party (predecessor of the SPÖ) was strictly secular, protected the interests of urban industrial workers, and held its position firmly in “Red Vienna” and several other industrial centres, while its support in the country was marginal. The cleavages were thus not weakened by their crossing, but on the contrary, they reinforced each other. All the relevant parties operated within this environment of strong competition (cf. Jelavich 2003: 151-191; Rumpler 1990).

The experiences of failed pre-war democracy led Austrian political leaders to more convergent behaviour after 1945. The specific mechanism of cooperation between two strongest camps (*Lager*) was created thanks to the willingness of the Austrian People’s Party and Socialist Party of Austria to cooperate. This arrangement is called Proportional Democracy (*Proporzdemokratie*)⁸ (cf. Engelmann 1962; Mommsen-Reindl 1976: 27-101; Plasser, Ulram, Grausgruber 1992:16-19; Secher 1958:794-798).

Both parties of the large coalition had a relatively similar and in the European context high and stable electoral support (cf. Bartolini 2000: 109-121). The significant electoral failure of the SPÖ in 1949 (38.7 per cent compared to 44.6 per cent in 1945) is explained mainly by the entry of the League of Independents (Freedom Party of Austria since 1956) to the electoral market (Gerlich 1987: 76). The year 1953 however saw a return to “normality” since the SPÖ won the election with 42.1 per cent. The electoral results of both main parties were basically equal (slightly better for the ÖVP) in the 1950s and 1960s, fluctuating above 40 per cent. The main reason for such electoral stability was that the structure of society remained almost untouched (cf. Table 1).

Table 1: Changes in Sector Employment in Austria 1910-1980

Data in %	1910	1934	1951	1961	1969	1977	1980
Primary sector	39.4	37.1	32.6	23.0	19.1	11.8	10.0
Secondary sector	31.1	32.2	37.8	41.5	40.8	41.0	46.6
Tertiary sector	29.5	30.7	29.6	35.5	40.1	47.2	42.4

Source: Bodzenta (1980: 164).

⁸ We can briefly describe the principle of the *Proporzdemokratie* in terms of the slow but firm translation of the mechanism of proportional representation of both large parties from the level of functioning coalition governments, to lower levels of political (and non-political as well) life. The roots of this principle could be traced back to the first coalition government after 1945. Key decisions were made by agreements provided in the cooperation of both parties’ administrations after Austrian Communist Party (KPÖ) left the government in 1947 (The Austrian Communists have not been significant in parliament since 1959). Administrative functions were distributed according to the principle of balance between these two parties at regional and municipal levels. This, of course, made membership in one of the two decisive parties more attractive, at least since the mid-1950s, when even functions in the governing bodies of state-owned or controlled enterprises (airlines, banking sector) started to be distributed according to the *Proporz* principle. Moreover, public administration offices, elementary school head teacher posts etc were distributed according to the same principle.

The Austrian party system thus became relatively stable at the end of the 1940s and remained this way until the 1960s. If we, however, consider the number of relevant parties and the distribution of their support, we can talk about an even longer continuity. When observing the strength of the parties and their potential to form coalitions or be in opposition, we can see that the Austrian party system in fact oscillated around a two-party system until 1983 (cf. Gerlich 1987: 64-66). The SPÖ represented one of the two main poles in this system. However, although the ÖVP was the more active and stronger party until the mid-1960s, i.e. until the period identical with the classical era of the Austrian consociation mechanism, the SPÖ took the initiative from the end of the 1960s, and its one-party governments actually partly changed the mechanisms of Austrian politics. New phenomena, such as increasing voter volatility, emerged.

Table 2: Constant voters and volatile voters in parliamentary election, 1983-2002

	1979-1983	1983-1986	1986-1990	1990-1994	1994-1995	1995-1999	1999-2002
Voters who changed party preference	7	13	14	16	12	14	20
New mobilized voters, not voted before	3	1	2	6	7	1	7
Demobilized voters who became abstainers	2	3	7	10	3	8	4
Sum of volatile voters	12	17	23	31	22	24	30
Stable non-participators at the election	6	7	9	14	16	17	18
Stable party supporters	82	76	68	55	62	59	53
Sum of stable voters	88	83	77	69	78	76	71
Sum of eligible voters	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Ogris et al (2002: 6)

There were certain shifts from the strictly consociation behaviour of both of the large Austrian political parties towards more competitive models of political behaviour in the 1970s. In spite of this, the ÖVP in this decade was still a very loyal opposition in the European context, which was due to the persistence of consociation periods in other spheres of political and social life (see for instance the mechanisms of social dialogue). During the first half of the 1980s, however, the adversarial behaviour of both large parties towards each other increased (cf. Gerlich 1987: 67-69). The reason was not only the establishment of new parties (the Green Party), but also shifts in the Austrian electorate that will be considered below.

The situation after the 1983 election showed new and until then unexpected problems of the Austrian party system: not only did new possibilities of forming government coalitions occur (SPÖ-FPÖ; SPÖ-ÖVP; ÖVP-FPÖ), but they were actually discussed. The winning combination from these negotiations was a government of the SPÖ and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ). The SPÖ initiated talks with the ÖVP to

demonstrate its willingness to govern consensually; the ÖVP-FPÖ talks were held *de facto* for the two parties to improve their bargaining positions *vis-à-vis* the Socialists (Müller 2003: 97).

Using the terms of Stein Rokkan and S. M. Lipset, the Austrian party system finally loosened in the 1986 election (Lipset, Rokkan 1967: 50-56; cf. Bartolini, Mair 2000: 55-67) and the conditions for this slackening had existed since the end of the 1970s.⁹ The Austrian party system changed dramatically, and new political parties emerged (The Green Party; cf. Dachs 1997); traditional “catch-all” parties of the large coalition lost their support; on the contrary, the FPÖ protest party attracted new voters. The powerful internal dynamics within the Austrian party system has been proved by the FPÖ and the Greens to a smaller degree or the Liberal Forum temporarily (1995-99). On the other side, the SPÖ and the ÖVP have been on the defensive during the whole period. Both the two-party system as well as the two-and-half party system patterns disappeared, and too much space remained for discussion of whether expansion of new parties (and thus emergence of a limited pluralism format) will be followed by change towards moderate or polarized pluralism.

Recent developments have left only a few clues to solve the issue of the search for new patterns of Austrian party system dynamics. We can observe the processes of fragmentation of ex-Third-Camp parties. After the remarkable rise of popular support for Jörg Haider’s FPÖ from the beginning of the 1990s, which culminated in an impressive electoral outcome in 1999, enabling the FPÖ to enter a coalition government with the ÖVP, the process of a swift and sharp decline of the FPÖ can be seen, starting with the combination of external crisis (lack of means of mobilization after entering government) and internal disputes leading to Haider’s new project, the “orange” Union for the Austrian Future (BZÖ), which tried to attract protest voters left after the 2000 and 2002 election and who were under-represented by Schüssel’s coalitions (cf. Höbelt 2003). The emergence and decline of the Liberal Forum in the 1990s (cf. Liegl 1997) is more of a historical phenomenon now, but it should be remembered that for several years the Austrian party system retained a five-party format.

Another problem that has to be solved is the question of stabilization of inter-party relations, and both patterns of competition and cooperation. Schüssel’s coalition formula will hardly survive the next election, and there is no clear wisdom that says who and with whom will form the coalition after this year’s election. The coalition potential of the FPÖ declined rapidly, while the Greens also showed a remarkable increase in their fortunes. The main cards will, however, stay in the hands of two major parties, but the possibility of a quick and trouble-free rush back to a large coalition model is more illusion than a probable outcome of the post-election negotiations. I do not rule

⁹ These election were crucial even from the point of view of the total change in voter behaviour trends. While in 1979 the total volatility was only 1.3 per cent (which complied with the standard from the beginning of the 50s), it was 6.1 per cent in 1986, and 9.9 per cent in 1990 (Plasser, Ulram, Grausgruber 1992: 30).

out the possibility of a large coalition, but the way towards this solution would be very complicated. The Austrian party system underwent important steps towards the system of moderate pluralism in 1986, but we still have to wait for more predictable coalition/opposition formulas enabling us to judge the type of party system more precisely.

But let us go back to Austrian large catch-all parties – the ÖVP and SPÖ. Both of the traditional large parties had to cope with the haemorrhage of the traditional voters and have been forced to face appeals for redefinition of some of their ideological and programme basis. (Kitschelt 1994; for general discussion devoted to decline of *catch-all* mechanisms cf. Puhle 2002). Both parties, however, have a better position compared to the mid-1990s. The reform of the economic policy of the FPÖ, connected with implementation of tax reform limiting the generous Austrian welfare state, brought workers back to the fold of the Social Democrats. The evaluation of the ÖVP governmental performance is also favourable, and the Chairman, Wolfgang Schüssel, is seen as a trustworthy and competent politician and compared to Gusenbauer, the SPÖ chairman, seems to be in many aspects a charismatic person. These parties thus remained the main axis of the Austrian party system in the 2002 election and will decide (probably not in mutual agreement) about the form of a government coalition.

The Austrian electoral system – more a sign of continuity than an example of a fluid system

The genesis of the Austrian electoral system started at the beginning of the 1860s. More than four decades had passed until limited suffrage became universal for men, introduced in 1905-07. The single member plurality electoral system remained however with the situation changing dramatically after the decline of the Habsburg Empire after the First World War. The Austrian First Republic adopted a PR electoral system which helped to maintain social segmentation and to translate it into the composition of Parliament. The PR principle is enshrined in the Austrian constitution (Article 26) and its use in practice has remained relatively consistent since 1945. Nevertheless, there were several changes to the Austrian electoral system. Important reforms occurred in 1971 and 1992, but it could be said that the Austrian electoral system created and creates only small or even negligible distortions (Müller 2003: 91; Müller 2005: 397). The proposal to introduce a personalized PR system as in Germany was rejected due to the unwillingness of both the ÖVP and SPÖ to apply it. The idea of switching to a simple majority vote system met the same fate (Müller 2005: 412-414; Pelinka 1999: 504).

The 1971 reform was provoked by the feeling in politics that electoral law favoured ÖVP voters and it was consequently disadvantageous for both the SPÖ and FPÖ due to the arrangement of electoral districts. The former 25 districts were replaced by nine

new and larger units. The new system was, however, criticized for not allowing personal contact between candidates and voters and for giving all power to political parties in the process of distribution of candidates on the electoral list. Discussions held in the 1970s and 1980s lead to the latest reform in 1992. Forty smaller districts, with around 180,000 eligible voters, were created in order to enable personal contact between candidates and voters. Preferential voting within a party list system was introduced too (cf. Fischer 1997: 101-102; Müller 2005: 399-400).

The Austrian Parliament – National Assembly (*Nationalrat*) – is composed of 183 members, and Austria is divided into 43 electoral districts. Candidates are nominated via party lists. Voters could change the ordering of candidate using preferential voting at district and regional levels. There is a per cent threshold at state level, which qualifies parties eligible for the distribution of seats in Parliament. Nevertheless, there is another possibility for the party to take part in national level seat distribution if the party wins a seat in the first tier in any of the 43 districts. The threshold is combined with three-tier districts at electoral unit, regional, and national levels using the Hare method (for the first and the second tiers) and d’Hondt method (for the third tier) systems (cf. Müller 2005: 401-405).

How pure is the Austrian PR system? The format of Austrian PR awards seats in such a way that the outcome is *de facto* proportional in terms of the total number of votes (cf. Gallagher, Mitchell 2005: 17). The Austrian electoral system ranks among the most proportional systems according to Farrell (2001: 157-159; cf. Müller 2005: 407-408): the Gallagher index of disproportion was only 1.8 (the mean for the 1994-2002 period compared with 3.38 in Germany or 5.20 in the Czech Republic) at the end of the 1990s; the effective number of parties index was 3.54 at the same time, which corresponds more or less with the four main parties represented in Parliament.

Searching for an alternative explanation: changes in society and political behaviour; restructuring cleavages of Austrian politics

The break-up of the camp *milieu* that started in the 1970s brought about the individualization of voter behaviour, a rapid increase in the degree of voter volatility (cf. Plasser, Ulram 2000; Müller 2000: 9-13; Müller, Plasser, Ulram 2004; Plasser, Ulram 2002), a decrease in the effectiveness of traditional socio-political networks built around both large parties; and the phenomenon of disgust with politics increased (*Politikverdrossenheit*; cf. Ulram 1990: 170-180, 215-220; Pelinka, Rosenberger 174-176; Müller, Plasser, Ulram 2004: 149-154; Plasser, Ulram 2002: 108-115). All these processes also introduced a new dynamic in Austrian party competition. Both large parties had to adapt from camp-oriented parties to “catch-all” forms of parties focused primarily on electoral competition. However, the party membership of the SPÖ and ÖVP remains relatively high in the Western European context (cf. Pelinka, Rosenberger 2003: 152-153).

Table 3: Development in the number of members of SPÖ, ÖVP and FPÖ

SPÖ		ÖVP (estimate)		FPÖ	
1970	719,389	1974	539,000	1970	32,800
1975	693,156	1977	546,000	1975	33,000
1980	719,881	1980	554,000	1980	37,380
1985	685,588	1986	555,000	1985	37,057
1990	597,426	1990	555,000	1990	40,629

Source: Nick, Pelinka (1993: 73)

Until the 1980s the electoral behaviour of Austrian society had been very stable, determined by a camp mentality and still characterized by electoral models from the time of a fully stratified society.¹⁰ The most turbulent period was the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, when Austrian electoral behaviour was dominated by processes of segmentation, individualization and de-alignment of socio-political relations (cf. Plasser 1988; Plasser, Ulram, Grausgruber 1992: 20-23; Plasser, Ulram 2002: 83-100) that increased electoral mobility in an unprecedented manner (Ulram 1990: 288-289). While in 1970 the percentage of voters that strongly identified themselves with their party and were its core members constituted 65 per cent of all voters, this was only 39 per cent in 1986, and only 28 per cent in 1995 (Pelinka, Rosenberger 2003: 177). This de-segmentation was mainly of benefit to those parties that were not so connected with the traditional environment of strong mass political groupings (FPÖ and Greens). The SPÖ's fall was partly caused by the change in the role of trade unions in the economy, while the ÖVP suffered mainly through the process of secularization in among Austrian voters. Both parties, moreover, were not very attractive to the new post-material oriented section of the electorate, in particular the younger generation. On the other hand, older people still vote mainly for the ÖVP and the SPÖ. However, the process of breaking identification relations of voter-party slowed down considerably at the beginning of the current decade, and some authors (Plasser, Ulram 2002: 92) talk about a certain re-stabilization.

Table 4: Aggregated differences in the electoral behaviour of age cohorts 1986-99

Superiority (+) or fall (-) of the SPÖ and the ÖVP compared to the FPÖ with the LIF and the Greens

Age cohort	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	SPÖ and ÖVP 1986-1999
18-29	+44	+18	±0	-4	-10	-54
30-44	+60	+44	+14	+22	+14	-46
15-59	+80	+60	+34	+44	+37	-43
60 and above	+78	+80	+48	+56	+47	-31

Source: Müller (2000: 21).

¹⁰ Among the Western European countries, Austria was a state with the lowest average total volatility in the period from 1918 to 1985 (Bartolini, Mair 1990: 74, and 323-324).

Besides the break-up of the camp mentality, the Austrian electoral market was also liberalized by the process of privatization of many state enterprises in the 1980s and reduction of the welfare state, which began in the 1990s and progressed during Schüssel's first coalition government of the ÖVP and FPÖ in 2000-02 (Pelinka, Rosenberger 2003: 62-63). Furthermore, new issues emerged that the voters cared about.¹¹ Another example of declining of traditional means of *Lager* control over the electorate was the breakdown of traditional partisan dailies (as for example SPÖ-based *Arbeiter Zeitung*) and at the same time the emergence of new printed media such as *Der Standard* at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s. More competition in the sphere of electronic media (broadcasting) has opened since then as well (Larkey 1999: 213-215).

Neither of the two large Austrian parties was prepared for these changes at the end of the 1980s. According to Peter Ulram, the following was still true at the beginning of the 1990s:

1. The party structures were not able to react to the desegmentation and decline in camp mentality and failed to open communication for representing the demands of new voters and voter group;
2. the party decision processes handled new issues only with great difficulty, the political style of both large parties was to a considerable degree uncoordinated, unsystematic, aggressive, and full of traditional resentments,
3. a large group of the members of both parties at the high and medium level still lived in the mental environment of the traditional conception of politics, which differentiated them not only from the population but also for instance from the economic and cultural élite, which lead to a rapid decline in the ability of the “political class” to mobilize voters (Ulram 1990: 289-290).

Besides the behaviour of Austrian citizens, we can find another reason for the re-structuring of Austrian party system's patterns of functioning. We have already observed the remarkable rigidity of cleavages which have had loosened in the years just after the Second World War and the mid-1960s. The cleavages structure has loosened since the end of the 1960s and, moreover, they started to be less society-based and became more political (for this distinction cf. Römmele 1999¹²). What does the cleavage structure in Austria look like today?

¹¹ According to Wolfgang C. Müller, such issues were unemployment, the shock from the slump in some sectors of Austrian economy after joining the EU, environmental problems, and immigration (Müller 2000: 22-23; cf. Plasser, Ulram 2002: 151-163).

¹² A similar, although not the same, distinction was suggested by Mattei Dogan (2002), who distinguished vertical cleavages dividing society according to cultural criteria, and horizontal cleavages that divide society according to socio-economic stratification. He attempted to devise a matrix of West European countries according to relative strength of both horizontal and vertical cleavages, suggesting that Austria is, together with Germany and Belgium, an example of country with strong vertical cleavages and strong horizontal cleavages also (Dogan 2002: 98). Dogan's concept should be, however, more precise in the definition of the relationship between vertical and horizontal cleavages on the one hand and the traditional Rokkan's functional and territorial dimension on the other hand because it seems that his model of vertical cleavages combines both of these dimensions in a certain but unfortunately unclear way.

A certain role is still played by the traditional cleavage between owners and workers, which was somewhat transformed into a looser socio-economic cleavage dividing right and left, to a smaller degree between church and state, to an even smaller degree than between city and the country, while the traditional Austrian character of the cleavage between centre and periphery that came about in relation to Germany's loss of its former strength. Austrian society is currently characterized by relatively strong post material issues and the related post-material cleavages, both in the movement towards environmental models, which played into the hands of the Greens (entered Parliament in 1986), and in the sense of supporting the "new" politics ("new" right and "new", in Austria mainly the socially liberal, "left"), which was of benefit in the second half of the 1990s mainly to the FPÖ and (temporarily) the Liberal Forum (cf. Ulram 1990: 81-87; Müller 2000: 41-43; Plasser, Ulram 2002: 163-169). We can currently talk about the partial unlocking of social relations determined by cleavages and the transformation of Rokkan-type cleavages into less strict political divides (see Table 5). The socio-economic cleavage dominates (cf. Hloušek, Kopeček 2005: 4-5) combining economic and societal issues. It is cut across by an Inglehart-like post-material cleavage which combines axiological and environmental factors.

Table 5: Structure of main cleavages in the current Austrian party system

Post-material cleavage	Socio-economic cleavage			
	<i>material oriented</i>			
	Left	KPÖ	SPÖ	Right
	Greens	BZÖ	LIF	
		ÖVP	FPÖ	
	<i>Post-material oriented</i>			

Conclusion – limited impact of electoral rules on a party system’s logic of functioning in “Post-Rokkanian” world

The Austrian electoral system belongs to those which are “feeble” according to Sartori, and its relevance for party system formation is thus limited. The only real consequence of the 1992 electoral system was the failure of the Liberal Forum to enter Parliament in 1999. This small centrist party, which seceded from the FPÖ in 1993, would have entered Parliament according to the 1971 system. A certain psychological effect of the 4 per cent threshold worked also though the negotiation of two former Green List members, which led to the reinforcement of the Green Party by the members of a concurrence “environmental” project in 1993 (Müller 2005: 406-407).

The Austrian case shows that more appropriate than electoral “laws” or rules is a healthy scepticism related to the ability of electoral rules to decisively shape the logic of party systems. We could agree with German political scientist Dieter Nohlen

(Nohlen 1990: 272-279), who criticized Duverger’s and Sartori’s concepts for certain empirical, theoretical, and methodological reasons and who pointed out the limited explanatory capacity of both “laws” and rules. The problem with Sartori’s electoral rules is that they could be related successfully only to the format of a party system. Regrettably, they have only little to say when we need to discuss impacts on the mechanics of party systems.

If we apply Sartori’s fourth rule to the Austrian party system we can conclude that relatively pure Austrian PR has only a slight reductive effect on the Austrian party system format. The only “victim” of the Austrian electoral system is Liberal Forum, which declined in 1999 when it only narrowly fell below the nationwide electoral threshold. It is, of course, disputable whether the electoral system caused the decline of the Liberals. It seems to be more plausible explanation that the effects of Austrian PR only fostered tendencies provoked by other stimuli. Put another way, Austrian PR enabled newly emerging (or newly reinforcing) parties – the Greens and the FPÖ – to enter Parliament relatively quickly, thus allowing the expansion of the Austrian party system format from two (and-a-half) parties to three and four (potentially even five) parties.

But how can we explain the changes in a party system’s logic of functioning? Sartori is able to answer clearly because he presupposes the almost causal relation between a format and a type. A four (or five) party format – limited pluralism – thus leads almost inevitably to the type of moderate pluralism (cf. Sartori 1976: 119-130, 282-293). But the answer is not so clear in the Austrian case. The Austrian party system responded somehow belatedly to changes in Austrian society. The decline of traditional cleavages and the camp mentality, the emergence and reinforcement of new cleavages and other related processes such as “medialisation” of Austrian politics created a less stable environment. Political parties have to find new ways of attracting more fragmented and more fluid groups of voters in the “Post-Rokkanian” world characterized by the existence of cartel-like parties operating in an environment of only weak alignments. The analysis of the electoral system is thus only one and a relatively small part of inquiry into the nature and behaviour of political parties in a party system. The Austrian case could be used as a fine example supporting such a conclusion.

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Electoral Reforms in Poland after 1991 and Their Political Consequences*

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Abstract: *This article analyses the phenomenon of electoral engineering in contemporary Poland. The aim is to study the causes and especially the consequences of electoral reforms in relation to political parties and the party system as a whole. This analysis is supported by a number of empirical indicators, e.g. over-representation and under-representation of political parties, aggregation, fragmentation and polarization of the party system, etc. The Polish case study excellently demonstrated the theories of the direct influence of the electoral system on the party system, both in a positive and negative sense. Politicians can use electoral reform to help stabilize the party system and the political régime as a whole (Polish electoral reform of 1993), or they can use the same tool to help themselves (to ease re-entry into parliament), but at the expense of stabilization of the party system (Polish electoral reform of 2001).*

Key words: *election, electoral system, electoral engineering, parties and party system, Poland*

Introduction

Poland provides us with a unique example of electoral engineering in East Central Europe. Wherein lies its distinctive status in this respect? Poland is a country where reforms of the electoral system are frequent. Five parliamentary elections have taken place in the last 15 years, and three electoral systems were used in the process (the semi-free election of 1989 are not included). Only twice did two consecutive elections take place according to the same electoral system (election in 1993 and 1997, and in 2001 and 2005). Moreover, since 1989 there have been lively and ongoing discussions about the electoral system and its possible changes on both key levels of discourse – academic as well as political (see Chruściak 1999, Dudek 2004). Polish electoral engineering efforts are not determined by any “objective” criteria: they are a direct consequence of political decisions, which is a fact of major importance for further analysis. The electoral system is widely regarded as a technical instrument, which can be changed or fine-tuned according to current needs and with the aim of reaching the desired political consequence. Politicians change the system because they want to, not because they have to. In fact, Poland uses electoral engineering as a tool of everyday politics. We will try to analyse this interesting and extraordinary situation and try to determine what are its causes and likely consequences.

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Electoral Systems in Poland after 1991¹³

For election to the Lower Chamber of the Polish Parliament (*Sejm*), the electoral system has been based on proportional representation since 1991. As we can see, Polish politicians have not changed the basic form of the electoral system, which is still based on proportional representation to this day, but they have modified its technology and characteristics. By the technology of an electoral system we mean its construction (what are its components), and by characteristics we mean the likely effects and consequences of such a system. Both these variables are unavoidably related. When describing the Polish model of proportional representation, we will put special emphasis on constituencies, mathematical methods of seat allocation, and the electoral threshold, because these are the variables which have the most influence on outcomes in the proportional representation electoral system.

The significance of constituencies is based on two characteristics: their shape and size. The most important variable is size, which means the number of seats that can be won in such a constituency. Constituencies in Poland have multiple seats available, which is understandable given the proportional nature of the Polish electoral system. The size of these constituencies has changed frequently since 1991. Under the electoral system adopted in 1991 the country was divided into 37 regional constituencies, in which 397 of the total 460 members of parliament were elected (the remaining 69 members of parliament were elected in one large constituency, which covered the whole country). The size of the regional constituency ranged from 7 to 17 available seats (10.3 being the average size). The electoral system of 1993 kept the distinction between several regional and one nationwide constituency, even up to the ratio of seats allocated to each segment. The number and size of the regional constituencies changed, however. There were now 52 constituencies, with the number of seats ranging from 3 to 17 (almost half of the districts had 3 to 5 seats, with the average being 7.4). The year 2001 brought additional changes. The nationwide constituency was abolished, and all members of parliament (460) were elected in regional constituencies. There were 41 of them, with their size ranging between 7 to 19 seats (the average being 11.2).

The 1991 electoral system contained two mathematical methods for seat/vote redistribution. The largest remainder method, using the Hare-Niemeyer quota, was used at the regional constituency level. At the nationwide constituency level the Sainte-Laguë method was used, albeit in a modified version: the first divisor was not one (1) as in the original method, but one and four tenths (1.4) instead. From 1993 to 1997 the d'Hondt method was used both at the regional and nationwide constituency levels. In 2001 Poland went back to the Sainte-Laguë method, with the same modified version as adopted in 1991. As the nationwide constituency has been abolished, this method is the only valid one in all, i.e. regional constituencies.

¹³ For more details about the topic see (Antoszewski, 2002b: 60-71; Chruściak, 1999: 57-145, 185-201; Jackiewicz, 2004: 48-65; Jednaka, 2002: 78-94; Krzekotowska 2005; Lisicka 2005, 32-51; Piasecki, 2003: 29-106).

In Poland the electoral threshold has not always been taken for granted. The first electoral system (1991) contained only a limited version of the threshold, applicable in the nationwide constituency, where only 15 per cent of all seats were allocated. In order to qualify for seats and their redistribution on the nationwide level, a political party needed to reach the 5 per cent threshold in all the regional constituencies or to get seats in at least five regional constituencies. On the level of regional constituencies (85 per cent of seats), there was no electoral threshold. The electoral system from 1993 established the 5 per cent threshold for political parties, an 18 per cent threshold for coalitions in the regional constituencies, and a 7 per cent threshold in the one nationwide constituency. In 2001 a unified threshold of 5 per cent for political parties and 8 per cent for coalitions was introduced.¹⁴

Electoral reforms in Poland – what was changed, why, and with what results?

There were many electoral reforms in Poland on all levels (all types of election underwent some changes except general presidential election), so it is expedient to start with a certain systematization of the process. As a working concept, we could divide Polish electoral reform with respect to two categories:

1. its characteristics;
2. its goals.

In the first case, analytical distinction can be made between “political” and “technical” electoral reforms. “Political” electoral reforms are reforms of the electoral system, which arise from a given political situation and aim to achieve another, i.e. their goal is to influence political parties and the party system, and through them eventually even politics itself. Both reforms of the electoral system for the parliamentary election in 1993 and 2001 and the electoral reform of the municipal election in 2002¹⁵ can be classified as “political” electoral reforms. On the other hand, “technical” electoral reforms are those which arise because of necessary adjustments to changed conditions at the level of the political system. The electoral system is adapted to the constitutional framework, as there should not be any discrepancy between the two. A typical example of a “technical” electoral reform is the reform of the electoral system for local election in 1998, which followed a wide-ranging reform of the whole administrative structure of the country, effective since 1 January 1999¹⁶.

¹⁴ It is important to note that in all the aforementioned cases, the thresholds have not been applicable for political groups representing national minorities. As a result, there are now (after the election of 2005) two representatives of the German minority in the *Sejm*.

¹⁵ The direct election of mayors being one of the principal changes (for more information, see Kubát, 2003: 78-80; Piasecki, 2003: 163-191).

¹⁶ This reform diminished the number and enlarged the size of the *województwo* (voivodship and province) and introduced self-governing districts as links between the larger regional and smaller county administrations. The provinces acquired autonomy, and regional parliaments started to be elected in direct general election. More on this topic in Dudek (2004: 458-460); Kubát (1999).

The second distinction that we can make is between “legitimate” and “special-interest” electoral reforms. A “legitimate” electoral reform attempts to ameliorate an evidently malfunctioning party system, whereas “purposeful” electoral reform is a result of interplay between political parties which are trying to use the systemic change to enhance their chances in the upcoming election. This distinction may seem unclear at the moment, but it will become understandable once we analyse both major Polish electoral reforms in 1993 and 2001. These two reforms are effective examples of both types, the one of 1993 being “legitimate”; the 2001 “purposeful”. They are also relevant for the topic of this study, as here we can clearly see the relationship and its consequences, between the electoral and the party systems.

The electoral Reform of 1993, Its Origins and Consequences

The electoral system adopted in 1991, which was characterized by its maximum proportion, was deliberately adopted, and these proportional effects were considered to be a desirable consequence of the system. From 1989 to 1991, apart from gradual fragmentation in Parliament, the political scene further disintegrated also outside the *Sejm* (in those years the number of registered political parties reached 100)¹⁷. Most of them did not have any representation in Parliament but harboured such ambitions. In this situation it was considered prudent to allow for the most representative reflection of the political situation in the country in Parliament¹⁸. Many MPs were thinking along these lines as they tried to guarantee further parliamentary existence of their freshly formed groupings (this was a time of tumultuous formation of the party system due to disintegration of the Solidarity movement). As a result, an electoral system was adopted which satisfied these ambitions (Antoszewski, 1999: 91).

The high extent of proportionality of the 1991 electoral system was ensured by the following aspects of the system:

1. larger constituencies;
2. chosen method of seat allocation of seats within regional constituencies;
3. chosen method of seat allocation of seats in the nationwide constituency;
4. almost absolute absence of electoral thresholds;
5. limited barriers for registration of lists in electoral districts.

This electoral system did not cause the extreme fragmentation of the party system *per se*, but it enabled the fragmented political system to be relatively accurately represented in parliament; this was due to the fact that the system did not in any way skew the election results in favour of large parties (it was more or less neutral, which enabled the smaller parties to acquire seats). The *Sejm* was in the end composed of

¹⁷ One of the causes was a new law regulating political parties, which did not contain any major barriers for registration of new parties (see Grylak, Żmigrodzki, 2005: 280-281).

¹⁸ It should be noted that the *Sejm* which resulted from semi-free election of 1989 reflected “old” political realities connected with the transformation towards democracy. In 1991 it did not any way possess the necessary legitimacy and was by no means politically representative of the country as a whole.

29 political groupings (24 electoral committees¹⁹)! Rae's (1971: 53-58) fragmentation index was 0.94 on the parliamentary level, and Laakso and Taagepera's (1979: 3-27) index of the effective number of parties was approximately 10 (Kubát 2000:104)!²⁰ At the same time we are witnessing a significant deconcentration of the party system. The strongest party (Democratic Union) held only 13.48 per cent of seats in the *Sejm*, and the two strongest parties combined (Democratic Union and Alliance of the Democratic Left) held only 26.52 per cent of seats. Small political parties indeed benefited from the electoral system, which can be demonstrated by their over-representation in the *Sejm* (their percentage share of seats was greater than their percentage share of votes; the index value was larger than 1). All political parties which received more than 3 per cent of the votes were over-represented, including several weaker parties which did not register their candidates in all electoral districts. The values of the deformation index (percentage of seats divided by percentage of votes) are not extreme, and over-representation does not exceed 1.5 (except for two specific regional parties). As a whole, the electoral system more or less reflected the preferences of the voters.

Table 1: Deformation index index in 1991

Political arty	% of Votes	Seats/% of Seats	Deformation index
Democratic Union	12.32	62/13.48	1.094
Alliance of the Democratic Left	11.99	60/13.04	1.088
Polish Peasant's Party (SP)*	9.22	50/10.87	1.179
Catholic Election Action**	8.98	50/10.87	1.211
Confederation for an Independent Poland***	8.88	51/11.09	1.249
Civic Centre Alliance	8.71	44/9.57	1.099
Liberal Democratic Congress	7.49	37/8.04	1.073
Polish Peasant's Party(PL)	5.47	28/6.09	1.113
Solidarity Trade Union	5.05	27/5.87	1.162
Polish Friends of Beer Party	3.27	16/3.48	1.172
German Minority	1.17	7/1.52	1.299
Christian Democracy	2.25	5/1.09	0.484

¹⁹ Strictly speaking, political parties or coalitions do not participate in election. These organizations need to form election committees (*komitety wyborcze*), which take part in election. In the last communal election in 2002 there was a tactical trend of calling election committees by names other than those of the parties who formed them (Kubát, 2003: 82-83).

²⁰ From 1945 to 1979 the average value of the Rae's fragmentation index on the parliamentary level in 16 Western European countries was 0.7, and from 1980 to 1994 it was 0.7 as well. The average value of the effective number of parties in the same 16 countries in the same time periods was 3.4 and 3.8 respectively (Herbut, 1997: 174 and 177). In the Central and Eastern European region the highest Rae's fragmentation index was at that time in Slovenia (0.85 in 1992), the lowest in Bulgaria (0.59 in 1991). The highest value of the effective parties index was again in Slovenia (6.58 in 1992) and the lowest in Bulgaria (2.41 in 1991) (Kubát 1999: 105-106).

Labour Solidarity	2.06	4/0.87	0.408
Christian Democrat Party	1.12	4/0.87	0.777
Union of Real Policy	2.25	3/0.65	0.289
Party X	0.47	3/0.65	1.383
Movement for Silesian Autonomy	0.36	2/0.43	1.194
Democratic Party	1.42	1/0.22	0.155
Democratic-Social Movement	0.46	1/0.22	0.478
Podhalan Union	0.22	1/0.22	1.000
Great Poland's Social-democratic Union	0.20	1/0.22	1.100
Christian-Social Union****	0.12	1/0.22	1.833
Solidarity '80	0.11	1/0.22	2.000
Union of Great Poles	0.08	1/0.22	2.750
Others	6.18	-	-

* Two seats and the corresponding votes of the "Piast" Peasant Election Alliance (town of Tarnów) and Peasant Unity (town of Bydgoszcz) were added to the Polish Peasant's Party figures.

** One seat and the corresponding votes of MP M. Gil from Kraków were added to Catholic Election Action results.

*** Four seats and the corresponding votes of the Polish Western Union and 1 seat of an MP from the Alliance of Women Against Life's Hardships were added to the Confederation for an Independent Poland figures.

**** An MP from the Christian-Social Union, on the electoral list of Electoral Committee of Orthodox Believers, was elected in the town of Białystok

Not all parties registered their candidates in all constituencies (some of them were regional). This explains the difference in the ordering according to the acquired votes and seats, as well as the fluctuation in the values of the deformation index.

Sources: Gebethner (1993: 15); Kubát (2000: 69); Żukowski (1992: 36-37)

The parliament which resulted from the 1991 election did not and could not fulfil its task of working throughout the full term and forming a majority, which would ensure the stability of government.²¹ The electoral reform of 1993 was undertaken with the aim of preventing the unstable political situation from 1991 to 1993. The fundamental aim was to bar the entry into Parliament of the small and ephemeral political parties and thereby to diminish the fragmentation of the *Sejm*, even at the expense of the decreased representativeness of the body.

The electoral reform contained the following key aspects:

1. diminishing of the size of the constituencies;
2. change of the seat allocation formulas;
3. introduction of electoral thresholds;
4. change to conditions, under which party lists can be registered.

²¹ Parliament was dissolved in 1993 after the vote on May 28 of no confidence in the Government of Prime Minister H. Suchocka by a one-vote margin. From 1991 to 1993 Poland had three Prime Ministers (the composition of governments being changed frequently) (see Dudek 2004: 228-323).

The electoral reform of 1993 helped the stronger political parties. The electoral threshold simply disqualified the political parties which were not able to attain it (Duverger's /1965: 224-225/ mechanical effect). Only six groupings managed to get into the *Sejm*. More importantly, smaller constituencies and adjusted seat allocation formulas increased the natural threshold and made the position of smaller parties more difficult at the constituency level. Whereas in the Warsaw constituency 3.39 per cent of the votes were needed in order to get one seat in 1991 (in 1993 the number rose to 4.03 per cent of the votes), in the Białą Podlaska constituency 8.34 per cent of the votes were needed for one seat in 1991, and in 1993 the percentage rose to 17.21 per cent (Gebethner, 1995: 13). Large political parties gained a further advantage as the electoral reform caused their over-representation and thus helped in the subsequent process of majority formation in Parliament. The strongest political grouping (Alliance of the Democratic Left) gained 37.17 per cent of seats (after the 1997 election the strongest party, Solidarity Election Action, held 43.69 per cent of seats) and the two strongest groupings together held 65.86 per cent of seats (in 1997 the number rose to 79.34 per cent of seats - Solidarity Election Action and the Freedom Union).

Table 2: Deformation index in 1993

Political Party	% of Votes	Seats/% of Seats	Deformation index
Alliance of the Democratic Left	20.41	171/37.17	1.821
Polish Peasant's Party	15.40	132/28.69	1.862
Democratic Union	10.59	74/16.08	1.518
Labour Union	7.28	41/8.90	1.223
Confederation for an Independent Poland	5.77	22/4.78	0.828
Non-Party Reform Bloc	5.41	16/3.47	0.641
German Minority*	0.62	4/0.8	1.290

* The electoral threshold does not apply to the German Minority party.

Source: Kubát (2000: 75), author's calculations.

Electoral reform turned out to be most favourable for the two largest political parties. Medium-sized parties have also been over-represented, but only slightly. On the other hand, small parties (around 5 per cent of popular votes) became under-represented (with the exception of the regional German minority). As a result it was easier to form a parliamentary majority, which completed its term (until the 1997 election), and guarantee better conditions for a stable governing coalition.

On the whole, the concentration of the party system increased, measured by Mayer's (1980: 335-347) Aggregation Index, which calculates the position of the strongest

party in Parliament with respect to other parliamentary parties. In 1991 the value of this index was unbelievably low 0.56 (!); in 1993 it rose to “normal” levels of 5.31 (and 7.28 in 1997).²²

Electoral reform brought a stabilization of the party system. Rae’s fragmentation index fell to 0.74 (after the 1997 election to 0.66) and the index of the effective number of parties shrank to approximately 3.90 (2.95 after the 1997 election). This dramatic decrease of figures in these indexes undoubtedly positively influenced further political development. The values of both indexes were still relatively high, but they did not differ very much from those in Western European democracies. Furthermore, they showed a clear downward trend.

Electoral reform positively influenced the party system by eliminating ephemeral political groupings and encouraging integration attempts, which led to temporary unification of the political spectrum on the political right²³ and freezing of integration on the political left.²⁴

A further consequence of the 1993 electoral reform was a disturbing fluctuation of Rose’s proportionality index (see Rose, 1984: 73-81), which was a mere 64 in 1993 (in 1991 it was 91 and in 1997 it rose slightly to 81) (Sokół, 2005: 267).²⁵ This fluctuation is related among other factors to the psychological effect (see Duverger, 1965: 224-226), which had an impact on voter behaviour after electoral reform. In 1993 a total of 4,727,972 votes (34.52 per cent) were discarded, as voters did not realize the full extent of the new electoral system and were casting votes for small parties, which, given the changes in electoral rules had no hopes of getting into Parliament. This occurrence was only temporary. In 1997 “only” 1,652,833 votes were discounted (12.43 per cent) (Kubát, 2000: 109). This development had been foreseen and tolerated, as it was considered to be a trade-off for more political stability and improved effectiveness of both Parliament and the Government.

The dramatic rise of the extra-parliamentary opposition can be described as the short-term negative consequence of electoral reform. Such an opposition became radicalized and much more confrontational. However, these effects turned out to be transitory. On the other hand, the electoral reform forced political parties to pursue consensual negotiations, which often ended in the integration of the extra-parliamentary opposition. Many political groups simply stopped their activities thanks to the

²² The figures come from a calculation made by the author. For comparison, in 16 Western European countries from 1980 to 1994 the average value of the aggregation index was 7.47 (Herbut, 1997: 179).

²³ In 1996 Solidarity Electoral Action was formed, which lasted until the election in 2001, when it dissolved as a result of the problematic record of its government from 1997 to 2001 and the related loss of voter confidence.

²⁴ The Alliance of the Democratic Left was transformed in 1999 from a coalition into a unified political party.

²⁵ The values of this index range from 0 – absolute disproportionality, to 100 – absolute proportionality. The figure of 63 is indeed extremely low in international comparison. It is sufficient to note that values for this index in Europe (Western as well as East Central) usually range somewhere between 80-95 (see Antoszewski, 1997: 242; Rose, Munro, Mackie, 1998: 117; Wiszniowski, 1998: 100; Kubát 1999: 102).

new electoral system, as they realized the impossibility of access to Parliament and therefore the futility of their further existence.

The overall assessment of the reform is no doubt positive. It contributed to greater concentration and stabilization of the party system. On the parliamentary level, a drastic reduction of the fragmentation of the party system took place. Despite initial wavering, the stabilization eventually spread to the extra-parliamentary level as well and resulted in integrative processes in the political sphere. This stabilization on both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary levels brought a relatively effective Parliament in the medium run (also after the 1997 election), which was able to form majorities essential for functioning governments.

The electoral reform of 2001 – its political causes and consequences

The electoral reform of 2001 differed from the one of 1993. It varied especially with regards to its origins. In the beginning of this article the electoral reform of 2001 was classified as “purposeful”, as opposed to the preceding reform of 1993. This relatively vague concept becomes clear when we look at the root causes of the reform. To understanding it, a brief analysis of Polish politics before the 2001 election is necessary.

In the 1997 parliamentary election two right-leaning groupings, Solidarity Election Action (it was in fact a coalition of parties, not a political party) and the Freedom Union, won overwhelmingly and formed a governing coalition (combined, they held 66.7 per cent of all seats). It was the first time since 1989 when the political right consolidated, overcame its fragmentation and had a chance to implement its programme without restraints. This opportunity was badly squandered. Theoretical and practical differences concerning the best governing programme on the political right, a lack of cohesion of the governing coalition, later a lack of cohesion within the Solidarity Election Action coalition, bad personal relations within the Government, a number of political as well as criminal scandals, coupled with the plain incompetence of the coalition politicians all resulted in the creation of serious economic problems on the one hand and fatal problems in the political sphere on the other hand. As a result, the confidence of the public in the Government as well as in the political groups on the right fell dramatically. Another consequence has been turmoil on the political right, which resulted in complete rearrangement on this side of the political spectrum. The long-term and arduous task of building a unified political right was thwarted. Both main political groups on the right (Solidarity Election Action and the Freedom Union) disintegrated, and the coalition government formed by these two groups collapsed. A number of smaller right-wing parties emerged out of its ashes. Whereas the 1997 parliamentary election resulted in a relatively well-arranged and consolidated bi-polar model of the political right²⁶, a dispersed model of four right-wing groups was formed

²⁶ Solidarity Election Action coalition on one side and Freedom Union on the other. The right-wing populist Movement for Rebuilding Poland was present in the *Sejm* as well, but it did not take part in any major political events.

before the 2001 election.²⁷ Besides, two extreme groups began to gain ground – the extremely populist Self-Defence of the Polish Republic and a brand new coalition of fundamentalist Catholics and nationalists called the League of Polish Families. This took everybody by surprise and was of major importance if we are to understand the ensuing events (Dudek, 2004: 431-507; Kubát, 2001: 126-129).

The dire situation of the political right was duly reflected in polling trends. The preferences of voters for right-wing parties declined steadily and precipitously (in some cases to down to the limit of the electoral threshold), whereas the unified left experienced steady growth in terms of voter preferences, reaching even beyond the magical 50 per cent of votes. Both extremist groupings mentioned above experienced a sharp increase in preferences. Only the Polish Peasant's Party kept its stable core of voters (ranging from 7 to 11 per cent), which was a rather unusual occurrence at that time (for more detailed analysis, see Kubát 2001: 129-130).

The aforementioned disintegration of the political right, together with voter preferences at the time, became key impulses for the electoral reform of 2001.²⁸ A new electoral law was pushed through by deputies on the right, whose new parties faced the existential problem of getting their members into Parliament again, which was a consequence of the aforementioned developments. Fear of a decisive victory of the Alliance of the Democratic Left in the upcoming election was the second major factor of importance, as voter support for the party hovered around 50 per cent according to polls (it subsequently acquired much less in the actual election). Right-wing MPs did not heed frequent warnings not to change the electoral system to suit their particularistic interests and finally passed the new electoral law on 12 April 2001, just six months before the election date (*sic!*) (MPs of the Alliance of the Democratic Left voted against the law). The new electoral system was passed surprisingly smoothly when compared with the reforms in 1991 and 1993, when major political controversies, delays and even obstructions had occurred (Zdort 2001).

It is evident that the electoral reform of 2001 was not enacted in an attempt to improve the functioning of the party system and the political system as a whole (as was the case in 1993), but because of particularistic political interests of the smaller political parties. This argument will become clear when we look at the origins and effects of the reform.

²⁷ These parties emerged from the divisions within Solidarity Election Action and Freedom Union: Civic Platform; Law and Justice; remnants of the Freedom Union and the severely undermined Solidarity Election Action "Right" with a modified name (furthermore, as a coalition it contained other parties as well). To add to this, important and not exactly clear personal changes occurred, with politicians from different parties joining new groupings and their party lists.

²⁸ Another reason, which was only technical, was the necessity to adjust the electoral districts to the new administrative system of the country after the reform of 1998 (parliamentary and senatorial constituencies were identical to the old voivodships), in order to forestall organizational and legal (constitutional) difficulties (Zdort 2001). This was not in any way related to the political outcomes of the electoral reform and it played only a marginal role in the discussions of parliament, which were motivated almost purely by political consequences of the proposed reform.

The electoral reform had the following basic characteristics with respect to its effects:

1. increase in size of constituencies;
2. elimination of the nationwide constituency;
3. change of the mathematical method for seat allocation;
4. change in the means of financing electoral campaigns.

The first three points had the most influence on the change in consequences of the electoral system; the last point did so only to a limited extent²⁹.

The electoral reform of 2001 had several effects. It mitigated the over-representation of political parties. It may be true that all parties became over-represented, with larger parties more so, but the differences were however minimal. Moreover, we can see a slightly growing over-representation among the smallest parties. Compared with effects of the electoral system of 1993, the over-representation of large political parties is significantly lower; the same holds true for medium-sized parties (see Table 2).³⁰ This trend is even more significant if we compare the level of the deformation index in 1997 (under the electoral system of 1993) and in 2001 (see Tables 3 and 4). A shift in favour of medium-size and smaller parties of the new electoral system then becomes evident.

Table 3: Deformation index in 2001

Political Party	% of Votes	Seats% of Seats	Deformation index
Alliance of the Democratic Left – Labour Union	41.04	216/46.96**	1.144
Civic Platform	12.68	65/14.13	1.114
Self-Defence	10.20	53/11.52	1.129
Law and Justice	9.50	44/9.57	1.007
Polish Peasant's Party	8.89	42/9.13	1.028
League of Polish Families	7.87	38/8.26	1.050
German Minority*	0.36	2/0.43	1.194

* The electoral threshold does not apply to the German Minority party.

**The Labour Union formed an independent parliamentary club with 16 members after the election.

Source: *Kubát (2001: 135), authors's calculations.*

²⁹ The electoral law made the financing of campaigns stricter through various limitations. State subsidies for political parties increased, with only those parties that gained more than 3 per cent of the votes in the last election and coalitions which gained more than 6 per cent, being eligible for subsidies (Piasecki 2003:87). These limitations were advantageous for weaker and “poorer” parties (mainly for those outside Parliament) and more or less unfavourable for strong and “rich” parties. The new electoral law brought additional minor modifications, which had almost no political significance (see Jackiewicz, 2004: 58-59; Piasecki 2003: 88-89).

³⁰ Unfortunately we cannot compare the extent of deformation for the small parties with voter support just above the electoral threshold because in 2001 no such parties were elected to Parliament (the weakest party had almost 8 per cent of votes). In 1993 such parties were under-represented, and even more so in 1997 (the electoral system stayed the same, but the psychological effect of the electoral threshold influenced voting behaviour).

Table 4: Deformation index in 1997

Political party	% of votes	Seat/% of Seats	Deformation index
Solidarity Election Action	33.83	201/43.69	1.291
Alliance of the Democratic Left	27.13	164/35.65	1.314
Freedom Union	13.37	60/13.04	0.975
Polish Peasant's Party	7.31	27/5.87	0.803
Movement for Rebuilding Poland	5.56	6/1.30	0.234
German Minority*	0.39	2/0.43	1.194

* For the German Minority party the electoral threshold does not apply.

Source: Kubát (2000: 90), author's calculations

The new electoral system also increased the proportionality of representation. A rise in figures of the proportionality index had occurred in 1997 without modifications of the electoral system as a result of the psychological effect of the electoral threshold. Understandably, the electoral reform of 2001 further highlighted this trend and the proportionality index climbed to 90 (Sokół, 2005: 267), almost back to the 1991 level (see above).

Another consequence of the electoral reform was a halt in the growth of concentration of the party system in Poland. The electoral reform could not stop this trend, but it slowed it down significantly. The aggregation index fell to 6.71 (author's calculation). The strongest political party held a greater percentage of seats than in 1997 (and 1993), but the two strongest parties combined had significantly fewer seats than in 1997. This could be explained by the fact that in 1997 two similarly strong political groupings (one on the right and one on the left) competed in election, whereas in 2001 an asymmetric situation developed, with one strong left-wing party and greater number of distinctly weaker right-wing parties participating in election. Only in 1993 was the situation similar; the two strongest parties combined still had a greater percentage of seats than in 2001. Not only the process of realignment on the political scene but also the changed electoral system are responsible for this outcome.

Table 5: Election results of the strongest party and the two strongest parties combined from 1993 to 2001

Election	1993	1997	2001
% of Seats% of seats of the strongest party	37.17 (Alliance of the Democratic Left)	43.69 (Solidarity Election Action)	46.96 (Alliance of the Democratic Left – Labour Union)
% of Seats% of seats of the two strongest parties together	65.86 (Alliance of the Democratic Left + Polish Peasant's Party)	79.34 (Solidarity Election Action + Alliance of the Democratic Left)	61.09 (Alliance of the Democratic Left – Labour Union + Civic Platform)

Sources: Antoszewski (2002a: 145); Sokół (2005:267).

Another important consequence of the 2001 reform was the bringing to an end of the declining trend in figures of the fragmentation index and the index of the effective number of parties; both measure fragmentation of the party system (in our case at the parliamentary level). The values of these indexes rose after a drop in 1997. Rae's fragmentation index climbed to 0.72 and the index of the effective number of parties to 3.6 (Antoszewski, Herbut, Sroka, 2003: 143, Raciborski, 2003: 98). These values are, however, not outside the range of average values for European countries (Antoszewski 2002a: 144). The new electoral system did not cause any dramatic changes in this respect; it only stopped existing tendencies.

If we look at the trends in a longer term perspective, i.e. in comparison with the 2005 election, we can observe the strengthening of proportional effects of the electoral system. All indicators show further deconcentration and fragmentation of the party system. The strongest party (Law and Justice) gained 26.99 per cent of seats, and the two strongest parties combined (Law and Justice + Civic Platform) 51.13 per cent of seats. The aggregation index fell to 3.37. Rae's fragmentation index was 0.77 and the index of the effective number of parties 4.26. Rose's proportionality index even surpassed the 1991 election by reaching 92 (all calculations made by the author). Of course, this was not caused solely by the electoral system, as changes took place in the political system before the 2005 election (disintegration of the heretofore united political left); as a result only small and medium-sized parties took part in the 2005 election as opposed to the 2001 polls. The electoral system, however, did not in any way help to counterbalance these developments.

Table 6: Party system after the election of 2005

Strongest party (% of seats)	Two strongest parties (% of Seats% of seats)	Aggregation index	Rae's fragmentation index	Effective number of parties index	Rose's proportionality index
26.99	51.13	3.37	0.77	4.26	92

Source: author's calculations .

The reasons for this, as well as the instant consequences of the 2001 electoral reform, are unmistakable and provide justification for labelling this reform as "purposeful" as opposed to "legitimate". It brought to an end some positive tendencies within the parties and party systems, such as decreased fragmentation, over-representation of larger parties and under-representation of smaller ones, which had the related effect of making it easier to form a working majority in parliament. The objectives of this reform were planned beforehand and it indeed fulfilled the expectation of its architects, namely to help smaller political groupings to enter Parliament at the expense of larger ones, albeit this assistance was understandably not particularly noticeable (Kubát, 2005: 126).

Important and specific factors of the electoral reforms in 1993 and 2001

An analysis of electoral engineering consists of examining the single components of an electoral system and determining their influence on electoral results. The modifications to the proportional electoral systems are based precisely on the changes of these components. This was also the method undertaken by both Polish electoral reforms in 1993 and in 2001, as the basic characteristics of the electoral system – proportional representation – remained unchanged.

Generally speaking, as has already been mentioned above, political science emphasizes the importance of constituencies and mathematical methods of seat allocation as the most relevant components of proportional electoral systems in relation to their political consequences; less so is true for election thresholds and balancing distribution of seats. Polish researchers highlight three factors when analysing electoral reforms in Poland: constituencies, mathematical methods of seat allocation and electoral thresholds. In general, this assessment is correct. Nevertheless, it is interesting to examine which components had more and which had less overall impact, as both electoral reforms mentioned are very different in this respect.

The 1993 electoral reform was more radical than the subsequent reform of 2001, and more factors influenced the outcomes at the same time. Whereas the reform of 2001 consisted mainly of the modification of two factors, namely constituencies and the mathematical methods of seat allocation, the electoral reform of 1993 brought about the introduction of electoral thresholds as well. Political science assigns lesser importance to electoral thresholds, as they indeed prevent very small parties (which are often transient) from entering Parliament and thus preclude its atomization, but this is their only effect; electoral thresholds do not help in the process of majority formation and do not strengthen the effectiveness of Parliament (Novák, 1996: 411). Furthermore, electoral thresholds have no effect on the proportionality of electoral systems of proportional representation (Antoszewski, 1997: 241). The claim that electoral thresholds are of limited importance is correct, but only in the long run. The effect of the electoral threshold is twofold: mechanical as well as psychological. The mechanical effect is instant: it simply prevents parties who do not reach the threshold from getting into Parliament. The psychological effect means that voters gradually realize that voting for ephemeral groupings does not make sense, as they do not have any chance of reaching the threshold anyway; such voters start casting their votes for the larger parties, where it is clear that they will not have problems with reaching the electoral threshold (for mechanical and psychological effects see Duverger, 1965: 224-226). Voters realize this fact gradually, which means that time plays an important role. The introduction of an electoral threshold therefore has a devastating impact in the beginning, but its effects become weaker as time passes. This is exactly what happened in Poland. The introduction of electoral thresholds in 1993 led to 34.52 per cent of votes being discarded, i.e. 34.52 per cent of the votes cast did not lead to election of a single deputy! In the next election the number of discarded votes fell to 12.34 per

cent and in 2001 to 9.37 per cent of the votes (Czeńnik, Markowski, 2004: 47; Kubát, 2000: 109).³¹ This development is related to a dramatic fluctuation of the extent of proportionality of the electoral system in 1993.

The effect of electoral thresholds was a highly specific component of the electoral reform of 1993 and thus in a way overshadowed other factors. It is generally accepted that the size of constituencies was of major importance. I think this factor was indeed very important, but not the most important. The structure of constituencies in 1991 shows that even though they were large, their size was not excessive.

Table 7: Number and size of constituencies in 1991

Size of constituency	Number of constituencies	Number of constituencies (percent)
7	4	10.8
8	5	13.5
9	5	13.5
10	7	18.9
11	3	8.1
12	5	13.5
13	4	10.8
14	1	2.7
15	1	2.7
17	2	5.4
Total	37	100

Source: Alberski, Jednaka (1994: 73-74).

It is correct to argue that decreasing the size of constituencies was significant, but again, not radically so (the average size dropped from 10.6 to 7.5).³² More detailed studies of the structure of constituencies showed that they contributed more to the majority effect of the proportional electoral system than to its proportionality (Raciborski 2003: 85). In 2001 the constituencies grew, even surpassing the 1991 sizes; again, this change was not dramatic and in international comparison these constituencies are not exceptionally large. The smallest constituency had 7 available seats, the largest one 19 seats (average size of constituency was 10.6 in 1991 and 11.2 in 2001).

³¹ In the election of 2005 it was 10.93 per cent, more than in 2001 (data from the Polish State Election Committee, see www.pkw.gov.pl). The reason is the ongoing disintegration of parties before election.

³² The most significant drop was in the size of the smallest constituencies, from 7 to 3.

Table 8: Number and size of constituencies in 2001

Size of constituency	Number of constituencies	Number of constituencies (%)
7	1	2.43
8	3	7.29
9	11	26.73
10	4	9.72
11	2	4.86
12	7	17.01
13	4	9.72
14	3	7.29
15	3	7.29
16	1	2.43
18	1	2.43
19	1	2.43
Total	41	100

Source: Jednaka (2002: 91).

This could lead us to the idea that mathematical methods of seat allocation had more impact than the size of constituencies (keeping in mind the interconnectedness of all factors). This claim can be verified by using evidence of the 2001 electoral reform, which was not marked by the specific phenomenon of establishing new electoral thresholds.

The method of the largest remainder with Hare-Niemeyer quota was replaced in 1993 by the d'Hondt method. In 2001 Poland returned to the Sainte-Laguë method, which was used in 1991 in a modified form for the selection of 15 per cent of the available seats. What changes were brought by the change of the mathematical method, and what would have happened had the original method remained unchanged?

Table 9: Simulation of electoral results for the 2001 Sejm election using different mathematical methods of seat allocation (number of seats; figures are rounded up)

	Alliance of the Democratic Left – Labour Union		Civic Platform		Self-Defence		Law and Justice		Polish Peasant's Party		League of Polish Families		German Minority*	
	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats	seats	% of seats
d'Hondt**	245	53.3	62	13.5	47	10.2	38	8.3	37	8.0	29	6.3	2	0.4
Sainte-Laguë***	216	47	65	14.1	53	11.5	44	9.6	42	9.1	38	8.3	2	0.4

* The electoral threshold does not apply to the German Minority party.

** Simulation of election results.

*** Modified version. Actual election results.

Sources: Raciborski (2003: 90), author's calculations.

If we compare the effects of both methods, the modified Sainte-Laguë method used in 2001 and the d'Hondt method used in 1993 and 1997, with respect to the 2001 election, we come to the unequivocal conclusion that both methods definitely influence election results, each in a different way. The Sainte-Laguë method caused a slight over-representation of all political parties in Parliament, including smaller and medium-sized parties. The d'Hondt method would have had the effect of significantly over-representing larger parties (in this case only one party: the Alliance of the Democratic Left, which received over 40 per cent of the votes), slightly over-representing the one medium sized party (Civic Platform; 12.68 per cent of the votes) and considerably under-representing smaller parties (with less than 10 per cent of the votes). (By the way, we emphasize again that these figures are not relevant for the specific German Minority.)

Table 10: Deformation index in 2001 using different mathematical methods of seat allocation

Political party	% of votes	Deformation index (Sainte-Laguë*)	Deformation index (d'Hondt**)
Alliance of the Democratic Left – Labour Union	41.04	1.144	1.299
Civic Platform	12.68	1.114	1.065
Self-Defence	10.20	1.129	1.000
Law and Justice	9.50	1.007	0.874
Polish Peasant's Party	8.98	1.028	0.900
League of Polish Families	7.87	1.050	0.810
German Minority***	0.36	1.104	1.111

* Modified version. Actual election results

** Simulation of election results.

*** The electoral threshold does not apply to the German Minority .

Source: author's calculations.

The different effects of both mathematical models of seat allocation can be demonstrated well by the values of indexes measuring the fragmentation of the party system, i.e. the Rae's fragmentation index and the index of the effective number of parties. In the case of the modified Sainte-Laguë method the fragmentation index is 0.72 and the index of the effective number of parties 3.6. Using the d'Hondt method instead, the values would decrease to 0.67 (Rae's fragmentation index) and 3.04 (index of the effective number of parties) (author's calculations). The values of the aggregation index also show significant impact of the d'Hondt method, favouring concentration of the party system and impairing its fragmentation. The modified Sainte-Laguë method led to an aggregation index of 6.71. Electoral simulation using the d'Hondt method raises the value of this index to 7.61 (author's calculations).

The aforementioned facts demonstrate some specific features of both Polish electoral reforms, which however do contradict the theories of electoral systems and their political consequences. The importance of electoral thresholds has been confirmed, albeit only in the initial period, i.e. at the time of their implementation (in 1993). The psychological effect later caused their influence to fade, as time passes (the threshold ceases to have significant impact on level of proportionality of the given electoral system).³³ The Polish electoral reforms showed the significant influence of mathematical methods of seat allocation and redistribution on the overall effect of an electoral system. In the case of Poland, the influence of mathematical methods was even greater, as changes in size of constituencies (another key factor) were *de facto* small. The size of constituency could not alone have had a sufficiently strong effect and all the “burden of responsibility” fell on mathematical methods (this is best demonstrated by the electoral reform of 2001).

Conclusion

Some Polish authors express doubts about electoral system being the key variable for the formation of party system and subsequently having an influence on politics. Stanisław Gebethner (1995: 31) or Zbigniew Szeliga (1997: 13) firmly insist that the electoral system of 1991 did not cause extreme fragmentation of the *Sejm* from 1991 to 1993. They argue that this fragmentation originated from polarization in society (voters) and the political scene, and that the electoral system merely enabled this to be truly reflected in parliament. This line of reasoning leads to the argument that the electoral reform of 1993 was in fact unnecessary, as consolidation in the political arena as well as in society in general – which was a part of the democratic consolidation of the overall political system – would have modified the party system at the parliamentary level and in the realm of politics in general, without the “intervention” of the electoral system.

Such reasoning does not seem to be correct. The electoral system of 1991 was indeed not the primary cause of the bad condition of politics in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s. However, by having such parameters which allowed even the smallest political factions represented by often ephemeral political groupings access to the *Sejm*, it directly transferred the social polarization and fragmentation to Parliament, thus paralyzing its efficiency from the start. S. Gebethner (1993: 173) argues that even if the 5 per cent electoral threshold had been used in the 1991 election, nine groupings would have entered Parliament, which would result in its fragmentation anyway. This claim deserves our critical attention. First of all, it makes a large difference for the efficiency of Parliament if there are 9 or 29 parties (in the 1991 election 24 electoral committees acquired seats, representing 29 parties)³⁴; secondly, the claim does not stand the test of the 1993 election. They took place under politically similar (albeit not identical) conditions as in 1991. The party arena continued to be heavily fragmented, especially on

³³ This does not concern the mechanical effect, which remains constant.

the political right. The new electoral system had the effect of preventing transfer of this fragmentation to parliament, which subsequently looked very different. As correctly noted by A. Antoszewski (2002c: 45), an analysis of the development of the party system in Poland shows that its institutionalization and stabilization occurred thanks to the overcoming of the extreme fragmentation and due to increased concentration. "It follows mainly – albeit not completely – from the change of the electoral system in 1993, which made access to Parliament much more difficult for small parties and made it clear to the voters that they needed to start voting strategically, i.e. casting votes for parties, which have realistic chances of getting into the *Sejm* (ibid)." All indicators analysed in this text support such a conclusion. Similarly, the electoral reform of 2001 had a visible influence on evolution of the party system, in this case in the opposite direction. This can be demonstrated not only by the 2001 election, but also by the 2005 election, as the process of deconcentration of the party system started by the electoral reform of 2001 continued.

To be sure, the electoral system is not omnipotent. For example it cannot prevent changes in the party system throughout the electoral term (movement of deputies between parliamentary clubs, fragmentation or consolidation of existing parties), which are so typical for politics in Poland. The electoral system nonetheless unequivocally and unambiguously shapes the defining impulse for formation of the party system, both in the short and long-term perspective. Poland is an excellent example in this respect.

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The 2005 Federal Election in Germany 2005 – an Analysis Sketching an Integrative Model to Explain Voting Behaviour.

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Abstract: *Despite the existence of various significant theories, finding one reliable way of analysing election remains difficult. The short-term impacts of election have gained more importance for voting behaviour, while socio-structural classes have become differentiated even further and party identification has become weaker. In contrast, the accuracy of statistical data from election polls and their coverage in the media suggested a high quality of prognosis. The federal election in Germany 2005 were a showcase for that. According to the author, psephology lacks a systematic combination of possible motives for voting behaviour. This hampers the interpretation of statistical data, because there is no comprehensive frame which restrains an over- or under-emphasis of single factors. In his article he outlines a research perspective that can contribute to ease this lack of systematic in psephology. His aim is to present a theoretical frame that brings together profitable results of psephology and provides new impulses for developing theories of voting behaviour. Only a combination of single approaches and thus the resulting formulation of an integrative theory – the main thesis of his article – is able to comprehend voting behaviour in its entirety and to accomplish a systematic weighting of single influence factors. A first test for this thesis and the outlined integrative model is the analysis of the German federal election of 2005.*

Keywords: *voting behaviour, theory, German federal election 2005, agenda-setting, micro-sociological theory, cleavage theory, Ann Arbor Model, social-psychological approach, political communication, framing process, hermeneutic, rational-choice approach*

Introduction

The German federal election in 2005 produced a surprising result. Contrary to all polls, the Union parties got only 35.2 per cent of all votes cast. The CDU and CSU vote combined was around six per cent less than the polling firms had anticipated. The disappointment of Union supporters with this poor performance was as great as the pollsters' perplexity about their inaccurate forecasts. However, they pointed out in the run-up to the election that a significant part of the electorate still had not made a decision. Do German pollsters have to feel like 'losers' (Ko 2005: 3) or should they resign as the former deputy chief editor of the *Stern* news magazine demanded (Priess 2005: 14). No doubt all polls published before the election were beyond the accepted margin of error. Nevertheless the main business of the pollsters is the issue of election interpretation, not prognosis. But their evidence (the published polls measure morale

not votes, and have to be understood as snapshots), had been ignored on the hustling by politicians and the media and therefore misinterpreted. So Gerhard Schröder's mantra-like statement that he wants to win election not polls, achieved an unexpected validation.

Table 1: official final result and last published polls (survey period or day of publishing) for the German federal election 2005 (all data in percent)

	CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Linke PDS	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
Official final result (7 Oct.)	35,2	34,2	9,8	8,7	8,1
Infratest dimap (6/7 Sep.)	41	34	6,5	8,5	7
Forsa (5-9 Sep.)	42	35	6	7	7
TNS Emnid (10-12 Sep.)	42	33,5	6,5	8	7
Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (6-8 Sep.)	41	34	7	8	7
Allensbach (10-15 Sep.)	41,5	32,5	8	8,5	7

Source: own composition according to the summary on „Spiegel-Online“ [<http://www.spiegel.de/flash/0,5532,11717,00.html> (17 February 2005)] and the official statistics.

Table 1 clarifies the differences between the last published polls before the election and the official final result of the election to the Bundestag. While the data for the SPD, and largely for the Linke PDS, corresponds well with the vote of the electorate, the large difference between survey data and the actual election result for the Union parties is striking. In the weeks after the election psephologists and commentators were anxious to find reasons to explain this bad election result for the Union parties. The following causes were primarily stated as possible factors: Firstly, the interviewed persons concealed their true voting intentions or they hoped to affect the behaviour of the parties by giving false information (Ko 2005: 3).³⁵ Secondly, Angela Merkel could not convince voters that she could be chancellor. Fifty-three per cent of voters wished that Schröder could continue as chancellor and only 39 per cent wanted to have Merkel as the new head of government (*Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* 2005b).³⁶ Furthermore, Merkel acted clumsily in her public appearances, less convincingly than Schröder and appeared almost to antagonize to a media democracy (is this a technical term?) (Priess 2005: 10; Drieschner 2005: 7). Thirdly, the Union parties focused their election campaign too much on the topics of the economy, labour market and taxes. By doing so they largely ignored issues like social welfare and ecology. But it is exactly

³⁵ Manfred Güllner of the polling company Forsa makes a similar argument: several supporters of the Union parties would have had an antipathy towards Angela Merkel. Therefore, they would not have voted for her although they had evinced that wrongly (Drieschner 2005: 6).

³⁶ According to polls from the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach*, 45 per cent favour the incumbent and just 32 per cent the challenger (Noelle 2005: 12).

those issues that introduce the human element to politics and are important matters in an election campaign – especially for a Christian people’s party. In addition, the recruitment of Paul Kirchhof to Merkel’s shadow cabinet was, for many citizens, becoming more and more like an ominous sign. He scared off large numbers of employees with his extensive proposal for tax reforms. He was under attack from the SPD, who stigmatized him as a radical reformer who was cold and aloof and campaigned against him, defining him as a symbol of injustice (Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 62, 64; Deckers 2005: 7; Drieschner 2005: 7; *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* 2005b). Fourthly, many middle-class voters gave their second vote to the FDP. Either in the hope of enforcing the reform lobby in a coalition of Union parties and the FDP or to refuse an SPD/Union coalition (Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 64; Deckers 2005: 7; *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* 2005b).

Not all reasons are convincing; others raise further questions. Tactical voting behaviour and deception can be based on a multiplicity of different motives. Such a significant deviation between the expressed voting intentions and the actual votes pointing in one direction is therefore quite unlikely. In particular, it has to be explained why, unlike other federal or regional election, especially this election, the voters wanted to conceal their true intentions. Such a bias is largely balanced by the recall-question.³⁷ Also, the overemphasis of the voter’s candidate preference must be a surprise. German psephologists largely agree that voting behaviour in Germany is only to a small extent influenced by candidate alignment (Gehring – Winkler 1997: 488). More than three quarters of the voters confirmed this in a survey (Infratest dimap 2005b). Certainly, Schröder was favoured as chancellor in comparison to Merkel by most parts of the population. But comparison with the incumbent is a burden that every candidate has to bear. Three years ago Edmund Stoiber was compared even more unfavourably to Schröder. Moreover, Merkel was ranked better in important traits and skills – such as credibility, the potential to provide jobs or solve future problems – as the incumbent. Even her clumsy behaviour was – according to election observers – looked on with fondness by the voters (Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 60). Further on, why was the unemotional election campaign of the Union parties and the “cardinal error Kirchhof” (Richard Hilmer cited according to: Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 62) only noticeable on the night of the election and not already at the last pre-election polls? In the last television debate of the leading candidates on 4 September the name “Kirchhof” had been connected with a socially divisive tax concept which would burden many employees (Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 62). And an advocate of social welfare and environmental issues such as Horst Seehofer was missing from Merkel’s shadow cabinet from the very beginning. Should not these unfavourable influencing factors have been already

³⁷ The result of the “Sonntagsfrage” (“If next Sunday were parliamentary election which party would you vote for?”) is statistically weighted by the recall-question (“Would you tell me which party you voted for on the last election?”) and the official result of the last election. Voters from a party who are under-represented by the recall-question in comparison to the actual result of the last election, are considered more strongly. In the reverse case it is vice versa. (Noelle-Neumann – Petersen 2005: 293-295).

noticeable in the opinion polls, at least in the poll published on 16 September 2005 by the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach*? Why did the voters give the CDU and CSU a feeling that they were in a safe position for a long time? Also, tactical voters do not decide spontaneously in the polling booth.

Despite some plausible reasons for the surprising election result, the remarkably large deviations from the pre-election polls are interpreted only unsatisfactorily. Too many possible factors have to be taken into account, and each of them is open to interpretation: At what time, in which direction and with what kind of effect the factors have an impact on voting behaviour? The analysis is difficult because there is no way of weighting the different influences on the voting behaviour. Party identification, performance of government and opposition, allocation of competence to parties and candidates, tactical voting behaviour or media coverage, the single possible impacts stand often incoherently side by side. This hampers the interpretation of statistical data, because there is no comprehensive frame which curbs an over- or under-emphasis of single factors. This statement refers directly to the theoretical basis of psephology. In fact there are several significant theories of voting behaviour. However, a systematisation of the base motives is missing. Thus psephology is still facing the charge that it approaches its object of investigation less systematically and does not possess an *ex ante* defined and accepted theoretical model of explanation.³⁸ By integrating the established models of the psephology, this article wants to contribute to ease the lack of systematic systematisation in psephology. My aim is to sketch a theoretical framework which brings together profitable results of psephology and provides new impulses for a further development of theories of the voting behaviour. Only the combination of the single models and hence the resulting formulation of an integrative theory – i.e. the main thesis – is able to explain the voting behaviour in its entirety and to accomplish a systematic weighting of the single influencing factors. The first practical test for this thesis and the developing integrative model is the satisfactory answer of the aforementioned questions.

First, I present step-by-step micro- and macro-sociological motives, socio-psychology factors which have an influence, rational considerations and influences of political communication for the voting behaviour. In certain places I have modified the established theories. I have done this on the one hand to describe them in a better way and on the other hand to save the significance of the theories, because there are social developments that challenge their suppositions. At the same time I gradually sketch the integrative explanation model and clarify it by schematic illustrations. Afterwards I will go back into detail into the still unanswered questions of the introduction. No new theory of voting behaviour is developed; rather I outline an integrative explanation model on the basis of the well-known approaches and their scientific reception. Due to its scientifically founded components it can serve as a basis for a uniform theory-building for psephology.

³⁸ This critic refers to analyses of the effects of election campaigns for the voting behaviour (Bretthauer – Horst 2001: 407).

Sketch of an integrative model of voting behaviour

Micro- and macro-sociological motives

In the study *The People's Choice*, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues showed that the social environment of the citizens shapes their voting behaviour. Family, friends, church, municipality, living and working conditions shape the political climate of the personal environment. During their political socialization citizens require a party identification connected with their social surroundings. Social control and peer pressure strengthen and continually modify them. According to the micro-sociological explanation model, the probability of making voting according the direction given by the group is more likely the more the different social circles surrounding the voter correspondent in a political sense. Vice versa: The larger the "Cross Pressure"—the influence of politically opposite social groups on the individual – the more frequent political change, lower political interest and lower voter participation can be observed. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues developed an index of political predisposition. The combination of the three variables socio-economic status, religious affiliation and place of residence proofed a high prognostic ability. That is why the authors made the much quoted statement: "[A] person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference" (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944: 27). But that does not mean they are representative of social determinism. They also take political communication into account. The voters obtain information from the mass media in a two-way communication flow: directly and through discussions with opinion leaders. These well-informed and much highly individuals take part in political discussions more frequently. In this way they contribute to the embedding of the information in the social surroundings and to increase its meaning for potential voters. (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944: 84 et seq., 191 et seq., 199)

The micro-sociological approach still offers a good prognostic ability. However, it lacks explanatory power. The approach is not able to explain why socio-structural standards lead to a vote for one or another party. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) resolved this problem in their macro-sociological explanation model. According to this theory, profound historical conflicts such as nation building, reformation or industrial revolution cause cleavages within a society. Élités and social groups with different interests have emerged along those different, long persisting coalitions and due to them, parties with a firmly aligned constituency were established that represent the corresponding group interests in the political area. According to Lipset and Rokkan there are a few basic antagonisms in West European societies: Owner versus Worker, Centre versus Periphery, State versus Church and Land versus Industry are the most important. They determine, based on key cleavages, the basic pattern of voting behaviour and the structure of the party system. (Lipset – Rokkan 1967: 9-26, 47) The "Cleavage Theory" creates opportunities to establish new parties only in revolutionary situations. Only in such politically stormy times it would be possible to overcome the thresholds of the political system for a successful formation of a new

party (Lipset – Rokkan 1967: 26-33). This thesis has no longer compatible with the political reality of Western European countries since the late 1980s. The resurgence of populist and extremist parties as well as their electoral success questions macro-sociological theory. When confronted by new developments in the social and political system, the approach extravagates its explanatory power. Therefore, changes must have taken place that questions the assumptions of the Cleavage Theory. A more exact investigation of such processes of change is particularly useful for an advancement of the theoretical basis of voting behaviour. This can be a starting point of necessary and meaningful modifications of these basic principles. Therefore, I would like to deal with social transformation processes in more detail.

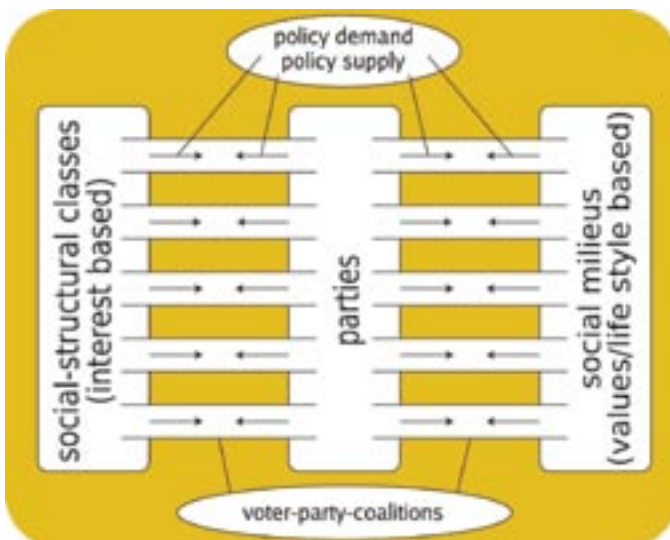
The social scientist Ulrich Beck (1983: 35-74; 1986) was one of the first to formulate the thesis that social transformation processes are stimulating individualization and diversification of circumstances and lifestyles. These processes undermine the hierarchical model of social classes and question its strength. Since then, the thesis in psephology has generally been accepted that the traditional social ties between voters and parties become weaker and the possibility of swing votes, protest votes and voter abstention increases. But also here it is important to take a closer look. Social classes in Germany have changed markedly since the country became a single entity. They do not exist any longer as fighting political camps, but as traditional lines of different lifestyles they are still evident. Cultural borders and mutual prejudices between social milieus still exist. The individualisation that comes with modernization of society did not dissolve the social layers, but multiplied them. The socio-structural classes have been differentiated even further and formed branches like a family tree. (Vester et al. 2001: 13) “The cultural classes of every day life are [...] right because of their abilities to change and to differentiate extraordinary stable. What erode are the hegemonies of certain parties (and groups of intellectuals) in the socio-political camps. Thus there is not a crisis of social milieus (because of value change) but a crisis of political representation (because of an increasing distance between élites and milieus).” (Vester et al. 2001: 13; author’s translation) There are two points, which are important in the following: Firstly, one can observe processes that weaken voter-party-coalitions postulated from the socio-structural theories. Secondly, there are empirical results that new social groups, based upon shared lifestyles and value orientation, emerge besides traditional classes and camps.

Unfortunately, a confusing abundance of different terms prevails in psephology, for instance socio-structural classes, political camps or social milieus. In case of their adoption it often remains unclear whether they include a different meaning too. I align myself with the following distinction: on a social level *interest-based* socio-structural classes and *value-based* social milieus exist. Both types have the potential – if mobilized – to aspire the representation of their specific norms within the political system. This representation can be accorded by parties, whereby voter-party-voter coalitions or political camps are constituted. The different lifestyles and value orientation, which

are marked in social milieus, can cause the desire to form a corresponding policy which like the interests, is organized -along the lines of social class. In both cases the parties are offering the citizens certain policy contents for representing their demands in the political system. Thus the coherent interaction between supply and demand can cause voter-party-coalitions. According to Ronald Inglehart's (1977) thesis, the value change in the 1970s and 1980s led to a new cleavage within Western societies: between a materialistic value-orientation, characterized by striving for security and material supply, and post-materialistic value-orientation, corresponding with the wish for respect and self-realization. The Green Party could establish permanency, because it offered a political home for the post-materialistic values, mobilized in the peace and ecology movement.

Within the integrative explanation model I introduce the domain "value orientation/lifestyle" as a necessary supplement to socio-structural interests. Figure 1 illustrates the reformulated sociological themes. I would also call for a new understanding of voter-party-coalitions: not any longer as stiff, essentially changeable structures, but as coalitions that form based on a certain policy demand, meeting an adequate policy supply. Voter-party-coalitions are joined and are abolished, with different social groups increasingly selective and specific to situation and topic. Coalitions in this sense are strategic alliances, depending on circumstances and people, in the individual struggle for existence on the different social determined arenas. Whereas no socio-structural group-interests or value-orientations have become arbitrarily, but their political representation! The frozen voter-party-coalitions are loosened and now have to be mobilized increasingly by topics and situations. For example, during the election

Figure 2:



campaign in 1998 it was useful for the SPD, to appeal to the “Neue Mitte”³⁹, to induce union-aligned voters to elect SPD, in contrast to the election campaign of 2005, which stressed the difference between the two important political camps.⁴⁰

With this reformulation no achievements of the sociological explanation models were given up. Both, firm socio-structural voter-party-coalitions as well as coalitions, joined topic and situation specific, are explainable. The quality, quantity and stability of the cleavages depend on the voters’ policy demand and the parties’ policy supply. Combined, this can lead to strong cross pressure as well as to firm party commitment. The question of de-alignment or realignment is not decided; both developments stay explainable within the presented model. I want to stress once more the necessity of mobilization along the cleavages. Social conflicts are not bare theoretical constructs, but political tensions between social groups, which have been significant for a long time. Therefore, the underlying conflicts have to be current to a certain extent otherwise they could not have an impact on the voting behaviour. Voter-party-coalitions have to be revitalized from time to time as voters assure themselves about the political intentions of the parties. Especially at very political periods, such as election, voter-party-coalitions are affected by important issues (Pappi 1979: 466 et seq.; Schultze 2003: 74).

Socio-psychological explanation approach: party identification

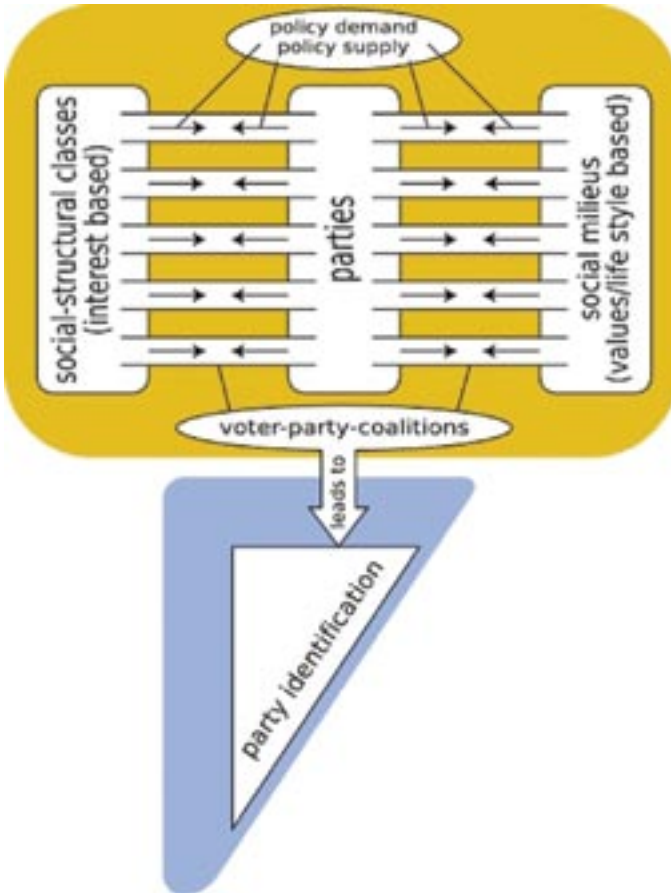
Angus Campell and his colleagues formulated the socio-psychological explanation approach in the 1950s. Despite or perhaps because of the discussions about the transferability of the US-American Ann Arbor Model, it developed into one of the most prominent theories of the empirical election research outside the USA.⁴¹ The decision process at an election is described as a “funnel of causality”; at its exit is the voting decision. The short-term influences, such as preferences for candidates, parties and issues precede this exit directly. Further long-term factors like party identification or social structure are again pre-aged in comparison to the short-term ones. (Campbell et al. 1960: 24-32) The party identification serves as a political reference framework, to order the complex political system. It provides a stable consistency in attitude, whereby due to the short-term factors, a voting decision deviating from the party identification is intended. The different motives are not imparted by objective occurrences, but by individual perception: The identification with a group is more important than the actual group membership. This evaluation shapes the attitude to issues, parties and candidates (Falter – Schumann – Winkler 1990: 8).

³⁹ The SPD directed its election campaign towards centre voters. All voters who did not want to elect for the Union parties, after 16 years in government, should be able to vote for a modern SPD. The according slogan was “advancement and justice” that appealed to the Neue Mitte (New Centre).

⁴⁰ The federal election 2005 was affected by antagonism between SPD and Green party on the one side and CDU/CSU and FDP on the other side. The one camp wanted to stay, the other to be in government.

⁴¹ Cf. for a brief overview about the discussion in Germany with pursuing reference (Wüst 2003: 99 et seq.; Gehring – Winkler 1997, 477).

Figure 2:



The central explanation concept within the socio-psychological approach is party identification. The authors of the Ann Arbor Model defined party identification as fairly long-term, affective embodied connection of a voter to a party, as a psychological identification with a party (Campbell et al. 1960: 121 et seq.). In the scientific reception of the model the concept of the party identification was specified: Socio-structural determinants and value-orientation respective lifestyles consolidate in the course of political socialization and lead across the perception of voter-party-coalitions to different intense affective party identification (Gehring – Winkler 1997: 477; Bretthauer – Horst 2001: 397). Thereby it becomes evident that the modified socio-structural explanation model supplements the socio-psychological approach. The motives, resulting from socio-structural determinates, value orientation and lifestyles feed into the socio-psychological area. Whether the voter, based on his/her specific policy demand, can identify with none, one or more parties, he will develop no party identification, or

a more or less significant. Figure 2 illustrates the different pronounced party identification by the downward decreasing width of the triangle.

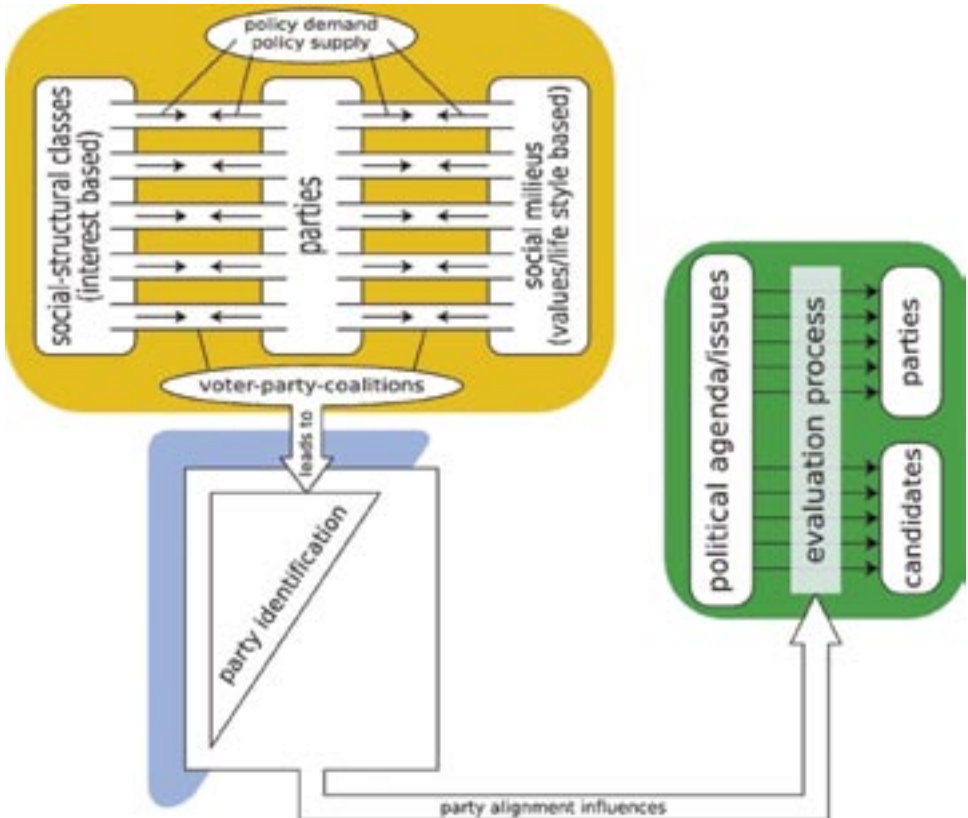
Rational-choice approach

Previously presented motives explain the voting decision on the basis of personal preferences and socio-structural determinants. The rational-choice approach of Anthony Downs, on the other hand, presumes that they go without saying. Moreover, voters and parties are regarded as rational actors, exchanging votes against the implementation of political aims. (Downs 1957: 23) Individuals acting rationally, when they choose in a given situation the alternative from which they can expect the best profit. Situational and political conditions lead the voter to make a voting decision due to its rationality. Citizens have to be able to arrange their desires and requirements and to evaluate the political alternatives according to this preference order (Downs 1957: 6). Correspondingly, the theory is based upon the axiom that if the parties want to win election, they will consider the voter's preferences (Downs 1957: 11-13). The voter evaluates the parties according to their previous performance (retrospective) and their expected governmental performance, were they in power (prospective). Because the voters do have not sufficient information, they make a choice based on uncertainty about the real occurrences. The theory of the rational voter is limited in its explanatory power. The model is not able to explain satisfactorily why due to a large electorate and the almost insignificance of their votes citizens go to vote at all, or why small parties get votes. They virtually have not any influence to governmental output (Arzheimer – Schmitt 2005: 284-293). Down's rational voter is therefore seen as a supplementary rather than as an alternative to the already presented explanation approaches of voting behaviour (Falter – Schumann – Winkler 1990: 13).

In my previous remarks the short-term factors of the Ann Arbor Model missed out the impact of political issues and their influence of party and candidate preferences. Following Morris Fiorina's enhancements of the rational voter and the *New American Voter* by Warren Miller and Merrill Shanks, I understand the evaluation of parties and candidates, intended in the social psychological approach, as a rational vote influenced by uncertainty. There are three criteria, according to the Ann-Arbor model, that have to be fulfilled in order that the political agenda has an impact on the voting behaviour: A voter has to perceive an issue, ascribe importance to the problem and finally associate the answer to the question with a party (Gehring – Winkler 1997: 476). The decisive factor is which competence in problem solving, regarding the respective issues, parties and candidates are being ascribed. The evaluation process results from a prospective and retrospective performance review of parties and candidates (Bretthauer – Horst 2001: 398). Thus, the rational-choice approach unfolds within the Ann-Arbor model: on the one hand by the preference order of the issues and the position of the voter according to these questions, on the other hand by evaluating parties and candidates.

During this decision making process the voter is caught in a dilemma between insufficient information and the high costs of a more comprehensive provision of information. The voting decision becomes a cost-benefit calculation. The voter shifts a bigger part of the costs for selection, analysis and evaluation of information onto his/her social surroundings, interest groups, media, party programmes and so on. In this way the voter is able to limit uncertainty in a rational way (Wüst 2003: 101). Identification with a party also eases the evaluation process. As assumed in the socio-psychological approach and confirmed by empirical studies, voters aligned with a party most likely assign the highest competence in solving political problems to this party. Thus a profiled party identification has an impact on the evaluation of parties and candidates (Schoen – Weins 2005: 212 et seq.). Figure 3 demonstrates the developed integrative model so far. In the dark grey area the rational-choice approach broadens the social psychological model.

Figure 3:



At this point it is worthwhile to ask what opportunities citizens have to understand the highly complex political system in order to make a well-informed decision.

A significant party identification structures the political room in advance to make the opinion of his/her party – if it exists – to an assessment factor. But what works for a voter without party ties? Where does s/he obtain a benchmark to evaluate parties, candidates and their politics? He has no choice than to inform himself or to be informed by others: from personal discussions, newspapers, television, and media in common, in election campaigns; in short: by his/her participation in political communication.

Influence of political communication

From the findings that ever fewer voters have a significant party identification, the area of political communication comes in psephology's field of vision. Herein the agenda-setting approach proves useful, mainly because it is compatible with a plurality of different concepts, complementing each another, e.g. with framing processes (McChombs 2000: 126). In the following section I give a brief sketch of the agenda-setting approach and framing processes.

The core of agenda-setting is that the importance of different news items in the media coverage has influence on the political agenda (McChombs 2000: 123 et seq.). This is based on the assumption that interpersonal communication replaced information transfer in the course of the modernization of society. In contrast to this gained the media coverage more and more relevance for what we know about the world. Besides what the news is about, the nature of the media reports is important: the view we get from the scene, the presentation of the pictures, and the attributes used in the report. All of this has an influence on how we perceive and understand the news. Media coverage has a certain context that is contained within the news. This contextualization has expanded into communication research as the term "framing" (Mc Chombs 2000: 126 et seq.).

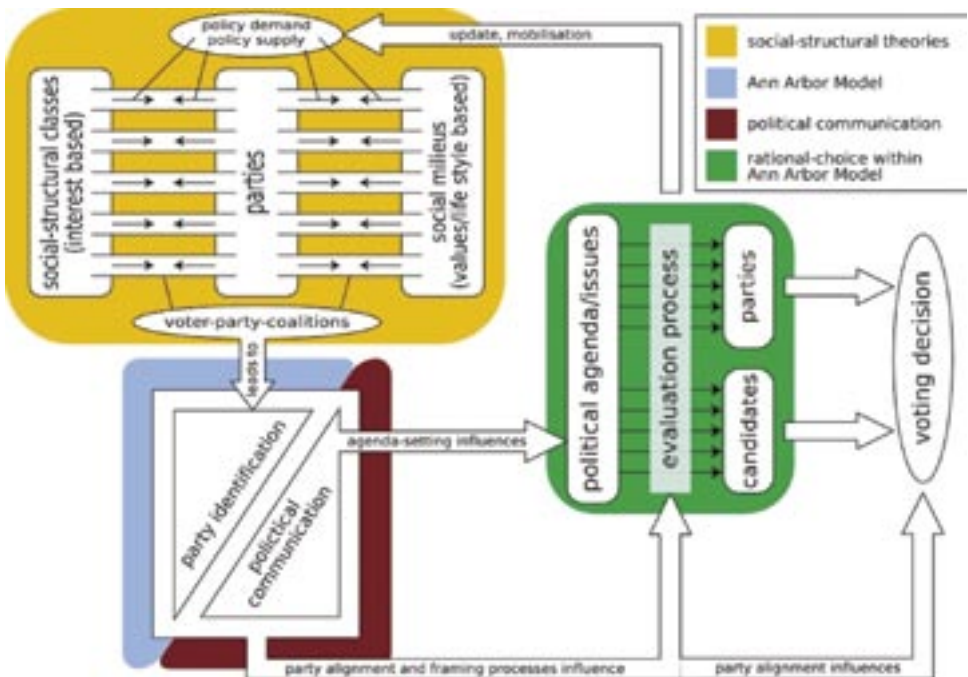
The media agenda and the way the news is produced *can* exert influence on our voting decisions. The stress lies on "can". It is important not to neglect the fact that the news is received by individual processes of news adaptation. Media coverage should be understood rather as an offer for the citizens to align their conceptions with those presented in the media and if applicable to agree with them, partly agree or to reject them. The fact alone that a certain line is being reported – and this is still very frequent and pushing – does not mean that one absorbs this viewpoint uncritically (Schmidt 1994: 15 et seq.). Media coverage is one impact among factors which, considering the time spent on media consumption, is surely part of the individual news adaptation process. But how and with what influence depends on further factors: e.g. personal knowledge and attitudes, the political climate of the social surroundings or the circumstances of the current situation.

With regard to the above we should refer to the findings of empirical studies according to the agenda-setting thesis. In fact, at the aggregated level of media and the public, the significant compliance of the media with the public agenda could be veri-

fied, but in fact the media agenda and the individual agenda correspond only to a very limited extent. Instead, the personal embarrassment of a recipient and that of his/her social surrounding has an influence on the individual topic relevance to a much greater extent. Information from the media influences a complex individual psychological and group dynamic adaptation process. (Rössler 1997: 379-412)

Facing this theoretical imponderability of the impact of political communication on individual voting behaviour, it has to be agreed Otfried Jarren and Ulrich Sarcinelli (1998: 15; author’s translation) that “despite the comparatively high amount of single case studies, even the state of knowledge in the intensively operated election communication is limited because it lacks complex explanation models and comprehensive theoretical concepts that are going beyond highly specialized impact perspectives.” That means for the integrative explanation model that the area of political communication – except the briefly presented impact hypothesis – has to be classified as a black box. However, when facing the increasing importance of media information, we should not surrender to the complex correlations. Further research is necessary to shed light on the dark of the influences of political communication on the voting behaviour.

Figure 4:



Illustrated in figure 4, the impact of political communication is taken into account as follows. On the one hand political communication has an influence on the political agenda, by agenda-setting, and on the other hand on evaluating parties and candidates

through framing processes. The stronger the party is the less significant the party identification of voters is. A profiled party alignment is able to have a direct influence on the voting decision, without a “detour” over the evaluation process about candidates and parties (Schoen – Weins 2005: 198-200).

In conclusion, the model is completed by the aforementioned feature of important issues having the potential to have an impact on voters’ policy demand and the parties’ policy supply, whereby voter-party-coalitions could be revitalized, mobilized or abolished. One could think of the German participation in the NATO deployment in Kosovo. As part of its government responsibility the Green Party agreed to the military intervention in the Balkans and abandoned their unconditional pacifism. Some voters of the Greens lost their party identification and looked for a new political home.

Application of the integrative explanation model

After the integrative model has been completely outlined, it is essential to prove its explanatory power. The single motives of the voting decision, provided in the model, will be presented step by step on the basis of statistical data from the German federal election 2005, finishing with conclusive answer to the questions mentioned in the introduction.

Class structures have had an impact on the voting decisions in this federal election too. For example, an above average proportion of Catholics voted (48 percent) for the Union parties. Thirty-four per cent of people without a religious affiliation gave their vote to SPD, only 31 per cent to CDU/CSU, and to 20 per cent to the SPD. The high proportion of votes cast for the SPD is due to the fact that it is traditionally strong in atheist eastern Germany. Regarding the votes of employees, there is a stand-off between the two people’s parties. The CDU/CSU and SPD gained 34 per cent of votes among these voters. The fact, that just 20 per cent of unemployed persons voted CDU/CSU should be thought provoking for supporters of the Union parties. The election campaign slogan “Putting work first”⁴² apparently did not attract votes in this group. It was possible that jobless people had more fear of drastic reforms than hope for a quick economic recovery and the creation of new jobs by a Union Party-led federal government. This could also explain the success of the Linke PDS in this election group (25 per cent). But again the special situation in the eastern part of Germany has to be taken into account: high unemployment in connection with the strongly rooted left-wing party there (Die Wahl 2005: 15). The fact that the SPD, performing only moderately in the federal government and with social reforms such as Hartz IV, still reached 34 per cent in this voting group may surprise at first sight. But it shows the steady influence of social milieus regardless of short-term factors moving in opposite directions. The best example is the Gelsenkirchen constituency. In this traditional SPD stronghold 53.8 per cent voted for the Social Democrats – the unemployment rate in Gelsenkirchen in 2004 was 19.9 per cent (Bundeswahlleiter 2005). Voter preferences

intensified by social milieus are not inflexible, and this was seen again in the results in Bavaria. The CSU lost disproportionately in that constituency; they gained the best results at the federal election in 2002. And in lower Bavaria (57.3 per cent of second votes; minus 12.5 per cent compared to 2002), as in Upper Palatinate (51.2 per cent; minus 11.9 per cent), many votes were lost (Kießling 2005). Above all, the personnel decisions of the Union parties can serve as a possible reason for this. On the one hand the mobilizing effect of a Bavarian chancellor candidate was extraordinary high in the year 2002. But in the run-up to the election 2005 Stoiber did not want to decide on what to do in the case of an election victory: go to Berlin or stay in Munich. On the other hand, many potential voters of the CSU were sceptical about the entire leadership of the Union parties (Kießling 2005).

Let us deal with another staff decision. Angela Merkel presented her shadow cabinet on 17 August 2005. One of its members was the largely unknown finance expert and former judge of the constitutional court Professor Paul Kirchhof. Initially it seemed that the surprise inclusion had achieved its goal. The media coverage was mainly positive (Media Tenor 2005a), and once more the candidate for Chancellor could prove that she meant the slogan “Give way to employment“ seriously: the tax policy could be subject to this too. But Kirchhof’s radical tax concept of a uniform tax rate of 25 per cent with simultaneous omission of all exceptions had to frighten. Furthermore, affirmations by the Union Parties that they would implement the tax policy this way by the Union parties did not help. In particular, the abolition of the “commuter lump sum“⁴³ and the tax-exempt amounts for shift work and work on public holidays would have meant a tax increase for many employees (Feldenkirchen – Theile 2005: 62). This was the actual point of attack for the SPD, which concentrated largely on the unknown Paul Kirchhof and his opposition to “social injustice”, and the television debate crucially contributed to this image, proved by data from the “Infratest dimap”. Before the television discussion 42 per cent of interviewed people were of the opinion that Union parties pursued a good tax policy and only 28 per cent said the SPD had an adequate tax policy. After the television debate the opinion polls were balanced: CDU/CSU and SPD gained 35 per cent each (Infratest dimap 2005a). But if the election campaign had not been primarily restricted to the topics of employment and the economy, Kirchhof alone would not have had such an impact. As an opposition party, the CDU/CSU benefited largely from the votes from the assumed or actual losers of the reforms of the red-green federal government. Those were borrowed votes, bringing the conservative camp to a high poll position since 2002. The fact that the union parties abandoned committing to these groups permanently or making at least advances to them may have determined the election result (Drieschner 2005: 7) Another problem for the Union parties was that that they could not distinguish themselves as a party for socially weak groups and social equality. In this respect the antagonistic election campaign staged by SPD and Schröder caught on. The policies of the CDU/CSU were perceived as those

⁴² Author’s translation of *Vorfahrt für Arbeit*.

of social indifference, personified by Paul Kirchhof, making it simpler for the Social Democrats to uphold their arguments (Kießling 2005).

This election also shows that media agenda might significantly determine the public agenda, and how the topics are relevant for the individual recipient and what impact they have could be different from the tenor of the media coverage. Roland Schatz, chief editor of the “Media Tenor”, made a forecast based on the analysis of its institute on 16 September: if the media support to CDU/CSU lasts at the last two days before the election the conservative camp will win (Media-Tenor 2005).⁴⁴ Apparently the pictures of parties and candidates in the media differed from the one citizens had in mind. Otherwise the indecisive voters would have followed the media trend and voted for the Union parties.

What explains the large deviations between the last published polls and the election result? Two reasons are possible: either an important number of voters actually made their decision just before the election so that their vote could not be counted by the polling companies, or the poll methods had been in this case faulty. Therefore, the preferences of some voters could not correctly be measured, or not at all. Elisabeth Noelle (2005) assumes the party constellation after the election to the 16th German Bundestag is the result of an opinion formation that has to be fundamentally different from those preceding election. I suspect that a combination of both reasons tipped the scales for the inaccurate election prognoses.

In the run-up to the federal election there were not only many voters who were indecisive right up to the end. They were also in an impossible situation while making their voting decision. Renate Köcher from the *Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach* tellingly described tellingly as a “desponded mood of change” (Spreng 2005). In fact at the beginning of September 70 per cent of interviewed people were disaffected with the work of the red-green government. However, at the same time 50 per cent were sceptical whether a government led by the Union parties would do a better job (Infratest dimap 2005a). It was not surprising that 46 per cent of all voters said that the voting decision was never so difficult in the past. This was mainly because the parties’ political programmes differed greatly from each other – so 51 per cent of the asked ones. Neither the CDU/CSU nor SPD could successfully gain a picture of voter confidence (Infratest dimap 2005b). Also, there had never been so many different governmental coalitions imaginable in the run-up to an election. That makes it difficult for tactical voters. Facing this imponderability a closer look at polling methods could prove instructive. Which results do we get from undecided voters at the opinion polls? To deduce voter intentions, pollsters are looking for statistical “twins” in the data, i.e. those who expressed a voting intention and gave a similar answer to the question in the interview, as with those who did not make a statement regarding their vote. In the scale of statistical accuracy one assumes that undecided voters will decide like their

⁴³ It is a tax-deductible commuting expense for employed people; called “Pendlerpauschale” in German.

statistical “twins” and therefore will be assigned as corresponding (Noelle-Neumann – Petersen 2005: 295). Facing the specific character of that election with all its imponderableness and indecisive voters, one may assume that the assignment of the voting intention through statistical twins was partially misleading this time.

Before examining the plausibility of this answer, let us have a closer look at the voters. Also in this election there was a core of loyal voters with a party identification strong enough to support their party largely independently from the influence of short-term factors. Another part of the electorate possessed a certain party identification, but this was less significant. Situational personal attitudes and the prevailing election campaign issues were able to affect their party identification. These votes have to be mobilized by the parties. If it does not succeed, a vote different from the party identification becomes possible. To carry on this rough classification of voters, there is a third group possessing no significant party identification, above all using short-term impacts for their its decision and showing affinities to Down’s Rational Voter, whereas “rationality” should not be interpreted in a strict way.⁴⁵ The first group of voters is for the plausibility proof uninteresting. They make their voting decision early in favour of their party and that is reflected in the polls. Potentially this is different form the other mentioned voter groups because for their vote short-term impacts were weighing much more. Since the election campaign of the Union parties was not qualified for scooping even approximately the voter potential, the mobilizing impulse for the Union parties was largely missing. That enforces the potential impact of situational circumstances of the election. But they were largely all suitable to distract from the voting intention in favour of the Union parties: one-sided management of the election campaign, little convincing personnel, loss of interpretation sovereignty over important election campaign issues (e.g. tax policy), reservations concerning a large coalition etc. The polling method to align voting intentions by statistical twins works better the more precise are the circumstances in the run-up to an election. For example, with a clear tendency for change, consistent preferences for party and candidate or clear strategic options on possible governmental coalitions. All of that was not evident before this election – the opposite occurred. So this time it was possible that one linked voters without voting tendency to statistical twins that made their voting decision more based on their party identification. In that case there would be – as happened – a preponderance of the CDU/CSU in the polls. For the voters who stayed indecisive to the last, the situational circumstances of the election have been more important. This made a vote for the Union parties improbable and could explain the large change of voters from CDU/CSU to FDP. If the voters without firm election intention possessed a weak identification with the Union, they would want to leave their votes in the conservative camp. The election campaign provided many good reasons for them to elect the FDP instead of the CDU/CSU this time.

⁴⁴ Sure, the conclusion was also based upon the published polls that emerged as defective after the election. That has to be taken into account.

Conclusion

Psephology recognizes a plurality of possible motives for voting behaviour, but without developing their systematic combination. Facing an increasing volatile electorate, long-term motives lose their importance, while short-term factors have more of an impact. That fact has to be taken into account by the theoretical basics of psephology – not only in ad-hoc explanations in post-election interpretations. Therefore, I consider the following steps to be necessary: Firstly, take a revision of the macro-sociological “cleavage theory” and connect its strength in the causal explanation of the prognostic abilities of the micro-sociological model. Secondly, understand the decision logic of the rational-choice approach as an addition to the socio-psychological Ann Arbor Model. Thirdly, consider the influence of political communication on the voting decision more strongly. Particularly the agenda-setting approach and the provision for framing processes have been proved profitable in psephology when the individual relevance of media coverage is taken into account too. Fourthly, combine the different voters’ motives to realize a systematic weighting of the single influence factors. It applies to develop a balanced theory building, acquiring the individual voting behaviour preferably comprehensively. By the example of the election 2005 to the German Bundestag I hope to have clarified that the outlined integrative explanation model can be a contribution to this, what my main thesis would prove.

Nevertheless, someone may have provisos against integrative approaches. Does not the existence of different capable models of the voting behaviour permit psephology to precisely analyse the complex process of voting decision sophisticatedly? Is an integrative approach desirable, even though thereby subtleties of the theories deriving in different science traditions will be lost? The model sketch should clarify that the expressiveness of the single theories persists completely despite the integration. Combining the single election motives systematically provides a further development in our understanding of voting behaviour. An abundance of different explanation approaches is not a criterion of quality. They have to be related meaningfully to each other so that from the bare abundance a profitable variety of theoretical models arises.

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⁴⁵ A mother for example, disappointed from the established parties could vote for the *Familienpartei* (family party), because she *does not* want to give their vote to other parties. Understood, with such a meaning of “rationality” we are outside the application scope of the rational-choice approach. But this is irrelevant for the further analysis.

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Conditions and Limits of Programmatic Party Competition in Slovakia*

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Abstract: *The article aims to assess the extent of transformation of the Slovak party political scene since the 2002 general election. It does so by focusing on three interrelated questions. First, what were the origins of the ascendance of the left-right political competition after 2002? Second, have there been significant differences between party organizational changes before and after 2002 e? Third, how have the second-order election during the 2002-06 parliamentary term influenced the course of party political developments, particularly existing patterns of party interactions? It is argued that the party competition cannot be reduced to a single left-right, socio-economic dimension. Instead, three divides are identified: a socio-economic left-right divide, a cultural-conservative versus liberal division, and an ethnic Slovak-Hungarian cleavage. These divisions are significant across the population and have successfully been exploited by deliberate strategies of political parties.*

Keywords: *Slovakia, left-right competition, the 2002 parliamentary election, party competition, second-order election*

Introduction

Slovakia has often been perceived as an exceptional case among the Central European countries, having undergone a difficult political transition from Communism and followed a political trajectory different from its neighbours (e.g. Haughton, 2005). In the mid-1990s, for example, its political régime was not considered fully democratic, an evaluation that led to its initial exclusion from integration into the European Union (EU) and NATO. The country had been criticized for its treatment of ethnic minorities, and the Government had been frequently censured for its methods of limiting the rights of the legitimate political opposition. On a party political level, the dominant conflict had been characterized as a competition of authoritarian and libertarian forces, the main difference between the two competing camps of parties being the extent of political liberalism in their understanding of democracy (see Učeň, 2000: 123-125). In the 1998 parliamentary election, however, authoritarian-leaning parties were voted out of power and a broad left-to-right coalition government initiated complex processes of democratic renewal and administrative and socio-economic reforms. Following the 2002 election, which resulted in a surprisingly clear-cut victory for the centre-right parties,

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Slovakia was invited to join both NATO and the EU (it joined the latter in 2004), and the overall democratic character of its political régime has since then been taken for granted both internally and internationally (Bilčík, 2001). In addition, many commentators on Slovak politics noted that the nature of party competition has been changing. The authoritarian-libertarian logic of party competition is said to have gradually been replaced by a more programmatic left-right competition (Gyárfášová, 2004: 125). Developments on the party political scene are – in new democracies perhaps more than anywhere else – driven by general election. Not only do election represent the quintessence of democratic régime, they also decide about the status of previously relevant political parties. This has certainly been the case in Slovakia, as in all post-1989 election there have either been new parties gaining parliamentary representation for the first time, or parties are losing parliamentary presence after having been previously politically relevant, or both. Thus, the timeframe of the current analysis is primarily set by the 2002 general election, even though occasional references to important events go beyond that period.

While of primary importance, however, election are not the only source of change on the party political level. Important organizational modification and ideological transformations of parties take place in the period between the general election. Frequent splits and mergers of political parties during the election cycle have been a widely acknowledged feature of many new democracies of Central Europe, and Slovakia is anything but an exception. Indeed, the “volatility of parliamentarians”, i.e. party switching of members of parliament, represents a crucial source of an overall weakness of linkage between parties and voters in Eastern Europe (see Pettai and Kreuzer, 2003, Shabad and Slomczynski, 2004).

This article aims to assess the extent of transformation of the Slovak party political scene. It does so by focusing on three interrelated questions. First, what were the origins of ascendance of the left-right political competition after 2002? Second, have there been significant differences between party organizational changes after 2002 from those before that date? In other words, did changes in the new dominant logic of party competition also bring about changes in the organizational strategies of political parties and their leaders? Third, how did the second-order election during the 2002-06 parliamentary term influence the course of party political developments, particularly existing patterns of party interactions?

It is argued that while the previously dominant authoritarian-libertarian divide of party competition has faded away, it is premature to label the Slovak party competition as following a left-right (socio-economic) logic. A mixture of structural and agency-related factors did push for a more programmatic party competition. However, there have been parties as well as significant groups of voters who prefer alternative issues of political competition, primarily based on parties reflecting voters’ ethnic and culturally conservative identities. In addition, the results of the second-order election seem to be conducive to further structuration of party competition. No significant new parties

emerged, and the patterns of cooperation largely copied the government-opposition divisions.

The origins of left-right competition

As Peter Učeň aptly put it when describing party competition in the 1990s: “there are several dimensions of political conflict in Slovak party politics, there is a hierarchy of these conflicts, and on the top of this hierarchy there is a conflict over the notion of politics and democratic government” (Učeň, 2000: 129). While the left-right divide of party political scene has constantly been present in Slovak post-1989 party competition, throughout the 1990s there have been other, more salient divisions and issues that shaped the character of party politics in Slovakia. That is why in the 1992-94 coalition cabinet there had been nominees both of the far-left Association of Slovak Workers and the radical nationalist Slovak National Party. Similarly, the Communist-successor leftist democrats (SDL) and the anti-Communist Christian Democrats (KDH) jointly shared governmental responsibility in the short-lived 1994 cabinet as well as in the 1998-2002 Government. As was argued elsewhere (e.g. Rybář, 2004), the nature of party competition has changed significantly since the 2002 parliamentary election. A combination of three factors contributed to a clear electoral victory of the centre-right: First, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) saw its worst electoral results ever, primarily due to a defection shortly before the election of a group of its prominent MPs, who were dissatisfied with being excluded from the party list for the upcoming election. Second, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ) of the Prime Minister Dzurinda fared unexpectedly well, coming second just after the HZDS and ahead of the newly formed Smer party, whose programme was amorphous. Third, neither the Communist-successor the SDL, nor the Slovak National Party (SNS) were able to clear the 5 per cent electoral threshold, thus losing their parliamentary representation for the first time since 1990. A new centre-right coalition government controlling originally 78 out of 150 parliamentary seats was sworn in within a few weeks after the official result of the election was announced, with Dzurinda becoming a rare example in the region of a centre-right prime minister re-elected to office (Učeň and Surotchak, 2005). It is important to stress, however, that the electoral success of the Slovak centre-right in the 2002 election owes as much to factors related to its socio-economic programmes as it does to factors unrelated to left-right competition. First of all, the SDKÚ’s primary electoral message focused on the need for political continuity with Dzurinda’s previous (1998-2002) cabinet that was to guarantee successful conclusion of the EU entry negotiations. Thus, the SDKÚ did not present itself as a champion of radical economic reforms but as a guarantor of integration into the EU and NATO. Because Slovakia under the Mečiar administration (1994-98) was excluded from the integration mainstream, many Slovak voters were concerned about the deteriorating international position of their country and turned to parties with unquestioned international credentials. Second, it is doubtful whether the label ‘centre-right’

is appropriate for the economic and social aspects of the programme of the second largest party of the new government – the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK). The party has been able to monopolize the votes of Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians, whose value orientations reveal significant inclinations to paternalism and welfare state expansion. In addition, a content analysis of the 2002 party manifesto confirmed that among the most prominent themes in the SMK's programme include social protectionist and redistributive measures alongside protection of ethnic minorities and decentralization (Berecová, 2003: 65-68). Hence, the SMK's election results are best explained by the party leaders' ability to mobilize the politically active ethnically based section of the electorate, which always votes. It is not explained by their voters' preference for liberalization in the social and economic sphere. Third, the New Citizen Alliance (ANO), a junior coalition partner in the centre-right government, based its electoral strategy on stressing its novelty and managerial competence, as the party was set up in 2001 by a group of successful individuals without previous direct political experience (Haughton and Rybář, 2004a). It should be acknowledged, however, that the ANO election manifesto clearly preached a liberal economic orthodoxy and the party consciously portrayed itself as a centre-right liberal force (Berecová, 2003: 50-54).

Similarly, parties that were confined to the parliamentary opposition status in 2002 cannot all unequivocally be described as leftist. The Communist Party (KSS), which secured parliamentary seats for the first time since 1990, has been considered as a radical leftist neo-Communist formation (Haughton – Rybář, 2004b). However, analysis of the Smer and HZDS revealed their socio-economic profiles to be less clear. Throughout the election campaign, for example, Smer “consistently avoided any references to its own leftist leanings” (Krivý, 2003: 88). Similarly, in the period before the election, the official party documents and rhetoric of the party leader pointed to a strategy of electoral mobilization based on protest against the existing political establishment, and a mixture of law and order and social welfare pledges (Učeň, 2003, Rybář, 2004b). The HZDS also represented a difficult case. While the party re-branded itself as a centre-right peoples' party in 2000 (Haughton, 2001), the economic aspects of its programme defined the party only marginally. Rather, the HZDS has been perceived by its opponents as a semi-authoritarian force that came to be an obstacle to Slovakia's democratic consolidation. Interestingly enough, a content analysis of its 2002 election manifesto showed that on a left-right scale the party is closer to the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) than to the SDKÚ, KDH and ANO (Berecová, 2003: 76-78). In other words, the 2002 coalition formation process was determined by factors more important than party manifestos. Three can be mentioned: the relatively positive experience of cooperation of the SDKÚ, SMK and KDH in the 1998-2002 cabinet; the anticipated benefits of inclusion of representatives of the country's largest ethnic minority into the government and a desire to break with the country's pre-1998 mixed democratic credentials. Thus, even though the 2002 coalition government has been labelled as the first Slovak programmatically unified cabinet (Szomolányi, 2003: 18); its homogeneity probably could not have been defined in socio-economic terms.

Whatever the reasons for the coalition government formation in 2002, the policy manifesto of the new cabinet represented an ambitious and far-reaching attempt to liberalize the existing social and economic policies. A series of policy changes was launched, bringing about extensive modifications to the country's health care, social policy, pension and tax systems, and administrative decentralization. Even though opinion polls indicated that most citizens agreed that serious reforms were needed in these sectors, the general perception of the actual policy implementation tended to be critical or even dismissive (Bútorová – Gyarfášová, 2006). Towards the end of the 2002-06 electoral cycle, however, only health care reform was rejected by a majority of voters, while the views of changes in the other sectors were more balanced and rather positive (IVO, 2005). Significant differences existed in the opinions of supporters of the governing parties and of the opposition (more supportive in the former and more critical in the latter case). What is most significant for the character of party competition, however, is that these policies were consciously presented as “liberal” and “centre-right” by both their proponents and opponents. Among the parties of the Government it was especially the core executive – the Prime Minister and the finance ministers nominated by the SDKÚ – who actively promoted the rhetoric of the left-right competition, but similar references were occasionally made by the ministers nominated by the ANO and KDH⁴⁶. Similarly, the Smer party – since 2003 the most popular party in the opinion polls – has systematically addressed the Dzurinda administration as “rightist” and portrayed itself as the left-wing alternative to it (e.g. Smer, 2005). These activities of the party leaders have had important consequences for political self-identification of their supporters: In late 2005 a (simple) majority of the SDKÚ and KDH supporters (48 and 37 per cent, respectively) placed themselves on the right of the political spectrum, while a considerable share of potential Smer voters (39 per cent) claimed a leftist persuasion (IVO, 2005). The significance of these numbers becomes evident when seen against the levels indicated by the Slovak voters at large. In the same survey, only 14 per cent of all respondents claimed they favoured right-wing parties, with 25 per cent of them of a left-wing, political persuasion. At the same time most Slovak voters (41 per cent) placed themselves “in the centre” (IVO, 2005)

Fragmentation of the centre-right and the collapse of the cabinet

The Dzurinda four-party centre-right government formally lost its narrow parliamentary majority in 2003, when three ANO deputies left the parliamentary party groups to protest against the unexplained ways the party leadership pursued clientelist practices in the ANO-controlled Ministry of Economy. In the same year, seven parliamentarians elected on the SDKÚ ticket defected from their parliamentary faction to protest against

⁴⁶ Economic liberalization and a policy of systematic decrease of the level of corporatism were referred to by the Economy (ANO) and Justice (KDH) Ministers.

the way the Prime Minister-cum-party leader Dzurinda handled an intra-party dispute of apparently minor importance⁴⁷. While the new minority status of the Government did not seriously limit its ability to pass laws through Parliament, tensions between the parties of the Government increased. In 2003 for example, the ANO submitted to Parliament a law on abortions, and the party joined the opposition to pass the statute against the will of other three coalition partners. This step led to a severe worsening of relations between the ANO and the Christian Democrats that was eventually resolved only in late 2005 (see below). Even though the law eventually did not come into force (after the President exercised his veto the ruling parties agreed to wait until the Constitutional Court decides in the matter), this episode demonstrated the existence of important differences in the centre-right camp over cultural conservative values. The ANO leaders tried to build the image of anti-clerical and modern politicians defending a secular character of the state against the culturally conservative Christian Democrats. This anti-clerical stance also found fertile ground among Slovak voters too: According to the findings of Krivý, Christian conservatism is a political value important for the supporters of the KDĽ, while voters with anti-clerical inclinations tend to support the KSS, Smer and ANO (Krivý, 2005: 99).

Political differences also emerged between the SMK and the other three centre-right parties over the implementation in Slovakia of the Hungarian Status Law. While the SMK welcomed this initiative of the Hungarian Government aimed at supporting financially and organizationally ethnic Hungarian minorities living in the Central European states, the other parties claimed the law was unacceptable, extraterritorial and against the provisions of the framework Slovak-Hungarian treaty on good-neighbourly relations (Mesežnikov, 2004: 41-42).

The post-2002 Slovak coalition government was thus characterized by two main dividing lines: the conservative-liberal cleavage separated the Christian Democrats from the ANO, and the ethnic Slovak-Hungarian cleavage dividing the SMK from its coalition partners. Furthermore, a number of disputes fuelled by personal animosities and patronage interests (see Láštík, 2004: 108-110) of the governing parties did not add to an image of an “ideologically homogeneous government” (Gyárfášová, 2004: 125).

It was this mixture of ideological and personality-related factors that eventually brought about the collapse of the Dzurinda coalition government. In September 2005 the ANO broke up in a dispute over the suspicious and not properly explained private financial transactions of the ANO leader Pavol Rusko, who also held the post of Minister of Economy. An overwhelming majority of the regional party organizations supported Rusko, while the majority of the ANO members of parliament found their leader’s

⁴⁷ The SDKÚ presidency obliged all the SDKÚ-nominated cabinet ministers to support the Prime Minister’s proposal to replace the head of the National Security Bureau (NBÚ). After the Minister of Defence Ivan Šimko declined to vote along party lines, the Prime Minister decided to replace him by a more loyal party member. Šimko and his supporters within the party criticized the party leader, and eventually left the SDKÚ to form the Free Forum.

activities incompatible with a proper ministerial conduct and potentially harmful to the electoral prospects of the party. Eventually, the rebels were expelled from the party at an extraordinary party congress. In turn, the Prime Minister, under pressure from the KDH, decided to dismiss Rusko from the Government and to formally terminate the coalition agreement. A new coalition agreement was signed between the three remaining parties (the SDKÚ, SMK and KDH) and the parliamentarians who were expelled from ANO⁴⁸.

The new three-party coalition, however, lasted only for less than five months. In February 2006 all three Christian Democratic government ministers resigned, and the party withdrew its support from the government. Their move was prompted by a decision of the Prime Minister Dzurinda not to include on the agenda of a cabinet session a draft of the “Vatican Treaty”, long awaiting ratification in Slovakia (SME, 7 February 2006). The document, one of the key goals of the KDH, was to regulate the right of Slovak citizens to exercise “conscientious objection”, e.g. the right to refuse to perform abortions, teach sex education in schools, etc. This conflict should be perceived in the light of mobilization of the core supporters of the KDH on the one hand, and an interest of the SDKÚ in the former ANO voters on the other hand. With the 2006 election looming, ANO experienced a drop in voter support, a situation that Dzurinda’s SDKÚ wanted to exploit. The rump coalition government, composed by the SDKÚ and SMK agreed with the parliamentary opposition to hold early election in June 2006.

Organizational development of the parties since 2002

Frequent splits and mergers of political parties is a typical feature of Slovak politics. One of the questions accompanying the decline of the authoritarian-democratic divide since 1998 was whether the specific nature of the dominant political conflict before that date had any relation to the organizational instability of political parties. A preliminary answer seems to be positive. As it is clear from Table 1, the 1994-98 period saw the most stable composition of parliamentary party groups.

Table 1: Number of MPs who left their original parliamentary party group

	1990-92	1992-94	1994-98	1998-02	2002-06*
Number of deputies	44	25	14	37	29
%	29.3	16.7	9.3	24.7	19.3

Source: Malová – Krause (2000), Malová (2005), National Council of the Slovak Republic, author’s calculations as of 1 January 2005)*

⁴⁸ As far as the composition of the cabinet is concerned, there was only one change: Rusko was replaced by a former ANO parliamentary deputy. Two other ministers nominated by ANO also left the party and remained in the cabinet as unaffiliated (non-party) politicians.

During the 1994-98 Mečiar government, when the country experienced a process of serious democratic backsliding, less than 10 per cent of MPs left their parliamentary faction (see Malová – Krause, 2000). It can be hypothesized that the intensity and nature of political conflict – when the stakes of the political game were high – had a bearing on the unity of parliamentary parties. On the other hand, both the period before 1994 and after 1998 witnessed an extensive instability of the parliamentary parties. Hence, the conclusion Gyárfášová (2003: 125) derived from the electoral behaviour of Slovak voters in the 2002 election, i.e. that the (authoritarian-democratic) polarity of electoral behaviour of Slovak voters was weakened in 2002 and this can be identified in the behaviour of Slovak politicians too. Indeed, the phenomenon on the part of the voters could have been prompted by the behaviour of the members of the political class. Table 2 indicates levels of political fragmentation of the Slovak Parliament in the period between election.

Table 2: Number of parties represented by individual members of parliament

	1990-92	1992-94	1994-98	1998-2002	2002-06*
First Parliamentary Session	9	6	12	6	7
Last Parliamentary Session	12	10	13	16	13

* as of 1 January 2005).

Source: Author's calculations

Party fragmentation of the 2002-06 Slovak Parliament started already a few months after the election. A group of 11 HZDS deputies split from the party to form a new political party – the People's Union (ĽÚ). Initially they tried to initiate the change in the party leadership, using decreasing levels of support for the party as the main argument. However, the party leader Mečiar managed to stabilize his position, after which the rebels decided to form a new party. Another wave of defections hit the HZDS in 2005. Hence, during the 2002-04 electoral cycle the number of HZDS deputies dropped from 36 to 22.

The SDKÚ also suffered from disintegration. Seven of its MPs left the party and formed the Free Forum (SF). Initially, the SF did not seem to represent a threat to the electoral prospects of the SDKÚ. However, since the breakdown of the ANO, the preferences of the SF virtually match those of the SDKÚ (IVO, 2005). Defections of parliamentarians affected also the Communists, albeit in a much smaller scale. Three parliamentary factions – those of the SMK, KDH and Smer – remained stable over the whole electoral cycle.

Important shifts have taken place in the political scene outside of Parliament too. The most significant was the process of concentration on the left of the political spectrum. In late 2004 the Smer party absorbed three extra-parliamentary social democratic parties

that had previous parliamentary experience⁴⁹. As a consequence, the left of the political spectrum has since then been occupied by Smer and the neo-Communist KSS. On the other side of the spectrum, the fusion of the SDKÚ with a small extra-parliamentary Democratic Party was the only sign of party concentration. This meant that among the small centre-right parties only one – the Democratic Party – merged with the SDKÚ – i.e. there has been only a limited party concentration on the right of the spectrum. The centre-right seems to be ideologically divided and organizationally fragmented: Even though the ANO is probably going through a process of terminal decline, both the SDKÚ and Christian Democrats stand good chances of being returned to Parliament after the 2006 early election, as does the more centrist Free Forum. The viability of the ethnic divide in Slovak politics is documented by a constant level of support for the Party of Hungarian Coalition and also for the radical-nationalist Slovak National Party. The SNS, even though out of Parliament since 2002, has had a stable pool of supporters, and only intra-party personality clashes leading to a split in 2001 led to its absence from Parliament (Konečný – Zetocha, 2005). Should the party be elected to it in 2006, the importance of the ethnic cleavage will further increase. The claim that “the Hungarian card” is no longer a useful tool for electoral mobilization (Szomolányi, 2003: 19-20) may well prove to be premature.

Patterns of party competition and the impact of second-order election

Two second-order election – the European Parliament (EP) election and the regional election held in 2004 and 2005 respectively, are briefly examined in the remaining part of this article. The concept of second-order election refers to election in which the voters do not decide about composition of the national government. Thus, while being an important indicator of how voters evaluate the performance and policies of political parties, the second-order election only decide about the less important political positions. In the second-order election voters often punish the parties in government and also support parties that are politically less significant (e.g. Marsh, 1998).

The historic first election to the European Parliament in June 2004 also saw the lowest turnout ever registered in a nationwide election in Slovakia. Less than 17 per cent of voters per cent took part in the election. A year and a half later the turnout in the (second) regional election reached just above 18 per cent. Due to their character as second-order election and also because of the low turnout, their results do not bear direct consequences for the nationwide party system. However, both election showed trends that may have important implications for the patterns of party competition and strategies of parties in the national election too.

Slovakia was one of a few countries where EP election did not see a victory for the parliamentary opposition. Fourteen seats in the European Parliament allocated to the

⁴⁹ The Smer party integrated the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), its former breakaway faction called the Social Democratic Alternative, and the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS). It thereafter changed its name to Smer – Social Democracy.

Slovak MEPs were divided among five parties: The SDKÚ and KDH secured three seats, as did the opposition Smer and HZDS. The remaining two seats went to the Hungarian Coalition Party. Three aspects of the EP election seem particularly important. First, unlike all previous parliamentary election, the 2004 EP election actually worked as a stabilising factor for party system development. Even though the Communists and the ANO did not cross the 5 per cent threshold of parliamentary representation, it was the first nationwide election in which no new party succeeded in its bid for parliamentary seats. Hence, the election did not play (in Slovakia rather usual) a disruptive role in party system development. Second, the election confirmed that a great deal of voters who, in opinion polls indicate their support for the Smer party, are less disciplined and more difficult to mobilize in the election than supporters of the SDKÚ, SMK and KDH. This was evident already in the 2002 national election. Smer, even though a top contender for a plurality of votes, came only third, well behind the HZDS and SDKÚ. Third, a *de facto* winner of the 2004 EP election was the KDH. Voicing a mildly Euro-sceptic message and being able to mobilize its core supporters, the Christian Democrats nearly doubled its share of votes compared to the parliamentary election of 2002. The “identity politics” of the KDH based on cultural conservative values clearly paid off, and the well-developed network of local party organizations (Rybář, 2005: 146-149) also played its role in the successful performance of the party. The campaign before the EP election presented an opportunity for parties to further shape the political discourse of the left-right party competition. On the one hand, the Smer party election manifesto was full of positive references to the process of European integration, which was rather surprising in the light of previous unsystematic (and sometimes Euro-sceptic) remarks of the Smer representatives on EU integration (see Malová – Láštic – Rybář, 2005: 106-108). In addition, the party document contained positive references to the European social model and criticised the Slovak Government for its neo-Liberal policies aimed at dismantling the Slovak welfare state. The leftist character of Smer was also reinforced by the fact that several representatives of smaller social democratic parties (that merged with the party later that year) run on the Smer ticket. On the other side of the political spectrum, the ideologically fragmented character of the centre-right was confirmed by the EP election literature of the KDH and SDKÚ. While the KDH based its party manifesto on cultural conservatism and soft Euro-scepticism, the SDKÚ openly supported the integration project and spoke highly of the virtues of the European Single Market. In addition, the ANO suffered from intra-party disputes over who should lead the EP party list, a factor that contributed to the electoral failure of the party. It is important to note, however, that the campaign was largely devoid of any substantial political content. The competing visions of politics only rarely featured in public debates in the campaign. Probably the main issue was a vaguely presented “valence factor”: The parties tried to present themselves as more competent than their opponents in “representing Slovakia in the EU”. Only rarely they explained, however, were what ideas and policies they would promote once in the European Parliament.

While in the EP election most parties tested their electoral fortunes without alliances, the 2005 regional election represent a good case for examining patterns of party competition and cooperation. Cooperation strategies of parties have been influenced by various factors, including a distinct electoral system⁵⁰ and a unique distribution of support for parties in Slovakia's eight self-governing regions (Mesežnikov, 2006: 60). In spite of that, three main patterns of party cooperation can be identified: A cooperation of the centre-right, centre-left and the HZDS. The centre-right parties – typically, but not invariably, including the KDH and SDKÚ – joined forces in six regions. The centre-left alliance composed of Smer and the Free Forum formed in three regions, while Smer also joined forces with the radical nationalist SNS in four regions⁵¹. The third “cooperation” pattern, or rather a lack of it, confirmed the political isolation of the HZDS. The party entered into coalitions only with marginal nationalist and communist parties who were not able to secure a single seat in the regional assemblies. The ethnic divide was also present in the regional election. With the single exception of the Bratislava region, the SMK did not enter into any electoral alliance. In one case the SMK even faced the united front of all ethnic Slovak parties⁵².

The election meant a drastic defeat for the HZDS. The party's total share of seats in the eight regional assemblies amounted to less than 12 per cent. The Christian Democrats became the most successful party, winning over 21 per cent of the seats (Mesežnikov, 2006: 61). The Smer, SDKÚ and the SMK also achieved decent electoral results, gaining between 14 and 17 per cent of all seats. The results of Smer were particularly impressive, compared with their not-so-successful 2001 regional election (see Krivý, 2002). It can be hypothesized that Smer benefited from a merger with the SDL, whose strong regional and local party organization helped the party to succeed even in the 2002 local election, shortly after a disastrous performance of the party at the national parliamentary level.

Overall, the two second-order election seem to have two important consequences for the party competition at the national level. First of all, the identity parties, especially the Christian Democrats and the ethnic-Hungarian SMK, benefit most from the low levels of turnout. Both parties are able to mobilize their core electorate and succeed in placing their representatives to various second-order elected offices. In addition, the SDKÚ also manages to run successful campaigns and surpass all expected electoral results. Second, the patterns of cooperation and conflict between political parties since 2002 reflect a growing importance of the left-right divide, and persistence of the ethnic

⁵⁰ While a list proportional representation system in a single nationwide constituency is used for the EP as well as national parliamentary election, results in the regional election are decided by a multi-member plurality system.

⁵¹ In both situations, however, Smer was a clearly dominant force in the alliance and its partners remained in a junior position.

⁵² In the Nitra region, where the SMK won an absolute majority of seats in the regional assembly in 2001, a “Slovak Coalition” formed composed of the SDKÚ, KDH, HZDS, Smer and even the SNS. The instrumental character of the coalition was confirmed by a break up of the coalition two months after the election.

cleavage. The importance of cultural-conservative versus more liberal political standpoints was also confirmed, especially in the EP election.

Conclusion

The main goal of this article was to assess the extent and conditions of a left-right programmatic turn of party competition since the 2002 election in Slovakia. It has been noted that the dominant conflict between authoritarian and pro-democratic forces typical for most of 1990s has considerably weakened. This trend is confirmed by both the analyses of the voters' electoral choices (Krivý, 2005:107) and by the mobilization strategies of the relevant political parties. However, a convergence of party political competition towards a single-dimensional left-right model based on socio-economic differences has not been confirmed. Instead, three dimensions of party-political conflict seem to have formed: a socio-economic left-right divide, a cultural-conservative versus liberal division, and an ethnic Slovak-Hungarian cleavage. The potential for cultivation of these divisions exists at the population level, and has been rather successfully exploited by various political parties. Party political organizational development reflected and also reinforced these divisions. In terms of organizational consolidation of political parties, I found mixed results. While parties on the left have undergone a process of concentration, the centre-right has further disintegrated and remains organizationally and electorally fragmented and ideologically divided. The explanation probably rests in the government-opposition dynamics. The centre-right further disintegrated because of disputes over government performance and programme, while the centre-left united to compete effectively against the ruling parties. The ethnic cleavage is politically embodied primarily by the SMK, and manifests itself occasionally in tensions between the party and its centre-right allies. Moreover, the prospect of electoral success of the radical nationalist Slovak National Party in the 2006 parliamentary election may further reinforce the ethnic cleavage in Slovak politics. Finally, the results of the second-order election, even if they are treated with caution due to their specific character, also support the trend of party competition structured along the three divides identified above. A particularly revealing illustration of the changing nature of party competition is the poor results recently achieved by the erstwhile dominant HZDS. The party has been unable to articulate its position in the new structure of party competition and remains politically isolated, even though both the centre-left and the centre-right parties indicated their willingness to cooperate with the HZDS after the 2006 election.

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BOOK REVIEWS

*Lenka Strnadová**

The Philosophy of Habermas

The importance of Jürgen Habermas for 20th century philosophy can be matched only by a limited number of his contemporaries. From the beginning of the 1950s until today Habermas has relentlessly been fulfilling the self-imposed role of a highly engaged "public intellectual... who is willing to put aside the lure of modish intellectual fireworks, in favour of the hard work of thinking through the mundane but pressing concerns of ordinary people" (p. ix). Firmly rooted in the Neo-Marxist thinking of the Frankfurt School, his consistent scientific approach found expression in the project of critical theory. Despite the fact that his work alongside Adorno, Horkheimer, and other members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research initiated in 1956 ended with his departure in 1961, Habermas has never abandoned his initial intention: to develop "social theory with practical intention" (p. 265).

In *The Philosophy of Habermas*, Andrew Edgar took on the difficult task of providing a reader with a thorough account of Habermas's work. Despite the great number of academic texts on particular concepts of his thinking, both the academic community and students lack books that would deliver a comprehensive insight into the complex and extensive realm of Habermas's research. Edgar chronologically introduces the reader to subsequent periods of Habermas's theory and lays out in detail respective contents of his most influential works.

The first chapter, *The Marxist Heritage*, is grounded in essays written in the initial period of Habermas's career and collected in *Theory and Practice*. He reveals critically the obvious failure of the Marxist prediction of the end of capitalism in the face of the stability of the late capitalist system. Neither traditional bourgeois theory (positivism) nor Marxist theory (dialectics), are able to equip the critical theorist with a working model of society capable of bringing about social change. Both risk falling into dogmatism.

The second chapter, *The public sphere*, maps a period of Habermas's thinking marked by two milestone publications, *Student und Politik* and *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, with the latter being the symbol of Habermas's departure from the Frankfurt Institute. Ideas sketched out in the introduction to *Student und Politik* expose the basic view of society of the late capitalist welfare state as a body of "unpolitical citizens within... a political society" (p. 30). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* then provides a detailed historical account of the development of the

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bourgeois public sphere as an instrument of political control that citizens exercise over the state, and its decay with the establishment of the late capitalist welfare state.

The third chapter, *The idea of critical theory*, revolves around the issue of scientism as opposed to an alternative approach favoured by Habermas, which finds its true formulation in the theory of cognitive interests and the emancipatory science of critical theory (pp. 56 – 57) on the pages of the crucial work of the period, "Knowledge and Human Interests". The rich and comprehensive structure of critical contemplation culminates in the theory of cognitive interests (interests in manipulation, communication, and emancipation) and critical theory as "a knowledge grounded in the emancipatory interest" (p. 88) partly inspired by Marx and partly by Freud.

The fourth chapter, *Legitimation crisis*, delineates a substantial break in the focus of Habermas's work signalled by an eponymous book. Unexpectedly, in order to provide a sufficient explanation of social change, Habermas turns to systems theory and outlines tentatively what later becomes the gist of his life's work. The ability of the system to manage a crisis is determined by learning capacities that allow agents to respond to the crisis and reconstruct the system. Against the backdrop of developmental cognitive psychology, Habermas distinguishes four stages of social evolution culminating in capitalism with the core in the area of economy. Bringing the argument to a conclusion, the crisis of late capitalism is linked to discrepancies among outputs and inputs of the economic, political, and socio-cultural subsystem. The "post-conventional" (i.e. critical) morality and perception of law play a crucial role in the potential social change that is to follow, facilitated by a discursive process of collective will-formation.

The fifth chapter, *The theory of communicative action*, referring to a two-volume work of the same title, deals to a great extent with the theory of language and its intersubjective use. In order to distinguish what is true and what is not, a certain level of communicative competence of the interlocutor is indispensable. It represents a means through which an individual is able "to question the taken-for-granted and secure assumptions of the lifeworld" (p. 153). The rules of discourse ethics allow for the recognition of systematically distorted communication which is one of the main symptoms of the colonization of the lifeworld. Referring back to the model of the system implicit in 'Legitimation Crisis', Habermas pushes further his theory of the development of different historical modes of society, elaborates in detail the notions of the lifeworld and the system and the processes of modernization and rationalization.

The argumentation follows in the sixth chapter, *Modernity*, with a critical account of the project of the Enlightenment. He revives the idea of critical theory – the critical theory of modernity – that would be able to avoid the impasse the traditional project of modernity run into collapsing into the colonization of the lifeworld. Instead of creating autonomous individuals, critically constituting their world, it submitted them to the domination of interests of pure instrumental reason and inhibited the potential of emancipatory social change. The only way out of the impasse of modernity and the

colonization of the lifeworld is a political action stemming from rational criticism of modernity, facilitated by the return to communicative competence in the lifeworld.

The seventh chapter, *Law and democracy*, summarizes Habermas's most recent thought. He publicly scrutinizes and takes firm, challenging stances on all major global developments. However, Edgar reflects mainly on his more settled work on law and democracy. The development of law copies the path of the development of social and political systems, the result of which can be perceived in the instrumentalisation of the law as an institution that has become party to the system's colonization of the lifeworld. "A discourse theory approach to law, and specifically to the question of the legitimacy of law, requires that the formulation and deliberation of law is grounded in the democratic participation of citizens" (p. 253). Habermas puts forward a model of discursive democracy rooted in his previous analyses, on the one hand reaffirming the central place of communicative rights, human rights, and popular sovereignty, while on the other hand not abandoning the general framework of liberal rule of law.

Generally, Edgar has fulfilled his objective of a thorough introduction to Habermas's thought. He restricts his own interpretation 'merely' to a detailed account of the philosopher's work. On the one hand, such an approach is understandable if we take the extent of Habermas's work and of published critique into account. On the other hand, the reader is partly isolated from the feedback that has provoked many shifts and re-conceptualizations in Habermas's theory.

The book may help both a newcomer to Habermas's theory and an experienced reader of his work overcome numerous challenges, be it the mere extent of his writing, the depth of the arguments and numerous references to other thinkers, Habermas's precise but highly dense and rigorous language, and not least the continuous developments and alterations that accompany the course of his thinking. Still, neither allows 'The Philosophy of Habermas' for distraction and superficial reading and at times, even the author seems to be struggling to maintain the logic and clear direction of the account.

There are two main advantages to the chronological composition of the book. First, it allows a reader to trace both the refinements and intricate paths of Habermas's thinking. Secondly, by splitting Habermas's work into self-contained chapters Edgar considers numerous readers who are interested only in a specific part of Habermas's theory.

Habermas's thought has recently received much attention, particularly his reflection of the EU integration process, the UN, 11 September 2001, the "War on Terror", multiculturalism, the clash of cultures etc. While the general political relevance of his thought for contemporary societies is clear, it is to the detriment of the book that the philosopher's account of cosmopolitanism is only briefly summarized and his attitudes towards other current affairs are utterly neglected.

Moreover, regular conclusion is substituted by a brief summary and assessment of the role Habermas ascribes to philosophy – 'philosophy as stand-in and interpreter'

(p. 264), main points of his argumentation, and the reaction that Habermas has been receiving over the years. Alas, with respect to the intended uncritical character of the book, an elaborate conclusion would be highly desirable, not only summarizing, but outlining works that complement Habermas's thought from the critical point of view as well.

Despite the reservations, 'The Philosophy of Habermas' provides a rich, comprehensive, and telling image of not only Habermas's ideas but of the multidimensional tradition of European and American thought that constitutes its foundations.

Andrew Edgar, The Philosophy of Habermas, Chesham, Acumen Publishing 2005, 292 pages.

Lukáš Valeš*

Enlarged European Union and its Foreign Policy

The topic of EU joint foreign and security policy is an interesting sphere of political science research in itself, and also from the view of the latest stage of EU enlargement. The discussions about the shape of the joint foreign and security EU policy illustrate European integration and its dynamics; both in times of its successful development and deepening it is strengthened as well and vice versa. That is why it is not surprising that after the rejection of the draft of the Treaty of the European Constitution, the post of European Foreign Secretary was rejected by member states too. The establishment of the post, together with the European President's Institute, should have significantly strengthened the Union's foreign policy activities in the international field. The rejection of the Foreign Secretary post also poses a new question: what kind of EU joint foreign and security policy do the EU member states wish to have or, as a last resort, do the EU member states wish to have it at all? The debate on this topic is very important because its path could show where the process of European integration should lead after the unsuccessful plebiscites in the Netherlands and France. Is the EU going to reduce its foreign activities in order to defend European interests in international trade? Is EU foreign policy going to be an amalgamation of the particular EU member states' national policies?

The EU enlargement of 10 new member states was the next significant impulse for a discussion about the EU joint foreign and security policy. Its present geographical centre of gravity was significantly developed. The medieval *cordon sanitaire* vanished from the European map and the Union now has direct border contact with the countries of the former Soviet Union and Russia. That means that the eastern enlargement of the EU did not mean just a simple expansion of the member states, an increase of the number of its inhabitants and enlargement of its common market. At the same time the EU came closer to the less stable (see the example of Ukrainian "Orange" revolution) and the less democratic part of the Europe, i.e. characterized by the dominance of the powerful Russian Federation. For the EU joint foreign and security policy these factors mean new impulses, and they make it necessary to redefine approaches to this region that have been inherited from the end of the Cold War. We could say that this has been motivated by the particular relationships of some European states (Germany and France) to Russia. The enlargement has also important symbolic significance for the inhabitants of the new member states – entry to the Union was understood also as definitively lifting the burden of the history from a divided Europe after the Second World War and incorporating the Central European countries, drawing them away from the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. This fact determines to a certain extent

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the EU's relationship with the East European countries (especially Russia), which is characterized by a high level of distrust and caution (e.g. Poland).

That is why we should welcome the fact that the book *Zahraniční politika rozšířené Evropské unie: Témata, výzvy, perspektivy (Enlarged European Union and its Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges, Perspectives)*, written by David Král and Lukáš Pachta, is published in bilingual version and is easily accessible for Czech and English-speaking readers. The book could bring very interesting ideas to the debate on this topic and help the non-European reader, introducing him/her to the opinions, positions and motivations of the countries of this region towards the issue of EU joint foreign and security policy. Both authors are employees of the Prague Institute for European Politics (EUROPEUM), which deals with topics and questions from this sphere.

The publication is divided into two parts: The first, by David Král, is called *Enlarging EU Foreign Policy. The Role of New EU Member States and Candidate Countries*. It explains foreign political priorities and interests of the new EU member states. The start of the accession negotiations, dealing with the Convention, and the intergovernmental conference until the approach of full membership, is the main topics of this part. The aim is to find the answer to the question of how the foreign political priorities of these states that are to a great extent influenced by their geographical positions and historical experience can affect the common European foreign and security positions not only in face of Eastern Europe and Russia.

How much are the new member states going to be accessible to the common European points of view that are going to be formulated by the EU joint foreign and security policy, and how much are the states going to tend towards "Atlanticism", preferring the common security interests of the whole European region, where the main role belongs to the USA? These are the main topics of the book. The author's conclusion is that "Poland, together with countries in the Baltic region, will probably remain the most enthusiastic about "Atlanticism". The smaller Central European countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia will be probably cautiously support the USA's politics with caution and they will looking more towards the opinions of the main EU player's states" (p. 9). According to the author's point of view, the USA represents a guarantee of a more harsh position towards Russia for states than the countries in the Baltic region and Poland, which is understandable given their historical experience of Russia as a permanent security threat. On the contrary the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary do not consider Russia as a real danger any more. Their foreign policy tends to the South in the author's opinion. In the same way as Poland supports the possibility of Ukraine's accession to the EU, this group of states is a follower of the idea of EU enlargement to countries of the Balkan region, above all Croatia, because of its historical connection, the existence of national minorities of these states in several Balkan neighbour countries, and also because of the philosophy that the strengthening influence of the Union is the best means for the stabilization of the whole Balkan peninsula (according to the author's review). Strong idealism in

foreign activities therefore plays a strong role in all the new countries and results from their historical experience, especially the totalitarian Communist era. This is the way how the author of this part of the book explains, for example, the Czech Republic's policy towards Cuba, which is much more principled and also stubborn towards Fidel Castro's régime than can be seen in most of the other countries, particularly in the old EU member states. The reference of the Czech position influence regarding Cuba on the EU strategy towards this regime is certainly good. We should be aware of one inaccuracy though. The Cuban authorities did not arrest two Czech MPs in 2001, as is written by the author of the book, but just one, Ivan Pilip. His colleague, Jan Bubeník, was a private citizen (p. 51). The author is maybe concentrating too much on the relationships among the new member states, EU and the Eastern Europe. The areas where the EU joint foreign and security policy has its important place and where, if the member states should want, it could play a fundamental role, stayed left aside. An example can be the Middle East region, where the EU position is not burdened by one-way support of one of the concerned players. The question of "Atlanticism" features in the second part of the book too, and is probably motivated also by the Marshall Plan of the United States to publish this publication. The second part of the book is called *European Security and Defence Policy in the Light of the Transatlantic Relationship* and is written by Lukáš Pachta. He tries to look for the answers for questions that concern the relationship or compatibility of the European security and defence policy with the existence of NATO and the key role of the USA in the security questions. Will a strengthening of the all-European security and defence policy mean opening a transatlantic linkage eventually a new isolationism of the United States of America towards Europe? The author turns to the prehistoric period and era of the establishment of the European security and defence policy, analyses the role of the main European states towards the European joint security and foreign policy and voices the opinion on the changes that these states are going through, the view of the USA on them, etc. The question that concerns European army forces, European arms industry etc. did not stay behind. At the end of this book the Král and Pachta comes to the conclusion that the European security and defence policy is a successful project despite its short history. He finds an interesting answer for the question whether the project does not mean gradually opening of the transatlantic partnership: "In today's form it is acceptable for the majority of all states and political actors on both sides of the Atlantic, and it is in compliance with transforming transatlantic linkage" (p. 119). Europe should take over by this form its part of the security responsibility in chosen regions that belong to its "sphere of influence" where the Europeans have for example more historical experience (e.g. in Africa) and Europe should share it with the USA. The author correctly mentions various scenarios of possible development that range from mutual symbiosis to the divergence of the security policies of the USA and European countries. Lukáš Pachta, more like David Král, reminds us continuously of the rising significance of complexity of the security policy that is not just hard security, which is only based

on powerful and army means, but also a linked series of questions combining also economics, environment, etc. (soft security). The points of view of the partners on both Atlantic coasts may differ in the future especially regarding these questions.

The book presents an interesting benefit of the discussion about the EU second pillar in contemporary security architecture. It could be an impulse for a brown study and for Central European reader as well. However, these problems are not as topical for the ordinary citizen as those that are connected with the existence of the single European market. These are the questions that politicians as well as the public in Central Europe should be able to look for and find answers. Our entry to the family of united European nations is not just a profit of a large market, subsidies or free travel, but it is also taking over the shared responsibility for future European development and is also a challenge to search for our answer to the question of what role should the enlarged EU play in the modern world. This search should also reflect how the reality of Union enlargement that brought new foreign political questions and views as well, nowadays crisis of European integration and also the radical change of the world foreign and security situation that was symbolized by the 11 September 2001 attacks (and also in Madrid in 2004). The start of this discussion in the Czech and Central Europe environment would be a major benefit of this publication and also a significant pro-European positive signal to the countries in this region. The omission of some foreign policy EU aspects is, on the other hand, a flaw of this publication, primarily economic (but also, for example, development aid), and also too much concern about the transatlantic problematic that even for its significance do not cover the topic of the “joint foreign and security policy”. The fact that the authors concentrated often rather on the positions of single EU member states, without trying to show the position of all European position, can be criticized as well.

David Král and Lukáš Pachta, Enlarged European Union and its Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges, Perspectives, Prague, Europeum. Institute for European Policy 2005, 137 pages.

*Klara Weger**

Designing Federalism

The theory of federalism has until now mostly concentrated on the analyses of federal constitutions and the functioning of existing federal institutions. Discussions have focused on when to choose federalism and why, what kind of political system (parliamentary/presidential) could be considered as more suitable for this kind of state organization, the division of powers between national and sub-national administrations and other such practical questions. The aim of the debate until now has been essentially to reach a common definition of what federalism is and which conditions are necessary to permit one to qualify a system as “federal“. Even though broad definitions on which most scientists agree have been suggested, the multiplicity of existing federal arrangements throughout the world makes them unable to reach more specific proposals concerning the nature of federalism.

Unwilling to resolve definitely this debate (which one might as well consider as unresolvable), as the authors clearly mention: “we do not want to debate alternative definitions of federalism“ (p. 5), this newly published book however is an attempt to bring new ideas into the theoretical field. By concentrating on the question of the stability of existing federal systems and by trying to identify the structure of federal state institutions that best encourage the survival of such a system, the authors bring the debate on federalism to another level that has, to our knowledge, until now been neglected. The study of actual federal systems (mainly those of the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and India) were added to a chapter entirely dedicated to two specific unsuccessful federations (the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia), enabling the authors to establish a certain number of tendencies that might lead to a stable federal system.

Following a short recapitulation of the existing debate on federalism and a definition of concepts that will be central to the following work (stability, institution, self-enforcement) the main theories that will accompany the entire book are stipulated at the end of the first chapter. Following the authors, the desire of federation members to change institutional specifics in their favour is a permanent feature of the federal process. These ongoing processes of negotiation and renegotiation in a federation pose an ever-present danger to the stability and effectiveness of a federal state. Indeed, it is always characterized by an inherent tension. Thus, the authors conclude that the primary purpose of a federal system must be to keep such processes in check.

The authors therefore introduce the concept of Level 1 constraints, whose aim is to restrict federal bargaining and which relate to “explicit bargains among federal subjects over the allocation of authority between them and the federal government, and other limits on their and the centre’s action“ (p. 36). Level 1 constraint can thus

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be understood as rules that bring stability in federal bargaining, and as constitutional constraints on federal bargaining.

To ensure the enforcement of Level 1 a second level is introduced (Level 2) that defines the institutional structure of the federal centre and its relationship to the federal, subjects to ensure the maintenance of these rules. Level 2 rules thus encompass the general principles of government structure.

Nevertheless, and this is what we consider as the main contribution of this book, the authors do not neglect the importance of a well-designed constitution, the Level 1 and Level 2 constraints which follow them constitute only one dimension (the constitutional one) of the federal design which is here considered as a two-dimensional problem. Indeed, as the authors claim, rarely are the problems of stability only solved by a good constitutional design because much political design occurs in a spontaneous fashion.

This is the reason why a third level of institutional design is introduced (Level 3) which constitutes the second dimension of the federal design. Level 3 could be defined as an ensemble of factors that encourages political party integration and motivates politicians to cooperate and coordinate activities across levels of government.

Political parties are assigned a central and causal role, parties are in this volume considered as the most durable and manipulable tool and as an integral part of a federal system.

The first chapters of the work focus on the analysis of the first and the second level of institutional design (i.e., the constitutional matters). The second and third chapters concentrate on the study of Level One constitution constraints. Here constitutions are here understood as living documents that, as society changes, are also subjected to modifications. But, at the level of the Constitution, to ensure stability, federal bargaining has to be restrained. Some of the Level 1 agreements should thus be made especially difficult to modify, although other can be considered as ultimately renegotiable.

In this context, the interesting notion of non-institutionalized bargaining (Chapter 3) is introduced in the case of two failed federations - the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Non-institutionalized bargaining occurs when no sustainable system of constraints exists any longer and when nearly every rule and institution becomes subject to renegotiation and change. The study of these two countries allows the authors to emphasize the need, while designing or redesigning federalism, to proceed in a way that avoids open, unrestricted renegotiation of federal terms. Here, a clear point is here made about the danger of including a right to secession within the Level 1 constraints.

Finally, several propositions are finally made concerning Level 1 constraints that might have a positive effect on a federal country's stability, such as a minimal set of constraints at this level, or the inclusion in the constitution of the notion of residual powers.

The fourth chapter focuses on the study of Level 2 constraints, and to assess the core Level 2 structure essential for a federal democracy it begins with the question

of the legislature. A distinction is made between internal representation – states are represented and negotiate within national governmental structures such as in Germany and the USA - and external representation – subjects of the federation defend and articulate their interests without the federal centre as in Canada or the EU - and between direct and delegated representation. Without clearly expressing their preferences either alternative, the authors carefully study the advantages and inconveniences of each mentioned type of representation, paying much attention to the specific context of each country.

Again, several pieces of advice are given concerning Level 2 constraints so as to avoid a chief executive that is too strong when compared to other branches of the national government, or creating a legislative chamber that serves little purpose.

The fifth chapter raises the question of stability and self-enforcement of constitutional rules and concludes that courts (Supreme Court/Constitutional Court) fail to be the ultimate enforcers of federal provisions. The role of maintaining federal constraints belongs to political élites. The central role of political élites and parties can be considered as the core argument of the book and constitutes the main subject of the following chapters.

As the main aim that political leaders share in a democracy is to win election it becomes clear that, in the absence of any contrary incentive, the constraints on federal bargaining would certainly be challenged if doing so assured them victory. The search for stability thus needs a structure that motivates officeholders to resist pressures to overstep the rules. Therefore, the authors conclude that to render a constitution effective, local and regional political élites must be given an incentive to uphold federal constraints even when, as is likely, their voters have other preferences. Political leaders indeed have to be imperfect representatives of their voters. The maintenance of the balance between the centre and federal subjects and the respect of the boundaries of constitutional constraint has to be in the elite's self-interest.

What therefore should be the primary or only concern of those who would design a federation should be an institutional arrangement that has as its primary objective the encouragement of a certain type of party system – this if, following the authors, the most durable source of federal stability.

What is needed is a party that includes at least sections of the electorate from more federal subjects than otherwise seem necessary to ensure a redistributive outcome. Therefore, the notion of integrated political parties in which politicians at one level of government bear an organizational relationship to politicians at other levels (vertically – between local and national politicians - and horizontally – between politicians in different federal entities) is central to the book's thesis.

Integrated parties are, among others, the product of design – specific kinds of institutions bring politicians to create parties of a particular sort. Chapters 7 and 8 consist of a synthesis of parameters that favour the creation of an integrated party system

through the examples of the party systems of the USA, Canada, Germany and India. No single institution variable is considered as decisive but a list of design features at the local level – such as for example an important number of local and regional offices filled by direct election – and at a more global level – such as a simultaneity of local, regional and national election – that tend to favour an integrated party system is then established.

The last chapter of the work applies the theory to two concrete cases - today's Russia and the European Union – and leave the authors quite pessimistic about the possibility of creating a true federal system in these two entities.

Creating federalism, even though sometimes hampered by a strongly present game theory and in our opinion a too logical – even mathematical – approach, and even though sometimes barely hiding the author's admiration for the USA's political and party system – the authors somehow sounding as presenting it as the right way to follow – can be considered as an important contribution to the theory of federalism. It presents an interesting view of the development of actual federal systems and their inadequacies, and of the role political parties play in such systems. In its efforts to establish a recipe for producing stable federal systems we consider this book as a real source for future debate on federalism. It does so not in a fixed way but by designating tendencies that might favour such a development.

Mikhail Filippov, Peter C. Ordeshook, Olga Shvetsova, Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 396 pages.

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POLITICS IN CENTRAL EUROPE publishes original, peer-reviewed manuscripts that provide scientific essays focusing on issues in comparative politics, policy analysis, international relations and other sub-disciplines of political science, as well as original theoretical or conceptual analyses. All essays must contribute to a broad understanding of the region of Central Europe.

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- a list of up to six keywords suitable for indexing and abstracting purposes;
- a brief biographical note about each author, including previous and current institutional affiliation;
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Dates should be in the form of 1 November 2005; 1994-1998; or the 1990s.

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In the text, refer to the author(s) name(s) (without initials, unless there are two authors with the same name) and year of publication. Unpublished data and personal communications (interviews etc.) should include initials and year. Publications which have not yet appeared are given a probable year of publication and should be checked at the proofing stage on an author query sheet. For example:

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Publications by the same author(s) in the same year should be identified with a, b, c (2005a, 2005b) closed up to the year and separated by commas. Publications in references that include different authors should be separated by a semicolon: (Miller 1994a: 32, 1994b; Gordon 1976). If the year of first publication by a particular author is important, use the form: (e.g. Bull 1977/2002: 34). If there are two authors of a publication, separate the names by ‘–’ (not ‘and’ or ‘&’). If there are more than two authors, put the name of the first author followed by ‘*et al.*’, or write all names separated with ‘–’ (four authors maximum).

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B) List of References

References are placed in alphabetical order of authors. Examples of correct forms of references for alphabetical style:

BOOKS:

Single author books:

Diehl, Paul F. (1994): *International Peacekeeping. With a new epilogue on Somalia, Bosnia, and Cambodia*, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Two or more authors:

Degnbol-Martinussen, John – Engberg-Pedersen, Poul (1999): *Aid. Understanding International Development Cooperation*, Zed Books, Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke, Danish Association for International Cooperation, Copenhagen.

EDITED VOLUMES:

Rittberger, Volker, ed. (1993): *Regime Theory and International Relations*, Clarendon Press.

CHAPTERS FROM MONOGRAPHS:

George, Alexander L. (2004): Coercive Diplomacy, in Art, Robert J. – Waltz, Kenneth N., eds., *The Use of Force. Military Power and International Politics. Sixth Edition*, 70-76, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Printed journals:

Haas, Ernst B. (1961): International Integration. The European and the Universal Process. *International Organization* 15 (4): 5-54.

Online editions of journals:

Judt, Tony (2002c): Its Own Worst enemy, *The New York Review of Books*: available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/15632> (15 August 2002).

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Printed editions:

Excerpts From the Pentagon's Plan: Prevent the Re-Emergence of a New Rival (1992) *The New York Times* (9 March).

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Cooper, Robert (2002): 'Why We Still Need Empires', *The Guardian Unlimited* (7 April): available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4388915,00.html> (2 November, 2003).

RESEARCH REPORTS AND PAPERS FROM CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:

Waisová, Šárka (2005): Czech Security Policy – Between Atlanticism and Europeanization, Bratislava: Ministry of Defence, Working Paper No. 05/2.

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Supply tables, figures and plates on separate sheets at the end of the article, with their position within the text clearly indicated on the page where they are introduced. Provide typed captions for figures and plates (including sources and acknowledgements) on a separate sheet. Electronic versions should be saved in separate files with the main body of text and should be saved preferably in Jpeg format.

Authors are asked to present tables with the minimum use of horizontal rules (usually three are sufficient) and to avoid vertical rules except in matrices. It is important to provide clear copies of figures (not photocopies or faxes) which can be reproduced by the printer and do not require redrawing. Photographs should be preferably black and white gloss prints with a wide tonal range.

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- If the reviewed book is the result of a particular event (a conference, workshop, etc.), then this should be mentioned in the introductory part of the review.
- Review authors should describe the topic of the book under consideration, but not at the expense of providing an evaluation of the book and its potential contribution to the relevant field of research. In other words, the review should

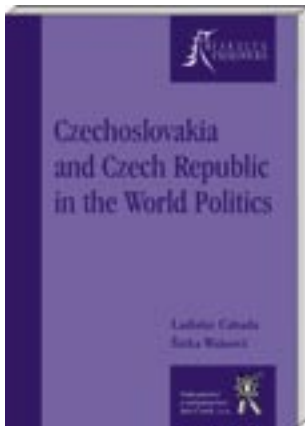
provide a balance between description and critical evaluation. The potential audience of the reviewed work should also be identified.

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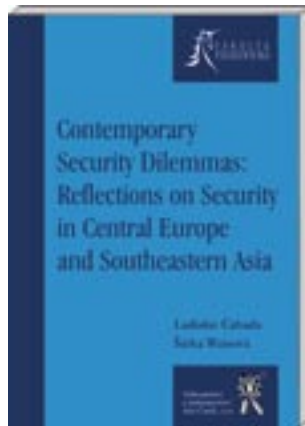
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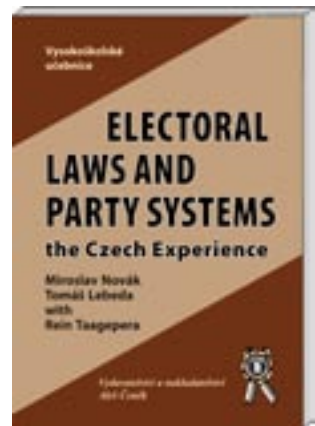
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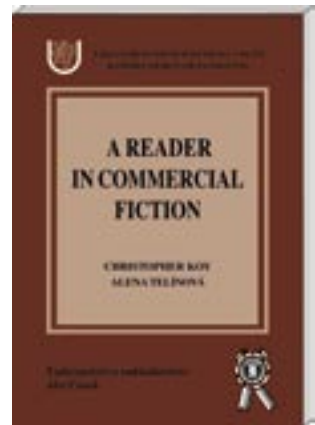
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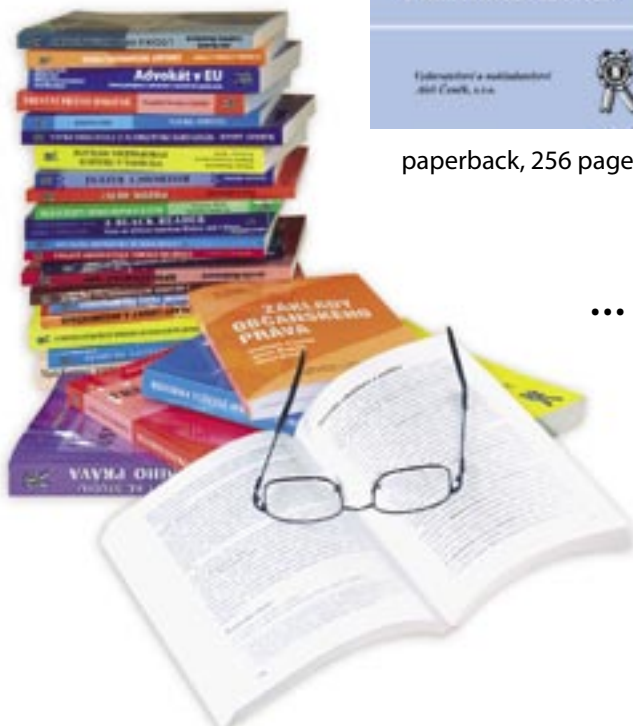
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